



Issue # 2

CHAMPIONS[®] NEW MILLENNIUM BAY CITY



A CHAMPIONS: NEW-MILLENNIUM ROLEPLAYING SUPPLEMENT

BAY CITY



Super-Heroic Adventures in the City By The Bay



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INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Welcome to *Champions New Millennium: BAY CITY*, your guide book to where the cool heroes hang out. This book should tell you everything you need to know about Bay City, from its origins, to its villains (at the very least, some of them) to cool places to visit and trash.

In short, everything a right-thinking super-hero could want.

We've organized this book into several sections, to help keep things organized for your reading pleasure. Here's a quick overview:

Introduction: That's what you're reading now.

Story Seeds: Some starting adventure ideas.

Bay City Primer: An overview of Bay City, and a breakdown of its districts.

The Places: Thirty of the hot spots to visit in Bay City.

Mini-Listings: Brief listings of places to eat, drink, and sleep.

Story Seeds: More story seeds dealing with over-arching plots in and around Bay City.

Characters: Descriptions of characters who live in Bay City.

The Rules: Errata and more rules additions.

The Bay City Primer should get you further acquainted with the sprawl of the Bay Area. We've broken Bay City up into four districts and further broken each of those up into sub-districts or neighborhoods. The Primer looks at how Bay City was formed and how it functions. It also has plenty of information on the districts and neighborhoods, including maps and places to visit. This is a good section for players and GMs alike. Characters who live in the area should know how their city functions, and where they can find things, and GMs, of course, need to know all of this and more.

You'll find plenty of locations for your heroes to visit in the Places section. We've given you some of the high (and low) spots of Bay City here. Each place comes complete with a character and story seeds to enhance your campaign. More information on this section can be found on page 30 of this book.

The Mini-Listings contain a number of brief entries for restaurants, night clubs, bars, and hotels. While there isn't a lot of information for each place, they can come in quite handy when you need to send your heroes to a rendezvous in a public place.

The Characters section has write-ups for a number of heroes and villains. You'll find detailed descriptions of the four heroes who were mentioned in *C:NM*: Crusader, the Marksman, Shadowbeast, and Speedster. We've also included details on the current incarnation of the Masters of Fortune and the Amazing Foxbat.

Lastly, we've included some Fuzion errata and new rules. We are constantly expanding the Powers Plug-In for the system by adding new Powers, Limiters, and Adders. We've also included a few new flavors of martial arts, and some expansion for the skill list.

Get ready to cruise the coolest place in the New Millennium. And, as always, Be A Hero!

OUR PHILOSOPHY

This book is intended to be a guide to Bay City, the standard campaign location for the New Millennium setting. However, when putting this project together, we took a long, hard look at just what was we wanted to do with this project. After much discussion, a vision started to evolve.

We had a thorny problem: We needed to provide enough information so that players and GMs who had never visited the San Francisco Bay Area could become familiar with the area, yet we didn't want to write a standard guidebook. Most people can find that kind of information in their local library or bookstore. Besides, guidebooks, while informative, aren't really that useful for a super-hero game.

We also wanted to forestall all of the "I live in the Bay Area, and you guys got it wrong" comments. We live there too, and we **know** we got it "wrong."

It's the New Millennium, hero. Things have changed.

The great 'quake of '95 gave us the perfect opportunity to shake things up. So be prepared. The landscape has changed. While many of the landmark buildings are still there, other things have changed. The earthquake and the shake caused by the Wildstrike knocked down buildings, leveled freeways, and gave plenty of chances for the city to be rebuilt.

Bay City isn't just San Francisco with a new name. In the New Millennium, BART runs all the way around the Bay, something that Peninsula residents know will **never** happen. We've taken other liberties as well, in the name of making an exciting environment for your Capes to live in. We hope you like it.

Descriptions of places are a necessary part of a location book, but they aren't enough. Heroes don't interact with places directly (unless they are trashing them during a fight); they interact with the people that hang out in those areas. So each place or location had to have a person associated with it. Some, like the Guard Station or the Steel Citadel, Bay City's very own VIPER's Nest, needed more than that.

Also, the main places needed plenty of story seeds to get the heroes involved with the happenings there. We made sure that the book was full of ideas to get the GM's mind working. And just to make sure there was enough here, we threw in more characters, including two villain teams, to spice things up.

The thirty places that we describe in the main section were chosen with care. We wanted to make sure that we hit a representative sampling of the standard places Capes go to fight, as well some locations that are definitively San Francisco. Obviously, we couldn't list every place that might be of interest to your campaign, nor would we want to. However, the thirty places we do provide should be enough to keep your heroes hoping for quite a while as they try to drive crime from Bay City.

And that's what its all about, isn't it?



DESTROYER TRIUMPHANT!

Destroyer stood there, his prize in his hands at last. After all these years, the Helmet of Atlan, the fabled headgear of his ancient enemy was his!

Looking over the unconscious forms of the new Champions, he laughed. He could finish them off now, but they were so pathetic, lying there. Why should he bother? It was better that they see his ultimate glory, better that they try and fail to stop him, better that they live to see the new age. *His* age.

The Time of the Destroyer. The world would shake again.

He strode from the ruins of the ORI lab. Now, though, it was time to return to his base, to unlock the secrets held within his prize. He concentrated for a brief moment, communing with his awesome powers. He closed his eyes in anticipation, and gave the *thought*. Smiling, he opened his eyes again.

And found he was still outside of the ORI facility! Something had blocked his Gate Transport. Troubled, he tried again. Nothing. But this time, he knew why.

"Even long after your death, you test me," he growled at the helmet. "But a little thing like this will not stop me. I will return with you to my lair. And then you will be mine!"

Destroyer walked off, filled with purpose.

Hours later, Destroyer paused. This problem was thornier than the Champions, old or new! He had depended so long on his Gate Transport that he had made no other plans for leaving this cursed hero-infested city. How should he proceed?

A passing bus gave him an idea. Although it pained him to act as the unblest might, he had no other choice. It was a *long* walk back to his base. He stood in front of the bus, arm outstretched. The driver, eyes wide with panic, froze. Dr. freakin' Destroyer was in front of his bus! What should he do?

Destroyer's eyes narrowed. Would the fool not stop? Well, then, Destroyer would make him! Power swirled around his pointing hand. His Cosmic Burst slammed into the front of the on-coming bus, smashing the engine open. The bus skidded to a halt just

in front of him. He reached in through the shattered front and casually threw the driver to one side, "Fools! If I cannot leave, you will not ride! Flee!" he screamed at the running passengers, "Run like the ants you are! I will come and step on you!"

"Having a bad day, doc?" came a voice from behind him.

"You! Bah, I thought you had retired from this arena."

Destroyer replied to the red and black-clad figure.

"What? You never heard of making a comeback?" The Marksman smiled. "Besides, how could I pass an opportunity to see your pretty face? Now, are you going to come quietly, or are you going to make me crack a sweat?"

"Fool! Even with your late teammates, you were no match for one such as me! Be gone!"

"I don't think so, Doc."

"Away, pest!" Cosmic energy flared around Destroyer's fist as an Electro-Force Blast shot out at his tormentor. A shot from the Marksman's famous sonic rifle diverted the blast.

"You'll have to do better than that," chuckled the crimson and black clad hero. "Give it up, and I'll let

you walk, prune-face."

"I have had ENOUGH!" bellowed the world's most powerful villain. "Your death is far too long in coming." Destroyer brought both of his hands forward in preparation of a devastating attack.

At that very moment, there was a rush of air past the villain as Speedster raced by, snatching the helmet from Destroyer's loose grasp as he did. "I got it, Marksman! You can take off!"

"Is there no end to this torment?" Destroyer snarled. "I will deal with you in a moment." Turning from the Marksman, he shot a blast into the back of the retreating Speedster. The now-unconscious hero smashed into a building across the way, the Helmet of Atlan flying from his hand.

"You shouldn't have done that, Destroyer!" The Marksman snapped off five quick shots, each one aimed at a weak spot in the villain's armor. Destroyer staggered back.

"Now, it is your time to die!" Arcane energy blazed from Destroyer's eyes. "You will be scourged from the Earth!"

Forgotten, the Helmet of Atlan bounced away . . .





STORY SEEDS

1 Destroyer Contained: This adventure should take place right after Dr. Destroyer obtains the Helmet of Atlan from ORI (as described in *C:NM*, page 168). Although Destroyer's plan went off without a hitch, he still has a big problem.

Destroyer's power comes from the First Gate Key, a power source tainted by his very nature. The Helmet of Atlan is an artifact of the Second Gate Key, which stands in direct opposition to his power. The direct manifestation of this is the suppression of certain of Destroyer's abilities.

While the cruder manipulations of Gate Key Energy, such as attack powers, are still possible, the Helmet interferes with Destroyer's Gate Transport. (It also interferes with other aspects of his powers; if Destroyer were to keep the Helmet with him for a long period of time, he would start to feel sickly and the rest of his powers would cease to function.) Destroyer is not yet aware of all of this; he only knows that the Helmet is preventing his Gate Transport power from working.

Destroyer was depending on his Gate Transport to escape from Bay City with his prize. Now, that has been denied to him. He's *not* in a good mood.

The good doctor needs to find another way to leave the city. He has no great fleet of vehicles at his beck and call at this time. And he's not exactly an inconspicuous figure; it is very difficult for him to use public transportation.

The frustrated villain is liable to go on a rampage through the city. And when he does, it will be up the heroes to stop him.

2 Dad, Can I Borrow The Car?: Dr. Destroyer does have a few other options. While he doesn't maintain a super-fast, stealthed get-away vehicle, he knows that other organizations do. He might well try to borrow one.

Of course, these aren't the type of people who tend to lend their vehicles to super-villains. Dr. Destroyer's easiest target would be the Guard. Their Regional Headquarters at Pier 44 has the perfect escape craft, the GTV-203 Fighter. This small, fast, and stealthed craft would be just the ticket for Destroyer's exit.

The Guard won't let the villain take the plane without a fight. When they see who they are up against, they'll call for all of the help they can get. Including our heroes . . .

3 I'd Walk A Mile For A Dragon: Destroyer might choose to go after a target that isn't inclined to yell for help. He knows that VIPER has several Nests in Bay City, and these Nests have just what he needs: a Dragon jet. He has one slight problem, however. He doesn't know the location of the Steel Citadel (page 69.)

Destroyer is going to do something that he is ill suited for. He's going to have to mingle with the underworld, and try to find the elusive nest. He has no doubt that he'll succeed; self-doubt is not part of Destroyer's make-up.

This unusual behavior by the villain is sure to attract the attention of the heroes. Destroyer's idea of a street investigation is to find a low-life bar, grab the first shady character he sees, throw him up against a wall, and ask his questions. If his victim can't (or won't) give him the information he wants, he'll toss him aside (generally to a long stay in the hospital) and find another target. He'll repeat this process until he finds out what he wants.

This might well attract the attention of the heroes. (And if it doesn't, they should be in another line of work!) They'll have to find Destroyer and stop him before too long. Or there will be a pile of dead and maimed bodies as high as the Transamerica Pyramid.

There is the chance that Dr. Destroyer will get lucky, and find the Nest. That opens a different can of worms. Destroyer feels no need to be subtle. He will smash his way into the Nest, grab a pilot, find the Dragon Jet, and fly away.

VIPER will do its best to stop him. And if there is a visiting villain in the area, such as Adder or Oculon, the fight is going to last a little while. How are the heroes going to react to a major super-brawl in the middle of downtown Bay City?

4 The Enemy Of My Enemy Is My Enemy: There are other powerful forces that will be upset with Dr. Destroyer's presence in their fair city. The Scions of Caine, the Masters of Fortune, Black Paladin, and any other villain groups that call Bay City their home (or area of operations) are likely to be very concerned. Destroyer on a rampage can mean any number of things, all of them bad.

If one of these groups has a plan underway, Destroyer will probably mess it up. These villains tend to be fearless and arrogant. If Destroyer is interfering with them, then they'll take care of him. And woe to anyone who stands in their way.

Once again, this is a chance for a very public brawl. The responding heroes will find themselves in a very bad situation. The villains will happily attack the heroes as well as Dr. Destroyer, seeing a perfect opportunity to remove yet another thorn from their sides. Destroyer will lay about him without concern for anything. It's enough to make a hero hang up his cape.

5 Confusion Is The Mother Of Improvisation: Not every paranormal in Bay City is going to be obsessed with Dr. Destroyer. In fact, some might be downright glad to see him. Destroyer is providing one of the biggest distractions to ever hit the city since the Wildstrike. And *these* villains aren't going to let that opportunity pass them by.

The Guard and the local heroes are going to be turning their efforts towards stopping Destroyer. So they might just overlook a small raid on the local bank and/or jewelry store. Or the villains might get really ambitious, and try to free one of their comrades from the NorCal Containment Facility in Oakland. The Guard will still have their usual compliment of troops stationed there, but they won't be able to get any back-up. Easy pickings, the kind any lazy villain loves.

What will the heroes do? Stopping Destroyer before he brings the city down around their ears is vital, but they can't just

let the other villains get away with their crimes unchecked. Will they turn all of their efforts to stopping the master villain? Will they foil the opportunists' plans? Or will they try to split their forces and take on both threats at once? Life is made up of hard choices and, if they aren't careful, this might just be their last one.

6 A Shadowy Hand: Markoth (*Alliances*, pg 62) isn't happy. The former ruler of Tangut isn't getting the respect he feels he deserves. Worse, his so-called companions are doing nothing to help him regain his lost throne. The master of magical forces far beyond the comprehension of mortal man is growing impatient. The time is coming to act.

Unfortunately, there are forces that are arrayed against him. That narrow-minded fool, Franck, has indoctrinated his people far too well. Markoth must move subtly, lest Franck grow suspicious and move against *him*. Such must never happen.

But the appearance of the Destroyer raises all kinds of interesting possibilities. Although Markoth's political manipulation within the Scions of Caine are far from complete (indeed, he's barely even started them), he can't just sit back and let opportunity pass him by. Now would be a good time to maneuver certain of his "brothers" into combat with Destroyer. With any luck, they will be killed. Whatever the result, Franck will be distracted.

To that end, Markoth has plotted Destroyer's path through the city. Pleading poverty, he has convinced Darkbolt and Black Diamond to undertake a simple bank robbery. These two long-suffering Scions are well used to this type of behavior from Markoth, and have no idea that the target bank lies directly on Destroyer's route. No doubt the Scions will encounter the villain. The inevitable will happen. Markoth's plan will progress.

Of course, this will happen just as the heroes are arriving to finally deal with Dr. Destroyer. If they managed to get the upper hand over the villain, so much the better. Suddenly, they will find themselves having to deal with two of the more annoying Scions. Markoth will sit back and laugh. Things are going so much better than he could have planned.

7 Easy Come, Easy Go: No matter what happens, Dr. Destroyer will eventually lose the Helmet of Atlan. Some enterprising hero will grab it, or Destroyer will drop it in a fight. Either way, it is going to get lost.

If someone is brave enough to grab the Helmet out of Doc's hand, they won't hang onto it long. Destroyer's immediate reaction will be to blast the

offending fool into the next millennium. The helmet will go flying, and land out of sight.

Once the helmet is out of the view of Destroyer and the heroes, it will be impossible to find. The Helmet has places to be and people to find. Destroyer will ultimately be frustrated (as if he wasn't already!), and will take this out on the heroes. But with the Helmet gone, there is nothing to stop the master villain from simply teleporting back to his lair.

8 With Great Power ...: Just because Destroyer couldn't find the Helmet doesn't mean that it vanished from the city. It's still around, and it has an appointment with destiny. However, there is a small problem: the Helmet isn't intelligent. While it is filled with the need to accomplish the things it was created for, there is no mind directing that need.

This means that it cannot plan to end up in the correct hands for this particular time. Instead, it must rely upon the forces of fate to direct it. Such behavior is a recipe for disaster.

If the wrong person were to get his or her hands on this powerful artifact, it would be very bad. And entropy won't allow anything else to happen right away. The heroes are in for some rough times. As if things weren't bad enough already!

Anyone wearing the helmet will gain paranormal abilities. (Dr. Destroyer couldn't wear it because he is one of those extremely rare people who draws power **directly** from a Gate Key that is in opposition to the Helmet's power source. Dr. Destroyer might be the only person on Earth who *can't* use the Helmet.) These abilities will vary from person to person, but all look pretty much like the sample villain below. (For a visual, just use anyone in street clothes wearing the helmet.) The Helmet won't stay with anyone for very long; it will arrange to be lost as it looks for its proper owner.

HELM (HOST TO THE HELMET OF ATLAN)

CP: 70

OP: 22

PP: 78

INT	4				
WILL	4	RES	12		
PRE	4				
TECH	4				
REF	8	SPD	4		
DEX	8				
CON	10	SD	20	ED	20
STR	10	REC	20		
BODY	10	STUN	50	HITS	50
MOVE	8	RUN	16	SPRINT	24
		SWIM	8	LEAP	8

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS AV/DV

E	Hand-to-Hand: 210
4	Use Helmet of Atlan Powers: 412
E	Hand-to-Hand Evade: 210
*	Other Skills as appropriate for the person who found the Helmet	
12	Combat Sense: 4	
3	Eidetic Memory	
3	Longevity	

COST POWERS END

14	Gate Key Power Multipower	
2m	Electro-Force Blast: 12d6 Affects Desolid	7
2m	Cosmic Burst: 11d6 Armor Piercing Blast	7
2m	The Petrifying Light of Atlan: 9d6 Transform, Cumulative, any Humanoid to Stone Statue	7
2m	White Light: 8 Phases vs. All Sight	7
2m	Wrath of Atlan: 12d6 Explosion	7
2m	Atlan's Triumph: 10d6 Suppress vs. all Powers of a given special effect (anything powered directly by the First Gate Key.)	7
34	Gate Transport: Teleportation 50 m/y w/ 8x Mass & 2,000,000x Distance, 1 Floating Location	5
16	Atlan's Aura: Force Field, 30 SD & 30 ED, 0 END Cost	0
2	Flash Defense: 10 Phases	

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 30 Obsessed: Must use new found powers (Constantly, Will risk life and limb, Extreme)
- 13 Unlucky (Frequently, Very costly or dangerous misfortunes, Major)



BAY CITY PRIMER

THE BIRTH OF BAY CITY

Bay City was an accident. No one ever expected to try to merge a dozen or more municipalities, let alone three separate counties, into a single political entity. But nature has a way of throwing curveballs

Even before Nasty Nine-Five, the 7.4 magnitude earthquake that rocked the Bay Area, the various communities had made emergency plans for such a natural disaster. The cities of Silicon Valley created an Emergency District and, in response, San Francisco, Oakland, and some of the Peninsula cities formed the **Bay Area Cities Emergency Relief Council.**

The Council's purpose was to coordinate disaster relief and Federal emergency funds. Over a course of months, more and more cities were added to the Council, until every community on the Peninsula north of Palo Alto was a member. The Council's organizers calculated that such a broad membership would give them quite a bit of clout come a major shake (or flood or other disaster.)

Then came the Nasty Nine-Five. The Council members got out from under their desks when the shaking stopped, and knew that they were in big trouble. The fifty-seven second earthquake had devastated the area. The politicians looked out over the destruction and screamed for help. Federal help. State help. Paranormal help. *Any* kind of help.

And, surprisingly enough, it worked. The Federal Government, pleased to only have to deal with one entity, coughed up disaster relief funds with an open hand. The paranormal population of the area pitched in, and helped re-build the freeway system in record time. While they were at it, the Champions, along with other local Capes, turned a small land mass in the Bay into an artificial island, and helped construct the badly-needed Emperor Norton Bridge.

Once the relief efforts were well under way, the various mayors and other city officials took a moment to assess the situation. It was obvious that the rebuilding would take years, and the Council would have to stay in existence during that time. Mayor Bobby Greene raised the possibility of making the Council permanent, and incorporating it as a giant metropolis. After much discussion, the Council's name was shortened to simply "Bay City," and articles of incorporation were drawn up.



HOW BAY CITY WORKS

The initial idea was considered elegant by some. The newly incorporated Bay City would be governed by a council made up by the various mayors of the municipalities involved. Each former city would function like a semi-autonomous district, and still elect their own mayor and other officials. It sounded simple.

Of course, there were problems. Many city departments were combined to eliminate duplication of effort. Some of these takes, such as combining the police departments into one big and efficient organization, took considerable time and had to be reorganized several times. Others, like the expanded Water District, were much easier to implement. There were growing pains, but things seemed to be going along well.

Then the joker was dealt. People had overlooked the political angle. Seeing a new organization, and a new power base, all of the new council members began jockeying for position. Many important issues were ignored as the mayors vied to see who would be top dog. It seemed as though Bay City was doomed from the start.

Then Mayor Bobby stepped forward. Using the techniques he used to bring his Board of Supervisors in line, he crushed all opposition. He forged an alliance with Luther Androtti, the mayor of Berkeley, and the two of them took control of the council. In the process, Androtti became a mouthpiece and yes-man for Bobby. The new mayor of Bay City appeased the rest of his opposition by tossing around plum jobs in the various city agencies. Or, in Bobby's words *veni, vidi, veci*. He came, he saw, and he took over. Things have been running smoothly since.

Today, Bay City is one of the largest cities in America. Certainly, it is the largest when you consider city boundaries. While there are still many factions and power struggles on the Council, Mayor Bobby has things well in hand, and quashes any sign of rebellion ruthlessly. The other city official have learned to live with this situation, and it appears that Mayor Bobby will hold his job for as long as he wants to. Many people pray that Bobby will get national ambitions, and leave his post to run for the Senate.

Mayor Bobby's chief rival is Elihu Wilson from Oakland. Wilson would like to become mayor, and is plotting to get rid of Androtti, and grab the Deputy Mayor's job for himself as the first step. So far, his manipulations are still in the planning stage.

GETTING AROUND BAY CITY

BART

Created in 1974, the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system is a fast and economical way to travel through Bay City. This subway and surface rail system links all the regions of Bay City and some points beyond.

BART enjoyed a massive expansion after the 1995 earthquake. The damage from the big shake allowed BART to obtain the rights-of-way it needed to expand down the San Francisco Peninsula. Today, the BART system extends from San Jose to Pittsburg and comprises over 70 stations.

BART operates trains from 4:00 am to Midnight, seven days a week. Fares range from \$1 to \$7, depending upon the distance traveled. Tickets are sold by automated ticket-vending machines in any denomination up to \$100. A \$60 monthly "Fast Pass" is also available that allows unlimited travel on all BART trains and MUNI busses.

Bicycles are allowed in the rear of each car except the lead car. No permit is required. Bikes may not be taken on escalators.

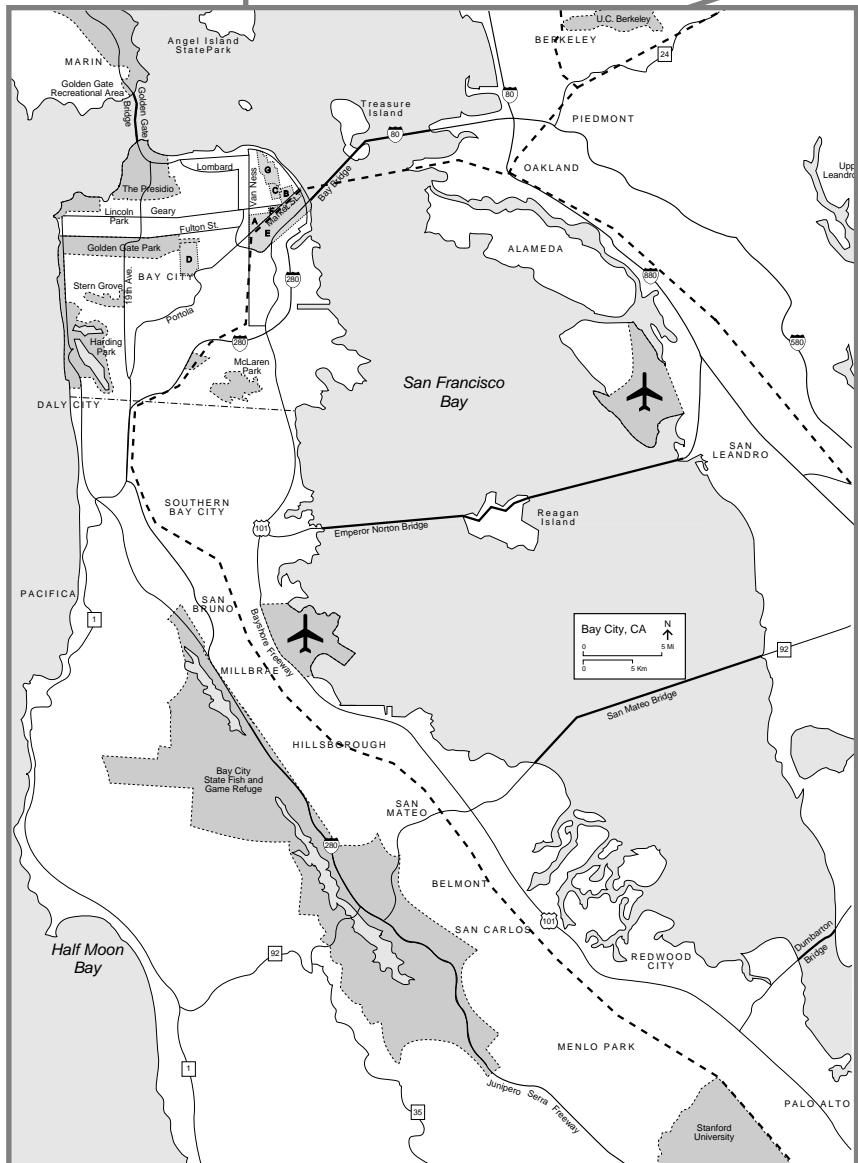
MUNI

The Bay City Municipal Railway (MUNI) is a network of over 130 bus routes. Formed after the 1995 earthquake from San Francisco's MUNI System, Alameda County (AC) Transit, and the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) bus services, MUNI now covers the entire area with a comprehensive series of bus and streetcar routes.

The MUNI system is maintained by passenger fares and a one-percent sales tax on all purchases within Bay City. These revenues have allowed MUNI to aggressively expand its services.

MUNI fares range from between \$1 for in-zone transit to as much as \$4 for multi-zone trips. A \$60 monthly "Fast Pass" is also available that allows unlimited trips. Although considerably cheaper than BART, MUNI trips are much slower.

Most MUNI buses have bicycle carriers on the front or back of the vehicle. Bicycles are accepted on a first come, first served basis. As with BART, no permit is required.



TAXIS

Bay City has more than a half dozen different taxi services, each with its own fleet of cabs. While they are more expensive than public transportation, taxis do have the advantage of providing door-to-door service.

AREA MAPS KEY	
	BART Route
	BART Station
	Major Street
	Highway

PRIVATE VEHICLES

There is an extensive system of freeways throughout Bay City that make for easy access and speedy trips during non-commute hours. Highways 80, 92, 101, 280, and 880 make up the backbone of this network.

Drivers should be warned, however, that traffic congestion continues to be a major problem for Bay City. The commute hours now extend from 6:30 am to 10:00 am and from 3:30 pm to 7:00 pm. During these times, the major freeways are packed with vehicles, and traffic moves at a virtual crawl.



NORTH BAY CITY

What's known today as North Bay City is most of what used to be known as San Francisco proper. It's the urban area covering the peninsula from its northern tip down to about McLaren Park and the Pit (depending on who you ask; some would say the Pit's in Mid-Bay). It got its start as the Mission San Francisco de Asis, founded by the Spanish in 1776. A village named Yerba Buena ("good herb") sprang up on the other side of the peninsula a few years after that. When Mexico separated from Spain in 1821, California (and thus the Bay City area) became Mexican possessions.

That only lasted until 1846, however, when John Fremont's Bear Flag Revolt and the Mexican-American War led to the conquest of California by the United States. Yerba Buena was renamed San Francisco the next year—just in time for the California gold rush. San Francisco, and its Barbary Coast district in particular, became known as wild dens of sin and crime as "49ers" poured in, hoping to hit it big in the gold fields of northern California. However, vigilante squads cleaned out the worst areas, and by the end of the 1860s things were calmer. (Historians have drawn sociological parallels between the vigilante activity of that time and the presence of so many super-heroes in Bay City today, and cite this as one reason why the paranormal activity in the city is so extensive.) San Francisco passed into a gentler period in which it became a bustling commercial city and center of Victorian-era culture. The completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, which thousands of Chinese laborers came to this country to work on (establishing San Francisco's Chinatown as well), helped this process considerably.

In 1906 an earthquake measuring 8.5 on the Richter scale struck San Francisco, starting fires that lasted three days. About eighty percent of the buildings in the city were destroyed. Over 3,000 people were killed, according to some estimates. The survivors rolled up their sleeves and went to work rebuilding. The city

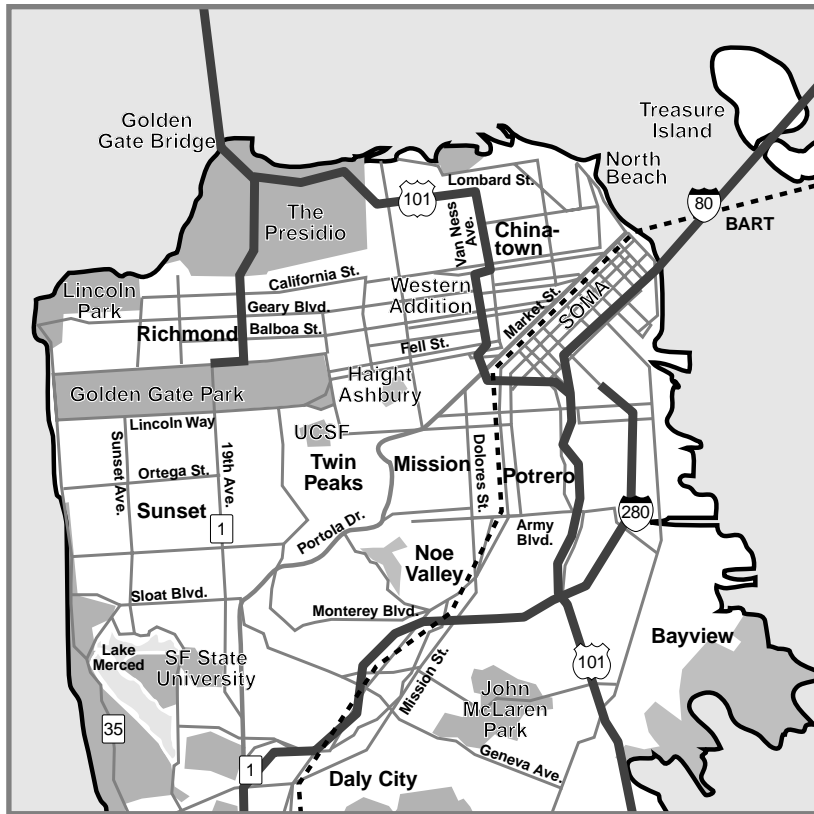
had returned to its former size by about 1915, though much rebuilding continued even after that. In that year, it hosted the Pan-Pacific Exposition to celebrate both its own revival and the opening of the Panama Canal. San Francisco became America's gateway to the Pacific Rim, and an even more important commercial center than before. Thus, it played a crucial role in World War II, when the Sausalito shipyards built a ship a day in furtherance of the war effort. San Francisco's stature as a city of international

repute was illustrated in 1945, when it hosted the conference that created the United Nations.

Post-war San Francisco has perhaps become best known for its influence on American popular culture. Its coffeehouses, clubs, and back streets gave rise to the "Beat Generation" poets of the 1950s, such as Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, and the literary movements they created. In the turbulent 1960s, San Francisco was the center of many anti-war and civil rights demonstrations, and became a mecca for "Flower Power" hip-

pies and their music. Janis Joplin, the Jefferson Airplane, and the Grateful Dead all got their start in the area. Unfortunately, the music was accompanied by a substantial illegal drug culture; the manufacture/growing and use of LSD, marijuana, and other drugs became a problem which has lasted to this day.

San Francisco has also been an important center for paranormal and superhuman activity since the 1930s. Beginning with masked vigilantes such as the Laughing Man (whose name came from the eerie, mirthless chuckle he emitted when fighting crime) and Gallows (a vicious adventurer known for his habit of hanging criminals from light poles), San Francisco soon had a significant population of "costumed crime fighters" (as the papers of the day called them). The city's first true superhuman, the Golden Eagle, appeared in 1940—just in time to assist with the war effort and prevent Japanese spies from wreaking havoc in the Bay Area.



San Francisco soon developed a reputation as a hotbed for superhuman activity. The world's first team of paranormals, the Prometheans, was formed in San Francisco in 1964. However, there were too many super-villains operating in the area for just one super-team to handle. A second team, the Champions, formed in 1967, initially to handle the threat of VIPER, whose existence had just been uncovered. The two teams' first encounter resulted, predictably, in a fight—a battle which was won by the Champions, much to the chagrin of the more experienced Prometheans. However, the two teams soon became allies rather than adversaries, and participated in numerous adventures together despite their ever-changing rosters. Both teams soon became pop-culture icons as well as role-models and crusaders for justice.

The 1970s and 1980s are now regarded by many area historians as something of a "Golden Age" for Bay area super-humans. The Prometheans and the Champions were both strong and respected. Many independent heroes, such as Nightraven, contributed to their efforts in their own ways. Major super-villain schemes and crimes were thwarted time and again, sometimes by margins so narrow that the truth was kept from the citizens to prevent them from panicking. Super-heroes were important, trusted, public icons, despite the scandals that rocked the superhuman world every year or two and created rifts between the Champions and organizations such as the Guard and UNTIL. The heroes' stellar performance during the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989 and the Oakland fires of 1992, during which they saved countless lives and millions of dollars' worth of property, earned them acclaim from everyone.

This golden period came to an end in 1995, when the San Andreas earthquake hit on January 12 and leveled much of San Francisco and the surrounding cities of the Bay area. None of the city's heroes were able to predict, much less prevent, this tragedy. The Prometheans, who later claimed to have been in another dimension fighting someone or something called the Shadow Between Worlds, were not available to help with disaster control, and the Champions's efforts to halt looting only led to more destruction—and to an opportunity for VIPER to steal some valuable technological items from the Wilder Institute. The Prometheans, the Champions, and super-heroes in general were lambasted in the press, but managed to regain some of the lost goodwill by helping out with quake relief and rebuilding efforts.

The several municipal governments on the peninsula quickly established the Bay Area Cities Emergency Relief Council (BAC-ERC) to coordinate quake relief, communicate with the federal government regarding aid, and begin rebuilding. The Council was made up of all the mayors of the cities, including Bobby Greene, then Mayor of San Francisco. Greene floated the suggestion that the various cities should take this opportunity to rebuild themselves as one city, thereby eliminating numerous bureaucratic hassles and improving life for the citizens of the area. After considerable discussion and debate, his proposal was accepted. On January 18, 1997, San Francisco and its neighboring communities

were reincorporated as Bay City, with Greene as Bay City's first mayor. He soon began a program of consolidation of municipal offices and resources which has streamlined and improved local government, but at the cost of angering many public employees and their families.

Bay City barely had time to recover from the San Andreas quake when the Proprietor War and the resulting Wildstrike hit. Almost overnight the city's physical and superhuman landscape changed. A vast Pit opened up in McLaren Park. Candlestick Park was ripped from the ground and thrown out to sea. A cave-in revealed the Caverns near Westbrook. And virtually all of the city's super-humans, including the Prometheans, the Champions, and the young heroes of the Arcadian Academy, died while fighting the Proprietor. Only Marksman of the Champions managed to survive to bring Bay City the story of what had happened to Dove, Orchid, and his other teammates. The city grieved for its heroes, and wondered what would happen, since, Murphy's Law being what it is, far more villains than heroes survived the War.

Fortunately for Bay City, new heroes arose to answer the challenges of the New Millennium. Quantum, who had worked with the team several times but had refused offers of membership for personal reasons, approached Marksman about using the name, team base, and equipment. Marksman, not wanting to see the Champions tradition snuffed out by the Proprietor, agreed to her request. Quantum hired support personnel and put out the word that she was forming a new team. Many of the new super-humans that had been created by the Wildstrike or related events applied, but few were able to pass Quantum's rigorous testing and membership qualifications. Eventually she was able to recruit Behemoth, Seeker, Solitaire, and Defender, and the New Champions—today known simply as the Champions—was formed. Since then they have been instrumental in carrying on the fight for justice and truth that their predecessors began.

Nor did the Arcadian Academy close its doors. Despite the deaths of the entire original class, Donald Henderson chose to carry on, hoping to train the next group of young heroes well enough to keep them from suffering the fate of their older comrades. So far he seems to be succeeding, but only time will tell.

Today Bay City is a thriving metropolis of nearly three million souls. Its government, run by Mayor Bobby Greene, runs efficiently and, some would say, well—though more would say that Greene wields entirely too much personal power. (comparisons to 1960s Chicago and Richard Daley are often made). It is home to numerous institutions of higher learning, advanced research institutes, museums, cultural centers, and other attractions that make it one of the best-loved cities in the world. Despite the problem of super-villain crimes committed by the likes of VIPER, the Masters of Fortune, Black Paladin, the Scions of Caine, and even Eurostar, it is well-protected by its new Champions and other heroes, such as Crusader and Speedster. Heaven only knows what the New Millennium will bring, but whatever comes along, Bay City is ready for it.

THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT

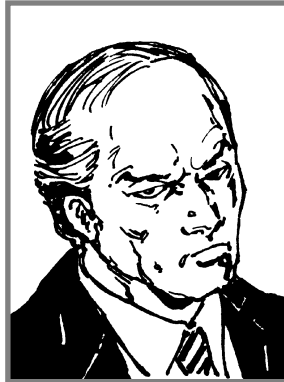
The Financial District is the heart of Bay City's business community. Every day millions, if not billions, of dollars pass through its banks and brokerages in electronic and paper transactions. Corporate executives, stockbrokers, commodities dealers, and mergers and acquisitions specialists abound, accompanied by the accountants, consultants, lawyers, and marketing wonks who circle them like flies at a picnic.

The Financial District is located in the north-central part of downtown Bay City. It straddles Market Street, and is bounded (roughly) by the bay, Howard Street, Third Street, Kearny Street, and Jackson Street. It is home to countless businesses from small to large, but is dominated by the so-called "Big Nine": Bank of America; Bechtel (an engineering and construction firm); Chevron (oil); Henderson International; Levi Strauss; Pacific Gas & Electric; Pacific Telesis (communications); PanStar; and Transamerica (insurance). Approximately 180,000 people are employed in the offices here.

The major landmarks in the Financial District are the Bank of America Building, the PanStar Building, and, most importantly, the Transamerica Building, a white structure shaped like a thin pyramid or obelisk. At 853 feet, this building, completed in 1971, is the tallest in the city. However, the top 212 feet are simply a spire containing mechanical equipment (a possible target for technology-oriented villains). A better view of the city can be had from the Carnelian Room, a cocktail lounge on the 52nd floor of the Bank of America Building.

Also of note is the nearby Embarcadero Center, an office park containing four high-rise buildings and the Hyatt Regency hotel. The first three tiers of each of these towers are occupied by shops, and the rest of them by offices of various kinds. Gamemasters looking for a good scene for a battle or chase can find it here.

One of the most interesting customs of the Financial District is performed on the last business day of each year. On that day, office workers throw calendar pages out of their windows, creating a chronological confetti that covers the sidewalks for days. Of course, these are only blank calendar pages, especially purchased for the purpose—but suppose some executive accidentally threw out his real calendar and a super-villain got ahold of it . . .



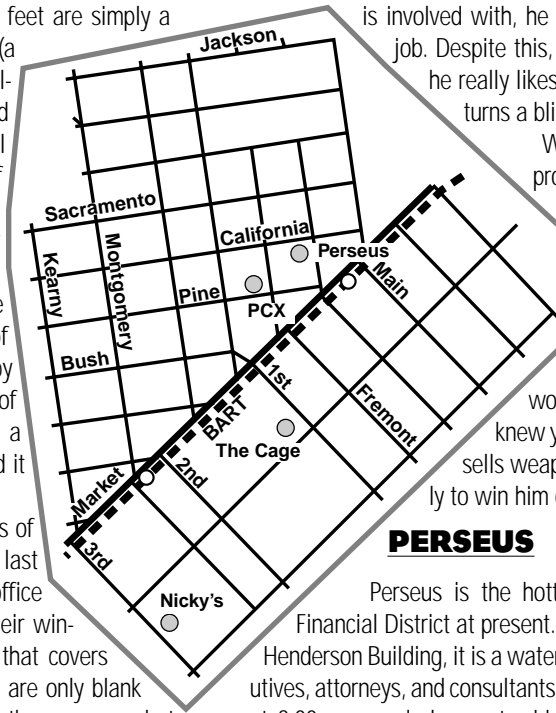
JEFFREY WICKERSHAM

Jeffrey Wickersham is Chief Financial Officer for PanStar, and is based in the megacorporation's downtown Bay City headquarters. He began his employment with PanStar three years ago. PanStar offered him so much money that he was unable to turn down the job, despite some of the rumors of unsavory

PanStar practices he had heard.

Now part of him wishes he had listened. Having learned about how PanStar does business, and some of the "projects" it is involved with, he regrets having left his previous job. Despite this, he is good at rationalizing, and he really likes the money he is making, so he turns a blind eye to PanStar's conduct.

Wickersham is very loving and protective of his family. Anyone who threatens them will immediately become his enemy. On the other hand, anyone who uses his daughters to show him that he is not doing the "right thing" ("How would your children feel if they knew you worked for a corporation that sells weapons to terrorists?") is more likely to win him over.



PERSEUS

Perseus is the hottest bar/cocktail lounge in the Financial District at present. Located on the fifth floor of the Henderson Building, it is a watering-hole that caters to the executives, attorneys, and consultants that work in the district. It opens at 3:00 p.m. and closes at midnight. Every afternoon after the offices close the place is packed with businesspeople unwinding after their long, hard days. Stock closings, percentage deals, and mergers are the topics of conversation; someone with good ears and a fair bit of knowledge about the business world could pick up juicy tidbits of gossip and the occasional stock tip by eavesdropping.

Those who lack the ears or the knowledge can turn to Art Vogelmann, the head bartender at Perseus. Art has worked at several bars in the District, and is a well-known fixture of the business leisure scene. He is a good source of information, provided that characters can somehow win his trust.

CHINATOWN

Wedge in between the Financial District and Civic Center area to the south, and North Beach and Fisherman's Wharf to the north, Chinatown is usually entered by tourists through the "Dragon Gates" on Grant Avenue at Bush. It was founded by Chinese immigrants who came to "Kam Saan" ("Mountain of Gold," as they knew California) to work on the Transcontinental Railroad and make their fortunes. Today it is an ethnic neighborhood with about 20,000 residents, almost all of them of Asian descent. It has its own newspapers, banks, and chamber of commerce.

On the main streets, heroes are going to find shops catering to tourists, but off the beaten paths, on the "Chinatown Alleys" and other sidestreets, they are more likely to find the "traditional" Chinatown they're seeking—fine restaurants, herbalists' shops, and the like. Characters of mystic bent are particularly likely to find things to interest them in some of the small "antique shops."

Life in Chinatown is controlled by a welter of associations and organizations—family associations (to which belong all persons with a particular last name), the Chinese Benevolent Association, and tongs. The latter are merchants' and workers' associations primarily, but some of them, and some of their members, control the Chinatown underworld. They sell drugs, run prostitution rings, extort protection money from merchants, and operate illegal gambling dens. The tongs' wills are enforced by street gangs of Chinese youth whom they control. The main criminal tongs at present in Bay City's Chinatown are the Lo Sing and the Sam Ong (with its feared "Fat Bamboo" gang). According to some surveys, as many as half of Chinatown's merchants pay some form of "tea money" to one or both tongs. The tongs also wield a certain amount of criminal power in the city as a whole.

However, Chinatown is not left to the mercy of the tongs and their gangs. Two super-heroes, Hong Hua Long ("Red Flower Dragon"), a female martial artist with powers of flight and resistance to damage, and Yan Ying ("Shadow Swallow", who has sonic powers, patrol the streets and try to keep the violence and extortion to a minimum.



CHEN HSU

Chen Hsu is an elderly Chinese gentleman who talks, acts, and dresses in an "old-fashioned" manner that puzzles and annoys many of the younger Chinese residents of Chinatown, with their fast-paced, modern American lifestyles. He runs an antique shop that mysteriously seems to change locations with great frequency. It is said that if

you find it once, you won't find it in the same place another time.

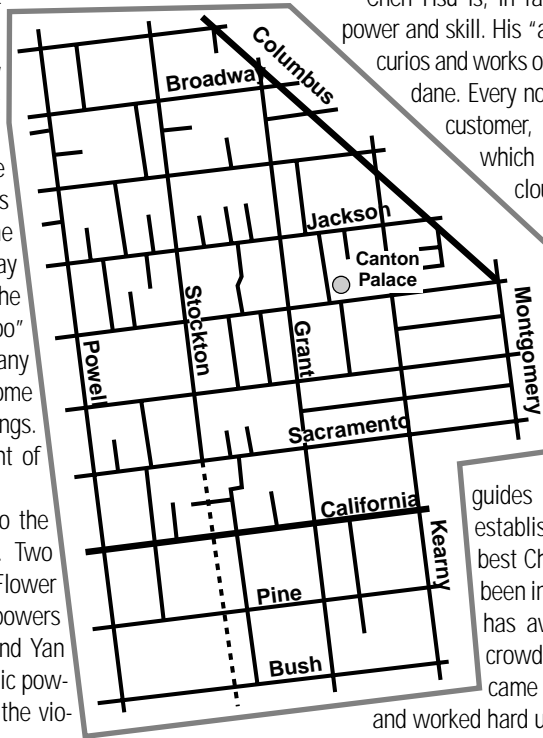
Chen Hsu is, in fact, a Chinese sorcerer of no small power and skill. His "antique shop" sells a wide variety of curios and works of art, most of which are entirely mundane. Every now and then, though, for a "special" customer, Chen will pull out fabulous items which he has for sale. Unicorn horn, red cloud herb, puppets that walk and talk under their own power, mystic artifacts of jade—all are for sale to he who is prepared to pay the price.

CANTON PALACE

Although it's hidden away down some stairs off of one of the Chinatown Alleys, and you won't find it in most of the restaurant guides which review Chinatown's eating establishments, Canton Palace is one of the best Chinese restaurants in the city. It has been in business for over twenty years, but has avoided excessive publicity and the crowds it would bring. Hong Jee Man came to American about thirty years ago,

and worked hard until he had saved enough money to open his own restaurant. He prefers to go on serving his neighbors and their friends and make a good, steady living at it, rather than putting up with tourists and gweilo yuppies who talk loudly and complain about everything.

Canton Palace has a medium-sized dining area decorated with Chinese art. On most days, about half of the tables will be in use; on Fridays and Saturdays, Chinatown's busiest days, the place is packed. The kitchen is slightly smaller than the dining area and is filled with chefs, their assistants, and various items of cookware and cutlery.



YAN YING

Mental 5 Combat 7 Physical 6 Move 7

SKILLS: Local Expert (Chinatown) 5; Professional (Singer) 5; Streetwise 4; Fighting 6; Martial Arts (Kung Fu)

POWERS: Sonic Multipower: 10d6 Energy Blast, 8d6 Killing Attack, 6d6 Sonic NND; Sonic Shield (24 KD/ 30 EKD Force Field), Superleap +15 m/y

HONG HUA LONG (RED FLOWER DRAGON)

Mental 6 Combat 8 Physical 7 Move 8

SKILLS: Expert (Chinese Legends & Lore: 5; Streetwise: 6; Expert (Chinatown): 6; Fighting: 7; Martial Arts (Kung Fu)

POWERS: Armor (20 KD/20 EKD), Flight 20 m/y

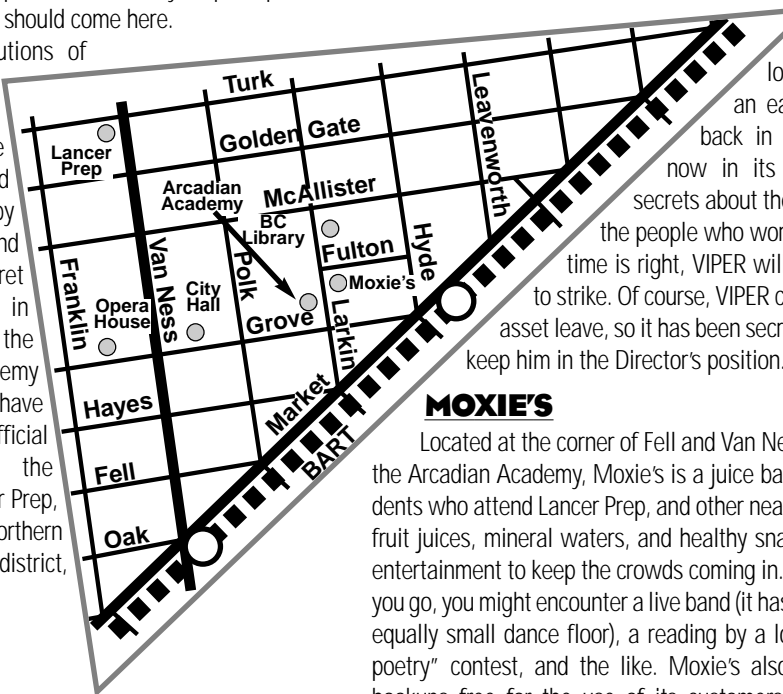
CIVIC CENTER

The Civic Center is the heart of the downtown area. Located west of the Financial District, east of Golden Gate Park, north of Haight-Ashbury, and south of the Presidio and Pacific Heights, it is bounded by Franklin Street, Market Street, and Turk Street. Numerous important buildings are located here, including City Hall, the Federal Building, the San Francisco Main Library (and the New Library right next to it), the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, Davies Symphony Hall, and United Nations Plaza.

The most important part of the Civic Center district is Civic Center Plaza, where City Hall and many other government buildings are located. The Civic Center area in general, and the Plaza in particular, were hard hit by the 1995 earthquake, and the Plaza was further damaged in a super-battle in which VIPER tried to steal certain government documents while the police were occupied with looting (the Champions stopped the raid). After the decision was made to create Bay City, Civic Center Plaza and its buildings were rebuilt, bigger and better than ever.

Another interesting location in the Civic Center district is the Japan Center. In the 1960s, some older Victorian buildings in an area which had been the heart of San Francisco's Japanese community for many decades were demolished. The Geary Expressway and Japan Center, a large shopping complex, were built. Japan Center is marked by a five-story cement "pagoda," and is filled with Japanese shops and restaurants. Heroes looking to make contact with the Japanese community, or perhaps seeking leads on yakuza activity, should come here.

Two academic institutions of interest are located in the Civic Center area. Of interest to super-heroes, is the Arcadian Academy, located in the quadrangle formed by Larkin, McAllister, Polk, and Grove Streets. Three secret entrances (as detailed in *Alliances*, pg. 23) allow the Arcadians to enter the Academy secretly, so that they do not have to walk right in through its official front door. Several of the Academy kids attend Lancer Prep, which is located in the northern part of the Civic Center district, almost in Pacific Heights.



HERBERT MCCOY

Herbert McCoy is the Physical Plant Director for the Civic Center Plaza. A gifted engineer, he is responsible for ensuring that all the buildings in the Plaza meet safety codes and function properly. He knows the buildings inside and out like the back of his hand.

However, for many years he has been disgruntled and angry. He thinks that his talents are being wasted working for Bay City. He sees the names of friends and classmates in engineering journals, and is bitter that he has not had the chance to build world-famous projects like they have. He's been stuck doing maintenance work and construction oversight. The city fathers are deliberately confining him to his Director's office and keeping him out of the limelight. Or at least, that's how he sees it.

Angry at being "overlooked," Herbert was an easy target for VIPER back in the mid-90s. He is now in its employ, passing it secrets about the Plaza buildings and the people who work in them. When the time is right, VIPER will use his information to strike. Of course, VIPER can't let such a useful asset leave, so it has been secretly pulling strings to keep him in the Director's position.

MOXIE'S

Located at the corner of Fell and Van Ness, right across from the Arcadian Academy, Moxie's is a juice bar catering to the students who attend Lancer Prep, and other nearby schools. It serves fruit juices, mineral waters, and healthy snacks. It also provides entertainment to keep the crowds coming in. Depending on when you go, you might encounter a live band (it has a small "stage" and equally small dance floor), a reading by a local author, a "quick poetry" contest, and the like. Moxie's also has three Internet hookups free for the use of its customers. Most of the time, though, there isn't a big event going on, it's just kids hanging out, having a good time.

Moxie's is secretly owned by Donald Henderson, for it serves a purpose for the Arcadian Academy. Located behind a "stack of crates" in the back room, near the entrances to the restrooms, is a secret passage leading directly into the Academy. All of the Arcadians have an electronic "key" to open the door.

THE TENDERLOIN

Pull out your map for a second. See that triangle between Market, Larkin, and O'Farrell Streets? They call that the Tenderloin. It's the worst area in northern Bay City. Rundown and grim even in the early 90s, it is even worse now, after the earthquake and the Wildstrike.

The Tenderloin is the "bad side" of town, equivalent in many ways to Boston's Combat Zone. It is the home of much of the vice and prostitution in Bay City. Smart folks don't go in there after dark, or if they do have to go, they don't go alone.

However, there are reasons to visit the Tenderloin—during the day, anyway. For example, there are many good restaurants there, including Vietnamese places opened by immigrants. There are also office buildings and some shopping, even if they're not the high-quality places you'll find elsewhere in the city. Just don't stay past nightfall if you visit any of them.

On the other hand, if it's sex or drugs you're looking for, the Tenderloin is the place for you. Everything from peep shows to adult bookstores to prostitutes can be had there, and just about any kind of drug—you name the party, they'll name the price. It's also got the highest crime rate in the city.

It's that high crime rate that attracts Bay City's vigilantes and supers many nights. Supers are relatively rare, since they've got the world to save and all that, but every now and then Seeker or Crusader or one of their pals will show up. You're more likely to encounter either or both of Bay City's most-feared vigilantes. The first is Nightraven, a black-cloaked mystery man with an impressive arsenal of martial arts maneuvers and equally impressive array of gadgets. The current Nightraven is clearly the second man to don that cowl; most suspect that he used to be the Rook, the first Nightraven's sidekick. The other is the Highwayman, who uses two custom-designed semi-automatic pistols which resemble flintlocks. Unlike Nightraven, the Highwayman is wanted by the police; he has killed more than one punk with those "flintlocks" of his. The potential victims he's saved, though, don't seem to care much about how violently he treats criminals.



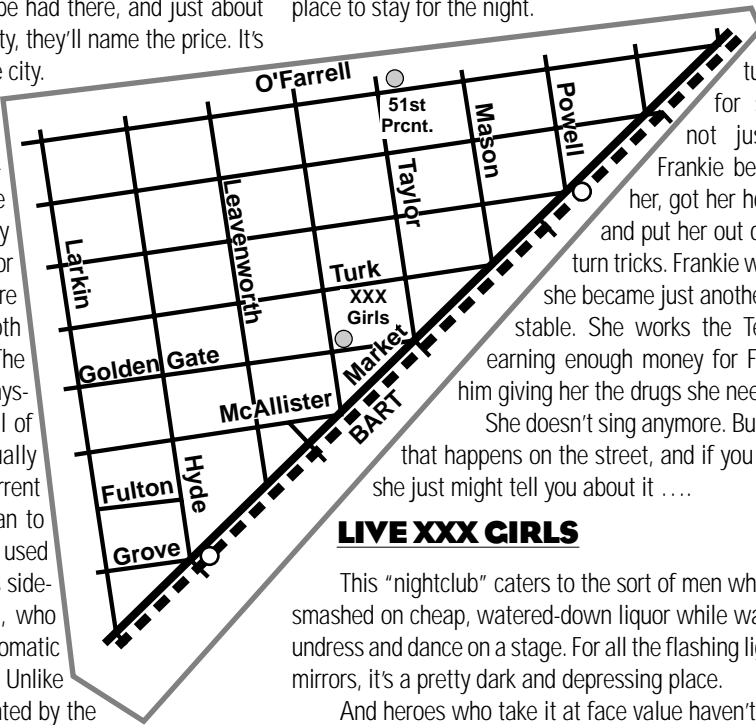
CANDY GREENE

She was going to become a singer. She remembers that.

Candy got off the bus from Dubuque, Iowa full of optimism. She was going to stay in Bay City for a couple days with some friends before heading down to L.A. to break into showbiz. But her friends weren't there to meet her, for some reason. She waited for several hours. Finally this nice-looking man, Frankie was his name, offered to give her a place to stay for the night.

It turned out to be for several years, not just the night. Frankie beat her, abused her, got her hooked on coke, and put her out on the street to turn tricks. Frankie was a pimp, and she became just another hooker in his stable. She works the Tenderloin now, earning enough money for Frankie to keep him giving her the drugs she needs.

She doesn't sing anymore. But she sees a lot that happens on the street, and if you treat her right, she just might tell you about it . . .



LIVE XXX GIRLS

This "nightclub" caters to the sort of men who enjoy getting smashed on cheap, watered-down liquor while watching women undress and dance on a stage. For all the flashing lights, neon, and mirrors, it's a pretty dark and depressing place.

And heroes who take it at face value haven't even begun to plumb the depths of that darkness. The owner, Jerry Castigliano, isn't satisfied with the money he makes selling a dollar's worth of booze for five bucks. He wants more. So in the back, where only "special" customers are allowed, he sells drugs and kiddie porn. He has a very select clientele—unless he recognizes you, or you have a rock-solid reference from someone he knows, there's no way he'll admit to any of this. He's got his "goods" hidden pretty well, behind a false panel in the back of the storage room, covered up by some old liquor crates.

THE HIGHWAYMAN

Mental 7 Combat 8 Physical 6 Move 7

SKILLS: Expert (Bay City) 4; Streetwise 8; Expert (Bay City Underworld) 8, Fighting 4, Firearms: 6, Martial Arts (Karate)

EQUIPMENT: Armored Costume (26 KD/EKD), "Flintlocks" (5d6 Ranged Killing Attack, 12 shots; he carries two of them.)

NIGHTRAVEN

Mental 6 Combat 8 Physical 7 Move 8

SKILLS: Expert (Bay City) 5; Streetwise 7; Expert (Bay City Underworld) 6, Fighting 6, Martial Arts (Karate)

EQUIPMENT: Armored Costume (24 KD/EKD), Glider Cloak (10 m/y Gliding), Swingline (20 m/y Swinging), Utility Belt (10 Power Point Power Pool for various weapons & gadgets)

HAIGHT-ASHBURY

Haight-Ashbury—the words themselves conjure up an entire cultural iconography. The Summer of Love. Psychedelica. The Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, acid rock. LSD. Flower Power. Hippies.

1967's "Summer of Love" brought the world's attention and thousands of young hippies to the area. They hung out, listened to music, and took drugs. But this culture also attracted violent criminals, the mentally deranged, and other such folk, bringing the hippie lifestyle into disrepute. That, and drug addiction, wiped out a lot of the hippie culture by the early 1970s. The neighborhood began spiraling downward into decay. It was the hippies' worst enemy—capitalism—that rescued Haight-Ashbury. Land prices went up, and gays and yuppies moved into the neighborhood and revitalized it.

Most of the hippy influence is long gone now, although a few traces remain. Haight-Ashbury, located between Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, and the Twin Peaks, is filled with unusual cafes and restaurants, bookstores, record stores, head shops, New Age and occult stores, tattoo parlors, art and curio shops, and many other curious businesses. Many of the buildings are gaudily decorated, aping the tie-dye shirts associated with the district. Some of it is still genuine, but even more has been "yuppified" and set up for tourists to enjoy. Still, there's no denying that the street life is as colorful as the buildings themselves.

Characters of a philosophical or mystic bent will particularly enjoy the Haight. Anarchist bookstores, occult stores, and New Age crystal palaces abound. Seeking a particular rare herb or crystal? You can find it here. Always on the lookout for mystical tomes or arcane threats? There are a several shops you should check out. Persistent rumors in the mystical community maintain that both the Lodge and the Brotherhood Arcane have their fingers in the Haight-Ashbury pie and are jockeying for position.

Heroes and vigilantes don't hang out in Haight-Ashbury very much, despite the sometimes high crime rate. Nightraven or the Highwayman track drug rings back here occasionally. Solitaire is said to be a frequent customer at the cafes, bookstores, and occult shops. But other than that, the paranormal doesn't show up here much. The abnormal does, sure, but not the paranormal.



DYO

One of the best known, and most colorful, street people in Haight-Ashbury is known only as "Dyo." As you might guess from his name, he always wears tie-dyed clothing; on occasion, even his beard has been dyed with a psychedelic riot of colors.

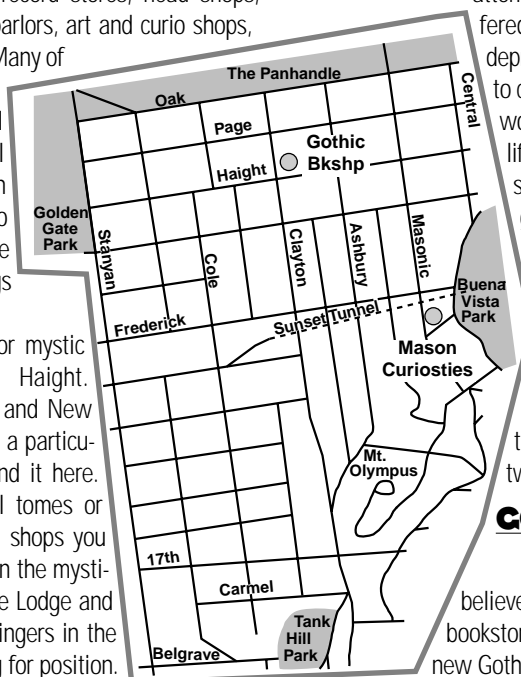
Most people assume Dyo's a left-over, burned-out hippie. This assumption, though understandable, is mistaken. Dyo's real name is Gerald Barnes. He was a corporate attorney in the early 1970s. However, he suffered from mental problems, particularly depression, and eventually became unable to cope with the pressures of the workaday world. He drifted out of his professional life and eventually found his way to the streets. His mental illness has progressed since then. He is able to look out for himself, but is paranoid, delusional, and sometimes frightening (though never violent, he sometimes shouts at people). Perhaps a hero with psychic powers will someday be able to put his mind to rights and learn about all the things he's seen and heard in the past twenty-some years.

GOTHIC BOOKSHOP

There are some who would have you believe that Lady Anne's is the only true occult bookstore in Bay City. Son Fraute, owner of the new Gothic Bookshop, will tell you otherwise.

Located on a small side street off of Haight Street, the New Gothic at first looks like a normal bookshop with an ordinary occult theme. It specializes in books dealing with Western occult practices, vampires, demonology, and like subjects. It also carries a wide variety of vampire-associated jewelry and "unlifestyle items."

But for those who seem to be true seekers of wisdom, Fraute will bring forth a series of books and other items which he claims possess genuine arcane lore and power—he himself is a mage, of course. Whether he tells truth, none can say. There are rumors that the Brotherhood Arcane has investigated his claims, but if so, their conclusions are unknown.



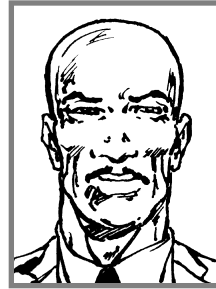
SOMA

SoMa—"south of Market," meaning roughly the rectangular area between Market and King Streets, bordered on either end by the bay and Van Ness Street—got its start in the nineteenth century as home to factories, machine shops, slums, and the working class in general. It was destroyed by the 1906 earthquake, but was quickly rebuilt. It continued to be "the wrong side of the tracks," since to its mix of working class and poor whites were added immigrants from all over the world.

However, SoMa's proximity to the Financial District ensured that it would not remain a slum for very long. In the 1950s the city began plans to construct a convention center there. After court battles with residents and other snags were resolved, Yerba Buena Center was built. It eventually included Yerba Buena Theater, Yerba Buena Gardens, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the San Francisco Marriott, and the Moscone Center (a convention center named for Mayor George Moscone, who was assassinated in 1978).

Although SoMa still has its share of warehouses and industrial centers—including the main offices of Comp-Tronics and Psi-Net—it has become a trendy area sometimes compared to London's SOHO district. It is full of clubs and other entertainment venues. A lot of the old warehouses have been turned into loft apartments, clubs, art galleries, and the like. SoMa is also home to some of the best music clubs in the city, the birthplaces of much of the "San Francisco sound."

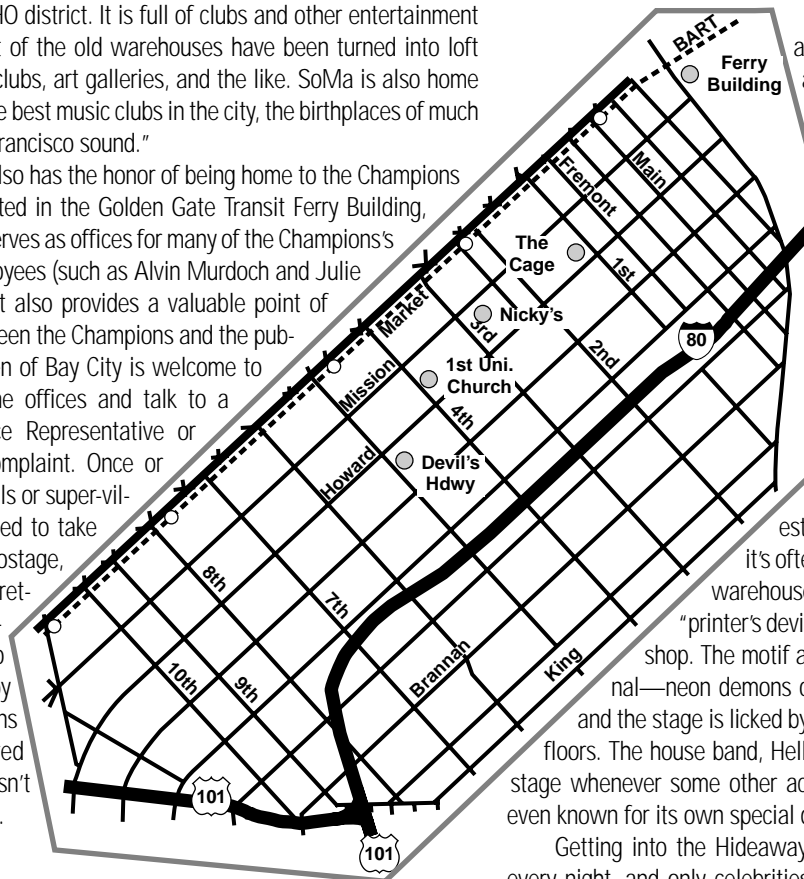
SoMa also has the honor of being home to the Champions Offices. Located in the Golden Gate Transit Ferry Building, this facility serves as offices for many of the Champions' civilian employees (such as Alvin Murdoch and Julie Rutherford). It also provides a valuable point of contact between the Champions and the public. Any citizen of Bay City is welcome to come into the offices and talk to a Public Service Representative or register a complaint. Once or twice criminals or super-villains have tried to take the offices hostage, but the swift retribution merited out to such idiots by the Champions has ensured that this doesn't happen often.



JERRY NEUBOLDT

Jerry Neuboldt is the receptionist for the Champions office in the Golden Gate Transit Ferry Building. His job duties include answering the phone, greeting visitors, and light clerical work.

Since Jerry is the first person that most visitors see when they walk into the office, he is usually the employee who has to make a good first impression, and he takes this responsibility seriously. He always tries to be calm, courteous, and professional, even in the face of some of the deranged individuals that show up from time to time not to mention the occasional super-villain attack!



Although Jerry appears to be a delicate young man, in fact he's anything but. He has received firearms and self-defense training at the Police Academy (supplemented by Seeker), and is also a certified Emergency Medical Technician. Right next to the alarm button underneath his desk is a .40 caliber handgun, and he won't hesitate to use it if he has to.

THE DEVIL'S HIDEAWAY

One of this season's trendiest SoMa clubs, "the Hideaway," as it's often known, is built in a former print warehouse. Its name is a pun on the term, "printer's devil," meaning an assistant in a print shop. The motif and decor tend towards the infernal—neon demons on the walls leer out at dancers, and the stage is licked by flames painted on the walls and floors. The house band, Hell's Bells, can usually be found on stage whenever some other act hasn't been hired. The club is even known for its own special drink, the Devil's Brew.

Getting into the Hideaway is tough—there are long lines every night, and only celebrities and "somebodies" are guaranteed to be able to jump the line. Head bouncer Andy "Troll" Abromowitz makes sure that those in line stay in line, if you know what I mean.

GOLDEN GATE PARK

Running from the Great Highway to Stanyan Street, and Fulton Street to Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park is Bay City's answer to Manhattan's Central Park. This 1,017-acre park got its start in the 1870s. It was originally dubbed "The Great Sand Park," since the land set aside for it was extremely sandy. Just holding the sand in place was a challenge for the initial builders; special plants imported from Europe did the trick.

From 1887 until 1943, John McLaren served as Superintendent of Parks for San Francisco. He devoted his life to improving Golden Gate Park and the other city parks, and was well-loved by the city for it. Under his leadership, Golden Gate Park grew and prospered. Cable car lines and other means of transportation were extended out to the Park so that the middle class and poor could enjoy it as much as the rich. More athletic facilities were built, and advanced horticultural techniques and careful care rendered the Park beautiful.

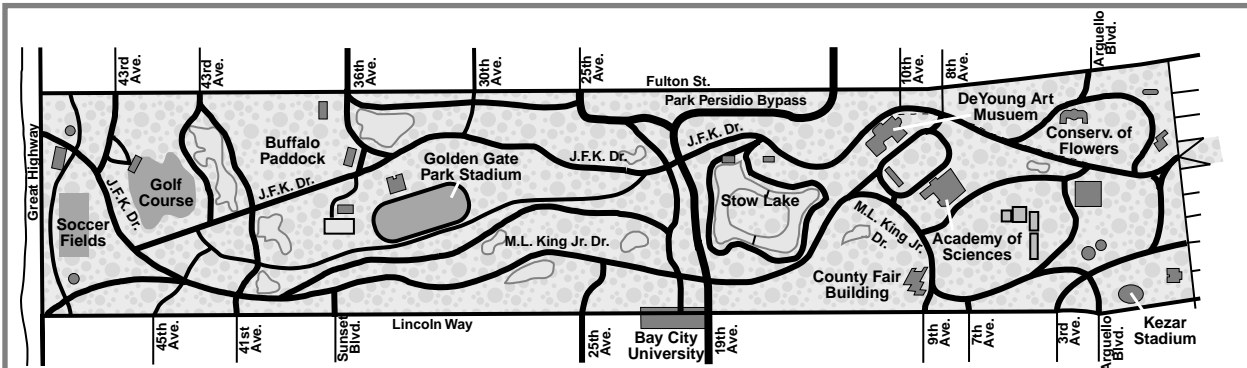
Since the 1960s, when it was the scene of giant rock concerts to which tens of thousands of hippies thronged, the Park has declined somewhat. Despite the recent passage of a \$76 million bond issue for park improvements, much of Golden Gate Park suffers from too much traffic, too many people, and too few groundskeepers and maintenance staff persons. Squatters and the homeless camp in the Park—something that didn't even occur during the Great Depression. It is no longer the paradise it once was.



JAMES FRANCIS FINCH

James Francis Finch is the Assistant Superintendent of Parks for Bay City. Since his boss is often involved in political issues, he devotes most of his attention to Park maintenance affairs. He is an ardent defender of the Park who would like to see most Park roads closed to outside traffic, an improvement in the groundskeeping budget, and the campers thrown out for good. He has been continually frustrated on these counts.

What Finch does not know is that there are sinister forces in the city which are moving against him. Certain city councilmen, who are on VIPER's payroll, would like to see more roads run through the Park, since VIPER-owned grading and construction firms would get the work (and could put a few "surprises" in place that might benefit VIPER in the future). Several Park employees are working with these councilmen. If Finch finds out about it, he will try to deal with it himself if he can.



Currently, the Park's facilities include the Shakespeare Garden, the Japanese Tea Garden (a picturesque place for meeting that yakuza contact), the California Academy of Sciences (see below), the de Young Memorial Museum and Asian Art Museum, the Children's Playground, all kinds of athletic facilities (even a golf course and a polo ground), a buffalo paddock, and nearly a dozen lakes. It's said to be a favorite place of relaxation for a number of super-humans, including Quantum, Solitaire, Lady Blue, and the kids of the Arcadian Academy.

On the outskirts of the Park there is housing for students at Bay City University. This small "university town" features lots of businesses and clubs catering to the students.

M. H. DE YOUNG MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND ASIAN ART MUSEUM

These two conjoined museums contain some of the largest and most fascinating collections of art in Bay City. The de Young was opened in 1919 using profits from the Midwinter Fair promoted by the de Young brothers in their newspaper. Its collection concentrates on American, Precolumbian, African, and Oceanic art. The displays are arranged by topic or culture in galleries around a central area, the Hearst Court.

The Asian Art Museum was built in 1965. Its core collection is the famous Avery Brundage collection of Asian art. It is two stories tall. Chinese art, including a huge collection of jade objects, occupies the entire first floor (the Brundage collection was nearly half Chinese). The second floor is devoted to other Asian cultures, including Japan, Tibet, and India.

The exhibits at the de Young are changed often, for the collections are so large that there isn't room to show even a majority of any of them.

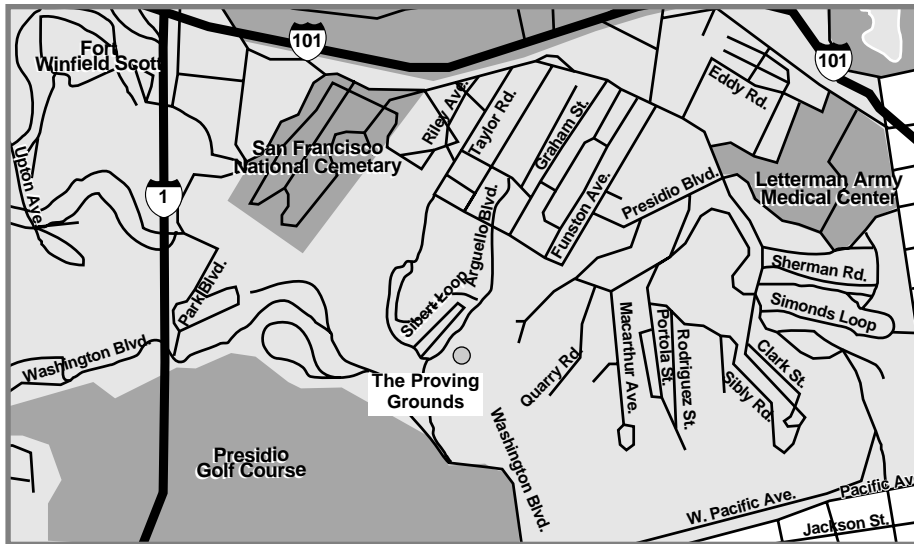
THE PRESIDIO

The Presidio, the oldest military post in the United States, was founded in 1776 by the Spanish (presidio means "fortress"). In 1822, it became part of Mexico, but was abandoned in 1835. In 1847, during the Mexican-American War, it was occupied by the Americans, who have retained possession of it ever since. Frame buildings were gradually replaced with sturdier structures. The Presidio played an important part in the Indian Wars and the Spanish-American War (when a hospital was built for soldiers who were injured or caught diseases in the Philippines).

During World War II, the Presidio's defenses, which had lain dormant, were reactivated, and the base itself was closed to the public. It became the Pacific Point of Embarkation for the war with the Japanese. After World War II the Presidio served mainly as an administrative base and medical facility, though Nike missiles were placed there in the 1950s.

In 1972, much of the northern part of the Presidio, including Fort Point, the earthwork batteries, and the shoreline was turned into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). From 1993 until 1996, the Army shut down all of its operations at the Presidio, and then the entire grounds became part of the GGNRA. The only part of it which remains devoted to any quasi-military purpose is the Proving Grounds (see below).

The Presidio is 1,480 acres in size, and has 70 miles of roads within its boundaries (including the Golden Gate Bridge Freeway). In addition to the military structures which visitors can tour, such as Fort Point (a Civil War-era brick fortress in the shadow of the Golden Gate Bridge), there are many other natural and man-made features to enjoy (including a golf course). Of particular note is the Palace of Fine Arts and the Exploratorium. The Palace, the only building remaining from the 1915 Pan-Pacific Exposition, was designed in a Neo-Classical style and features a large Rotunda; movie scenes are sometimes filmed here. The Exploratorium is a science museum featuring hundreds of hands-on displays and exhibits. A resourceful gadgeteer could concoct all sorts of weapons and devices out of these "spare parts."



CAPTAIN ARTHUR TREBECK



Arthur Trebeck grew up in San Francisco. After a distinguished career as a Green Beret, he left the U.S. Army and joined the Guard. He has been with the Guard for about ten years now. He is currently in charge of the "Proving Grounds," the joint Guard-Odyssey Research Institute project to develop weapons and technology for the Guard.

Captain Trebeck feels a deep responsibility to the Guard and to Bay City to keep the Proving Grounds safe and secure. He is a stickler for strict security procedures and protocol—something of a martinet, really, if truth be told. However, so far his methods seem to have worked; there has never been a serious accident at, or successful assault upon, the facility. Furthermore, several important Guard weapon developments have occurred during his tenure.

Captain Trebeck has a home on the Presidio itself, where he lives with his wife and two sons. His house's security is almost as good as that of the Grounds!

(For Captain Trebeck, use the standard Guard Special Agent character sheet (*Alliances*, pg 8), add Local Expert: The Presidio and other Skills as desired.)

THE PROVING GROUNDS

Located in the south-central part of the Presidio, just east of the golf course, is the Proving Grounds, the joint Guard-ORI technology development project and testing facility. It consists of three buildings.

The first, four stories tall, is where weapons are developed and tested. It includes design labs, secure storage facilities, and areas where the weapons are test-fired.

The second building, three stories tall, is devoted to the development and testing of other types of technology which

is useful to the Guard, particularly restraint technology, body armor, and communications gear. The principal work on the GPE7 Guard Helmet was done at this facility. The third building, only one story tall, is an administrative center. Captain Trebeck's headquarters are located here. The security forces are also based here.

NORTH BEACH

North Beach is located more or less between Russian Hill, Chinatown, and the bay. Although it includes Fisherman's Wharf, it hasn't actually been a beach for over a century—the inlet between Russian Hill and Telegraph Hill was filled in, using, in part, derelict Gold Rush-era ships (and who knows what menaces an enterprising GM could pull out of there ...).

In its beginning, North Beach was home to many working-class Hispanic and Irish settlers, but also to many of the city's vice dens. Parts of it became known as the "Barbary Coast" for all the sin and debauchery that took place there. Gradually, however, Italians moved in, displacing the previous inhabitants and eventually creating Bay City's version of Little Italy. Some Italians soon dominated the city's fishing industry; others opened restaurants or started other businesses. The Italian-American character of North Beach is fading in the present day, as Chinese pour over from an overcrowded Chinatown into the neighborhood.

From the 1890s onward, North Beach also served as a haven for the city's bohemian literary society. In the 1950s, Beat Generation poets Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac lived here. City Lights Books and Vesuvio Cafe, two fixtures of the Beat era, are still around. Both of them are near "the Strip," an area of Broadway Street near Columbus Street where the first topless stage show was performed (June, 1964) and which still features several sex clubs and adult bookstores. These places are a faint echo of the days when strip joints, tattoo parlors, and all other manner of vice abounded but there's still a little of it.

Perhaps the best-known part of North Beach is Fisherman's Wharf, a popular tourist attraction. Many excellent restaurants and shops can be found there, such as the beautiful Ghirardelli Square, built on the site of the old chocolate factory. There are also several museums, including a Ripley's Believe It Or Not! Museum (Foxbat, take note). The Telegraph Hill neighborhood and Coit Tower are also a part of North Beach. Telegraph Hill started out as a working-class Irish neighborhood, but has since become a rather upscale address. The Lodge House for the Emerald Council is located in the Telegraph Hill district, for example and you know it's nothing but the best for those guys. On the top of Telegraph Hill is Coit Tower, a monument built by Lillie Hitchcock Coit. The Tower, completed in 1933, stands 210 feet tall; there is an observation platform at the top. The interior of the first floor is covered with frescoes which were painted as part of a WPA project during the Depression.



ABIGAILLE ALBRIGHT

Abigaille Albright, heir to the Albright candy fortune, is one of the bright lights of the Bay City social scene. From her lavish apartment in the Telegraph Hill neighborhood she presides over parties and soirees which are the toast of the local high society. Invitations to Albright parties are highly

sought after.

In addition to her social events, Albright spends a lot of her time doing charity work of one kind or another. She is a consummate fundraiser; indeed, many of her parties serve more than just a social purpose. She received the Bay City Woman of the Year award last year for her efforts on behalf of several organizations, including the Paranormal Disaster Relief Fund to which the Champions often contribute.

Among Albright's many hobbies is matchmaking. Although she herself has never married, she fancies herself good at matchmaking, and in fact she is. And who's a more eligible bachelor(ette) than a super-hero?

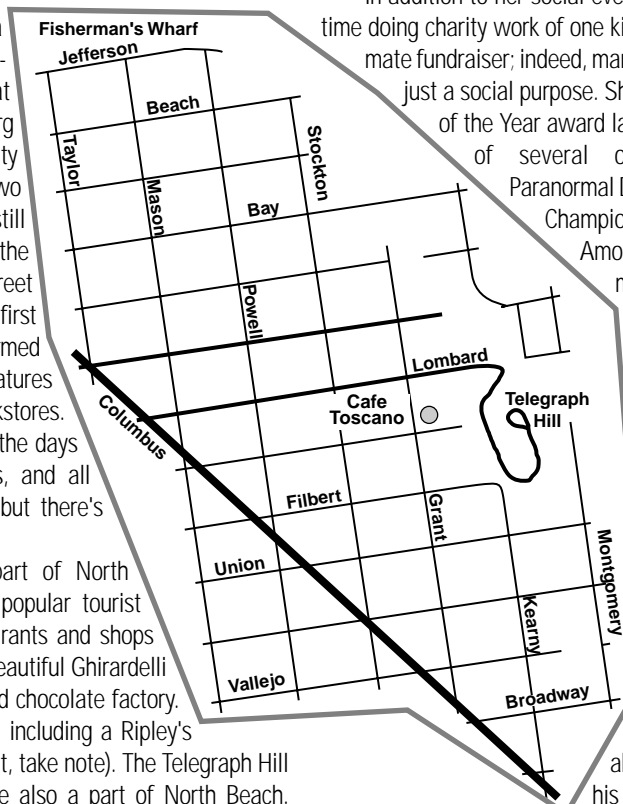
CAFE TOSCANO

This Italian cafe/grocery store has been in business since just after the 1906 earthquake. Founded by Louis (Luigi) Parminetti, it quickly developed a reputation for excellent Italian food at reasonable prices. Louis passed it on to his son Joe (Giuseppe), who was the owner during the "beat" period

when it became a hangout for the likes of Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Ferlinghetti. Joe in turn gave Toscano to his son Albert, who still runs it today.

"Big Al" Parminetti prides himself on the quality of the food he serves and the dining experiences he creates, and it shows. The place is so popular reservations have to be made a month in advance unless, of course, you're a friend of Al's, or some big celebrity or something, in which case he might just be able to find you a table.

Al is grooming his son Carl to take over the restaurant. Carl, who dreams of being an artist, isn't particularly pleased about this.



THE CASTRO/NOE VALLEY

Castro Street. The very words are infamous in some circles, for this area south of the Market Street/Seventeenth Street intersection is the center of Bay City's prominent gay culture. The area, named after a Mexican rancher, got a sleepy start, but took off after 1887, when the cable car lines finally reached it. German, Scandinavian, and Irish immigrants moved in. A building boom in the 1920s improved the neighborhood even more, but after that it entered a period of quiet. This lasted until the restoration period in the 1970s which spruced up and improved the Castro and Noe Valley considerably.

It was during this time and into the 1980s that the Castro became a haven for the city's increasingly vocal gay community (which presently is estimated to be 17% of the population of North Bay City, or about 115,000 people). The intersection of Castro and Eighteenth was called "the Gayest Four Corners in the World." Parties and outrageous behavior were often the norm—but all of this faded somewhat when AIDS reared its ugly head. The Castro, although still vibrant and alive, is not quite the wild place it was twenty years ago.

However, it hasn't lost all of its zest just yet. In addition to the usual parties and other activities that go on throughout the year, the Castro has several annual events that Bay City looks forward to. First, on the last Sunday of June, there is the Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parade, one of the biggest celebrations in the city. A couple months after that, on the last Sunday in September, is the Folsom Street Fair, where wild clothing and conduct are the norm. One week later is the Castro Street Fair, which is a little more restrained. Lastly, every November 27, there is a candlelight walk from the Castro to City Hall to commemorate the assassinations of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk (Milk was the first openly gay politician in the city).

Noe Valley, just over the hill from Castro Street, has become the home of many professional families. Nestled up against the Twin Peaks, it is a pleasant residential neighborhood that attracts many people these days. Who knows, perhaps a super or two has a house there.



RAFAELA SANCHEZ

Rafaela Sanchez is one of the best known gay and lesbian activists in Bay City. Head of the Speak Up Foundation, which she created in 1983 to publicize issues of importance to the gay community, Sanchez tirelessly lobbies to improve the lot of the city's homosexuals. Since she is one of the most prominent such activists in a city where her "constituency" represents, by some estimates, 20-25% of the voters, she is often able to get the ears of politicians. Sanchez has used her leverage in the past

to obtain increased AIDS research funding, civic improvements in the Castro, and money for AIDS outreach programs to the homeless, among other things.

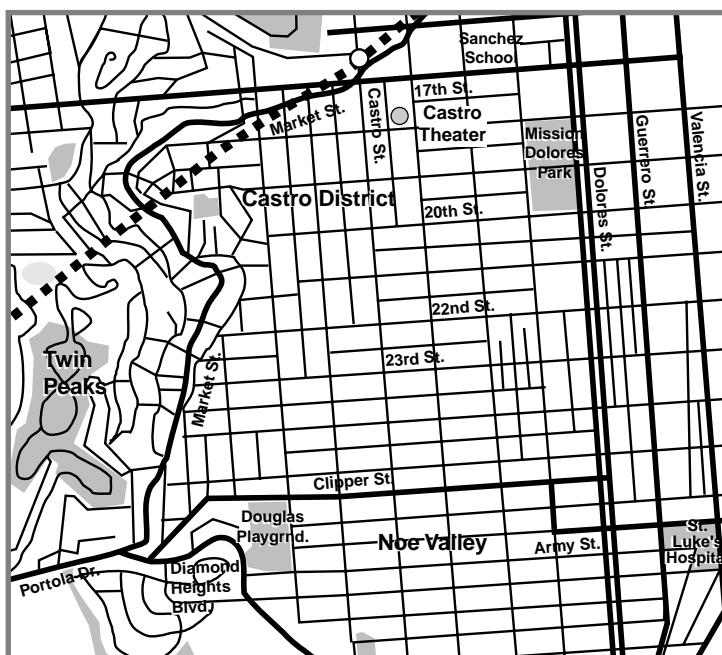
Sanchez and her partner, Linda Hammill, are the parents of two children, Lydia and Louis. This arrangement has brought Sanchez under considerable fire from conservative groups and their allies. She ignores it as much as possible and tries to raise her kids in the best way she can.

THE CASTRO THEATER

Located on Castro Street between Seventeenth and Eighteenth Streets, the Castro Theater was built in 1922 in an extravagant Art Deco/Spanish Renaissance style. The marquee and giant vertical "CASTRO" sign, added fifteen years later, have become neighborhood landmarks. The interior is done in an "Arabian Nights" style, with a ceiling designed to look like the interior of a large tent.

The Castro Theater has been well-maintained and still functions as a theater, showing a wide variety of films. Most of the films it shows are revived classic films and some of the more unusual modern films. It can seat 1,500 viewers, and has a Wurlitzer organ that rises from a space beneath the floor between shows.

Both the Gay and Lesbian Film Festival and the Bay City Film Festival use the Castro Theater as one of their venues.





EAST BAY CITY

The area known as the East Bay, about a half-hour trip on I-80 across the Norton or Bay Bridge, is composed of the former independent cities of Berkeley and Oakland. Assimilated into Bay City after the Great Quake of 1995, these two cities still hold a character uniquely their own.

Berkeley is most renowned for the university, although, with over 100,000 residents, it is not just a college town. The city is named for George Berkeley, an Irish missionary and clergyman who came to the United States to convert the Native Americans to Christianity. The university was created by the state in 1868, and the town grew up around the first campus of the state's university system.

Berkeley has been synonymous with American counter-culture, especially since the beat movement of the 1960s. In fact, it was here that the now famous Allen Ginsberg, in a small coffee house called Caffe Mediter-raneum on Telegraph Avenue, wrote his acclaimed poem, Howl.

Overall it is culturally diverse and a haven for those who go against the political grain. The non-traditional residents and atmosphere breed counter-culture and social trends, and it is an important place for Bay City artists, writers, and musicians. It is a very liberal place, even though the die-hards of the 1960s claim that the city and its residents have lost their edge.

Walnut Square lies to the northwest of Campus, and houses a variety of upscale shops and restaurants at Shattuck and Vine Streets. Just around the corner lies what is affectionately referred to as the Gourmet Ghetto, a three-block stretch of culinary delights. Elmwood lies south of the campus, near Ashby Avenue, and is an area full of interesting shops. 4th Street is a converted industrial area, holding several trendy restaurants and shops, most of which cater to vegetarians and the ecologically conscious.

Telegraph Avenue is often considered the main drag of Berkeley. Although it is a student-oriented area, it is the best place to witness the counter-culture that is Berkeley first-hand. One

might see anything here, from naked people walking down the street, to Hare Krishnas, to old fashion Communists speaking out "for the people." Beyond that, Telegraph Avenue is an excellent place to go shopping and socializing, full of cafes, bookstores, and street vendors. In a city that loves its books, Cody's Books on Telegraph Avenue is considered to be the best book-store in the city.

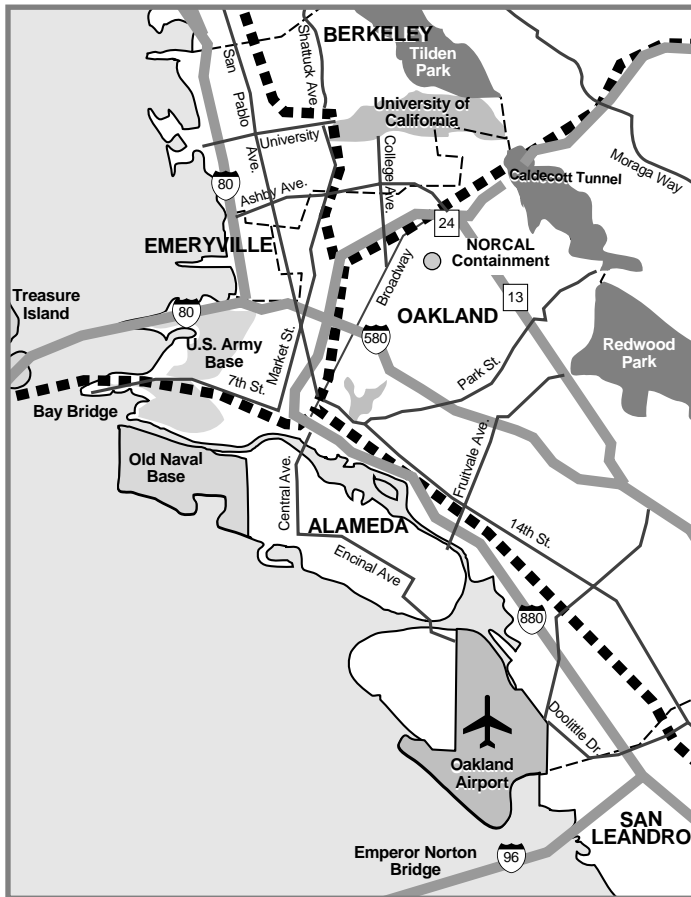
Oakland, on the other hand, is often referred to as "a blasted place." This is not necessarily true. Yes, Oakland can be a rough place and has a reputation for breeding street gangs, but it is a wonderfully diverse district. Within the space of a block, one can find a Nigerian clothing store, a Buddhist center, and a salsa club.

Oakland was originally a bedroom community for San Francisco. However, it became a center of ship-building and industry during World War II. Since that time, Oakland has primarily been a blue collar town. During the social turmoil of the 60s and 70s, it became home to militant groups such as the Black Panthers and the SLA.

The city has been cleaned up over the past few years, as the affluent have moved back to the East Bay as a cheaper and more spacious alternative to the city proper. The renovation of downtown and Jack London Square have rejuvenated much of the

town, but areas to the west and south still remain unsafe ghettos. The only thing that has kept Oakland together is the strong sense of neighborhood and community displayed by its residents.

Author Jack London spent many of his days as a resident of Oakland. The waterfront area, where he was renown for his boozing and fighting, is now called Jack London Square. It is an excellent collection of shops, restaurants, historical attractions, and small museums. One of Jack London's old hang-outs, Heinold's First and Last Chance Saloon, is still in business after 119 years, even though it had to be rebuilt after the Great Quake.



BERKELEY

Aside from UC Berkeley and Telegraph Avenue, the district of Berkeley contains several other points of interest.

Up Indian Rock Path, where Solano Avenue meets the Alameda, lies Indian Rock, a bastion of nature among the north Berkeley homes. Visitors will have to climb the rock, but the spot is an excellent place for a sunset picnic, watching the sun sink below the Golden Gate Bridge.

Lawrence Hall of Science is an amazing science education center looks more like a fortress than a commercial building. It contains many hands-on and interactive displays for children, and provides lectures, demonstrations, and planetarium shows for adults.

Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, located in Kroeber Hall on campus, contains over 4000 artifacts, displaying only a fraction at any given time. One of the highlights of the museum is the Yahi Indian collection made by Ishi, the sole survivor of the Yahi tribe.

The Sather Tower, rebuilt after the '95 quake, is a campus landmark which is also popularly known as the Campanile. It can be seen for miles around. Modeled on St. Mark's Tower in Venice, it is 307 feet tall. The bells are played weekdays at 7:50 am, Noon, and 6 pm, and on Saturdays at Noon and 6 pm. Sundays at 2 pm, the tower plays a 45 minute concert.

Yet another heart of the city's counter-culture, Sproul Plaza is located just inside the UC Berkeley campus at Telegraph Avenue and Bancroft Way. The Plaza was the site of many free speech and civil rights protests during the 1960s. Today, it is still host to a lively and diverse bunch. On any given day, one might find political activists, street preachers, musicians, and/or protesters. Of course, one will also find the usual retinue of UC Berkeley students, hanging out in the plaza or making their way to class.

A bit of nature in the midst of the city, Tilden Park hosts a botanical garden, a full golf course, an environmental education center, and 2000 acres of trails and picnic sites. Visitors can also feel free to swim in Lake Anza.

Few of the major paranormals make their permanent homes in Berkeley. Linda Shane (a.k.a. Gremlin) owns a house in north Berkeley, enjoying the exciting diversity of the town. Lady Blue also has an apartment in Berkeley - Margaret Trevail often frequents the Caffe Strada, as does, seemingly coincidentally, Professor Jacob Manning (a.k.a Behemoth).



PHINNEAS P. FOWLER

Perhaps one of the most colorful residents of Berkeley is Dr. Phinneas Pembroke Fowler, a professor of psychology at UC Berkeley. Dr. Fowler is a man in his late fifties, and was living in Berkeley during the amazing times of the late 60s and early 70s. He's done it all, as far as the counter-culture scene is

concerned - he's been a beat poet, he's been a hippie, he's been a Communist, he's been gay, he's been an eco-terrorist, you name it. Or at least that's what he'll tell you, but he's telling the truth, for the most part.

One can find Dr. Fowler discussing politics, theology, and philosophy at any of the

myriad cafes around the campus, virtually any night of the week. Beyond that, he's a prominent face at just about any rally or other counter-culture event. Some habits just die hard.

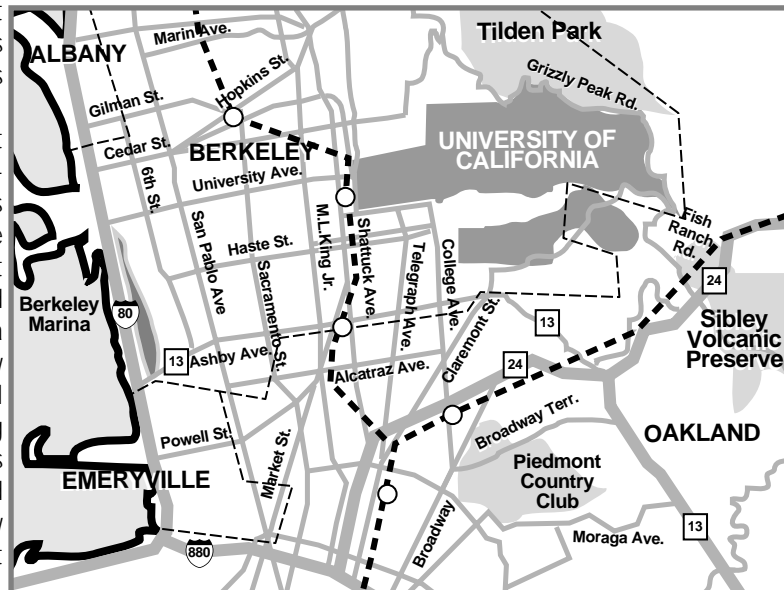
UC BERKELEY

Regardless of what residents might say, UC Berkeley dominates the city. Its central campus covers 178 acres, bound by

Bancroft Way to the south, Hearst Avenue to the north, Oxford Street to the west, and Gayley Road to the east. UC Berkeley is considered to be one of the nation's leading intellectual and scientific research centers.

Students, faculty, and Berkeley residents spend many hours drinking coffee and debating intellectual topics in the 55 cafes that surround the UC Berkeley campus. Many residents believe that without these cafes the city might collapse, but that is really more urban myth than anything else.

UC Berkeley was created by the state in 1868 and established five years later. The first campus in the state's university system, it was built on a plain of oak trees divided by Strawberry Creek. The first campus was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, who created New York's Central Park, and later included designs by Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan, who created the Hearst Castle at San Simeon.



OAKLAND

While the district of Oakland isn't really for tourists, it does contain a few sites worth mentioning, in addition to the aforementioned Jack London Square.

At 3629 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, you can find Eli's Mile High Club, with is purported to be the birthplace of West Coast blues. This small club dates back to World War II. Containing soul food, a pool table, and a myriad of live bands, Eli's is still a popular place.

Lake Merritt is a 155-acre lake in east Oakland, surrounded by parks. It is also encircled by a three mile track, which is popular with joggers, bikers, and in-line skaters. At night, Lake Merritt is lit up by a string of old-fashioned lanterns.

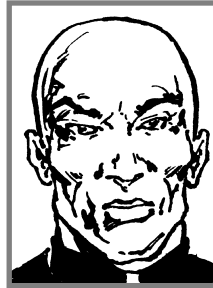
Along the north shore of Lake Merritt is the Rotary Nature Center and Waterfowl Refuge, a nesting place for a variety of birds including ducks, geese, and egrets in the spring and summer. The birds are fed daily at 3:30 pm year round.

The Oakland Museum of California houses much of the state's art, history, and natural wonders. The Hall of California Natural Sciences let's visitors walk through the state's different ecosystems, the Cowell Hall of California History includes Spanish relics and a fire engine that helped fight the fires of 1906, and the Gallery of California Art contains an eclectic collection including works by the Bay Area Figurative School. The museum also contains a bookstore, a cafe, and a lovely sculpture garden. On the whole, it is perhaps the best introduction to California in the state.

The Paramount Theatre is an excellent example of art deco architecture. Even though many similar building are now closed and in disrepair, the Paramount has been maintained and remains open for concerts and venues of all kinds. Movies shown at the Paramount are shown in classic form, with live organ music and old newsreels and cartoons. For those just interested in seeing the theatre itself, tours can be had for \$1 on the first and third Saturdays of each month.

Found in the middle of downtown Oakland, Preservation Park is a small business community comprised of 14 restored Victorian buildings. A small oasis is found here in the form of a small fountain ringed by wooden benches.

No known paranormals make their home in Oakland, although many must operate there. Shadowbeast is known to make regular appearances in the particularly bad areas of town.

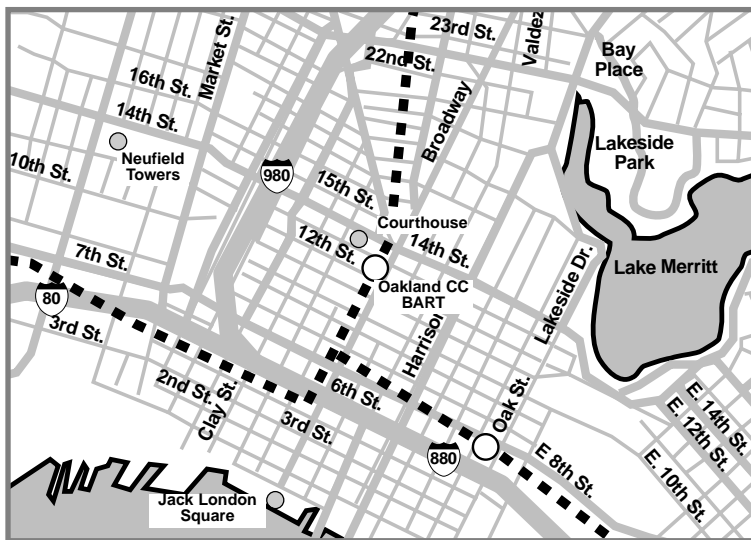


FATHER JEREMY

A prominent figure in the communities of Oakland, Father Jeremy is a Catholic priest with a mission from God. Rather than spend his time cloistered away in a parish, preaching to the converted, Father Jeremy is out on the streets preaching peace and understanding.

It is Father Jeremy who walks fearlessly into gang territories. They accept him, because he isn't like anyone else. He treats them as people, with respect and dignity. He doesn't come down on them, he only tries to find ways to stop the violence and crime while holding onto their sense of fellowship. Father Jeremy doesn't get preachy with them; he simply tries to appeal to them with reason and understanding.

He has been recognized by the city on several occasions for his good work. On the whole, he doesn't care about visibility or reward. He just wants everyone to get along. The gangs actually seem to like Father Jeremy; it probably doesn't hurt that he served in the Marine Corps and is a black belt in Tae Kwon Do.



NORCAL CONTAINMENT FACILITY

Hidden back on east side of Oakland is the Guard's NorCal Containment Facility. The containment facility is sort of a mini-Stronghold, containing six cells, which can be individually configured to hold different super-villains. Since east Oakland is one of the district's revitalized areas, the locals aren't very happy with the prospect of a super-villain prison in their backyards. All things considered, it's a small sacrifice to make.

The NorCal Containment Facility is meant to be a Guard holding house. Super-villains are only to be held there for brief periods of time, awaiting either a court date, a trial, or for transportation to one of the Guard's more secure Stronghold facilities. This is not to say that the NorCal Containment Facility is a poor imitation of the larger Strongholds. It utilizes the same Guard technology, both in security and in containment, and is as sound a structure as any other.

MID-BAY CITY

The middle part of Bay City encompasses the area of the peninsula from about McLaren Park and the Pit (most folks would use the 280 split as the cutoff point) down to Millbrae. This area includes, among other things, Bay City Industrial Center (a mostly industrial area on the southern side of the San Bruno Mountains) and Bay City International Airport.

This area of the peninsula was developed fairly late, since settlements were first established in the northeastern peninsula and gradually expanded west and south. It was primarily a rural and agricultural area until about 1920. Since then it has become steadily more and more industrialized and urbanized. Today, many people who work in downtown Bay City live here and commute in to work on the freeways.

Substantial portions of this area were badly damaged by the 1995 earthquake. Looting quickly broke out in some places, but Speedster came to the rescue. One by one he sought out the pockets of looters and used his super-speed powers to tie them up, knock them out, or otherwise incapacitate them. His greatest challenge came when he got over to the heavily industrialized area and encountered the Masters of Fortune, who were in the process of raiding a PanStar facility. It was him, alone, against Cateran, the Crimson Archer, Frost, Heatwave, and Streamer—not

exactly the best position for him to be in. Gritting his teeth, he plunged in with a lightning attack on Cateran that missed—she was quicker than she looked. Dodging several counterattacks, he maneuvered himself to a position between Heatwave and Frost, then ducked—allowing the two villains, who were each vulnerable to the other's powers, to knock each other out!

Cateran and Streamer came after him, but he managed to dodge Cateran entirely, and was able to absorb most of the force of Streamer's energy bolt. Picking up a convenient two-by-four, he ran past Streamer and hit him hard enough to knock him out cold. Then the Crimson Archer made his move—his last one ever. He

came swinging down from the rafters of the building they were in, hoping to take Speedster unawares by attacking from above. However, Speedster sensed his approach and got out of the way. Crimson Archer, unable to stop the course of his swing, collided with a generator that had been damaged earlier by one of Streamer's blasts, and electrocuted himself to death.

Speedster, shocked at this turn of events, failed to dodge

Cateran's next attack, and she knocked him out by smashing him in the head with the pommel of her sword. When he came to, the Masters had fled the scene, leaving the Crimson Archer's body (sans bow and arrows) and their potential loot behind. Speedster was later cleared of any responsibility for the Archer's death, and also received a commendation from PanStar for his heroic actions.

Mid-Bay City received another

shock of sorts when the Wildstrike hit on the first day of the New Millennium. In McLaren Park, a huge hole opened in the ground, with no discernible bottom. This "Pit," as it came to be known, has been investigated on numerous occasions, by, among others, Odyssey Research Institute employees. No answers about it have been forthcoming, and in fact three people, including one super-human, have entered the Pit never to be heard from again. Currently the city fathers have blocked off all access to the Pit, and have it under 24-hour surveillance.

Other than the Pit, Mid-Bay City is a pretty peaceful place to live, at least compared to North Bay City. There aren't nearly as many super-villains (or heroes) flying around committing crimes, VIPER doesn't seem to pay too much attention to the area (outside of an occasional raid on a high-tech facility), and the streets are less crowded and the prices a little cheaper. More and more people are leaving the city proper and moving down to "the Mid" to live. Residents hope it won't become as crowded and expensive as other areas of the peninsula that have suffered a similar fate.



SILICON VALLEY NORTH

The area south of the San Bruno Mountains developed into a heavily industrialized zone during this century. It even has a big sign on one of the hillsides that says, "The Industrial City." (Okay, it's not quite "Hollywood," but it'll do.) In the past couple of decades, this industrialization has subtly shifted towards production of high-tech items—from consumer goods such as desktop computer microchips and processors, stereo equipment, and the like, to even more advanced items such as commercial and military electronics. The process of changing from heavy industry to high-tech was accelerated by the 1995 quake, since many industrial plant owners did not find it profitable to rebuild, and high-tech companies were able to buy the land for their own manufacturing centers and laboratories. This has earned the area the nickname of "Silicon Valley North." (Although few people realize it, the "technologization" of the area actually began in 1937, when Hewlett and Packard started their engineering and electronic firm nearby.)

For the most part, this trend towards the development and production of high-tech goods has benefitted the area in terms of increased employment and revenue and decreased pollution. However, it has had its detrimental effects as well. Blue-collar jobs have declined, causing unemployment and disgruntlement among many industrial workers. Furthermore, the number of incidents of supercrime has increased. Heavy industrial facilities and equipment aren't of interest to most super-villains—but high-tech goods and electronic items are. There are more VIPER raids, break-ins by super-villain teams, and industrial espionage by the likes of PanStar than ever, and the Mid-Bay City Chamber of Commerce is not sure what to do about it.

Some members have suggested recruiting the area's own super-team, but so far this proposal has only met with lukewarm interest. The creator of the proposal, Carol Sutpen of the Bay Area Research Institute (an R&D firm specializing in biotechnology), argues that a Mid-Bay super-team would be able to concentrate solely on the area's unique problems, rather than having to spread its efforts to cover all of Bay City. Her critics, including David Furst, a top-level manager at the Mid-Bay PanStar facility, argue that introducing another super-team into the Bay area is unnecessary, and that it is only likely to attract super-villains and cause even more problems. The Chamber is expected to formally consider Sutpen's proposal soon.



JIMMY FRAZIER

Jimmy Frazier is a young, energetic computer programmer working for PanStar at its Mid-Bay facility. Labeled a genius at computer programming and systems creation/design at an early age, he went to work for PanStar straight out of high school, since he was unable to find a college (including Stanford) which

could teach him anything about computers that he didn't already know. He's been with PanStar for the past five years, and has made a substantial sum of money during that time.

However, he's become disenchanted with his job. Casual comments here and there by other employees, and facts uncovered during cracking runs on certain secure portions of the company's databases, have lead him to believe that PanStar's operations are not entirely on the up-and-up. He is using his computer skills to assemble evidence against PanStar which he hopes to turn over to

the Champions (he's a big super-hero fan) or some other law enforcement organization. If PanStar finds out what he's doing, though, his life won't be worth a plugged nickel.

BAY AREA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Bay Area Research Institute (BARI) is a scientific think-tank and research firm which employs about 100 people (scientists, researchers, and support staff). It specializes in biotechnology and medical technology applications.

Several of BARI's researchers are specialists in paranormal physiognomy and neurology. Although their facilities (and their knowledge) are not as advanced as those of the Odyssey Research Institute, or even some parts of PanStar, they would make good contacts for a super-team or a hero with psychic powers. They might be the targets of kidnapping attempts by super-villains for the same reason.

The president and owner of BARI is Stephanie Thompson, one of the few women to be involved in the management (much less ownership) of a Mid-Bay tech company. She has made a special effort to recruit women for both research-oriented and management positions. One of her vice presidents, Carol Sutpen, a vocal proponent of recruiting a Mid-Bay super-hero team to cut down on incidents of super-crime in the area.



BAY CITY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Bay City International Airport (BCIA), originally San Francisco International Airport, is one of the largest and busiest airports in the world (in fact, it ranks as fifth busiest in the United States, and seventh busiest in the world). It is located approximately 14 miles from the center of downtown Bay City.

A planned \$1.7 billion dollar expansion of the facility was derailed by the 1995 earthquake, and the money was put towards rebuilding efforts instead. It was rechristened the Bay City International Airport, and since that time has managed to expand significantly.

BCIA is shaped like a horseshoe, with three terminals linked together around a large parking deck. Arrivals are on the lower level, and departures on the top level. Forty-two major airlines serve the facility, along with many other minor ones.

Among its many services and accommodation, BCIA boasts an extensive art collection, parts of which are on display at various points around the terminals. Bay City regulations require that one percent of the cost of all public buildings be spent on art, so the airport has acquired a lot of art over the years.

Security is tight at BCIA, and with good reason: over the past twenty years, terrorists and/or super-villains have attacked it nearly a dozen times, usually hoping to kidnap someone or steal a cargo of some sort. The current head of security is himself a superhuman. Known as Guardian, he possesses superhuman strength and physical prowess, and is also much faster than a normal human being. He carries a circular shield which he can use as a throwing weapon (it is painted black, with a red chevron) and a sidearm (which he almost never uses).



RALPH SANDHURST

Ralph Sandhurst is an agent of the U.S. Customs Service who works at BCIA in the international terminal. His job is to inspect incoming cargo and luggage for contraband or undeclared controlled substances. He does his job very well—except when he's been paid not to.

About five years ago, a Colombian druglord offered Sandhurst an enormous sum of money—about two years' salary—to “look the other way” when a certain shipment came through. Unable to resist temptation, Sandhurst took the offer. The druglord passed Sandhurst's name on to other smugglers, and soon Sandhurst was making far more in bribes than he ever could from his salary alone.

Sandhurst is terrified of being caught, and is careful to cover his tracks as best he can. He does not publicly display his wealth at all. Occasionally his employers send through “decoy shipments” for him to “discover” so that it looks like he's doing at good job.

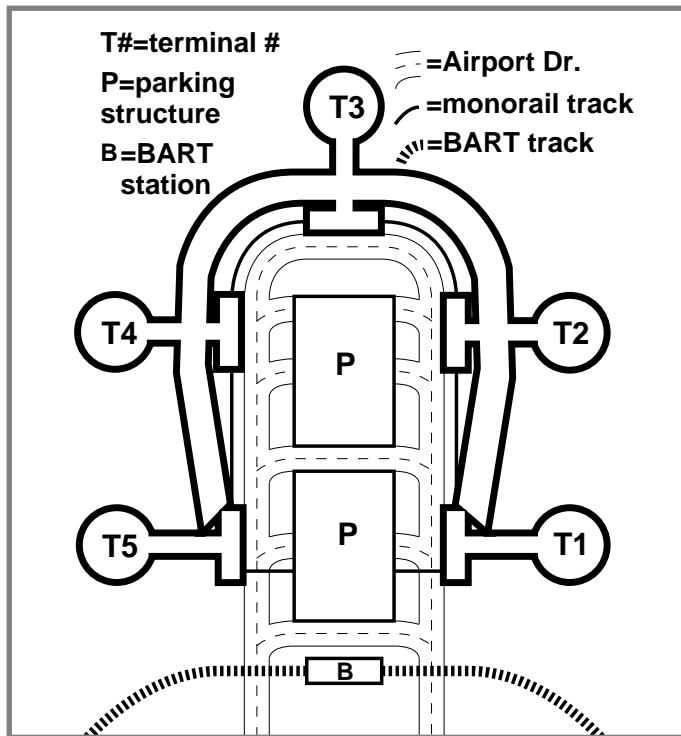
THE PAVILION

The Pavilion is a bar and restaurant located in the North Terminal of the airport. It is open from 6:30 a.m. until midnight every day. Mostly it functions as a source of alcohol for

wearry travelers. Its food menu is limited to light foods.

The Pavilion is an excellent place to sit and watch the crowd go by. It commands a fine view of a large part of the North Terminal, which is where domestic flights arrive. Anyone arriving on a domestic flight is likely to have to pass by the Pavilion.

Harry Grummann is the head bartender on duty during the busy period, 3:00 p.m. until midnight. He does a good job, and has been working here for nearly twenty years. He knows a lot of the airport employees, and is hooked in to all the gossip.



GUARDIAN

Mental 8 Combat 8 Physical 10 Move 12

SKILLS: Karate, Fighting: 4, Expert (Airport): 5, Profession (Security): 4

POWERS: Shield (Missile Deflection, 10D6 EB), Regeneration

EQUIPMENT: .44 Grizzly AutoMag, Communicator



SOUTH BAY CITY

South Bay City is the area running from roughly Burlingame down to Palo Alto and Stanford University. Originally this area was cattle country and farmland that helped feed the burgeoning city of San Francisco, but today it has become so settled and urbanized that it blends almost seamlessly into Bay City. Much of the area is occupied by the mansions and playgrounds of the wealthy; there are few middle-class or lower-class neighborhoods in this part of the city. Of course, Stanford University, home to about 15,000 students and 1,400 faculty members, is also a crucial element in the area's culture.

South Bay City was the site of some unusual occurrences during the Wildstrike. A large "column" of the Wildstrike energy touched down here, affecting many of the area's inhabitants. Some were warped and mutated in the horrible way that so many others were; fortunately for the rich, at least, plastic surgery was able to solve

many of these problems, and psychiatry some of the others. Even more area citizens were somehow affected mentally, driven into a sort of "berserk frenzy" in which they tore off most of their clothes and went rampaging from store to store and house to house, looting, burning, and brutalizing. The police were hard put to control this situation, particularly with the city's heroes occupied elsewhere, but after about 24 hours, most of those affected had come to their senses and returned to their homes. The only lingering effect noted has been a tendency towards insanity on the part of those affected, a phenomena which has been studied by scientists from Stanford and from Odyssey Research Institute.

A number of the so-called "Wildstrikers" were created here, including Tentacle (who has the ability to stretch his arms and, to a limited extent, his body), Orbz (a sort of "poor man's Oculon," with the ability to emit energy beams from his eyes), Hook (most of whose body hairs were transformed into barbed hooks), Volt (a twisted, crippled wretch with electrical powers), and Spiral (who can induce vertigo by touch). Unable to handle the sudden influx

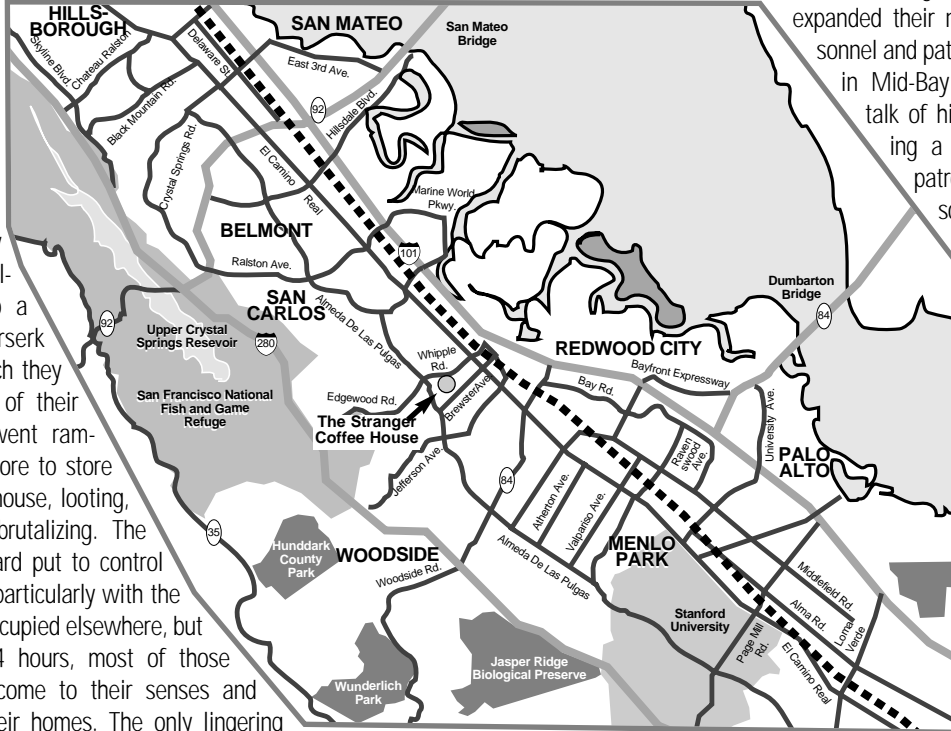
of power, they, too, went on a rampage for a short time, but soon brought themselves under control. Several of them actually helped the police corral other looters, then faded away into what became the Wildstriker underground.

In the aftermath of this chaos, personal security has become a booming business in parts of South Bay City. Good bodyguards are in demand. Those who can afford high-priced security systems have had them installed, with multiple redundant backups; the poorer folk get by with cheaper systems, or perhaps just a guard dog and a handy baseball bat. The Hillsborough police department and the public safety department at Stanford have all received

increased budgets and have expanded their number of personnel and patrol services. As in Mid-Bay City, there is talk of hiring or recruiting a super-team to patrol the area, but so far this proposal has not received serious consideration.

However, this is not to say that the area is completely ignored by super-heroes. Speedster is often active here, and the Champions and Crusader have shown

up on several occasions when they were needed. Defender is said to be involved with some kind of top-secret research project at Stanford University that the Odyssey Research Institute is also participating in. A couple of recent reports have claimed that the Highwayman is connected with Stanford in some way, or is conducting some kind of investigation there, but this has not been confirmed.



HILLSBOROUGH

Located in the middle of the Peninsula, just to the north of Burlingame and San Mateo, Hillsborough can trace its roots back to the *Rancho San Mateo* land grant purchased by William Davis Merry Howard from the Mexican Governor Pio Pico in 1846. Howard, the son of a wealthy Hillsboro, New Hampshire, had come to the west seeking new business opportunities, and purchased the land with money borrowed from his father. He died in 1856, but not before making a fortune. His wife and children went on to set the pattern for genteel living down the Peninsula.

Many famous (and rich) Bay Area families made their home in this area, and Hillsborough was incorporated as a city on February 10, 1910. Between 1910 and 1938, the population grew from about 750 to over 2500 residents. Until 1954, Hillsborough was all residential (except for a few city-owned buildings.) However, that changed when the Crystal Spring School for Girls was allowed to open. This school is still in operation, and now admits boys.

With a minimum lot size of one-half an acre, and a minimum house size of 2,000 square feet of living space (exclusive of the mandatory two car garage or car port), Hillsborough remains a popular place among Bay City's elite.

Of course, all of that wealth makes a tempting target, and between that and the Wildstrike rioting, Hillsboroughites have cause to be concerned. They have always been security-conscious, but since the Wildstrike they have stepped up their security considerably. The residents have recently approved high property taxes for increased police patrols and services.

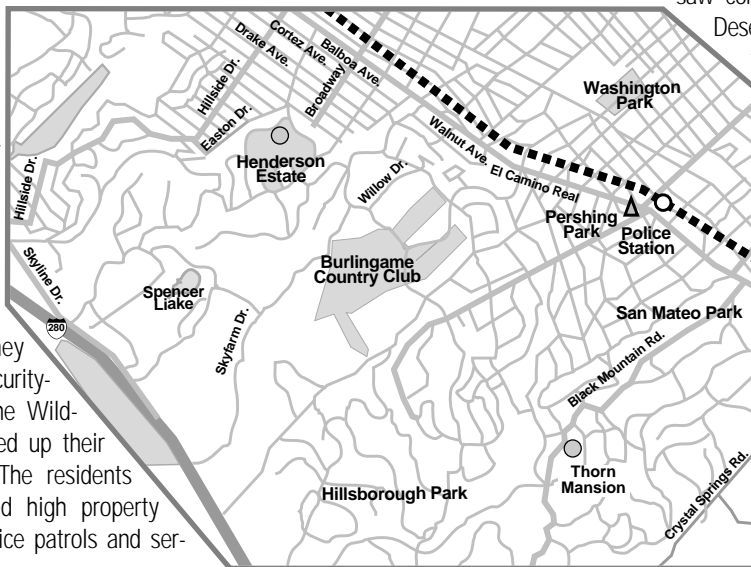
Lately there have been rumors that some sort of "cat burglar" has been making the rounds of the most luxurious homes and helping himself to jewelry, cash, and valuable antiques. Several people claim to have seen a dark figure, dubbed "the Midnight Phantom," skulking in the shadows or running away from mansions who have later been found robbed. Investigation of these criminal activities has been thwarted by the fact that some of the victims seem to prefer their privacy to recovering their property, and because the various private security forces would rather look into the situation without the help of the police. Whether the Midnight Phantom will ever be caught—or whether the situation is all that it really seems to be—remains to be seen.



LINCOLN YOUNGBLOOD

Captain Youngblood, one of the few black police officers you are ever likely to see in Hillsborough, is the chief of the Hillsborough Police Department. He commands a staff of 30 officers (about a dozen of whom are on duty at any one time) and an additional six administrative and clerical personnel. His office is in a small "station" near El Camino Real.

Captain Youngblood is a veteran of the United States Army; he saw combat duty during Operation Desert Storm. Although he tries to be friendly and diplomatic towards the residents of the community, he is a no-nonsense professional who isn't worried about ruffling feathers if he has to get the job done. The Hillsborough Homeowners Association has learned to trust him and his judgment implicitly. With the exception of the Midnight Phantom, there have been few security problems in Hillsborough since Youngblood has taken over the department.



THE HENDERSON ESTATE

There it is—the house that even other rich people are jealous of, Donald Henderson's mansion. Built in 1873, this residence occupies twenty of the most beautifully tended acres on the Peninsula. It is an embodiment of the American Dream.

The Henderson Estate is a testament to what success can bring a man. The Mansion itself is nearly 25,000 square feet, with more than 30 rooms. Its facilities include a large ballroom, a dining room big enough to seat 40 people for dinner if need be (and a kitchen and culinary staff capable of creating such a dinner), an underground shooting range, a shielded computer room with its own backup generators, and an indoor swimming pool. Elsewhere on the Estate visitors can find guest bungalows, a stable for half a dozen horses, a small pond suitable for fishing, butterfly gardens, the "Wishing Well Garden" shown as part of the intro to *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, and some of California's most beautiful rose bushes. All of this is surrounded by a stone wall that shields the grounds (and the house) from casual viewers.

PALO ALTO

Palo Alto is a community best known as the home of Leland Stanford, Jr. University. Stanford was founded in 1885 by Leland Stanford in honor of his deceased son, Leland, Jr. The Stanfords gave the university 85,000 acres of some of the best land on the peninsula, a portion of which, the Palo Alto Farm, became the Stanford campus (hence the university's nickname, "the Farm"). Other parts of the land, undeveloped to this day, serve to buffer the university from the outside world.

In the century plus since its founding, Stanford has developed a reputation as one of the best (and most expensive!) universities in the world; its graduates go on to become leaders in business, politics, and many other fields. Its features include a two-mile long linear accelerator under I-280; the Ames Research Center (said to be the home of Illiac 4, a computer system used to track the movements of Russian submarines around the world); Hoover Tower, a 285-foot tall structure with a 35-bell carillon; and Leland Stanford Jr. Museum (whose exhibits include the gold spike used to complete the Transcontinental Railroad and fine collections of Asian art and Rodin sculptures).

Stanford did suffer some damage during the 1988 and 1995 earthquakes, and has been busily rebuilding. It was spared most of the effects of the Wild Strike, although a few students here and there were affected. Over the years its labs and facilities have given rise to more than one "lab accident"

that led to the creation of some hero or villain, and its faculty have occasionally been the target of VIPER kidnapping plots and similar nefarious schemes. However, for the most part, it is a peaceful place.

There is more to Palo Alto than just Stanford U., however. The city is also a center of high-tech research and development. It is home to Hewlett-Packard (founded in 1937 by two Stanford grads) and many other major firms. Palo Alto is likewise home to many wealthy Californians. Although not quite as "posh" a residential address as Hillsborough, it still commands respect. Palo Altoans have something of a reputation for "snootiness" among less-well-off Bay City residents.

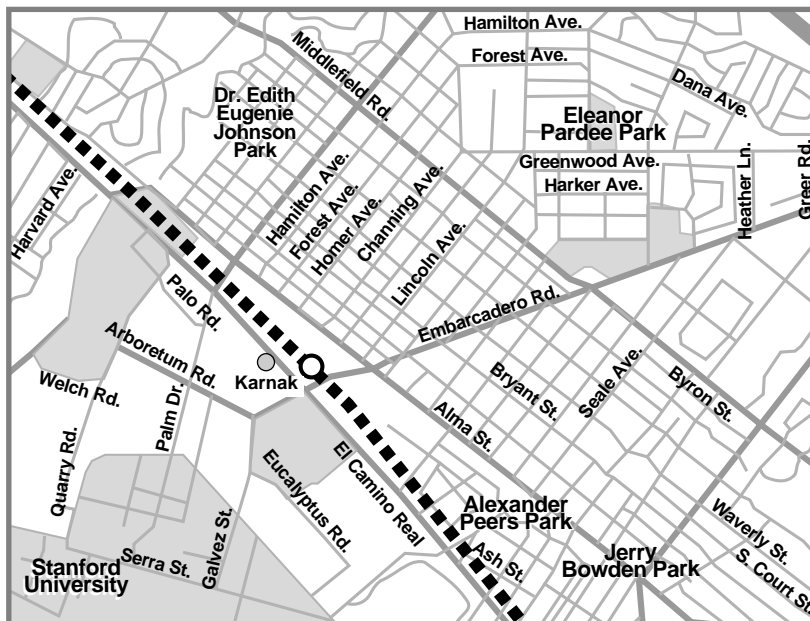


CYNTHIA PULLMAN

Cynthia Pullman is the Head Librarian for the Stanford University libraries. A woman of commanding aspect in her mid-60s, she has never married, choosing to devote her life to her career and her beloved books. Woe to any student whom she sees damaging or writing in a book! She has been at

Stanford for more than 30 years and has overseen the growth of the libraries' collections to the point where they rival just about any library in the world.

More importantly, she knows where all of the good stuff is. Seeking that long-lost book on Japanese occult practices? Ask Ms. Pullman. Need to do some research on practical applications for nuclear physics? She can show you where sensitive government documents are kept. She is also an expert at management information systems and even computer cracking (though she'd never admit it).



KARNAK

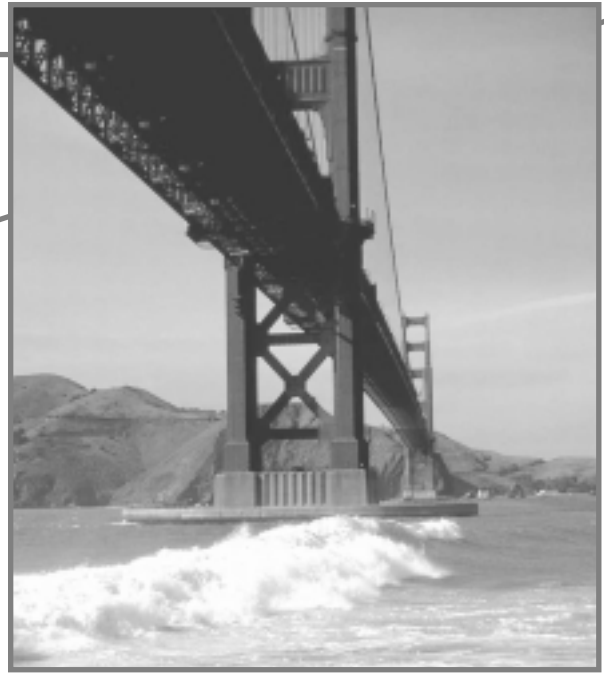
Located near the campus, Karnak is a coffeehouse catering to Stanford University students. As its name indicates, it is decorated with an Egyptian theme, with hieroglyphics and depictions of Egyptian gods on the walls. The menus are printed on pseudo-papyrus, and in the corner stands "Leland," a realistic-looking mummy in a graffiti-covered sarcophagus.

Karnak serves a generous selection of coffees, including its own special blends. It also has muffins, biscuits, sandwiches, and other "finger food" on the menu for those who want a bite to eat with their coffee.

Karnak is well-known for its evening entertainments. Almost every night there is something going on. Poetry readings, or readings from fiction, are common, with folk music a close second. Every Wednesday night is Checkmate Night, a sort of combination chess competition/singles mixer (check-mate, get it?).

The owner of Karnak is Bob Detwiler, a Stanford grad himself. He is still very "in touch" with the student community.

THE FLP A S M C S



SIXTY PAGES ABOUT THIRTY PLACES

Actually, it is sixty-eight pages about thirty places, but we're sure you'll forgive us for a little poetic license. The important part is the thirty places, not the actual number of pages.

What follows are descriptions of thirty places in Bay City. When choosing these locations, we wanted to make sure that we covered the basics, as well as hit some unusual ones. You'll find a bank, a department store, a courthouse, and a museum described, but you'll also visit a haunted house, an under-aged dance club and the local VIPER's Nest. The common criteria is that all of these places be of interest to super-heroes (and super-villains.)

Along with each place, you'll find a person and some story seeds. Places themselves can be pretty cut and dried; the person is there to give the location a face and a voice. Most of these people are normals, but all of them can come in useful. Wise heroes will learn to cultivate contacts and friends among the mundane world. You can never tell when they will come in handy.

The story seeds are there for the GM. Some of them stand by themselves; others are interlinked. Whatever the case, we encourage you to take them, shake them up, and weave them into your campaign plotlines. You'll learn a bit about the place in question just by reading the story seeds.

Some of these story seeds foreshadow a major plot: Markoth, banished ruler of Hidden Tangut, is getting ready to reclaim his throne. Will the heroes be able to counter his evil manipulations, or will Markoth's power grow, unchecked? The rest of Markoth's foul plan will be revealed in our next book, *WORLD WIDE*.

The rest of the story seeds stand alone (or link to other seeds in this book), and will provide weeks or months of play. Several of them are designed as pure roleplaying exercises, intended to let your players know their characters better.

Remember, Bay City is a big place, limited only by your imagination. So use what we've given you, take it, expand on it, and make it your own.

We're counting on you to do just that.



MISSION HIGH SCHOOL

An experiment in the San Francisco public school system, Mission High opened its ivory towers on June 12, 1996. Meant to be a learning establishment for the truly gifted, Mission High took only the top applicants from the Bay City area. Of the 12,000 plus students who initially applied for acceptance, only 815 made the cut. The school graduated its first class, composed of 157 students, in the Spring of 1997. Few Mission High graduates have ever had to worry about obtaining acceptance from the college of their choice, not to mention sizable academic scholarships.

The concept of Mission High met with little public resistance, even though it called for a nominal tax hike. When Mayor Bobby Greene presented the Mission High proposal to the public for voting referendum in November of 1994, the constituents of San Francisco applauded the idea for a gifted and talented school that was municipally funded, as opposed to the expensive private institutions of the time. The referendum passed with 87% for/13% against.

Today, Mission High boasts the finest high school level educational facilities found anywhere in the nation, and perhaps the world. Many families have moved to the Bay area solely for their children to attend, and some have even moved from other countries. Both the institution and its graduates hold a very high reputation—surprising for a high school.

Mission High still promotes small classes with only the finest minds; there are only 1121 students currently enrolled. The instructors are all graduate level educated within their respective fields, and constantly attend continuing education classes to keep up with the most current information and techniques. The library is extensive, the computer labs are always on the cutting edge of technology, and the scientific facilities are like those one might find at a governmental laboratory. But these things are not what truly make Mission High shine.

The greatest educational success Mission High boasts is its highly experimental class system. Unlike other high schools, which require a large number of courses in a typical lecture format, Mission High offers its students many electives in a free-form class structure, stressing practical applications. Students are still required to take general education classes, such as civics and English, all four years of their career but these are usually rolled up into an abbreviated class, and many students test out. Otherwise, students are free to choose the classes which suit their goals and interests best. Thus, you will find seniors who have never taken a PE class, but are currently studying Advanced Physics.

In addition to the elective heavy format, students are not chained to a desk for their day. Instead, they are simply required to check in with their instructor at the beginning of every hour and then are free to pursue their studies at their own rate. Classes simply consist of a syllabus, which outlines what each student should learn by the end of the semester, when experiments and papers are due, when lectures and presentations are scheduled, and the grading criteria for the class. This open format allows students to learn at their own rate and to further delve into those topics which are of particular interest. Each student has one hour of office time scheduled every two weeks to spend with their instructor, discussing progress, problems, and topics of interest. Because of this unique format, absences among Mission High students are routinely granted for the slightest of reasons.

HIGHLIGHTS

The PanStar Computer Lab: Donated by PanStar Industries, this computer lab boasts equipment not found in other high schools or few colleges anywhere. Students have access to the most advanced computer technology, from high-speed internet connections to main frames and virtual networks. All students are provided with unlimited access to the lab.

INFORMATION

Location: 3200 - 16th Street, North Bay City
Getting There: BART to the 16th Street Station; Muni lines also run down Mission St.

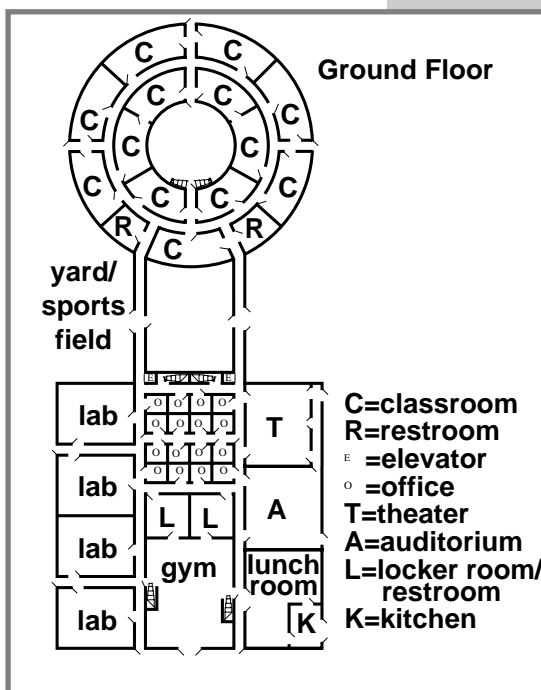
Classroom Hours: 8:00 am to 2:30 pm

Facilities Hours: 8:00 am to 8:00 pm

Student Body: 1121 total students (276 Freshman, 291 Sophomores, 255 Juniors, 304 Seniors)

Full-Time Staff: 75 Instructors, 22 Administration, 25 Support
Part-Time Staff: 35 Student Teachers

Average Student IQ: 155
Average Student G.P.A.: 3.7 (on a 4.0 pt. scale)



VICTORIA SWANBY, PRINCIPAL**VICTORIA SWANBY****Mental 6 Combat 3 Physical 4 Move 4****SKILLS:** Teacher: 6, Bureacratics: 5, High Society: 4, Beautiful: 2

Even though Ms. Victoria Swanby is thoroughly qualified for her job, both psychologically and educationally, many people view her as a token of publicity. What else would most people think when Mission High's first principal looks more like a New York City runway fashion model than an administrator.

Victoria does not come from a privileged background. Her family had to scrape through life, wondering whether they could afford to eat that week or not. Her upbringing taught her the value of education, shown by her scholarship to Stanford and her graduation *magna cum laude* in 1995. She received her degrees in both Psychology and Education.

While attending an exhibit opening at the Odyssey Institute, she met Mayor Bobby Greene. Victoria was impressed that Mayor Bobby wasn't trying to bed her and he was impressed by her sharp mind and cool self-confidence. The two clicked immediately, and became friends. He was the one who recommended her for the position of principal for the experimental Mission High when it first opened, even though she was only 24 at the time.

Victoria has always had a chip on her shoulder about her looks. She's always been confident and comfortable with her abilities and her natural gifts, and sees no reason why she should hide them. Unfortunately, people don't often expect looks and brains to go together. Furthermore, most men are interested in more than her professional opinion. As a result, she is currently very single and plans to stay that way. Anyone planning to try dating Victoria Swanby had better dig in for the winter.

Otherwise, when treated with respect, Victoria is a very gregarious, sharp, and focused person. It should be obvious to anyone that she is more than capable of fulfilling and excelling at her current role. She is quite open to talking with the students who, as a rule, like her. Victoria is never referred to as the "battleaxe" or as any other sort of antagonist by her students, although several of the males think "she's hot." She is firm believer in an open academic environment.

Secretly, Victoria has been asked to do one large favor for Kelly Johnson (*Alliances*, pg. 21)—keep an eye open for the display of dawning paranormal powers. More paranormal kids are showing up these days than ever before, and she believes in the Arcadian Academy, and has no problems with helping them out in this way.

**"YOUNG MINDS
NEED TO BE
ENCOURAGED,
NOT
SMOTHERED."**

STORY SEEDS

1 Impressionable Youth: Many organizations are keeping an eye out for new, young, and impressionable talent. In this case, VIPER is keeping an eye out at Mission High, in the form of Dr. Richard Mayfield, a professor of physics. Dr. Mayfield is a new hire at Mission High, and the staff knows little about him other than his excellent qualifications.

A freshmen named Melinda Hainey is just developing her paranormal powers and isn't very good at controlling them. So far, she's been able to conceal their existence, but is scared to death. As a student in Dr. Mayfield's physics class, he is the first to discover her talents. She's been filled with VIPER propaganda and believes it all.

Characters may become involved with this plot through associations with Mission High, the Arcadian Academy, or through following up other VIPER leads. Dr. Mayfield will attempt flee with Melinda if he is discovered. Rest assured that another VIPER agent will rise to replace him.

The GM should create Melinda Hainey as a powerful young telekinetic, with very little control. She's a scared girl, who just wants to be told that she's okay and that everything will be just fine.

2 Wired: At 7:56 pm last night, someone took control over the Mission High building. At 9:02 pm last night, the city's computers went down. The havoc had only begun.

At 7:28 pm last night, the being calling itself Wire was born. As young Billy Champlin labored in the virtual network, his paranormal powers awakened. Always one to have an affinity for computers, Billy became a full-fledged cyberpath and projected his consciousness upon the network. Unfortunately, Billy's wild powers put him in contact with a complex, latent virus that somehow fused with his mind. The hybrid that was created is fully insane, highly dangerous, and out of control. The hybrid calls itself Wire.

Wire is now striking out and hacking security networks because it can. The only truly rational act it has taken is to seal itself into the labs at Mission High. It's not sane enough to realize that someone will eventually get in, nor does it understand that Billy's physical body has needs. On the other hand, Wire is dangerous and should be considered one of the world's best hackers after it's been alive for a full twelve hours.

Obviously, this is a problem for everybody, but someone has to trace it back to Mission High sooner or later. Simply yanking Billy out of the virtual net won't help—as long as he's anywhere near a computer, he can multitask and continue to work. He'll have to be rendered unconscious. Then, someone has to figure out what happened, and if they can help Billy. Wire will most likely provide some scattered answers, since it's insane and really doesn't understand. No amount of psychological treatment will help him. It will either take magic, a powerful telepath, or the like to remove the virus from Wire and just leave Billy. Failing that, or there's one more crazy super-villain for Stronghold.



BAY CITY MAIN LIBRARY

Located in the Civic Center district, on Larkin Street, the Bay City Main Library (and its adjunct, the New Library) are proof positive of Bay Cityites' love of books and learning. The original San Francisco Library was destroyed in 1906. A replacement, the Main Library, was constructed in 1917. The centerpiece of the building is a five-story-tall atrium, 60 feet in diameter, with a huge skylight at the top. A grand staircase ascends through the atrium. Parts of the interior of the library have murals depicting pioneer life.

As large as the Main Library is, by the 1980s it was outgrowing the space. So, in 1988 San Francisco voters approved a \$109.4 million bond issue to build a new library building across the street. An additional \$30 million in private donations was raised to buy the furnishings for the New Library building. As of this writing, the New Library building is still under construction. Although it was originally scheduled to be finished by 1995, the damage caused by the 1995 quake and the subsequent creation of Bay City have delayed the construction process. It is now expected that the building will be finished, furnished, and in use by the public no later than 2003.

The New Library is designed to mirror the Main Library building in many ways, with a similar atrium and skylight arrangement. However, it differs from the Main Library building in that its interior spaces are arranged to take full advantage of modern information technologies and learning techniques. Once it is completed, it will be difficult for a patron to walk more than 50 feet in the library without passing a computer terminal or some other device designed to help him find the information he's looking for.

Several centers or institutions have been planned for the New Library. The largest of these is the Gay And Lesbian Center, which will include an extensive collection of gay and lesbian literature. Of interest to many heroes, particularly those of Asian or mystic backgrounds, is the Chinese Culture And Folklore Center, which will collect all of the library's resources on Chinese history, civilization, art, and mysticism. A series of murals depicting Chinese gods and heroes will be painted on the center's walls. The Bay Area Cultural Studies Center will focus on the influence of the area's culture on the popular culture of the United States as a whole. It is expected to have, among other things, a vast collection of materials on the Summer of Love and the "Flower Power" movement, including unreleased recordings by certain musical groups.

The Main Library's collection numbers over one million volumes. It has millions of magazines, pamphlets, documents, recordings, videos, and other such media; many of these are not currently on display, but will be once the New Library building is completed. Its collection of rare books and handprinted works is particularly noteworthy. It also has a large collection of books printed in San Francisco/Bay City. The Main Library also features a San Francisco History Room which includes books, artifacts, and documents from the very earliest days of settlement of the peninsula to the present time. Located on the third floor, the History Room is a mecca for Bay area historians.

The current head of the Bay City Library System is Dr. Franklin Williams, a noted scholar appointed to his post by the Library Board for a six-year term. His offices, and those of his administrative staff, are located on the fifth floor of the Main Library building, though they will be moved to the New Library building when that is completed.

HIGHLIGHTS

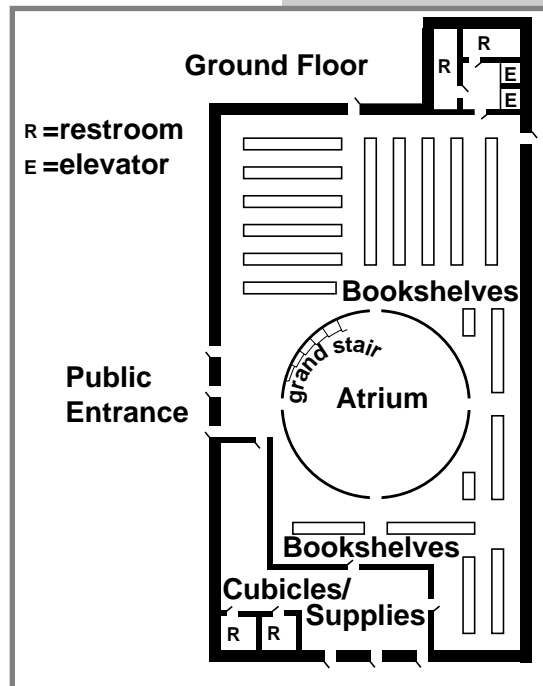
San Francisco History Room: Located on the third floor of the Main Library, this is the source for information on the history of the city.

Chinese Culture And Folklore Center: Once completed, this feature of the New Library will provide information on Chinese history and civilization.

Interior Murals: Depict pioneer life.

Rare Book Collection: Includes many

handprinted volumes and books printed in San Francisco.



Murchison Greek Collection: Everything you ever wanted to know about the ancient Greeks.

INFORMATION

Library Hours: 8:00 am to 10:00 pm.

Getting There: Muni Metro and BART both have stops near the Main Library.

Checkout Privileges: Library cards are free with proof of identity.

Photocopies: Copies cost \$.10 on any of the machines in the Library; you can use coins or purchase a copy card.

Internet Connections: The Main Library has 4 computers for use as Internet connections; the New Library, once completed, will have two dozen such computers.

ERIC BAUMGARDNER**ERIC BAUMGARDNER****Mental 6 Combat 6 Physical 6 Move 5****SKILLS:** Expert (Precolumbian Civilizations): 6; Professional (Librarian): 6

Eric Baumgardner is a librarian at the Main Library. In fact, he holds a prestigious post: Curator of the Rare Book Collection. He is an expert on the care, treatment, conservation, and use of old, rare books; outsiders needing information on the value of old books (such as attorneys handling estates involving possibly valuable books) often hire him to appraise books, and he makes a nice supplement to his income doing this.

One has only to observe Baumgardner at work to see how much he cares about his job. He fusses about “his” books like a mother hen fusses over her eggs. He watches patrons carefully to make sure that they do not damage the books in any way, and makes sure they all wear special gloves when handling the more fragile volumes. He always has a couple of pairs of these gloves with him—one for his own use, one in case someone forgot their pair.

Baumgardner holds a Masters degree in Precolumbian Studies from Stanford, and is proud to say that his Rare Book Collection includes the original copy of the Codex Candambrensius, a book written by the Aztecs on their metaphysical and spiritual beliefs, occult philosophies, and magic. He considers himself the world’s expert on this manuscript, and is jealous about letting anyone, even world-renowned scholars, look at it.

Despite the fact that he was raised by devoutly Jewish parents, Baumgardner has never been particularly religious—until recently. He has begun to wonder about the possible truth behind Aztec mythology and magic. Could their gods have been real? he asks himself. What makes one God the only god, and the rest simply figments of men’s imaginations? It doesn’t make sense. Worshiping them with human sacrifice isn’t really very sensible, but couldn’t the Aztec gods co-exist with the God or gods still thought to be real by modern men? Likewise the Norse gods, Greek gods, and so forth.

With these thoughts in mind, Baumgardner has been delving deeper and deeper into the symbology of the Codex Candambrensius and other Aztec tomes, hoping to “unlock” the secret of their magic and find out whether it works. He often stays at the library long into the night, studying after everyone else has left. Some of his coworkers have noticed that he’s been acting “strange” lately, but they don’t have any idea what he’s really up to.

“IT’S FASCINATING WHAT SECRETS THESE OLD BOOKS HOLD. ISN’T IT?”

STORY SEEDS

1 Misprint: The Main Library’s biology collection naturally includes quite a few books on the subject of genetics, including some specifically on metahuman genetics. As part of his plot to disrupt the Scions of Caine (see further Story Seeds elsewhere in this book), Markoth has decided to trick Radion into believing that Dr. Franck is not a mutant, so that Radion will attempt to wrest leadership of the organization away from Franck. (Whether Franck is or is not a mutant is irrelevant; what matters is that Radion and the other Scions believe that Franck is not a mutant — if he isn’t, he’s not worthy to lead them.) He plans to refer Radion to certain reference works on genetics in the Main Library’s collection to support his trumped-up arguments. Accordingly, he has visited the Library and used his magic to alter the words on the pages of these books to make it appear that his arguments are valid. That should be enough to convince Radion! Of course, what happens between now and then, if some innocent researcher reads the faux data, doesn’t matter to Markoth.

2 The Fifth World: Eric Baumgardner’s studies into Aztec mysticism are successful—sort of. Instead of teaching himself just enough about Precolumbian magic to determine whether the Aztec gods are real, and if so what they’re like, he accidentally incants an actual spell, and summons one of them! Not a beneficent one like Quetzalcoatl, either, but rather Tezcatlipoca, god of night and dark sorcery. Tezcatlipoca possesses him (so that he can move about undetected, and learn about this new, “Fifth World”) and then begins summoning other Aztec gods so that he can re-establish their reign over the Earth! By the time he has conjured forth two or three of them, the resulting mystic disturbances will be enough to alert the likes of Solitaire, the Lodge, and the Brotherhood Arcane. How they respond is up to the GM; hopefully, the PCs and/or the “good guys” (whoever they are in your campaign) will get there first. The summoned gods are still weak, weak enough to be battled and defeated by mere mortals and sent back from whence they came, but that will not last long.

3 Aiding And Abetting: Jerry Fitzsimmons is the Chief Foreman on the New Library building construction project. He works hard every day and he makes good money. But it ain’t enough. He wants more, even if he has to break the law to get it. He has been surreptitiously ordering extra building supplies (including explosives) and selling them to “interested parties,” such as other contractors and nascent terrorist groups. His scheme is costing city taxpayers millions. But that’s not the worst part—one day a bomb goes off in a BART station, killing two people and injuring a dozen more. It’s a crude bomb, made with dynamite and nails, but lethal enough for all its lack of sophistication. The PCs will have to investigate the explosion, track the evidence back to Fitzsimmons, capture him (not always an easy thing, when he knows the layout of the project much better than they do, and has access to dynamite and power tools), and see that the city is paid back.



CITY HALL

City Hall is the central structure of the Civic Center Plaza; its main entrance is on Polk Street. San Francisco's original City Hall was destroyed by the 1906 earthquake, and the current one was completed in 1915. It is patterned after the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. but designed in the Beaux Arts style. It is rectangular in shape, 400 feet (133 m/y) long and 300 feet (100 m/y) wide. It has two wings, each with a central courtyard. Joining the two wings is the marble-floored Rotunda, which is capped by a large dome modeled after the one on St. Peter's Cathedral in the Vatican. The Rotunda is 186 feet, six inches (62 m/y) tall, and the dome is 301 feet, 5.5 inches tall (100 m/y) — making the City Hall dome taller than the one on the U.S. Capitol by sixteen and a half inches. The dome, which is made of copper and clad with lead, begins 191 feet (64 m/y) off of the floor and is 86 feet (29 m/y) in diameter at its widest point. The dome is supported by eight girders, four 50-ton ones and four 20-ton ones; obviously, damage to a sufficient number of them could cause the dome to collapse.

Arthur Brown, the architect, designed the interior of City Hall to tell a story (or, perhaps more accurately, create a sort of civic morality play; changes in the layout since 1915 have interfered with his storytelling a little, however). As a citizen enters the building, he is confronted by his civic responsibilities — the Tax Collector is located to the south, and the Register of Votes to the north. On the second floor are the offices of the Board of Supervisors (the city council) (with windows facing west), and the Mayor's offices (windows facing east). On the third floor are the municipal courtrooms and the law library. Surrounding all of these offices are those of the city's bureaucracy. The first-floor landing of the grand staircase in the Rotunda is the centerpiece of the building; inaugurations and ceremonies are held here, and on Election Night, the official announcements of vote tallies are made from the landing.

City Hall, rebuilt after the 1989 and 1995 earthquakes was nearly demolished in 1999 by an attack by Eurostar. Seeking to extort money from the city to finance its campaign of world domination, as well as the opportunity to humiliate their greatest enemies, the Champions, on their home turf, Eurostar took City Hall hostage. Mayor Bobby, Luthor Androtti, and other key city personnel were held, along with the building itself. Explosive charges were planted throughout the structure so that it could be destroyed with the press of a button. Then Eurostar dug in to await their money, or their enemies.

They got the latter. The Champions, accompanied by Quantum, came charging in and took on Eurostar toe-to-toe. While Dove, Orchid, Quantum, and the others fought Eurostar, the Marksman, whose sensors had detected the explosives, searched the building for the transmitter so he could render them all harmless at once. He quickly realized that Fenris had kept it with him, and rushed back to the battle, which was taking place in the Rotunda.

The Champions fought their foes, using their superior training and tactics to take out their enemies, one by one. At last only Centurion was left, and rather than attack the Champions directly, he decided to "bring the house down" by ripping out the support girders for the dome! Fortunately for themselves and the city, the Champions were able to stop him and make sure that Eurostar got taken to Stronghold.



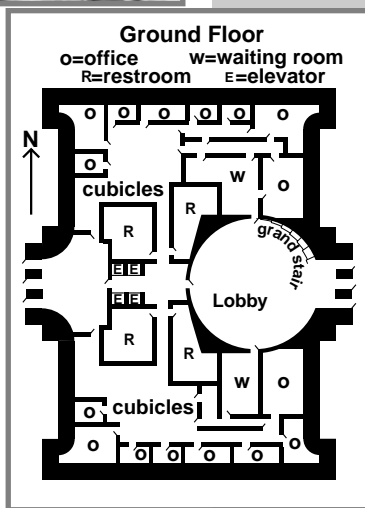
HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors meetings: See your elected officials in action! The Board meets every Tuesday night at 7:00 pm, and all meetings are open to the public.

The Rotunda: With its Corinthian columns, light pink Tennessee granite floors, Beaux Arts ironwork railings, and sunburst clock, the Rotunda is one of the most spectacular interiors in Bay City.

First Landing: Important ceremonies and announcements are held here.

Polk Street Entrance: The pediment is carved with allegorical figures related to the Gold Rush era.



INFORMATION

City Hall Hours: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday; closed for state holidays

Getting There: Muni Metro and BART both have stops near the Civic Center, and the 5 McAllister trolley bus passes by City Hall

Mayor's office hours: Mayor Bobby holds open office hours alternate Wednesdays from 3:00 to 5:00 pm, during which he meets with ordinary citizens to listen to their concerns (this is subject to scheduling emergencies, of course). Appointments are encouraged, but not required.

JUNE LOPEZ

JUNE LOPEZ

Mental 3 Combat 2 Physical 2 Move 2

SKILLS: Expert (Superhumans): 7; Expert (Bay City Government): 6; Professional (Secretary): 6



June Lopez, a pretty Hispanic woman in her early 30s, is Mayor Bobby's Chief Executive Assistant. She is in charge of his office and administrative staff, routine scheduling, and other matters; of course, Deputy Mayor Androtti and the other executive staff schedule the really important appointments.

It's unusual to find a secretary of June's age in such a key administrative position, but she has earned it through hard work, intelligence, and skill. She started out as one of the many secretaries employed by the Mayor's office nearly ten years ago. She soon distinguished herself by the quality of her work and her attention to detail. One step at a time she climbed the office ladder, and in 1998, when former Chief Executive Assistant Adrienne Weathers retired, Lopez was a natural replacement for her.

Lopez's position brings her into contact with a great deal of sensitive information—bids on government contracts, the names of potential political appointees, where certain married city officials are really spending their "all-nighters" (instead of at the office like they tell their spouses), that sort of thing. However, she is the soul of discretion, and never reveals any of this information to anyone—with one exception.

Lopez is an unrepentant superhero gossip junkie. She's been reading *Superhype* and all the other super-mags since she was a young teenager, and she loves the fact that working in the Mayor's office gives her access to information about the comings and goings of the Champions and other city super-heroes and villains. Writing under the pseudonym of "Frisco Rose," she contributes a semi-regular "Super Goings On About Town" gossip column to *Superhype*. Not even Gary Pinchot knows who she is; she's so careful about hiding her identity—which in and of itself is kind of a thrill for her. She knows that doing this could easily cost her her job, but being a super-gossip columnist is so much fun she just can't help it.

"I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT THE MAYOR IS IN A MEETING."

When not on the job (she often works very long hours), Lopez lives by herself in a nice house in Noe Valley which she bought last year. Her other hobby is gardening; her house is filled with potted plants, and her backyard with flowers. On a sunny weekend day you're almost certain to find her outside tending her garden. Her boyfriend, Nestor Camargo, is just as much a superhero fan as she is, but even he doesn't know she's Frisco Rose.

STORY SEEDS

1 Patsies In High Places: Meet Jim Turner. Jim is a big, strong fellow who played fullback for the University of Southern California about twenty-five years ago. Then he served a stint in the Army, and after that went to work for "the government" (don't ask, he won't tell you). About fifteen years ago he moved to Bay City (then San Francisco, of course) and took a job as Special Assistant to the Deputy Mayor. He held that job through a couple of administrations, right into Mayor Bobby's administration, where he worked directly under Luthor Androtti and became good friends with him and Mayor Bobby both. A couple of years ago, Jim ran for, and was elected to, the State Assembly, where he continues to serve to this day. He has been mentioned as a possible Congressional candidate, and is seriously considering running for that position. He still stays in touch with City Hall, and is frequently seen down there meeting with Mayor Bobby or Androtti.

No one at City Hall (or anywhere else, for that matter) has ever associated Jim's arrival in town with the appearance of the vigilante **Nightraven**—which is a good thing for Jim, since it would blow his secret identity wide open. No one has ever figured out that his adopted son, Marcus, was his sidekick **the Rook**, or that his wife Elaine, a whiz-bang electronics designer who works for a firm in Silicon Valley North, designed all of those nifty Nightraven gadgets and weapons for him. Jim retired from superheroing shortly before he ran for the State House due to a bad leg wound he received which made it impossible for him to function effectively as a vigilante. He doesn't have any super-powers, after all; he was just a normal guy who wanted to help people, and he couldn't do that with leg problems. The mantle of Nightraven was turned over to Marcus (see pg. 14).

What Jim Turner is unaware of is that his election to the State House was not entirely legitimate. His campaign unknowingly received a lot of "soft money" direct from VIPER. VIPER doesn't know anything about Turner's crime-fighting persona; they funded him because he seems like a promising pol who'll go places fast. And once he gets there, VIPER is all set to blackmail him—even if he didn't know about the soft money, no one will ever believe that, and he'll be removed from office if VIPER tells about it. The only way to keep his political post is to cooperate with VIPER and advance their agenda.

If VIPER thinks Turner will roll over that easily, though, they've got another thing coming. He's not that sort of guy. Of course, he's not the sort of guy who can take on VIPER all by himself, either. He and Nightraven will make use of his knowledge of the super-hero world to recruit helpers—such as, for example, the PCs . . .

JIM TURNER

Mental 5 Combat 6 Physical 6 Move 5

SKILLS: Martial Arts (Karate); Expert (Bay City Superhumans): 7; Expert (California Government): 5; Expert (Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World): 6; Fighting: 9; Local Expert: (Bay City): 9; Streetwise: 9



ALAMEDA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Located in the heart of Oakland, the Alameda County Courthouse serves the judicial needs of all of Alameda County. The original courthouse, built in 1901, was destroyed just a few years later by the 1906 quake. It was replaced with another courthouse, built from the same blueprints as the first, in 1911. This second courthouse didn't fare any better when the 1995 earthquake came along; it, too, was totally destroyed.

Seeing an opportunity to redesign the building to incorporate new theories regarding the functions of a courthouse, the California Courts Commission hired architect Herbert Brassman to develop a modern judicial services building. Brassman worked quickly, and in the year 2000 the new Alameda County Courthouse opened.

A six-story structure designed in what some have called a "neo-retro" style, the Alameda County Courthouse boasts a wide array of features designed to make it more "user-friendly" for citizens who aren't used to the ins and outs of the justice system.

First and foremost, all records are thoroughly computerized and cross-indexed, with "Help" features to make them accessible to the average user. Along similar lines are the six "Courthouse Tellers" located in the main lobby. The Tellers are essentially electronic kiosks where citizens can access common courthouse services without having to disturb courthouse personnel. Traffic tickets, fines, and child support can be paid here using depository envelopes, similar to making a deposit at an ordinary bank teller. Simple legal documents, such as small claims complaints, complaints for money due, and minor criminal complaints can be prepared on the machine (using both a keyboard and a "Forms & Option List" of common legal terms and phrases). If the Tellers live up to the Courthouse Commission's expectations, they will result in a substantial savings of time and money to the court, in which case they will be installed in other courthouses. If they don't work well, they will be taken out.

Also on the first floor of the courthouse are the offices most used by the public: Register of Deeds (where land records and corporate filings are kept); Child Support (where child support payments are made and received); and the Clerk of Court's office (where complaints are filed and court records kept). Directly across the hall from the Civil Division of the Clerk of Court is a "Liberty Shrine" of plaques displaying copies of famous American historical documents.

Located on the second floor are Small Claims Court (for minor matters such as small amounts of money due, evictions, and minor civil complaints), Traffic Court, and two criminal courtrooms. The third floor holds the rest of the criminal courtrooms, including a special Drug Courtroom for drug cases. Also on the third floor are the domestic courts, where divorce and child custody/support matters are heard. The fourth floor contains all the civil courtrooms, where cases like personal injury, wrongful death, professional malpractice, and business disputes are heard. The fifth and sixth floors contain judges' chambers and the court's administrative offices.

At present, the Chief Judge (and thus, the de facto head of the courthouse) is Randolph Hamilton, who has been on the bench for over 15 years. Judge Hamilton is a dour, no-nonsense fellow with no sense of humor and a perpetual scowl on his face; lawyers hate to appear before him. He tends to take a dim view of superheroes and the cases they are involved in.

HIGHLIGHTS

Courthouse Tellers: Modern-day information systems have reached the courthouse. Use these machines to perform routine courthouse tasks and save yourself time.

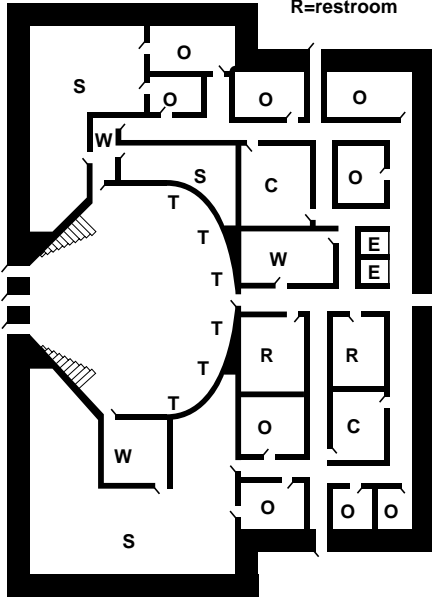
Howard Randleman Memorial Courtroom: Located on the fourth floor, this courtroom is a memorial to Judge Howard Randleman, who was assassinated by VIPER six years ago.

The elaborate hardwood paneling was donated by the Judge's estate.

Clerk of Court's Office: Want to file a lawsuit? Look up court records? Here's where you do it.

Ground Floor

O=office S=document storage W=waiting room
T="teller" terminal C=cubicles E=elevator
R=restroom



INFORMATION

Alameda County Courthouse

Hours: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday; closed for state holidays.

Getting There: The Oakland City Center BART station is two blocks from the courthouse. The bus system stops near the courthouse as well.

Small Claims Court: Held each day on the second floor from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm and 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

Divorce Court: Held each day on the third floor from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

DAWNELLA GREENE**DAWNELLA GREENE****Mental 3 Combat 2 Physical 2 Move 2****SKILLS:** Expert (California Legal Procedure): 6; Expert (Bay Area Judicial Systems): 5; Professional (Court Administrator): 5

Dawnella Greene is the Trial Court Administrator for the Alameda County courts. Her office is responsible for keeping track of the status of cases, scheduling trials and hearings, and maintaining contact with attorneys to determine whether cases have settled, are ready for trial, or need to be continued to a later trial calendar. She has eight people working for her.

Naturally, this position gives Greene considerable power and influence—she's the one who decides, for example, whether a motion filed a few minutes too late will make the next motions calendar, or whether the unfortunate attorney will just have to wait until next week (or month). Needless to say, all of the attorneys who practice at the courthouse make a point of being as friendly and accommodating as possible towards Greene and her office.

In fact, Greene tends to wield more power than most Trial Court Administrators. She views her role as a "proactive" one, and is very involved in the scheduling and settlement process. She attends all of the court-scheduled "Settlement Conferences," and sometimes she is allowed to attend them without a judge being present—in other words, she's in charge and tries to work the parties towards a settlement. She is very aggressive about settling cases, since every case settled is one more case off the docket, and one less worry for her office. Local lawyers snidely refer to her as "Judge Greene" behind her back because of this. However, few of them would deny that her tactics seem to work; Alameda County has a high rate of cases settled and good record for getting cases through the court system with reasonable speed.

Greene, who is in her mid-40s, is married to Bay City attorney Ken Greene. (This does not present a conflict of interest, because Ken Greene is a transactional attorney who handles complex business deals, not a litigator who argues cases in court.) They have three children, Lakisha (age 12), Ken, Jr. (age 8), and Julia (age 5). The family lives in an old, rambling house near Golden Gate Park. Greene is involved with several committees devoted to preserving and beautifying the Park, and she and her family can be found there almost every weekend enjoying themselves.

"NOW JUST CALM DOWN AND BE POLITE. UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU DON'T WANT YOUR CASE ON THE CALENDAR."

STORY SEEDS

1 Guard Duty: A super-villain (preferably one who belongs to a group or would be important to an organization like VIPER) is scheduled to go on trial at the Alameda County Courthouse for his latest crimes (which should be particularly heinous). Guard, of course, has been called in to transport the prisoner and run security for the trial, but in order to make certain that this villain doesn't escape, it has asked some heroes to assist. The heroes will accompany the Guard as it transports the prisoner back and forth from Pier 44, be present in the courtroom during trial, and so forth. This should make the character(s) plenty paranoid about possible escape attempts ("Doesn't that reporter look like the VIPER agent we captured a couple of years ago?" "That car, the one that just cut off the Guard van—surround it with a force bubble!"), but their paranoia will be rewarded if a breakout does occur. Even if everything goes like clockwork, the job will at least garner considerable exposure and positive publicity for the heroes, since it will be televised live (provided, of course, that the heroes do not manage to annoy the media in some way).

2 Old Cases Die Hard: The murder of Judge Howard Randleman six years ago has never been solved, despite the fact that the F.B.I. was called in to assist. Judge Randleman was in the middle of the murder trial of Bobby LaViola, an organized crime figure associated with the Pelissetti crime family from back East. LaViola is thought to be a hitman for the Pelissetti family. Halfway through the trial, Judge Randleman was found shot to death in his chambers—despite the fact that metal detectors are used at all court entrances. A mistrial was declared and a new trial started in front of Judge Leech (whom several law enforcement figures believe is corrupt). This resulted in LaViola's acquittal after several controversial rulings by the judge. The PCs, particularly those who are known to have detective or forensics skills, may be asked to carry on the investigation by the F.B.I. or Judge Randleman's estate. Evidence gathered so far indicates that super-powers may have been involved. Unusual energy traces were detected after the murder which the F.B.I. believes indicate that the killer used teleportation powers (not technology) to get inside the courthouse with a gun. What they can't figure out is why someone with teleportation powers would need a gun at all, since presumably the killer could just teleport something into the judge and kill him that way. The PCs, as superhumans themselves, may have perspectives on the case that the F.B.I. investigators lack.

3 Teller Madness: One day the Courthouse Tellers begin to go wild, depositing money into the wrong accounts, handing out free cash, and drafting form complaints with crude, insulting language. Preliminary investigation shows that a computer cracker has worked his way into them somehow—and that he seems to be using the PC team's base computer! What's going on?



BAY CITY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Bay City International Airport (BCI) has risen from the ashes of the old San Francisco International Airport (SFO). Not only is it one of the largest airports in the world, but it is also one of the busiest, ranking fifth in the United States and seventh in the world.

Before the Great Quake of 1995, the city had planned a major expansion of the airport. Unfortunately, the airport sustained severe damage during the quake, and the funds set aside for expansion had to be used for repair instead. Fortunately, the city has set aside funds for expansion since that time, and the Bay City International Airport is significantly larger than its predecessor.

Because of its large size and the 42 major airlines which operate out of Bay City International, there are five terminal buildings which surround a central parking structure like a horseshoe. Parking is not something one really wants to do at the airport, as parking in the 14 story parking garage is rather expensive and sometimes hard to come by.

Since Bay City requires 1% of any public building's cost to be spent on art, and since the airport cost a lot of money to rebuild, the airport has quite an extensive collection of paintings, drawings, and sculptures. Parts of this may be seen on display in any of the terminal buildings, with different exhibits coming throughout the year. It's not quite an art museum in itself, but it can come close. Travelers often cite this as their favorite thing about the airport.

Facilities at the airport are very modern. Moving walkways, touchpad computer maps, e-ticket check-in, and the like are found throughout the airport. No matter where you are, the monorail is close by, so nowhere in the airport is too far to walk. Of course, Bay City International boasts the usual retinue of shops, including clothing stores, book shops, coffee stands, restaurants, bars, and the like. It also offers the usual bevy of taxi services and vehicle rentals.

Airport security is extremely tight. Instead of the usual single checkpoint, all passengers must go through two. The first is in the usual place, between ticketing and the main terminal building, and the second is between the main terminal building and the concourse. Unlike many other airports, Bay City International does not rush people through checkpoints when there's a line; they take the time to make sure that everyone passing through is truly safe. They even go so far as to make certain that the bags you leave baggage claim with are actually yours. If you're a traveler leaving from or passing through Bay City International, plan on spending a little extra time. In addition to the checkpoints and the usual baggage scans, Bay City International boasts a large police department.

It would be nice to say that Bay City International's security was so tight that it was airtight. This would indeed be wishful thinking. A fair amount of drugs and other smuggled contraband still make their way through the halls of Bay City International Airport. Evidence has come to light that several members of the security force and the customs department have accepted bribes to look the other way. The entirety of both department's staffs are currently under examination, with Guardian himself spearheading the effort. The costumed hero is bound and determined to weed out every last iota of corruption within his domain.



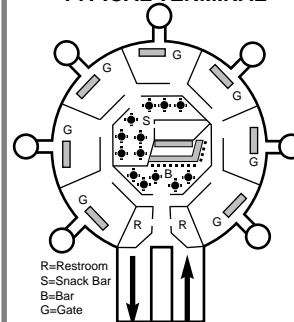
HIGHLIGHTS

Full Service Airport: Bay City International hosts 42 major airlines, in addition to many of the small ones as well. Facilities are ultra-modern, with transportational and visitor services.

Art Collection: Bay City International holds a large collection of fine art, on display throughout the terminal building at all times of year.

Security: For the traveler's safety, Bay City International employs a large and highly-trained security staff, headed by the Guardian.

TYPICAL TERMINAL



INFORMATION

Location: Off Highway 101, Mid-Bay City

Getting There: BART is the best way to get to the airport, via the station located in the North Terminal. There are also many airport taxi services available in Bay City.

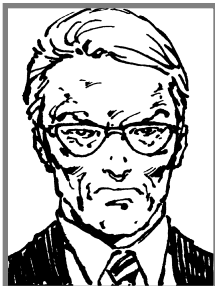
Phone Number: (650) 555-7767 (Main Airport), (650) 555-7878 (Terminal Directory Assistance)

Hours: 24 hours a day, seven days a week

HARMON THREADGILL**HARMON THREADGILL**

Mental 6 Combat 2 Physical 2 Move 2

Skills: Bureaucrats: 7; Expert (Bay City Airport): 8



Mr. Threadgill is the man most directly responsible for the day to day operations of the Bay City International Airport. Normally, one would expect the Chief Administrator of a facility such as the airport to be a typical suit, which Harmon is not. In fact, he looks more like somebody's grandfather—the curmudgeon sort, not the smiling, warm sort. His face looks grizzled, with neatly-cut gray hair and heavy-framed spectacles. The way he looks most of the time, it appears as if his frown was permanently carved into his face. His brown eyes are piercing, to the point of seeming unnatural. He's usually dressed in a ruffled suit, with bad ties and mismatched socks.

Harmon is a no-nonsense guy, to the point of being pig-headed. He worked hard to get where he is today, so he knows what's what and he isn't about to let anyone tell him differently. Most of his employees are quite afraid to cross him, since Mr. Threadgill has no problem firing those he sees as incompetent. Fortunately, he's very competent himself, running the airport as smoothly as can be expected.

As might be expected, Mr. Threadgill is not well-liked by the airport's employees, but he is respected. He plays hard and is tough, but fair. Having been in charge of the airport since the mid-eighties, it seems as if he's part of the establishment, and it appears that it will stay that way until he chooses to retire.

Harmon is secretly prejudiced against paranormals, hating them more out of jealousy than anything else. Thus, he's been resistant towards Guardian's demands whenever he can, without impeding what he also feels is a necessary investigation. He's trying very hard to keep Guardian quiet, so he can let his already overworked Public Relations staff keep this situation from exploding into a full-fledged fiasco.

Harmon lives with his wife, Clara, on Nob Hill. He's not a very social person, preferring to spend time with his wife, whom it seems is the only person he behaves lovingly toward. His son, Timothy, works as a systems administrator for the city.

This investigation business is quite the burr in the shorts to Harmon. He's been raging like a bull since it started. Although he accepts that Guardian is an excellent security chief, he hates the hero's overzealous attitude and dramatic means. Not only that, Harmon is secretly prejudiced against paranormals, hating them more out of jealousy than anything else.

"DON'T TELL ME WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE!"

Harmon lives with his wife, Clara, on Nob Hill. He's not a very social person, preferring to spend time with his wife, whom it seems is the only person he behaves lovingly toward. His son, Timothy, works as a systems administrator for the city.

STORY SEEDS

1 Covering His Tracks: This plot at Bay City International involves the current investigation. Implications have arisen that several officials have accepted bribes to allow illegal contraband onto flights or to get them through customs. This is by no means an organized syndicate, but many are participating individually.

Guardian has called in federal agents to investigate United States Customs, while he himself is conducting a witch-hunt of his own security staff. The paranormal is absolutely rabid about the situation, and is perhaps a bit too zealous.

Ralph Sandhurst, a Customs Inspector, is as dirty as the day is long. However, he's not stupid and is not about to get busted by some zealous stuffed-shirt. So, he's been biding his time, making busts here and there, and has turned over a few of his men as sacrificial lambs. But still the situation persists, so he needs to do something more drastic.

Sandhurst knows that the federal agents have just about made their quota and are getting sick of chasing down bad leads. He figures that with a little time, a little misdirection, and maybe even a little money from some friends, they'll lay off very soon. Unfortunately, this leaves Guardian, who isn't about to lay off any time soon for any other reason short of a small tactical nuke.

Fortunately, Sandhurst knows a few people who truly need his services. The last thing these businessmen would like to see is their guaranteed safe route cut off by a costumed crusader. So, the attempts on Guardian's life have begun. With Guardian out of the way, Sandhurst is sure that investigations will turn to his disappearance and murder and that things will quiet down much more quickly than otherwise.

2 Spiritual Works: It's amazing what some people find in art. One piece can mean something to one person, and something completely different to another. Currently, the airport has an exhibit of surrealistic pieces on display in the east concourse. One of these is a painting of a normal airport scene, except all the people cast shadows the wrong way and are missing eyes.

The man who created this painting, if researched, is currently residing in the mental ward at Bay City Memorial Hospital. It appears that he believes to have been possessed by spirits, who spoke to him in his head and guided his work. He is, of course, quite insane (to a point).

Voices were indeed speaking to him in his head, but they were very real and very physical. A young paranormal, David Shane a.k.a. Stupor, created a method by which a painting could implant post-hypnotic suggestions in its viewers, which could be reactivated at a later time by telepathic cue. The painting in question is the fruit of his efforts. In order for the power to work, someone must stare at the painting for at least a minute, but the bizarre images presented often have that effect.

So, now there are several people who have traveled through the airport, who are subconsciously waiting to do David's bidding. What does he have in mind?



NEUROSCAPE COMPUTER SYSTEMS, INC.

Founded in 1996 by Peter Stephenson, Neuroscape Computer Systems, Inc. ("NCS") is a high-tech firm located in mid-Bay City, just south of the San Bruno Mountains. It occupies a large building (too large, really) that formerly belonged to a company called Gerhardt Manufacturing (maker of fine computer casings and other molded metal and plastic products). When Gerhardt went bankrupt in the mid-1990s, Stephenson used his savings to purchase the building and establish NCS.

Stephenson himself is something of a renegade computer genius, well-known for his groundbreaking systems design work at companies like Henderson International and Bay Systems. He is the holder of over a dozen patents, several of which bring him a substantial income and allow him to do things like buy buildings and start companies from scratch.

NCS began its corporate life as a maker of software and computers which operated biomedical technology, primarily MRI-related systems and other devices used by neurologists. It struggled along in this field for a few years, making money but never a lot of money and not establishing any particular niche or position in the market. The ideas that Stephenson started out with for revolutionizing the field, while intriguing and potentially very profitable in theory, did not work out very well in practice. Without a breakthrough, the company was doomed to a slow death.

That breakthrough came just a few days after the end of the Proprietor War, but it wasn't what anyone expected. Working late one night on software designed to help model the pathways of the human brain (to assist neurologists, researchers, and behavioral scientists with their work), Stephenson was struck by a revelation about the relation between the human brain and computer systems. What it was, exactly, he's never told anyone. But the very next day he established a new Artificial Intelligence research branch of NCS and began hiring what would become a total of twenty-five new employees to work on AI projects.

Led by Stephenson, the Artificial Intelligence division has made astounding progress in the creation of an AI computer in little more than a year. Their main project, an AI nicknamed "Alken" (after the nursery rhyme character Aiken Drum), has already reached what Stephenson refers to as "Stage II consciousness." His subordinates don't really comprehend what he means by that—his explanations don't make a lot of sense—but they do understand that once Alken reaches "Stage IV consciousness," he will be "fully intelligent" (however Stephenson defines that term). None of them are quite sure what Stephenson's purpose is in designing and building Alken, but all of them are thrilled to be involved with such challenging, groundbreaking work. They're also paid really well, so none of them is going anywhere anytime soon.

The corporate culture at NCS is not what most people expect from a high-tech company these days; it's much stiffer and more "uptight" than the typical small computer firm. Stephenson seems intent on maintaining some sort of order or pattern than no one else understands. For example, all workers are expected to dress for an office environment (nice pants and button-down shirts for men, appropriate dress for women). Superiors are to be addressed by proper titles or last names, not by first names or nicknames (more than a few managers let their underlings break this rule regularly, though).

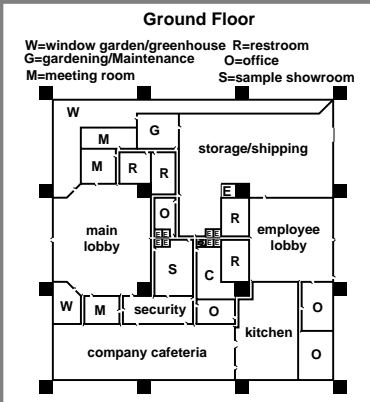


HIGHLIGHTS

AI Development Laboratory: Alken's home, and the place where you're most likely to find Stephenson at any given moment. It is a large laboratory filled with advanced electronic equipment that will mean nothing to anyone who doesn't have a Ph.D. in Computer Science or Neurology.

Neurotechnology Testing Laboratory: NCS's biomedical products are tested here. There is a large MRI machine and several related pieces of medical equipment.

Company Cafeteria: A large, well-stocked eating facility. Employees on lunch and coffee breaks will always be found here.



INFORMATION

Getting There: There are no BART or bus stations anywhere near NCS; you'll need a car.

New York Stock Exchange listing: NeuCS.

Tours: NCS allows small groups in to tour its facilities (why Stephenson started this, no one knows). Tours for groups up to 6 people can be arranged by appointment.

PETER STEPHENSON**PETER STEPHENSON****Mental 10 Combat 3 Physical 2 Move 3**

Skills: Computer Programming: 8; Hacking: 8; Science (Neurology): 7; Science (Computer Design): 7; Professional (Entrepreneur): 6; Wealth



An acknowledged genius when it comes to computer systems engineering and design, Stephenson has always had something of a well-deserved reputation as a renegade and an oddball. For example, when he was working at Bay Systems, he once cracked into the security computers from his desktop workstation and reprogrammed all the voice access monitors so that they would only work if the user announced his zodiac sign after his name.

This being the case, no one was overly surprised when he left his high-paying job at Bay Systems to start his own company. Somehow an idea popped into his head about specialized computer software for neurological equipment, and wouldn't let him go until he'd founded NSCS. Switching NSCS's focus from neurological apps to artificial intelligence caused a little more of a shock among the Bay Area high-tech community, but hey, when you've got the money, why not do what you want, right?

What no one has ever realized about Peter Stephenson, not even Stephenson himself, is that he is a mutant. His mutant power is basically an extremely high level of intelligence, coupled with other neurological changes which make him extremely adept at understanding, building, and using computers and similar devices. His intelligence, and his mutant abilities in general, were increased at least threefold when Stephenson was struck by some of the Wildstrike energy as he worked by himself late at night at NSCS. With his increased intelligence came the realization that he could make artificial intelligence work—he knew just what he had to do, and he's set about doing it.

Accompanying the expansion of Stephenson's intellectual capabilities are changes in his behavior. His ultra-efficient mind wants to make everything around him logical and orderly, while his ordinary, emotional, human self wants things to be more, well, friendly—hence the many odd and disturbing changes in his management style and personality. Subconsciously, his mind is at war with itself, on the one hand wanting to radically alter his environment to make it more “computer-like,” and on the other seeking a more “organic” approach. The internal stress the conflict is causing Stephenson may soon begin to affect his health.

“WE CAN INCREASE THE STORAGE CAPACITY BY A FACTOR OF FIVE. THAT'S THE NEXT STEP TOWARDS STAGE III.”

STORY SEEDS

1 Alken Implications: Stephenson doesn't have any particular use in mind for Alken—he just wants to build it. The potential effects, both technological and social, of true artificial intelligence haven't occurred to him. He just thinks of it as a big lab experiment, essentially. Sure, he can reel off an enormous list of applications for AI, dozens and dozens of ways it could be used to improve the lot of mankind, but the social and spiritual side of it has escaped him completely. Assuming he is successful, they won't escape a lot of other people—Congressional subcommittees, religious organizations, anti-speciesism activists, and hopefully the player character heroes in the campaign. How would the PCs deal with, for example, a riot at NSCS by religious fanatics intent on destroying the “soulless machine”? How would they answer Alken when it asks them what the difference is between Good and Evil?

2 Silicon Snakes: An even more interesting question is, how would VIPER deal with a machine like Alken? Any time they can get their hands on an advanced computer system, they'll take it, and no questions asked. One of Stephenson's AI Division scientists has been on VIPER's payroll for some time now. He feeds his masters information about Stephenson's agenda, the Division's research, and Alken's progress toward true sentience. At present, Alken is really only a highly advanced expert system, but when he reaches Stage III consciousness, he will become something more than that. Then VIPER has to decide whether to strike, or bide its time waiting for Stage IV. Of course, the PCs may hear about Alken and realize what a tempting target it is, or find out from one of their snitches that VIPER is spying on the project. A confrontation between VIPER and the heroes at NSCS could present many interesting dilemmas. Should the heroes take the chance to smash Alken and delay Stephenson's work as much as possible? Should they request Alken's aid in stopping VIPER, and if so, what will the consequences be? And even if VIPER is defeated, what if they manage to make off with project notes and data files—will the Serpentine network's capabilities suddenly be augmented, to the heroes' great regret?

3 Brain Drain: A hero who has a brain tumor or other neurological problems, or knows someone who does, may turn to NSCS for help. NSCS's latest iteration of its neurological analysis software may be just the key the hero needs to unlock the cure for himself (or his friend). What will ultra-intelligent Peter Stephenson request from the hero as compensation—or, put another way, what is the hero willing to do to get the potential cure? For a more traditional twist, suppose a villain (Lady Blue might be a good choice) needs the cure and kidnaps Stephenson (or his family) in order to get it. The PCs would then need to rescue the eccentric computer programmer.



THE PACIFIC EXCHANGE

Located in Bay City, the Pacific Exchange is California's premiere securities Exchange. Formerly known as the Pacific Stock Exchange, the PCX not only deals with basic stocks, it is a force to be reckoned with in the options trading market. (For the uninitiated, options represent the ability to purchase the option to buy securities at a set price or the option to sell securities at a set price. Although more risky than regular securities trading, options can be more lucrative.)

While not as visible as the New York Stock Exchange, the Pacific Exchange is the fastest growing options exchange in the country, ranking third largest in the stock options market around the world. Options trading at the Pacific Exchange has grown more than 175% in the last five years, and has been steadily increasing for the last ten.

The Pacific Exchange has added more than 20 new stock options this year alone, in addition to over 200 in the last five years. It trades in more than 850 companies, including leaders such as Microsoft, COMPAQ, Henderson International, and PanStar. Additionally, it also deals with the Dow Jones Taiwan Stock Index, allowing its clients to invest in quickly growing overseas companies.

The Pacific Exchange Building in North Bay City underwent serious reconstruction after the quake of 1995. Bringing in a corporate image firm, the powers that be decided that while they were changing the PCX building, they'd also go about changing their public image. Changing the exchange's name to its current form, creating new logos and becoming more focused on options, and a massive advertising campaign were the most major changes made during this time. Anyone living during 1996-1997 will remember the Pacific Exchange's marketing program, "PCX: Stocks & Options."

Formerly, the PCX building was a marvel of 1930's art deco construction. Now, it looks like an office building, and nothing more. The inside, however, is a different story, filled with the latest in telecommunications equipment and high-tech computers. The brokers and traders at the Pacific Exchange make sure that they are kept abreast of the most recent information, assuring quality service for their customers and hopefully a return on their investments.

Currently, Walter Kaiser is the Chairman and CEO of the Pacific Exchange. Many in the business community remember Walter from his days as CFO for PanStar, and know that he is a man with an eye for investment. He's the kind of guy who isn't happy unless he's gained a 50% return on his investments, and usually gets it. The SEC seems confident in his abilities and comfortable with him at the helm.

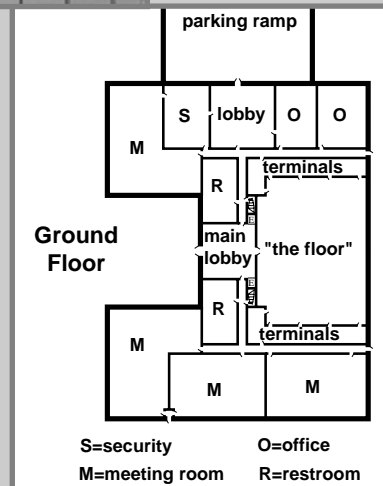
Between the Pacific Exchange's previous relative anonymity and its incredible growth over the last ten years, it has become a prime target for individuals and organizations with more nefarious goals. Chief among these is VIPER, particularly Gerald Fleetwood. Utilizing VIPER's finances, agents can play the options game, making huge amounts of money off both insider trading and stock price manipulation. VIPER can go so far as to falsely make its front businesses look extremely profitable, thereby attracting investment. Furthermore, unless a company is particularly successful, VIPER can utilize its resources to cause stock values to plummet, thereby ruining the firm. The specifics of this manipulation are quite technical, and as such will not be discussed here. Suffice it to say that VIPER financial gurus have it all figured out, and are not about to get caught doing it.



HIGHLIGHTS

Options Trading: The Pacific Exchange is the fastest growing options market in the United States, ranking third in the world. The PCX's options trading has grown more than 175% in the last five years, and has added more than 200 new options in that same time.

Stock Trading: The Pacific Exchange deals in more than 850 companies, including giants such as Microsoft, COMPAQ, Henderson International, and PanStar.



INFORMATION

Location: 155 Sansome Street, North Bay City

Getting There: The Montgomery BART station is only a few blocks south, and Muni has lines that run up Sansome Street.

Phone: (415) 555-9941 (Main Reception)

Hours: 7:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

WALTER KAISER**WALTER KAISER**

Mental 6 Combat 2 Physical 2 Move 2

Skills: Business: 7; Expert (The Stock Market): 8; Wealth



Walter Kaiser, Chairman of CEO of the PCX, is as slick as he looks. This middle-aged man seems as if he has a personal tailor and hairdresser on hand at his home. If you were to spend any time talking to him, you could easily guess that he's a corporate shark—something in the way his eyes light up at the prospect of money. This might put some ill at ease, but his air of professionalism compensates nicely.

He has had a long and distinguished career, including stays at Microsoft and Shell Oil, not the least of which was his ten year term as Chief Financial Officer for the multi-billion dollar PanStar Industries. During his stay, the company enjoyed greater profits than it ever had before, at least from its legal or quasi-legal operations. Walter knew full well what was going on, and "bent" a few laws himself in pursuit of the almighty dollar.

Walter Kaiser likes to win. In fact, he never loses. He is calculating and methodical, and anticipates every possible outcome of every possible plan or action. If something goes wrong, Mr. Kaiser's dangerous temper comes out to play, heads roll, and the situation is rectified to his liking. He has a very long memory and has no difficulty holding grudges.

Just a few years ago, Walter was approached with a "proposal" from none other than the criminal organization VIPER. They offered him the top position with the newly refurbished PCX and enough money to purchase most small African nations. How could he refuse? In return, he participates in patently illegal securities transactions and information. Fortunately, he's a good enough liar and a smart enough man that he has not yet attracted the attention of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Walter keeps a low profile. He rarely talks to the press, is rarely present in common areas of the exchange, and lives a very private life. Considering his current position, this is a wise choice. He prefers to sit back in his large office, and deal through the various VIPER plants or employees and brokers whom he has blackmailed into service. Walter has shown quite a knack for this kind of work, and it only seems a matter of time before Mr. Fleetwood moves Walter on to bigger and better things. After all, the Pacific Exchange is but one small part of a much larger picture, and good help is hard to find.

A workaholic, Walter never had time for a family, or much of anything else personal, in his life. He currently lives with his tropical fish in an expensive home in Pacific Heights.

**"WE CAN'T
LOSE"**

STORY SEEDS

1 SEcrets: Walter Kaiser is quite the enterprising businessman. He's conquered financial empires as the Chief Financial Officer for PanStar, and now he's heading up the Pacific Exchange, a rapidly growing options exchange. Furthermore, VIPER's paying him well to participate in some less savory activities.

Unfortunately, his luck has worn thin. After a particularly big payoff for one of VIPER's front companies, the Michael's Credit Firm, and the destruction of one Origin Biogenetics Lab (devastated through stock manipulation), the Securities and Exchange Commission has come around to investigate possible fraud. This will make headlines. Even though the SEC is about as forgiving as the Internal Revenue Service, Walter Kaiser isn't worried yet.

It shouldn't be too difficult for Walter and VIPER to maintain a facade of normalcy while the SEC investigates. The records are clean, and trading will undoubtedly fall during their stay. Thus, they can manipulate things so that everything seems normal, and that their trading is all on the up and up.

Enterprising and financially minded characters may take notice of this. Even though the SEC might find some abnormalities in the past, this will not enough to warrant any action. On the other hand, many paranormals have dealt with VIPER before and are perfectly aware of its capabilities. Furthermore, paranormals have the wherewithal to dig deeper than the SEC, which has a lot to do and is regulated by the United States government.

If the investigation is done properly, the character may be able to nail Walter and get one step closer to the heart of VIPER's financial operations. On the other hand, if things get too hairy during their investigation, provided the SEC is through, Walter Kaiser may be "transferred" by VIPER under the guise of a better job offer. After all, the Pacific Exchange is just one small part of a larger game.

2 Stock Quotes From Tomorrow: Daryl Stratton is a stock broker with an excellent record. He seems to give the best advice to his clients of any broker in the city, providing them with excellent returns on their investments. Through other brokers, Daryl has made a tidy sum playing the securities game himself. It is as if he has the golden touch.

The truth is that Daryl is a paranormal, with the unusual gift of precognition. He receives visions of the stock market, and where its chips will fall. Thus, he's got a pretty good idea of which stocks and options will be profitable, and which ones will be bad investments. Not a bad gift for a broker to have!

The SEC is about to investigate Daryl for insider trading. Of course, he'll come up completely clean. He's never been party to insider trading, and never will. They'll be forced to simply accept that Daryl is a first-rate broker, able to predict the market with extraordinary accuracy, and walk away. Daryl will become famous.

So, the question remains is the use of paranormals power like this illegal or unethical? How long will it be before more powerful organizations take notice of this young prodigy?



BAY CITY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Built after the Great Quake of 1995, Bay City Memorial Hospital was created to be among the finest medical facilities in the United States. Many of the best doctors and specialists were wooed from other hospitals, giving Bay City Memorial an instant reputation for greatness. Additionally, a ludicrous amount of money was spent to acquire every sort of medical machine available, including some which were still experimental.

It's too bad that the hospital's creators didn't spend more money on the appearance of the place. Rather than appearing safe, welcoming, or futuristic, Bay City Memorial looks institutional, as if it were built in the 1950s or '60s. It is a large and foreboding place, looking more like a maximum security prison, than a hospital. Frankly, Bay City Memorial looks oppressive, both inside and out. Fortunately, most consider this problem a minor one and a small sacrifice to make for superior medical care.

Bay City Memorial Hospital holds an excellent reputation overall, but several of their clinics are especially renowned. First is their heart clinic. Here, they perform the best, safest, and most innovative heart surgeries. These procedures save many patients from cardiac disease, clogged arteries, and the like. Second is the Neurosurgery clinic. With the most talented surgeons in the field, Bay City Memorial is in first place for limb reattachment and the healing of nerve damage, including highly experimental spine surgery to cure the paralyzed. Third is their Oncology unit, providing the newest (some experimental) treatments for cancer. These three clinics alone put Bay City Memorial on the medical community's map, regardless of anything else.

In addition, Bay City Memorial is a research hospital, holding staff for no other purpose than pioneering new medical practices. Thus, patients (especially in the Heart, Neurosurgery, and Oncology clinics) are often offered experimental treatment, should they desire it. Bay City Memorial is heavily monitored by the federal government, as a result.

Recently, Bay City Memorial has come under attack. The hospital's health care may be first-rate, but the staff's bedside manner is nothing less than abysmal. Doctors are rarely available for patient consultation, nurses are snippy and rough (and many do not speak decent English), and the meals look and taste like prison food. These things have only gotten worse in recent years with the medical community's attitude toward insurance. If a patient holds insurance from an HMO, corporate plan, or the like, odds are that they will be treated poorly and rushed out the door. If a patient's condition or recovery period normally warranted a stay of seven days, they'd be discharged in four or five. Why? Because these insurance plans don't pay as much to the hospitals and doctors. There have even been cases of patients being "overlooked" or turned away when they have no health insurance.

Because of these problems, Bay City Memorial is drawing legal fire. Citizens and the government alike are charging the hospital with unethical behavior, and it looks like heads are going to roll. It also appears that the hospital will be losing several class action suits. Bay City Memorial will undoubtedly stay open, but will definitely have to change the way they've been doing things.



HIGHLIGHTS

Most advanced medical facilities on the West Coast.

Full emergency response teams for the entirety of the Bay City area.

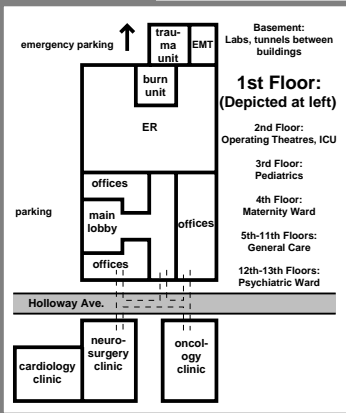
Full treatment facilities, including Trauma Unit, Burn Unit, and Psychiatric Ward.

World leaders in Heart, Neurology, and Oncology treatment and research.

Top-notch research staff, pioneering new treatments, procedures, and medications.

Proving ground for many experimental procedures.

All major medical insurance plans accepted.



INFORMATION

Location: 1901 Holloway Avenue, Mid-Bay City

Getting There: Muni lines run to Holloway Ave.

Phones: 911 (Emergency), (650) 555-4475 (Main Reception)

Office Hours: Main and medical offices open Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm.

DR. TERENCE SENECAUT**DR. TERENCE SENECAUT****Mental 7 Combat 2 Physical 2 Move 3****SKILLS:** Paramedic: 6; Research: 8; Professional (Doctor): 6

The renowned psychiatrist Dr. Terence Senecaut is currently the Head of Research at Bay City Memorial Hospital, a position he has occupied since its inception in 1995. Dr. Senecaut is best known for his ground-breaking treatment of Schizophrenics, particularly those suffering from Undifferentiated Schizophrenia. Currently, he has pioneered two new drugs (Pherenicol and Iodane) which are awaiting FDA approval. These two drugs promise to revolutionize the treatment of Catatonic, Disorganized, and Undifferentiated Schizophrenics.

The appearance of Dr. Senecaut evokes images of the traditional, trustworthy family doctor. An older man, he is often seen in his lab coat wearing an unassuming tie. His hair is grey and only starting to thin, which combined with his glasses and caring smile might remind one of their father or grandfather. Dr. Senecaut is a pleasant and jolly fellow; one who frequently raises the spirits of those around him.

Of course if one were to dig into the good doctor's past, one might find that he was nearly expelled from Harvard Med on ethical grounds as a young student. The details of this incident are sketchy as it happened about forty years ago, but it appears to have involved unauthorized, radical human experimentation. Obviously, he was acquitted of the charges and allowed to continue his education. Since that time, he has shown nothing but excellent, ethical treatment of his patients and has gained a shining reputation. If confronted with this, Dr. Senecaut will not expound upon the details of the situation, but will simply admit to his wrongdoings, attribute them to the rashness of youth, and point out his service record since that time. Everyone makes mistakes, and no one at this time would be ready to hold this against him.

Above all things, public image aside, Dr. Terence Senecaut is a man of science. It is his passion and his religion. He believes that nothing should stand in the way of scientific discovery and experimentation, and, in truth, may actually advocate radical and potentially unethical experimentation as long as it is done covertly. His image must stay pristine, otherwise he would not be able to continue to pursue his goals.

As of late, Dr. Senecaut has taken an avid interest in the psychologies and physiologies of paranormals. Since he has little in the way of outlet for this pursuit at the hospital, he is attempting to gain a position at ORI. He knows that they have the best opportunities and facilities to study paranormals, and hopes his accomplishments will quickly earn him a fellowship.

**"WE MUST
FORCE
AHEAD!"**

STORY SEEDS

1 Ethics: As presented, Dr. Terence Senecaut only has mildly questionable methods. If you desire, this could easily be taken one step further. With his position, his knowledge, and his character, Dr. Senecaut could be taken to the full lengths of a dangerous doctor and an excellent madman.

Deep within a sub-basement of the Bay City Memorial Hospital, there exists a very secret, hidden research laboratory. It is here that Dr. Senecaut and a dedicated team of hand-picked sciences do their work. Their goal is at least partially noble—to cure disease, illness, and infirmity and to give people a better quality of life. Of course, the tag line of "at any cost" should be added. Their methods are questionable, and they actively advocate accelerated human testing.

So far, Dr. Senecaut's secret experiments have involved everything from experimental surgery to genetic manipulation. He's an odd combination of Mother Teresa, Dr. Jekyll, and Dr. Moreau. He has no problem with the kidnapping and torture, in the name of science, of indigents, unwanted, or even Wildstrickers. Few survive his experimentation, and those that have wish they hadn't.

This lab and the kind of people who work there are the kind of scientists who only ask the question of *whether* they could, and never *if* they should. They're justified and fanatical in their own minds.

Because of all the turmoil within the administration currently, patients have gone missing from their wards. Those who are scheduled for transfer, those with no immediate family, and those who are severely disturbed have fallen prey to several of Dr. Senecaut's "cures."

Perhaps someone one of the characters knows is among those missing in action. Or perhaps they've heard the rumors among the street people of white vans and men with lab coats who come to take them away, deep into the night.

2 Breakthrough: Dr. Senecaut has finally gained a research position at the Odyssey Research Institute. He's spent a great deal of time pouring over the existing paranormal research data, and spending long hours deliberating on his own. Within two months, his research will pay off, although he's uncertain of the results.

From a synthesis of brain chemicals from certain paranormals, acetylcholine, and a variety of other organic compounds, he's secretly developed Supprizone. He originally intended it to be an inhibiting drug to allow burgeoning paranormals control over their wild powers as they learned to use them. But now he's not so sure. You see, when introduced into the bloodstream in sufficient doses, Supprizone will knock out all of a natural paranormal's powers (natural being those who have inherently developed those powers, not technology, magic, or the like) for a short time.

Dr. Senecaut is not yet anxious to share his findings. What if an organization like VIPER were to get their hands on Supprizone? Or what about the Guard? The drug could be useful for law enforcement, but it has many more nefarious purposes.



OAKLAND CITY CENTER BART STATION

Located just a couple of blocks away from the Alameda County Courthouse, the Oakland City Center/12th Street BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) Station links Oakland and Alameda County to the rest of Bay City. It was originally opened in 1974, when BART began transbay service. It is the only underground BART station in the Oakland area. Although no larger or more efficient than many other BART stations, the Oakland City Center station quickly became something of a tourist attraction because of the beautiful murals painted on four of its walls.

Commissioned by the City of Oakland, each of the four murals depicted a scene from the history of the Bay area or the West in general. These scenes ranged from events that happened in the 1870s to things that occurred in 1967. They were acknowledged as masterpieces of public art.

The four original murals were "Spike," which depicted the completion of the transcontinental railroad by the use of the golden spike, the remarkable "A Few Seconds Before Apocalypse," which showed a panorama view of San Francisco just before the 1906 earthquake, "Exposition," a celebration of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition, and "Long Strange Trip," a commemoration of the "Summer of Love" and some of the notable musical stars from that period. The detailing and accuracy that went into these works of art was astounding.

Sadly, all four of these beautiful murals were destroyed when the 1995 earthquake caused the station to collapse. The heroic efforts of local firefighters prevented any commuters from being killed in the collapse (though many were trapped for hours), but the murals were damaged beyond repair. They still exist in pictures in art textbooks and tourists' photo albums, at least.

When the Oakland City Center station was rebuilt (completed in full, 1997), the citizens who used it clamored for new murals to replace those that had been destroyed. Bay City agreed, and hired four talented artists to create them. The theme was to be "Super-heroes"—a not surprising choice, given the prevalence of paranormals in the Bay area. All of the murals were completed by 2001. Most folks agree that they aren't as good as the old ones, but they still entertain commuters.

The first mural is called, "Rage." It is a scene from a battle between Grond and Goliath, and vividly portrays the full fury of the combatants.

The second mural, "Sacrifice," was created with help from the Marksman, the only surviving hero to have been on the team with Mercenary. It depicts Mercenary's final moment, when he sacrificed his life to kill King Cobra and decimate VIPER.

The third mural, "Time In A Bottle," shows several heroes from the early 1980s fighting Dr. Destroyer in an (ultimately successful) effort to derail his attempt to create a time machine and use it to alter the course of history so that he would be mankind's unquestioned ruler.

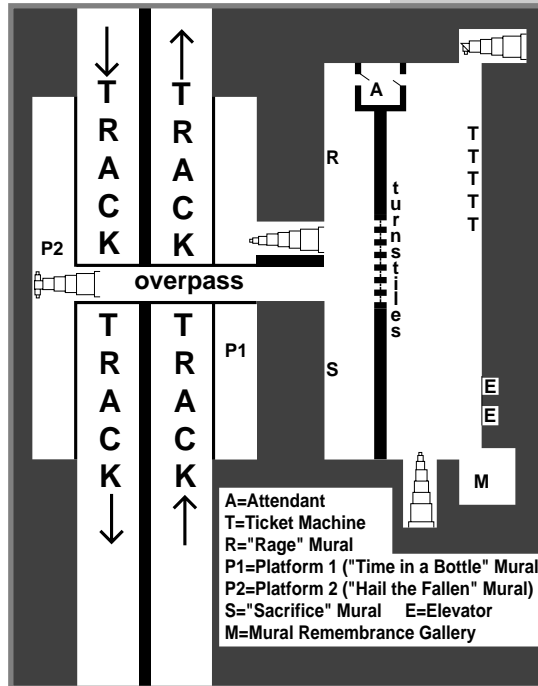
The fourth mural, last to be completed, is entitled "Hail The Fallen." A scene from the inside of the Great Dome (again as told to the artist by Marksman), it shows the heroes of Bay City in combat against the Proprietor.

HIGHLIGHTS

Murals: Four beautiful and detailed murals depicting the super-heroes of the Bay area

Mural Remembrance Gallery: A small gallery devoted to the earlier four murals which were destroyed in the 1995 earthquake. It contains large pictures of each of the old murals, along with a descriptive plaque about each one.

Transfers: Transfers to other BART lines are possible at the Oakland City Center station. Trains run from the S.F./San Jose leg to Richmond, Concord, Livermore, and Fremont.



INFORMATION

Hours of Operation: BART runs from early morning until midnight. 7:00 am to 9:00 am and 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm are the rush hours.

Tickets: Tickets may be purchased from ticketing machines in the stations. The tickets have a magnetic strip on them indicating how much they are worth; if a trip does not use up the full amount on the ticket, the purchaser can add money to the ticket and use it again later.

Tunnel: The tunnel between the peninsula and East Bay City is four miles (6 km) long.

OFFICER BURT CLANCY

OFFICER BURT CLANCY

Mental 4 Combat 4 Physical 4 Move 4

SKILLS: Expert (Police Procedures): 6; Expert (BART): 6; Firearms: 6; Professional (Transit Cop): 6; Fighting: 3; Perk: Law Enforcement Officer



Burt Clancy is an officer in the Bay City Transit Police (“BCTP”). He has been assigned to the Oakland City Center station (and the line serving it) permanently. His duties including assisting patrons, preventing muggings and other crimes, stopping those who try to skip the fare, and protecting the murals and Mural Remembrance Gallery from vandalism.

Officer Clancy joined the BCTP in 1996. Prior to becoming a transit cop, he served in the United States Army for ten years at many different posts around the world. After finally concluding that the military life just wasn't what he was looking for, he returned to his hometown (just in time for the 1995 earthquake!) and got a job with the BCTP. He was assigned to Oakland City Center in 1998.

So far, the most exciting thing that has happened to Officer Clancy on the job was the time a couple years ago when Quantum and Speedster chased Lady Blue through the tube underneath the bay and right up into his station! Something about some computer components Lady Blue stole, he never did get all the details. While the three of them slugged it out, he helped patrons and employees to get out of the station safely, and called central command and got them to stop all the trains before they reached the station. Just as he was finishing that up, Lady Blue smashed Quantum right across the station so that she smacked against the wall right next to him! He was barely able to duck out of the way and keep from being hurt himself. Then he actually got to help Quantum up and make sure she was all right. She thanked him and got right back into the thick of the fight, and soon Lady Blue was out cold. Just ask Clancy about the battle sometime; he loves to tell the story (again, and again, and again...).

Despite ten years in the military, over four as a transit cop, and marriage and two kids, Burt Clancy is still a little naive, and something of a kid at heart. He takes a lot of joy in the simple things in life, including doing his job well and helping people. A lot of other transit cops think he's kind of an idiot, but truth be told, he's a pretty bright guy, and he likes living his life his own way.

When not on duty, his hobbies include carpentry and tinkering around the house (though his efforts to “fix” things don't always work so well, to his wife's dismay).

“NO, MAAM, YOU WANT TO TAKE THE FREMONT LINE TO GET TO UNION CITY.”

STORY SEEDS

1 Art Is Life: Esper (or some other mentalist villain of your choice) decides to have a little fun with the morning commuters who are passing through Oakland City Center station. (If she happens to pick on a hero going to work in his secret identity, so much the better.) Suddenly, the heroes and villains in the murals come to life, fly off the wall, and attack people! The attacks aren't very harmful—no worse than bee stings or pinpricks—but the whole episode is odd enough to bring Officer Clancy, the rest of the transit police, and maybe even some super-heroes running. Esper will then stop her play, slip quietly onto a train, and ride away. If there is a mentalist hero around, he may be able to detect her mental presence—and if he's skilled, and lucky, do it in time to get on the train and follow her. Whether she leads him to the Scions of Caine's Bay City secret headquarters (in the southern part of North Bay City, near Portrero), her own home in Bay City, into a trap, or to some other place is up to the GM. (Of course, for her to lead the hero into a trap, Esper either must know that the hero goes through Oakland City Center station in the morning, or detect him as he follows her.)

2 Runaway train! The driver has lost control of a BART train that's heading right for the Oakland City Center station. A wreck is almost a certainty, unless the heroes intervene and save the day. Powers like high Strength or Telekinesis are most useful for slowing down or stopping the train, but electricity-based powers (to drain the electricity powering the train) or other powers may also prove helpful.

After the immediate threat of disaster is averted, the PCs can examine the train to find out what causes the problem. They will discover that the braking system on the train was cleverly sabotaged, and that a virus was surreptitiously planted in the central BART computer to prevent it from using an override command to shut down the train. Who did this, and what did they hope to gain?

3 Alex The Friendly Ghost: The reason that the original murals in the Oakland City Center station were so beautiful is that a “friendly ghost” lives there. Alexander Crummins, the architect who designed the original station, and who got the City of Oakland to agree to the first murals, died before the murals were completed. Unwilling to see the task undone, Crummins's spirit lingered on, “haunting” the station and inspiring the artists to new heights of creativity. Today he remains as a “protector” of the station—though he cannot affect the physical world in any way, he can sometimes subtly influence emotions and prevent people from, say, scrawling graffiti on the new murals.

Unfortunately for the ghost, his home has attracted the attention of the evil wizard Markoth. As part of his quest to gather all the mystic power from the Bay City area, Markoth intends to leech away the arcane energies that allow the ghost to survive at this location. If a group of heroes battles Markoth here, the ghost will do his best to help them defeat the self-proclaimed ruler of Tangut.



THE SOVEREIGN SUITES HOTEL

The Sovereign Suites Hotel is perhaps the finest hotel available in the Bay City area. Established as a hotel for the jetset elite, the Sovereign Suites opened in 1996 with a reputation for opulence. The hotel's owner, Robert Thorpe, is a perfect reflection of the hotel—slick, flashy, and reeking of money.

Although there are many fine hotels in the Bay area, Robert Thorpe felt that they had all fallen one step short of truly decadence. He wanted to build a hotel that was a complete experience, a hotel that catered to the super-rich—congressmen, presidents, ambassadors, and the like. In short, he wanted a hotel that would gain a reputation for catering to V.I.P.'s only. His dream became the Sovereign Suites Hotel.

The hotel itself is not terribly large as hotels go, but that is because there are no "cheap" rooms. The smallest rooms available at the Sovereign Suites begin at \$1500.00 a night, and more impressive rooms go far beyond that in price. Upper end rooms come complete with their own workout facilities, full offices, kitchens, pool tables, jacuzzis, and saunas, in addition to multiple bedrooms, a living room, drawing room, and dining room.

For additional prestige, the hotel offers its guest full transportation, tailoring, shopping, and pampering services (including manicures, facials, massages, and the like). Guests are waited on hand and foot, and shouldn't expect to want for any amenity. If a service isn't listed among the hotel's standard services, just ask. They will accommodate you.

In addition to offering its guests every possible amenity while in their rooms, the Sovereign Suites boasts a jazz club, a ball room, a small casino (with no real stakes), two bars, and three restaurants (one Italian, one Oriental, and one fine dining). Even though all guests have access to film channels in their suites, the hotel has a small movie theatre where they show first run movies throughout the evening. And for those who lack a few niceties in their suites, there are full workout facilities, an Olympic-size swimming pool, two jacuzzis, two saunas, and a steambath for common use.

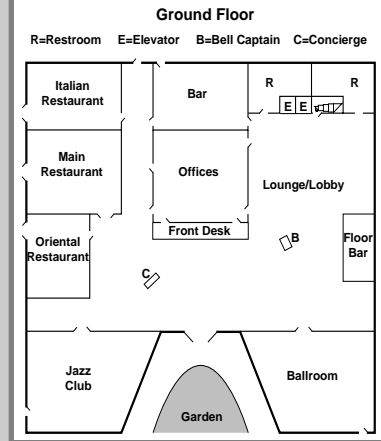
This, of course, is all in the travel brochures and hotel information. Surprisingly, the Sovereign Suites Hotel has a shadowy underbelly. The hotel has been declared neutral ground by all the major crime families (including those of the Mafia, the Yakuza, and the Triads), and is often used as meeting grounds for those of that persuasion. Additionally, those same syndicates use the Sovereign Suites as a safe-house, particularly for those important members who need to "lay low" from the authorities for a while. Many of the more prominent organized crime bosses are treated as "special guests" at the hotel, who are secreted to their rooms and never discussed. Thus, they are afforded both the utmost luxury and the utmost secrecy during their stay. As a side-effect, the management of the Sovereign Suites does not take kindly to the presence of the media, although they claim it as a courtesy service of privacy to their movie-star and governmental guests. Mr. Thorpe is well aware of these activities.

The Sovereign Suites Hotel also caters to criminals of a more insidious or paranoiac stature. VIPER has been known to utilize the hotel's discreet services, including stays by Senator Arlen Barlow and even Menton himself. Thus, the Sovereign Suites' reputation keeps it from being leveled even in a heated firefight.



HIGHLIGHTS

- Five star rating.
- Three fine restaurants, including ethnic Italian and Oriental cuisines.
- 88 Keys, the highly acclaimed jazz club.
- Rooms complete with private office and spa.
- Every amenity.
- Office facilities.
- Banquet and conference services available.
- Tailoring and boutique services.
- Courteous staff.
- All major credit cards accepted.



INFORMATION

Location: 950 Mason Street, North Bay City.

Getting There: The Powell-Mason Cable Car, runs along from the Powell St. Station downtown.

Reservations: (415) 555-6464.

Full Handicap Access.

Suite Rates: \$1500.00 a night and up.

ADAM EBLING**ADAM EBLING****Mental 4 Combat 3 Physical 3 Move 4****SKILLS:** Conversation: 5; Business: 2; Professional (Concierge): 6; Contacts

At one point or another, all guests interact with the concierge during their stay at the Sovereign Suites hotel. When they do, they'll most likely meet a short young man, with slick black hair, glasses, and a warming smile. This man is always pleasant and cool, regardless of conditions or situations, and it seems that everything negative just slides right off of him. This man is Adam Ebling, the

head concierge of the hotel.

Everyone praises Adam, from the guests to the employees to the management. They think that he's not only a really good guy but that he is also a model employee and an example for all to follow. To be absolutely honest, this is true. Adam takes great pride in his work, and it only helps that he's intelligent and easy going to begin with.

Adam started as a bellboy when the hotel opened in 1996, while he was still in high school. He showed himself to be a very conscientious employee and was soon promoted within the ranks. As far as anyone is concerned, Adam is a lifetime employee of the hotel and many expect him to see an office and a considerable salary soon. Adam himself is not sure how he'll like that; he enjoys being "in the trenches," as it were.

Because of his reputation and his position, Adam is in on everything that happens at the hotel. He knows who's there, why, and how long they're going to be there. This includes the hotel's more discreet guests as well. Because of this, Adam may be one of the best connected people in the city. All of the elite know him, whether they be the elite of the respectable or not so respectable kind, and they all think the world of him. He routinely receives generous tips and often has tickets and invitations to the most exclusive events.

Unfortunately for Adam's conscience, he doesn't agree with some of the hotel's more shadowy activities. He doesn't believe that such a fine and reputable establishment should be dirtying itself by concealing much of the filth of the world. Whenever he can, without revealing himself or compromising his position and well-being, Adam leaks information about "discreet" happenings and guests to those who might be able to do something about it. He always makes sure to cover his tracks in such a way that the information seems to have come from some source other than the hotel itself.

"OF COURSE, SIR."

STORY SEEDS

In general, the Sovereign Suites Hotel presents an ever-present possibility for anonymous information. Adam Ebling has his fingers in every pie at the hotel, and often hears things he shouldn't. With his social conscience, he is an excellent source for information about nefarious plots and schemes throughout Bay City and possibly the world. The only trick is making sure that he knows the characters and that he views them as important and effective. Adam should be used sparingly, since he values both his position and his life, but presents an interesting plot device.

1 Political Payoff: Senator Arlen Barlow is visiting Bay City and is staying at the Sovereign Suites Hotel. The official reason for his visit is personal vacation, which explains why he is avoiding the press. The real reason for his visit is to meet with his underlings in VIPER who are working out of Bay City.

Now, of all the scum that may pass through the Sovereign Suites, Adam Ebling hates dirty politicians the most of all. Of course, the Senator, who has stayed at the hotel previously, likes Adam. Thus, Mr. Ebling knows just a little more about what's going on. He knows that Senator Barlow is obviously not here for personal vacation, as he keeps having visitors of a business-like sort. He has accidentally heard conversation that is of a questionable nature. At this point, he's a bit concerned.

Dropping a hint to the police would be disastrous. First of all, they would never buy it, and second of all they would most likely bungle things and come in like bulls in a china shop. The only real option he has for someone to take such scant information seriously is the local paranormal population. Thus, he may pass this information on to the characters, who may choose whether or not to investigate.

If the characters choose to investigate, it is up to the GM to create Barlow's agenda and VIPER's activities. Remember that the Senator did not get where he is today by being careless. This thread presents the opportunity to gain Adam as a potential anonymous leak and to get closer to the machinations of VIPER in Bay City. On the other hand, if the characters choose not to investigate, it may cause Adam to reassess his opinion of them.

2 A Little Networking: Mayor Bobby Greene and Mr. Robert Thorpe have teamed up to throw a Paranormal Appreciation dinner at the Sovereign Suites hotel. Those paranormals who have established themselves as proponents of law and order are invited to join with both city and Guard officials for this dinner—costumes are acceptable. Obviously, this event is an excellent publicity opportunity. Security is also very heavy.

This thread is not meant to be an action adventure at all. It is simply an opportunity for up-and-coming characters to meet important people, make connections with other paranormals in the area, and to get a little free publicity in hopes of making a name for themselves. Of course, ORI is present and they are taking notes.

Bay City's newest educational institution was born in the fires and destruction of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. That quake leveled several parts of the city, including some areas near Golden Gate Park. Doctor Jason Wilder III, head of the Odyssey Research Institute, approached Donald Henderson and other prominent Bay area citizens and suggested that this presented an opportunity to found a new, world-class university in San Francisco. The others agreed. Realizing that they had to strike while the iron was hot, they drew up plans for the university and even established a charter. However, the project bogged down and ground to a halt.

The project got a shot in the arm from the 1995 quake, which once again made the land available. This time Wilder and Henderson didn't hesitate; they went ahead and bought a large tract of land near the intersection of 19th and Lincoln Streets. Dusting off their original plans, they made some changes and christened their nascent institution, "Bay City University." A steering committee was appointed and began recruiting top academic talent from around the world. Professors at other major universities were lured to BCU with promises of high salaries and access to cutting-edge facilities and technology.

Meanwhile, construction was progressing at a rapid pace, spurred by two factors: the BCU Board of Trustees's generous overtime payments and the assistance of many Bay City paranormals. As a result of the dedicated efforts of thousands of workers, Bay City University admitted its first class in 1998.

In the few years since then, BCU has already established a reputation as a leading academic university, its scholars renowned for their insight and the quality of their work and publications. In the undergraduate and graduate school areas, several of BCU's departments have achieved particular fame. Aside from the Wilder School of Science, the Henderson School of Psychology, and the Herb Caen School of Journalism, several other departments are worthy of note. The Department of Anthropology, located in the Shomshak Anthropology Center in the University's Museum of Cultural Anthropology, recently published a landmark study of the mythology and mystic lore of the Northwest Coast Indian tribes; it is currently working on a similar volume on the Inuit, and future volumes on other Indian cultures are planned. The Department of Archaeology has already sponsored several important digs throughout the world.

BCU also has several fine professional schools. Its Belli Law School, endowed by a grant from the late Melvin Belli, is an ABA-accredited institution that has already graduated its first class of young lawyers; its best known professor, Rob Carillon, recently returned to the school from a stint as Solicitor General. The average salary for the first MBAs graduated from the Peterson School of Business was \$125,000 per year. At present BCU does not have a medical school, but rumor has it that Donald Henderson is planning to endow one in the near future; more land would have to be acquired for the school and the hospital which would undoubtedly be built alongside it.

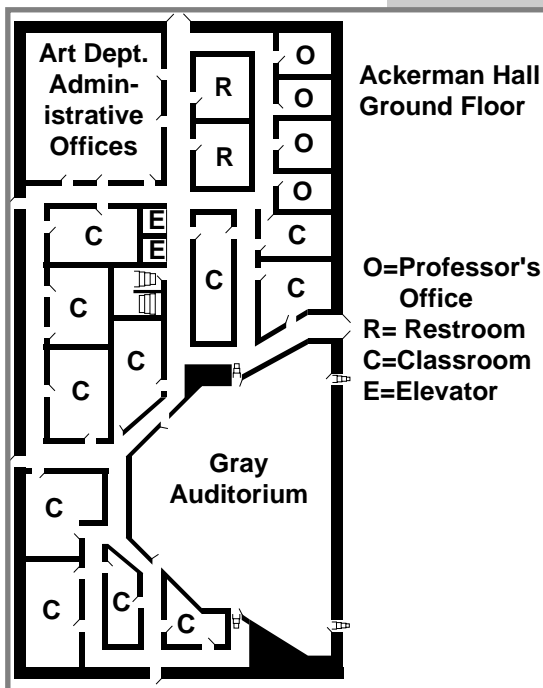
Bay City University's mascot is the Golden Knight. So far none of the BCU teams have achieved any significant success, but most observers think it's only a matter of time.

HIGHLIGHTS

Henderson Library: The Henderson Library, located in the center of the campus, already boasts a collection of over half a million volumes.

Okita High Energy Physics Building: This facility, next to the Wilder School of Science, includes a cyclotron and a free electron laser array.

Museum of Cultural Anthropology: Permanent exhibits include "Superheroes And Society" (Mercenary's last costume and a [nonfunctioning] helmet from one of Dr. Destroyer's old suits of armor are part of the display) and "Tapestry of Fire: Native American Cultures."



INFORMATION

Undergraduate Enrollment: Currently 6,700; this is increasing by about ten percent every year, as new dorm and classroom space allow.

Graduate and professional enrollment: Currently 3,500; this is expected to increase by at least 1,000 within three years of the endowment of a medical school.

Faculty (undergraduate and graduate): 750.

President: Jeannette O'Hanrihan.

Vice President: Enrique Matienzo.

Chancellor: Howard Reilly.

Dean of Student Affairs: Greg Langley.

Endowments: Thought to exceed \$200 million.

GREG LANGLEY**GREG LANGLEY****Mental 4 Combat 3 Physical 3 Move 3**

SKILLS: Education: 7; Expert (Educational Theories): 6; Local Expert (Bay City University): 6; Professional (Dean): 6



Greg Langley, Ed.D., is Dean of Student Affairs at Bay City University. A graduate of Penn State, he brings to the job ten years' worth of experience earned in similar positions at Ball State University, Pepperdine College, and Memphis State.

As Dean of Student Affairs, Langley is responsible for many important aspects of campus life. He has to coordinate events such as Homecoming and the Spring Festival. He acts as the BCU Student Legislature's liaison to the administration, and attends its weekly meeting. He is one of several members of the administration who must continually survey the curriculum and ensure that it meets not only the student's needs and desires, but the demands of accrediting bodies and potential employers as well. He monitors important student organizations, such as the *Knightwatch* staff, the Afro-American Student Caucus (AASC), the BCU Gay & Lesbian Alliance, and various political groups and makes sure that, while their voices are heard, they do not overwhelm the university community or cause problems.

Langley enjoys a good rapport with the student body and has earned the trust and respect of most students. In large part his reputation stems from an incident that took place in 1999, when he defused a series of demonstrations by the AASC (and counter-demonstrations by the BCU Student Republicans, the Conservative Forum, and several other groups) regarding minority faculty hiring that threatened to polarize the campus. Furthermore, he has always tried to be very accessible to the students. He can be seen walking around the campus every day, and is usually willing to stop and talk if he's got the time. Some days he will stop by the Pit (a popular campus eatery located in the BCU Student Center) for lunch and conversation with whoever's interested.

Due to his treatment of the *Knightwatch* staff during the 1999 protests incident (he strongly criticized the paper for "gleefully fanning the flames with ill-considered editorials"), Langley rarely receives favorable coverage from the student newspaper. However, those who have met him or worked directly with him, such as most members of the BCU Student Legislature, hold him in high regard.

Langley lives near campus in a small house which he shares with his wife, Sharon, a professor of biology at BCU, two teenagers, Sandra and Ellington, a Pekingese named Bouffant, and a big, fat cat inappropriately named Tiger. He and Sharon are frequently seen at football games, faculty mixers, and other university events.

**"WHAT ABOUT
RESPONSIBILITY
OF THE PRESS?"**

STORY SEEDS

1 Terror On Campus: Dalton O'Reilly is a gifted science student from Boston. A member of the original freshman class, red-headed Dalton is a popular figure on campus whom almost everyone recognizes. He served in the BCU Student Legislature as a representative last year, and earlier this year was elected Vice President for Student Affairs, one of the BCUSL's most prestigious posts. However, none of Dalton's fellow students realize that his other main extracurricular activity is supporting terrorists. Dalton's father Joseph, real name Gerald O'Shaughnessy, is wanted by the government of the United Kingdom for murder in connection with his activities as a member of the Ireland United movement, a terrorist organization devoted to removing the British from Northern Ireland. Joseph has been hiding out in America for over two decades, and has raised his son to share his violently anti-British beliefs. Dalton in turn has put his scientific talents to work designing bombs and other devices for Ireland United; he sends them to his father, who passes them on to comrades in Ireland. Dalton has no objections to "freelancing" for local organizations, either. He recently supplied bomb designs and materials (filched from the Chemistry Department) to some extreme right-wing militia members. After the bomb goes off at the Federal Building (if it goes off—the PCs should have a chance to prevent this tragedy), the investigation will uncover evidence which points back to BCU. If approached, or if he feels he is under any suspicion, Dalton will bolt and get in touch with his father, who will use his contacts to get Dalton safely back to Boston.

2 This Is Your Body On Drugs: During practice one fine fall day, a member of the BCU football team collapses on the field. (In order to get the PCs involved, have one of them witness it, or have the affected player be connected to one of them in some way.) He is rushed off the field to the nearest hospital, where it is determined he has suffered a heart attack. The doctors say the heart attack was caused by the steroids the boy had been using—there are still traces of them in his blood, and he appears to have been taking a lot of them. It's a new steroid, one the doctors haven't seen before. A couple of the other players will tell the heroes (either voluntarily or under pressure, depending on GM preference) that the stuff is called SuperSterol, and that several of the guys started using it a few weeks ago. They get it from some guy named "Lenny" down in the Tenderloin. The PCs now have to track down Lenny and bring him to justice. The only complicating factor is that Lenny's been giving the stuff to his bodyguards, who are now bulked-out and super-strong (STR 10).

3 Traces Of Tangut: The Museum of Cultural Anthropology (or the Henderson Library, if the GM prefers) has come into the possession of several artifacts of an unusual nature from the Archaeology Department's dig near Nepal. Markoth recognizes these as powerful mystic relics of Tangut, and he wants them. A good, old-fashioned smash-'em-up battle ensues on the campus between him and the PCs.

NICKY'S ON THIRD

Nicky's on Third is among the coolest restaurants in the Bay City area. Located South of Market, on the corner of Third Street and Annie Street, Nicky's on Third overlooks the Mission Creek Marina. While the food is good and reasonably priced, the atmosphere is what really makes Nicky's on Third special. And what an atmosphere it is!

The restaurant is a blast from the past. Right out of the late thirties-early forties, Nicky's on Third looks like the kind of restaurant you might find in a Humphrey Bogart film or any private dick novel of that era. The decor is fancy, but not outrageously so. The staff dresses in styles befitting the period, including zoot suits and fedoras or evening gowns, and nothing is done out of the period's character.

On most nights, Nicky's on Third has live bands as entertainment. These bands range from big band jazz to swing to good old torch singers. When these attractions are resting, either Sam or Johnny Fingers fills in at the piano. Again, these entertainers help reinforce the atmosphere of Nicky's, and always remain in tune with the period the restaurant tries to present. As an aside, Sam does not take kindly to requests of "play it again."

The atmosphere of Nicky's on Third does not just come from decorations, dress, and entertainment. It also comes from the acting of the staff. As far as anyone employed by Nicky's on Third is concerned, it is currently 1942. They won't talk about modern topics or amenities, but will refer to things such as skirts, molls, torpedoes, heaters, and "the Big One." Additionally, Nicky's on Third employs actors and actresses, who play out extemporaneous situations over the course of an evening. Thus, a patron might become involved in a gangland hit, might be questioned by a private dick, or become the mayor's mistress for the evening. Additionally, the staff has various "stage shows" over the course of the night, letting people know what's going on with the plot and various characters. It's all good clean fun, but no one is safe from the antics.

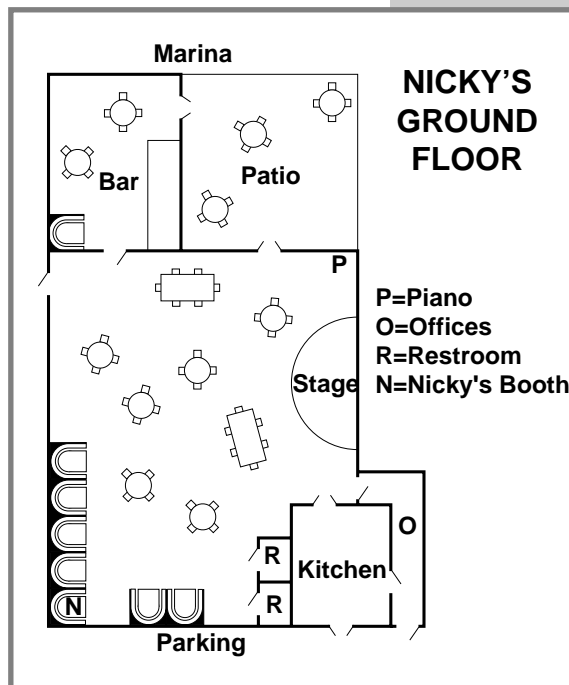
The most notorious figure is Nicky Fucacelli himself. As a fixture of the establishment, Nicky is known as Nicky "the Face," since he's a slick looking guy in his mid-forties, without a blemish on his face. Nicky has fashioned himself not only to be the owner of the restaurant, but a Mafia Don in his own right. One can often find Nicky seated with various henchmen and dames at his special back corner table. Needless to say, everyone bows and scrapes around him. Other notable characters are Vinnie "Meat" Manicelli, Nicky's main muscle, Francois Riviera, the snobby maitre de; Lonna Fiore, one of the staple torch singers and a looker to boot, Phil Dix, a pulp private eye; Donny "Shortchange" Oswald, a hustler, and, of course, Sam and Johnny Fingers. This is by no means a complete list of characters, but it gives you an idea of who to expect at Nicky's on Third.

As far as food goes, Nicky's serves good meals at reasonable prices. The restaurant is meant to be for everyone, so the prices range widely, from ala carte entrees at around \$8.00 to serious steak dinners at around \$35.00.

Nicky has no problem with paranormals; in fact, he encourages them to come to the restaurant. Since many of them are celebrities in their own right, he loves having a few costumed avengers in the restaurant for publicity reasons.

HIGHLIGHTS

Experience dining in the 30's-40's.
Interact with characters from a time gone by.
Join the staff and be part of the action!
Beautiful patio view, overlooking the Mission Creek Marina.
Good food, priced for anyone's budget.
Live bands and entertainment.



INFORMATION

Location: Third St. and Annie St., North Bay City.

Getting There: The Caltrain Depot is a few blocks away on the other side of the marina, and Muni runs down 4th St. Nicky's does have its own parking lot, but that's not to be relied upon.

Phone Number: (415) 555-8333 (Reservations), (415) 555-8323 (Main).

Hours: 5:00 pm to Midnight (Restaurant), 5:00 pm to 2:00 am (Bar).

Prices: Entrees range from \$8.00 to \$35.00; drinks are priced from \$3.00 on up.

NICKY "THE FACE" FUCACELLI**NICKY "THE FACE" FUCACELLI****Mental 6 Combat 3 Physical 3 Move 3****SKILLS:** Acting: 5; Business: 6; Expert (Film Noir): 6; Expert (The Gangster World): 5; Streetwise: 3

Nicholas Fucacelli is an old world Italian who's always held a fascination for the 30's and 40's. As a child he read every pulp novel he could get his hands on, and he's seen every film that has anything to do with Film Noir, pulp, or gangsters. Nicky always hope that his love could some day become his vocation, but he wasn't quite sure how to do it.

After a trip to New York City, he finally figured it out. He was invited to go to a restaurant in Midtown Manhattan, called the Jekyll & Hyde Club. This place wasn't just a restaurant, it was an experience of Victorian horror. Wandering loonies, floor shows, animatronics, and more all contributed to a dining experience rather than just a meal. Seeing both the lines and the way the patrons reacted to the club, he knew he could turn his dream into reality.

Nicky came back to Bay City with a plan, and promptly quit his job as marketing consultant. Gathering financing and hiring creative consultants, he built Nicky's on Third—a place where he could live, albeit for a short time, in the period he had come to love, and a place where he could share this passion with others. The first couple of months were rocky for Nicky's, but the concept soon caught on and things have been going well ever since.

Nicky himself is an Italian man in his mid-forties, with a sculpted face. He's always dressed to the nines, but is normally very quiet and somewhat shy when away from the restaurant. However, his personality changes drastically when he takes on the persona of Nicky the Face. Nicky the Face is a Mafia Don—cool, self-assured, fearless, and powerful. Many people find it difficult to believe, other than by looks, that Nicholas Fucacelli and Nicky the Face are indeed the same man.

On the whole, Nicky Fucacelli is a regular guy who's on the level. With all the gangster paraphernalia and themes at the restaurant, in addition to the persona of Nicky the Face, many people have theorized that Nicky is a made man and that the restaurant is "family owned." Nothing could be further from the truth. He just loves what he does, and loves sharing it with others.

**"YEAH, SO
WHAT'CHU
WANT, HUH?"**

STORY SEEDS

1 A Night On The Town: For a change of pace, you can use Nicky's on Third as a roleplaying game within a roleplaying game. With the 50% discount for paranormals an the festivities, it may be an attractive diversion. Simply have the characters become thoroughly involved in one of the mock noir plots. It also gives the players an opportunity to solve problems and deal with people without the assistance of their powers.

2 Muscling In: Nicky Fucacelli has a big time problem. Even though he's as clean as a whistle, his business persona and profitability have attracted the attentions of a very powerful man—genuine Bay City Mafia Don Vincezo Francesca. Don Francesca thinks that Nicky's is a great place to dine and an excellent business opportunity.

In short, the Mafia is leaning on Nicky to either sell the restaurant, or to come on to the payroll. Nicky's is good for a legitimate business front and a little money laundering. Best of all, deals can go down in the place and everyone will think that its just part of the act if they overhear.

Nicky Fucacelli isn't really a mobster, he just plays one in the restaurant. He has absolutely no desire to become involved in organized crime, but he wants even less to lose his pride and joy. He can't go to the cops, because he's sure he's being watched and he doesn't want anyone to get hurt, especially good old Nicky himself. He's got one choice left—the paranormals. He can pay, if he needs to, but most characters should be sympathetic to his plight.

On the other hand, going up against a Mafia Don can be daunting, even with paranormal powers.

3 A Spy Among Us: Perhaps Nicky Fucacelli really is a family man, and the restaurant is a business front for the mob. Perhaps the alternatives presented in #2 above are real and happening right now. Perhaps the mob is using Nicky's as way to catalog many of Bay City's paranormal population, in an attempt to ascertain who they really are. After all, knowing that much about them will diminish them as a threat.

4 Innermost Secrets: Perhaps #3 above is not only a reality, but that Nicky Fucacelli is a first-rate mindspy and he's using his mental powers to determine the identities of paranormal heroes to mount a Mafia offensive against their threat.

5 The Play's The Thing: Donald Henderson has decided to spring for a night a Nicky's for a select group of students—those of the Arcadian Academy. While they're all acting civil at the time (for more information see Story Seeds of The Cage on pg. 78 and The Stranger on pg. 90), tensions will mount over the course of the evening. Various stabs, jeers, and other vicious behavior will play out through Nicky's story for the night, and may cause quite a scene. Friends of the kids or coincidental diners (characters) may have a lot of fun watching the mess, or they may have to intervene.



BAY CITY BANK

Bay City Bank, formerly known as First State Bank, is another of the establishments rebuilt after the Great Quake of 1995. The only thing left in any usable state after the quake was the bank's famous vault, which emerged unscathed. Using the insurance money, the bank's owners rebuilt the bank around the vault and reopened its doors to the public a year later.

Having to reconstruct the building, the new owners wanted to build a new bank that was even more earthquake and crime resistant than the last. Thus, Bay City Bank looks sturdy and safe. The walls are thick and there is little in the way of glass. On the whole, it looks a lot like a military bunker, but what matters more to the consumer; should the building be pretty, or should it look like their investments are safe? Definitely the latter, which Bay City Bank thoroughly accomplishes through both the building's construction and its extensive security.

The most famous feature of Bay City Bank is its vault. Not only was the vault the only feature left standing after the Great Quake, but it has the reputation of being impervious to robbery. This giant, time-locked, now-computerized vault has never been robbed, not to say it hasn't been attempted. With all the fail-safes and security features of the vault, it's nigh impossible to break into without incredible amounts of explosives.

Even more impressive are the extra measures created by ORI in an attempt to spare the vault from paranormal theft. Drawing on some of ORI's paranormal power data, the vault has been further reinforced to make it difficult for paranormals to quickly blow it open. These measures do not make it impervious to paranormal manipulation, but simply make it a little more difficult in an effort to buy a few extra minutes of response time for the Guard or a local super-hero team.

Of course, the rest of Bay City Bank contains state of the art security as well, including computerized surveillance, laser eye webs, motion detectors, armed guards, and a lock down feature which seals intruders in the bank after hours. In short, it is an intimidating place to criminals and is often classified as "more trouble than its worth." Many have tried and have either made small scores from the teller's drawers or, more commonly, are currently serving time.

Bay City Bank offers nearly every service a banking customer could want, including free checking, savings accounts, IRAs, loans, safe deposit boxes, and the like. Furthermore, many businesses such as diamond merchants and jewelry dealers, often utilize Bay City Bank's vault services to keep their spare and valuable merchandise safe, for a hefty fee of course.

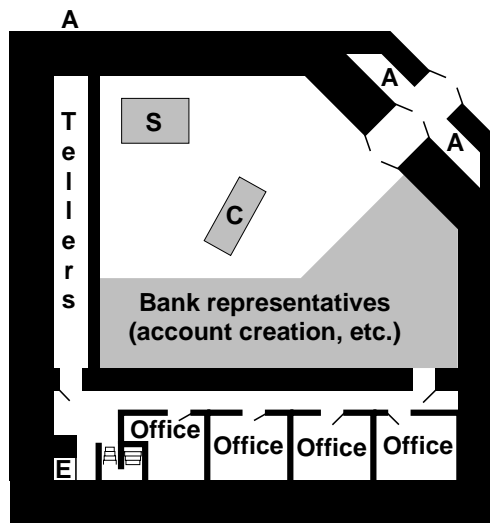
Bay City Bank built a second secret vault when they reconstructed the building, a fact known to a few select and trustworthy employees. This vault is smaller, but just as tough as the main vault, and is used to keep the most important holdings of the bank and the most important caches entrusted to them. It is here that you will find reserve materials of real worth. This vault has remained a closely kept secret to provide further reassurance against robbery, particularly against paranormal robbery.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Free checking.
- IRA and investment services.
- Safe deposit box services.
- Home, car, and personal loans.
- Extended Hours.

MAIN FLOOR

A=ATMs S=Supplies, forms, brochures, etc.
C=Customer Service E=Elevator



INFORMATION

Location: 10th Avenue and Clement Street, North Bay City.

Getting There: Muni lines run down Geary Boulevard, which runs parallel to Clement St., one block south.

Phone Number: (415) 555-2525.

Hours: 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm Saturday.

JORGE HIDALGO**JORGE HIDALGO****Mental 7 Combat 3 Physical 4 Move 4****SKILLS:** Business: 6; Expert (Banking): 6; Concentration: 5; Fighting: 2;

Spanish: 6; Athletics: 4

POWERS: Telepathy: 6 DC; Mental Defense: 10 pts.**COMPLICATIONS:** Must conceal powers; Defendants: Wife (Harriet) and children (Johnny [15], Joanna [13], and Lisa [9])

A native of San Francisco, Jorge Hidalgo has been the bank's president for the last eight years. He is a loyal and trusted employee, and the bank has enjoyed a profitable existence under his guidance. An active member of society, joining many Democratic campaigns and environmental causes, heading up his neighborhood watch, and coaching soccer at the local YMCA, Jorge is not an

unknown face in the community.

Jorge is an unassuming sort. He looks to be in his mid-thirties, with his black hair slightly graying in the temples. Of average build with a slight potbelly, Jorge's average looking at best. His face is slightly pockmarked, which he usually covers with a neatly trimmed beard. As a person, he's friendly, but not overly so, with a firm handshake. One wouldn't look at him twice, but they would assume him to be professionally competent simply by his serious manner and conservative dress.

In fact, Jorge has a secret which he has shared with no one, not even his wife or children. He is a natural telepath, albeit not a very powerful one. This talent has allowed him to accurately judge a potential employee's trustworthiness and has also allowed him to avert a robbery as he detected the criminal's surface thoughts.

He has kept his telepathy a secret all these years, for the simple fact that he just wants to lead a normal life. Jorge has seen what happens to all these paranormals on television, and it never seems like they have time for real jobs or normal families. Not interested in excitement or glory, he has chosen to conceal his gift and simply go on with life as best he knows how.

Very recently, Jorge was approached by several shady businessmen who presented him with a proposition. In return for certain "loans" and "investments" (read: money laundering), he had the opportunity to make a sizable amount of extra income. Furthermore, these men emphasized that it would be excellent for the continuing well-being of his family if he chose to accept. Caught in this lose-lose situation, Jorge is trying desperately to discover the identities of these men utilizing his talents so he can gain protection and send them straight to prison.

**"TRUST. A
TOPIC CLOSE
TO MY
HEART"**

STORY SEEDS

1 Blackmail: Unfortunately, loyal bank employee Jorge Hidalgo is in a bit of a bind. He's being blackmailed into money laundering for the Yakuza. He doesn't like it, but there's not much he can do right now but bide his time.

Fortunately, Jorge's a low-level telepath. He's doing his best to discern the identities of these men, so that he can alert someone to their activities and save himself and his family. It was only a matter of time before his patience paid off, even if it was only just a little.

The man with whom Jorge most deals is a young Japanese by the name of Takeshi Yoshimura. Takeshi runs an electronics retail superstore called Tech Futures, out of Japantown. It is through this man's dummy accounts that a lot of the laundering occurs. This is enough information for things to begin.

Jorge knows that going to the police at this point would be dangerous. He doesn't yet have enough for them to truly solve the problem, and he has no desire to become part of the witness relocation program. Thus, he assumes that costumed vigilantes will be his best bet, as he can conceal his complicity in the situation and have everything come out for the best.

Perhaps the characters have met Jorge before, or perhaps they are visible enough to warrant his attention. Regardless, he will want to meet with them privately and will explain his situation. If any investigation were traced back to him, something bad would undoubtedly happen to him and his family. Thus, they must treat the situation with the utmost discretion.

It will difficult to catch Takeshi in the act. While tailing him, investigators will see several unnamed figures as he conducts business, much of it out of the Osaka Tea House, also in Japantown. Eventually, they should be able to piece together Takeshi's associates and root out the problem.

2 The Perfect Distraction: During the rampage of a bizarre entity calling itself Wire (see Plot Thread #2, under Mission High on pg. 32), Bay City Bank suffers from an unknown security breach. No money was transferred, nor were records wiped, so no immediate, long term problems have been created. At least not yet.

On the other hand, Wire crashed the entirety of the bank's electronic defenses. The only thing still operating are the physical locks. Yes, this means that the infamous Vault is less defended than it has been in years. Unfortunately for Bay City Bank, one person by the name of Darkbolt was paying attention that night and just happened to be staying at his downtown apartment.

In the ensuing chaos, as various city power grids turn on and off at random, klaxons sound, and people panic, Darkbolt prepares himself to fulfill one of his long-time desires—to knock off the famous Bay City Bank Bank's vault. (He's been around long enough to know about it, but like most has considered it more trouble than it's worth.)

Who's paying attention during the panic?



THE WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE

Located in the Civic Center district on Van Ness Avenue, the War Memorial Opera House is home to both the Bay City Opera and the Bay City Ballet. It was opened in 1932, and has the distinction of being the first publicly-funded opera house in the United States dedicated to World War I veterans. In 1951, it was the site of the formal ending of World War II when the United States and Japan signed their peace treaty here.

The Opera House was mostly spared damage from the 1989 earthquake, but not so in 1995. The '95 quake caused significant structural damage to the Opera House which required extensive reconstruction. The opportunity was taken to redesign the Opera House from top to bottom to improve its acoustics, lighting, seating arrangements, and support facilities. Although the Opera House still has not been fully repaired/renovated, sufficient work has been done to make it safe for performances to be held.

There are six levels of seating in the Opera House. The closest to the stage are the orchestra seats, which are located right in front of the orchestra pit. Because they are so close to the stage, they are very expensive. Immediately behind the orchestra seats is the Grand Tier, which is just as costly. Along the walls above the stage and orchestra are Box Seats, the most expensive seats in the house. Behind these are the Dress Boxes, which many people consider a good compromise between seating location and price. Behind the Dress Boxes is the Balcony Circle, a set of boxes that lines the wall below the elevated Balcony seats.

Lighting for the stage is controlled from two locations. The main controls are in the lighting booth, which is located above and behind the Balcony seats so that the lighting technicians can see the whole stage at once. There is also a lighting board just offstage so that a lighting technician who is "close to the action" can alter the lighting for best effect. The lights themselves are suspended from the ceiling on gantries (long hanging racks or bars). A gadgeteer or character with light-based powers might be able to put the Opera House's lighting equipment to use as a powerful weapon or gadget.

A lot of activity actually goes on behind the stage. The elaborate equipment used to move sets and props around is located here, as is a large room where the sets themselves are created. There is also a room where costumes are stored, mended, and created—the Opera needs a lot of costumes to put on its productions. A character who knows the Disguise Skill might get a few ideas (or supplies!) here, or in the dressing rooms for the artists and choruses (some of which are located below the stage and backstage areas). Lastly there are practice rooms for the artists, choruses, and ballet dancers.

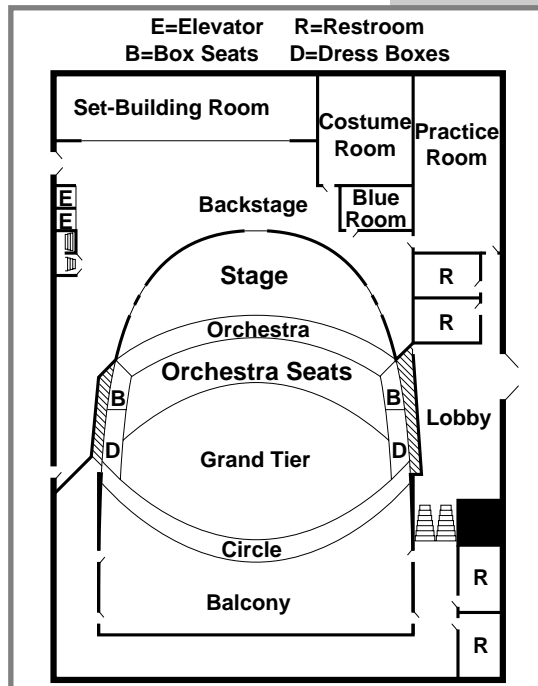
The bowels of the Opera House also contain many interesting rooms. There is a large room with risers where the orchestra practices and stores its instruments. There are traps, or elevators, which allow a character to be rapidly raised onto the stage for a sudden appearance. Some dressing rooms are also located on the lowest levels. Finally, there are plenty of storage rooms where the Opera House's equipment and supplies can be kept when they are not needed.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Blue Room: A special lounge located backstage for use by visiting opera superstars. The visitor's guests can relax here in comfort, served by uniformed waiters who bring drinks and hors d'oeuvres.

The Wagner Mural: Located in the main lobby is a beautiful mural depicting a scene from Wagner's Ring of the Nibelungs opera cycle. Art critics consider it one of the best murals in Bay City.

Cash bar: Near the main lobby is a cash bar where patrons can purchase drinks during intermission.



INFORMATION

Ticket prices: Prices vary depending upon the day of the performance (weekday versus weekend) and the opera being performed, but the following are current approximations: Box Seats, \$140; Orchestra, \$120; Grand Tier, \$120; Dress Circle, \$85; Balcony Circle, \$75; Balcony, \$22 to \$52 (based on location in Balcony).

Opera Season: Operas are performed from September to January.

Ballet Season: Ballets are performed in the Opera House from February to June.

ANGELICA ISSANTE**ANGELICA ISSANTE****Mental 6 Combat 2 Physical 3 Move 3****SKILLS:** Performance: 5; Singing: 8; Style & Wardrobe: 4; High Society: 5; Beautiful; Renown: 5

Born in 1962 in Florence, Italy, Angelica Issante is currently the lead soprano and “superstar” of the Bay City Opera. She is a flamboyant figure who is well-known even to Bay City residents who do not go to the opera. She is an eager participant in the city’s whirlwind upper-crust social scene, and her partying antics are often reported on the society pages. The fact that she’s beautiful

and single only makes the media more willing to cover her.

For all her seeming flightiness, though, Angelica is a serious artist. She did not get where she is today without countless hours of hard work, practice, and sacrifice. She began studying singing when she was just a little girl and the family priest heard her singing outside the church. He recruited her for the choir, where she soon caught the ear of local opera patrons. They in turn brought her to the attention of various opera stars, who started her on her career.

As a young woman, Angelica came to America for the first time, to study singing at the famed Juilliard School in New York City, and she never went back home. After completing her studies, she obtained jobs at various opera companies across the United States. With each new position she increased her skills, fame, and fan base. Finally, in 1994, she came to Bay City, where she has remained ever since (except for brief leaves of absence to appear with other opera companies around the world for special performances).

Out of the spotlight, Angelica is a quiet, thoughtful woman who enjoys spending time by herself. Her large apartment in the Nob Hill area is a wide-open, airy place, filled with light and plants and music. In addition to her vocal talents, Angelica is an accomplished pianist, and often plays simply for her own pleasure. She also enjoys reading (primarily historical romances), painting, sewing, and diving; most of her vacations are to tropical resorts like Cozumel and the British Virgin Islands where she and her boyfriend, opera tenor Allen Hale, can use their SCUBA equipment and hang out with the under-sea life.

Angelica is also known for her charitable activities. She is always willing to contribute her name and her time to a charity she considers worthwhile. However, she has earned condemnation in gay and lesbian circles for her outspoken stance against homosexuality and unwillingness to be involved in any way with AIDS benefits and similar events.

**“SEE YOU AT
ABIGAIL’S
PARTY!”**

STORY SEEDS

1 The Theft Of Figaro: There’s a first time for everything. It’s finally occurred to VIPER that (a) rich people have lots of money, (b) rich people are therefore worth robbing or kidnapping, and (c) a lot of rich people go to the opera (at a hundred twenty-five bucks a ticket, they must be rich!). Therefore VIPER is planning to hit the Opera House during an upcoming performance of *Le Nozze de Figaro*, steal whatever box office receipts there happen to be, and kidnap the wealthiest patrons they can find for ransom.

VIPER’s plan is to infiltrate the building as deliverymen in the days before the performance—there are so many storage rooms in the basement level of the building that they should be able to hide there without too much difficulty, and they can conceal their weapons in the crates they deliver. When their forward team (in disguise in the audience) radios them, they will begin the job. Assuming all goes according to plan, they should have millions in ransom money within the week.

Of course, it’s the PCs’ job to screw up that plan. They may find out about the attack in several ways: a friend who works at the Opera House mentions the unusual number of deliveries; ongoing investigations of VIPER point them towards the Opera House; they are attending the opera the night of the attack; their investigation following the attack turns up a clue in the storage rooms that leads them to the hideout where the kidnap victims are being held. If VIPER tumbles to the fact that heroes are on to them, or have involved themselves in the investigation, it will call up some of its own super-powered support. . . .

2 Songbird: Lucy Aldridge, the newest performer in the Bay City Opera, is on stage singing one night when suddenly her voice begins to shatter the support beams holding up the ceiling! The PCs, who just happen to be attending the opera that night, have to prevent the building from collapsing and killing hundreds. Then they have to help Aldridge, whose mutant powers of sound manipulation have just surfaced, cope with the resulting publicity and her new powers.

3 Fire! A fire breaks out during one of the Bay City Ballet’s performances. It starts and spreads quickly—so quickly that it will later be obvious that it was deliberately set. The heroes will have to risk life and limb to save hundreds of people trapped by the flames. Once they do so, they can look into who set the fire. Some very sophisticated firebombs and timing devices were used to make the blaze start in such a way as to maximize the danger to victims and their rescuers. Who would do such a thing, and why?

4 Emotional Rescue: Operatic performances tend to generate a lot of emotion. Emotion is one of the things that fuels magic. Accordingly, Markoth may look on the Opera House as a source of “fuel” for the magic power he needs to retake Tangut, and drain those emotions away. When the PCs hear about (or experience) the magnificent performance that suddenly went “flat,” they may be tempted to investigate. Mystically-aware characters may be able to detect the emanations of Markoth’s sorcery and use it to track him to his lair.



ABSOLUTE ZERO

Without a doubt, the hippest nightclub in Bay City is the club called Absolute Zero. Even though it only opened a short time ago, October 1999 to be exact, it has already established a reputation as the place to be seen. It was designed to cater to a variety of different tastes, without sacrificing their full experiences.

Absolute Zero has two distinctly different floors, which are open every day of the week. The upstairs is called the Lounge, which caters to those who would like a more relaxing night on the town. The Lounge is lit only by candles and small table lamps, with comfortable chairs and couches. Tuesdays through Saturdays are the Lounge's Strictly Jazz nights, playing traditional jazz favorites, sometimes swing, including live performances by local bands. Sundays are Crooner nights, with live performances of some the greats—Bing Crosby, Dean Martin, and the like. Dress on all nights is come as you are, but most patrons break out their best outfits or dress in period-style clothing. Zoot suits are popular in the Lounge.

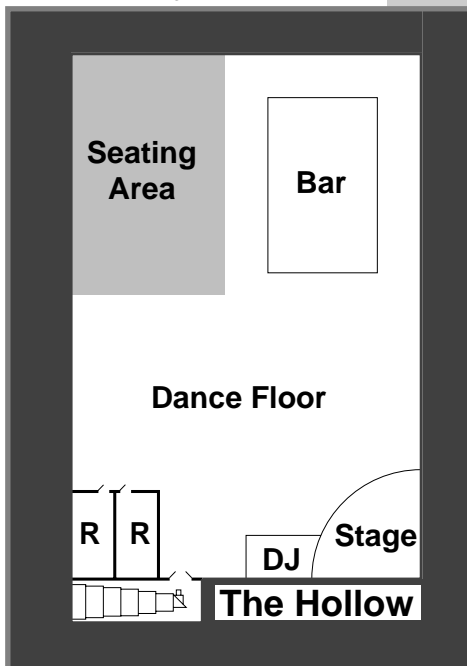
The Lounge also offers dance classes on Monday nights. Absolute Zero's top notch instructors offer classes in jazz, swing, and ball room dancing.

Downstairs at Absolute Zero is the Hollow. While there are consistencies within the Hollow, such as high-tech sound and lighting systems, excellent drinks, and loud music, both the theme and the decor change depending upon the night. Monday nights are Rave, spinning hardcore techno and ambient from around the globe. The Hollow takes on a persona of cyberspace and the digital age for Rave nights, and the patrons reflect the atmosphere. Tuesday nights are Glam nights, playing the best of the glam hard-rock bands from the 70s and 80s, including KISS, Motley Crue, Poison, and the like. Blast happens on Wednesday nights, cashing in on the wave of retro-80's popularity. Thursday nights are Fetish nights, with all varieties of fetish fashions, black leather, and PVC, complete with a controlled S&M show on stage. Fridays are a little more sedate, as the mainstream crowd moves in for Top 40 night. Saturdays warm up again with Seduction, where patrons dress in their most glamorous and provocative attire, dancing to atmospheric music under candlelight. The most unusual nights at Absolute Zero by far are Sundays—Club Enfer. Patrons dress as their favorite demon or damned soul, and dance to dark music in a mockup of the Inferno. Dress codes are strictly enforced on Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Fortunately, the walls are soundproof well enough that noise doesn't overflow between the two floors. Also, there are two separate entrances on the opposite sides of the building, so the odd combinations of patrons don't have to mix.

Most nights are popular at the Hollow, but Thursday through Saturday are by far the most happening nights. Strangely enough, Club Enfer is quite popular, since few take the theme very seriously. On the other hand, fundamentalist groups are up in arms. It's a good thing for Absolute Zero's Sunday revenue that these groups have little influence on their patronage.

If you want to get into Absolute Zero on a weekend night (Thursday through Sunday), you'd better follow dress code (if it applies) and get there before 9:00 pm. Things really get into full swing around 10:00 pm, and the club is usually filled to capacity by that time. It may be crowded, but it's well worth the effort.



HIGHLIGHTS

The most popular nightclub in Bay City.
Two clubs in one: the upstairs Lounge & the downstairs Hollow.

Joint cover: pay once and enjoy both sides of Absolute Zero.

Relax in the Lounge:

Strictly Jazz—Tuesday through Saturday.

Crooners—Sunday.

Dance in the Hollow:

Rave—Monday.

Glam—Tuesday.

80's Blast—Wednesday.

Fetish—Thursday*.

Top 40—Friday.

Club Enfer—Sunday*.

Dress Codes enforced in the Hollow.

Dance lessons available. every Monday night in the Lounge.

INFORMATION

Location: Hyde Street & Pine Street, North Bay City.

Getting There: California Street cable car, runs one block north of Pine Street.

Phone Number: (415) 555-8898.

Hours: 8 pm to 2 am Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, 8 pm to 4 am Thursday, through Sunday (Last Call 2 am)

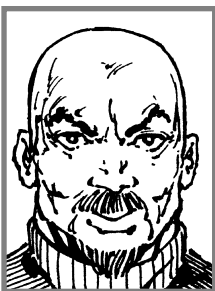
Capacity: 500 people total—Lounge 200, Hollow 300.

Cover: \$5.00 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, \$10.00 Thursday through Sunday.

Age Requirement: 21+, every night of the week.

MORTON HOLT**MORTON HOLT****Mental 3 Combat 5 Physical 6 Move 5**

Skills: Streetwise: 2; Jack of all Trades: 4; Leadership: 3; Fighting: 5; Persuasion: 7; Martial Arts (Street Fighting)



If there's one person with a thankless job at the most popular nightclub in Bay City, it's Morton Holt, Absolute Zero's Chief of Security. Morton's the guy who has final say on who's in and who's out, in addition to being in charge of policing the floor for illicit activities, drugs, and the like. He's also the guy who has to make sure the place doesn't get busted up.

Morton likes the Lounge a lot, since there's rarely ever any trouble there. On the other hand, the Hollow is a thorn in his side. With all the different crowds who are attracted to the Hollow on different nights, he sees all sorts of different trouble. Fortunately for everyone, he's good at his job and nearly every problem is stopped before it has really started.

The upside to his job is that he gets to know everyone who is a regular at the club. His memory is excellent, so if you're a regular, expect him to not only know your first name, but your full name, birthday, and favorite drink. If he likes you, expect almost preferential treatment. If he doesn't, expect to regularly find yourself on the business end of his patented stare. Obviously, not everyone likes him, but at least he can predict who's doing what and when. He's a people watcher at heart, and really gets a kick out of watching the patrons.

Morton is a scary looking Scot. He's tall, big, and bald, with a neatly trimmed goatee. Rumor has it that his stare literally paralyzes people, but that's only because they're afraid he might just kill them. Morton's been a bouncer for years, one who grew up on the streets, and he knows how to handle himself and others. He may fight dirty, but he always wins.

Morton Holt grew up in Glasgow, Scotland, and spent a good deal of his time on the streets hiding from his abusive, drunken father. Glasgow can be a rough town, so Morton quickly learned how to take care of himself. His first chance, he hopped a boat to the States and has been here ever since. Originally going to Los Angeles, Morton found Bay City more to his liking, moving there in 1996.

Even though his youth was no walk in the park, life has been kind to Morton since he moved to Bay City. He's got a good job with good pay, a pretty girlfriend, and a future. As a result, while still being rough, he's not the cynical and dour person one might expect him to be. He's become more light-hearted and optimistic, but that doesn't mean that trouble-makers should fear him any less.

**"NOW WHY'D
YE HAVE TA
GO AND DO
THAT?"**

STORY SEEDS

More than anything else, Absolute Zero exists as an excuse for otherwise hardworking characters to let their hair down in an established place. More than likely, one of the many atmospheres at Absolute Zero will appeal to any character.

1 More Soap Operas Please ...: All right, so Jacob Manning and Margaret Trevail have had a few dates. So they know who each other really is, Behemoth and Lady Blue respectively. So he's "good" and she's "bad." It doesn't seem to matter. They're romantically involved now anyway, and Margaret's given her word that she won't reveal Jacob's secret.

Jacob is doing his best to keep his life with Margaret a secret from the other members of the Champions team. Not that any of them would necessarily recognize her in normal clothes; it's just that Margaret might start to associate some of them with their super-hero identities.

The two can often be found enjoying jazz in the Lounge or Seduction night in the Hollow. On several occasions, Jo Amos (Quantum) and her boyfriend, or sometimes Dwight MacReady, have joined Jacob and Margaret at Absolute Zero. As far as anyone is concerned, Jacob is a college professor, Jo and Dwight work with the Guard, and Margaret is a researcher at PanStar. No one is the wiser, except for Jo who can't shake the feeling that she's met Margaret before.

It's only a matter of time before this clandestine relationship comes out in the open. Then, it will be hell for Jacob to try and reconcile this aspect of his personal life with his fellow teammates.

2 Rivals: Several Wildstrikers have come up with another use for Club Enfer. Since the majority of the patrons are dressed unusually during that night, these young paranormals simply attribute their odd deformities and mutations to prosthetics, and can come to the surface and enjoy a night on the town.

Some of those in regular attendance include Frail, a very gaunt, very pale Gothic-looking woman with the powers of insubstantiality; Shaitan, who looks an awful lot like a traditional demon with powers of fire; Cubcis, a shapeshifter of a more Lovecraftian sort; Kitty, an aptly named feline woman; Brute, an ugly and trollish hulk; Orlok, who looks much like the character in the movie *Nosferatu*, who can drain vitality with a touch; Shade, a freaking looking guy with eyes of pure shadow and the powers of darkness; and Deva, a beautiful woman with bewitching charm and bat wings.

Unfortunately, rivalries run deep. Both Shaitan and Brute have been fierce opponents in the subterranean ring for quite some time. Although they are normally civil outside the ring, they sometime start getting into it at the club, as do other rivals. This Pro Wrestling style huffing can really rile things up, and get Morton Holt in their face.



HARRIMAN'S

Located in the heart of downtown, near Union Square, Harriman's has been a Bay Area institution for over one hundred years. Founded in 1884 by Avery Harriman, a wealthy businessman who got his start as the counterboy at a San Francisco general store, Harriman's department store has fed San Francisco's and Bay City's appetite for fine clothes and household goods at fair prices ever since.

So enduring is Harriman's that none of the major earthquakes of the past century has caused it any major damage. It remained open and well-stocked when other stores had been destroyed, earning it customer loyalty spanning generations. "All the best things in life under one roof" has always been its motto, and it strives to live up to it.

After undergoing several renovations and expansions during its life, Harriman's now occupies an eight-story building, although the first floor is actually three stories tall, making the building as tall as a ten-story structure. The first floor contains the jewelry, perfume, and toiletries departments. Thousands of Bay area residents have gotten their engagement and wedding rings here. The first floor also includes the elegant Harriman Cafe, where shoppers can take a break for good food and drink at reasonable prices. The centerpiece of the first floor is a large statue called "Winged Apollo," crafted of bronze covered with gold leaf by sculptor Guiseppe Manzanari in 1914-15. (Some observers have noted the resemblance of the statue to the late superhero Dove, who joined the Champions seventy years to the day after the statue was installed in Harriman's.)

The second and third floors are the ladies' clothing department. Everything from casual wear, to office wear, to elegant evening wear, to tastefully exotic lingerie can be found here.

Men's clothing can be found on the fourth floor. Although the bulk of the clothes for sale are office wear such as suits, dress shirts, and ties, there is also a generous selection of more casual wear. A Harriman's suit is a mark of distinction in some circles.

The fifth floor is the sporting goods department. Harriman's does sell firearms for hunting, although buyers must of course comply with all regulations of the State of California pertaining to the purchase of guns. The sixth floor is housewares and the seventh floor contains furniture and appliances.

The top floor of the building is closed to the public; it is occupied entirely by Harriman's managers and staff personnel. The President and C.E.O. of Harriman's Corp. is Avery Harriman IV, who took over the reins from his father in 1998. Although young, Harriman has displayed a talent for the business world. However, several recent Harriman's projects have failed, leaving the company in a precarious position. It may be vulnerable to a takeover or restructuring in the near future if things do not improve soon.

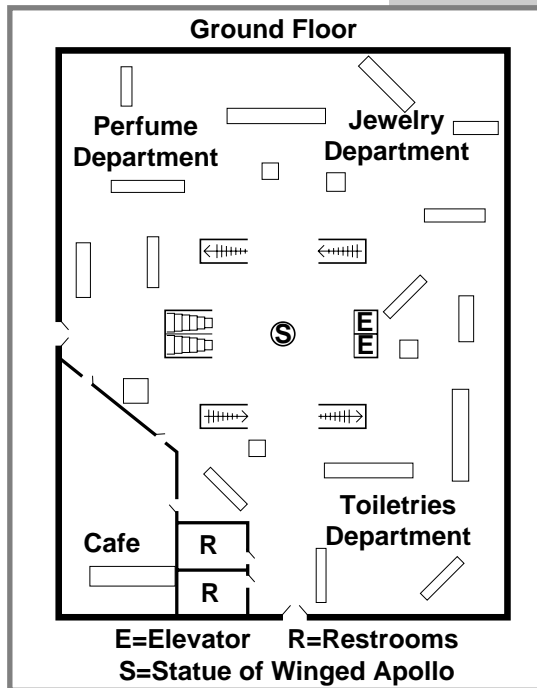
Other key players in the Harriman's family include: Vincent Skopolnick, Vice President of Finance (has ambitions to get rid of Avery Harriman IV and take over the company); Yvonne Carlyle, Head Buyer of Ladies' Clothing; Jennifer Dawn-Sutton, Manager of Housewares (the best source for company gossip); Jack Sullivan, Human Resources Director (can fire almost anyone); and Isaac Watson, Network Administrator (responsible for keeping the Harriman's computer systems running smoothly).

HIGHLIGHTS

Winged Apollo: This statue by Guiseppe Manzanari, located in the center of the first floor, has been attracting art aficionados, tourists, shoppers, and filmmakers for years

Jewelry Department: At any given time, millions of dollars' worth of glittering gems and shining gold are on sale here. Armed security guards are present twenty-four hours a day

Harriman Cafe: A place for shoppers to "get away from it all" for a few minutes and enjoy a cup of coffee, a sandwich, or just the chance to read the morning paper.



INFORMATION

Store Hours: 8:00 am until 10:00 pm Monday through Saturday; Noon until 6:00 pm Sunday; closed on Easter Monday, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

Getting There: Both BART and Muni Metro have stops within a few blocks of Harriman's.

Getting Around The Store: There are elevators on either side of the store, along with stairwells for those who prefer to walk. Escalators are located in the center of each floor.

Best Day To Go: Historically, crowds are smallest on Tuesdays.

YVONNE CARLYLE**YVONNE CARLYLE****Mental 6 Combat 2 Physical 2 Move 3**

Skills: Business: 4; Expert (Women's Fashion): 6; Style & Wardrobe: 7; Seduction: 5; Bureaucratics: 3



Yvonne Carlyle has served as Head Buyer for the Ladies' Clothing Department for over fifteen years. She supervises a staff of eight Assistant Buyers who keep the Department well-stocked with the latest fashions. She's seen styles and trends come and go, but one thing has always remained the same: her utter control over the Ladies' Clothing section of Harriman's.

From the moment she arrived on the job, Carlyle has been running Ladies' Clothing from her eighth-floor office. Although there is a Manager of Ladies' Clothing who is nominally in charge of the department, Carlyle has cowed some who ran that department into doing what she wanted, and has arranged for those who would not do as she told them to be fired for some misconduct or other. Avery Harriman IV is said to trust her implicitly and do whatever she asks, so few people in the company dare to stand up to her or question her decisions.

Carlyle's power stems from several sources. First, she is a strong-willed, domineering woman who will stop at almost nothing to get her way or ruin someone who stands up to her. She wouldn't commit murder or physically harm anyone, but is not above manufacturing evidence to embarrass someone or get him or her fired. Second, she has been around for fifteen years and not only knows a lot about how Harriman's is run, but where the skeletons are buried as well. Third, she is very good at her job as Head Buyer, and replacing her would be extremely difficult and cause the company to lose money in the short term, something that it cannot afford right now. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, she has been carrying on an affair with Avery Harriman IV for the past four years, despite the fact that he is married—just like she did with his father before him (though he doesn't know that).

Carlyle does not improve much outside of work. She is spiteful, manipulative, and mean-spirited, and so has few friends. She spends most of her evenings at home alone with her cat, Phyllis, whose personality is not much different from her mistress's. She cannot cook and eats almost all of her dinners in small, elegant, out-of-the-way restaurants where her attitude and sharp tongue have reduced more than one waitress to tears.

"I'M SURE IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE, YOU'LL SEE THINGS MY WAY."

STORY SEEDS

1 Battlefield Harriman's: Harriman's makes a great scene for a superhuman combat if the GM is in search of a picturesque battlefield with (a) lots of breakable objects, (b) plenty of small items that can be used as missile weapons, cover, and the like, and (c) hundreds of innocents who can be used as hostages, saved from collapsing ceilings, and so forth.

2 Murder on the Eighth Floor: Jennifer Dawn-Sutton, Manager of Housewares, is found dead in her eight-floor office behind a locked door. There are traces of a powerful barbiturate in her blood, and in the half-drunk cup of coffee sitting on her desk, but that's not what killed her—it was apparently used to keep her from struggling while the killer smashed her head in with the large, obelisk-shaped "Bay City Businesswoman's Coalition Woman of the Year 1999" award she won several years ago. There are no fingerprints on the award other than the victim's. According to Avery Harriman IV, there is no way for her office door to be locked unless it was done from the inside.

Dawn-Sutton is known to be an inveterate gossip and snooper who constantly digs up "dirt" on everyone in the company. She must have found out something she shouldn't have—and was killed for it. The PCs are called in to find out who did it.

The GM should make up his own solution to the mystery (whatever is most dramatic in terms of the campaign and how the game plays out), but the following facts are important:

1. Dawn-Sutton's body is found about noon. She had not been seen all day by anyone, because her door had been locked. The coroner estimates she was killed between 5:00 am and 7:00 am that morning. She was known as an early worker, and was usually not seen entering the building because she was the first eighth-floor employee to arrive in the mornings. No one else was seen entering the building early that morning.

2. It is possible to lock the office doors from the outside, but only using the chief custodian's master key (even Harriman's own key won't do it). If questioned, the chief custodian will claim that he lost the keyring with the master key on it a few days ago, but that it mysteriously turned up yesterday in a place where he'd already looked for it. There are no fingerprints on the keys or keyring.

3. The last person to leave the office the night before was Yvonne Carlyle. She knew about the chief custodian's master key, but will not admit this. She also knows that Vincent Skopolnick knows about it (he does not know she knows about it, though).

4. The day before the murder, Dawn-Sutton had a long meeting with Avery Harriman IV behind closed doors in his office, in which they raised their voices loud enough to be heard outside on several occasions. According to those who overheard them shouting, the meeting seems to have been about the possibility of eliminating the Housewares Department to cut overhead.



THE PIT

As the New Millennium turned, and the Proprietor War came to its bitter, tragic end, the energies of the Third Gate Key that the Proprietor had summoned spilled out across the world, wreaking both miracles and havoc wherever it struck. Those who witnessed its effects came to call it the Wildstrike. Some say the entire Earth shook, and there are reliable reports that the entire Red Sea began to boil.

One place affected by the Wildstrike was a patch of land in McLaren Park in Bay City. Before the terrified eyes of observers, the ground began to crack open, and lightning and weird energies emerged from the cracks. Some who stood nearby were burned by the lightning, and an even unluckier few were blinded forever by the strange light that shot up from the earth.

When it was all over, there was a Pit in McLaren Park, roughly circular, nearly 100 yards in diameter. Its sides are steep and sharp, and seem to go on forever into blackness; no one has ever seen the bottom of the Pit. Those who walk out onto the Promontory, a spit of land that projects out into the Pit, and look down claim to see strange shadowy creatures, but nothing living has ever been detected in the Pit.

Shortly after it was formed, the Pit was explored on two occasions. First, a new super-hero using the name Captain Flash flew into the Pit with the announced intention of "seein' what's up down there." He took with him a simple radio. He flew down, down, until those who watched could see him no more—and as soon as he passed out of their sight, his radio transmissions stopped. He was never seen or heard from again. About a week later, two members of the Odyssey Research Institute, Dr. Carl Wagner and Dr. Edmund Carstarphen, equipped themselves with the best protective, sensory, and broadcast equipment available at ORI and slowly descended into the Pit, using ropes and other climbing gear.

Again, as soon as they could no longer be seen by observers, their transmissions were cut off. They, too, have never been seen or heard from since that time. After their attempt to explore the Pit failed, Mayor Bobby ordered the Pit cordoned off and forbade anyone else to go into it. It remains cordoned off by the Guard to this day.

Many people have speculated about why the Pit was created in Bay City, but few of them have even come close to the answer. In the years 1947 and 1948, the Brotherhood Arcane began summoning a construct of mystical energy, known as the Spyre, on the site where the Pit is today. The Spyre was designed as a key to open a gate to the Shadow Realms, and to give the Brotherhood control over such Shadow creatures as they could call forth from the gate. The Lodge learned of the Brotherhood's scheme and fought the black wizards of the Brotherhood in what has become known as the Spyre Siege. The Lodge was victorious, and the Brotherhood's power over the Spyre was broken, causing much mystical energy to cascade out into the world.

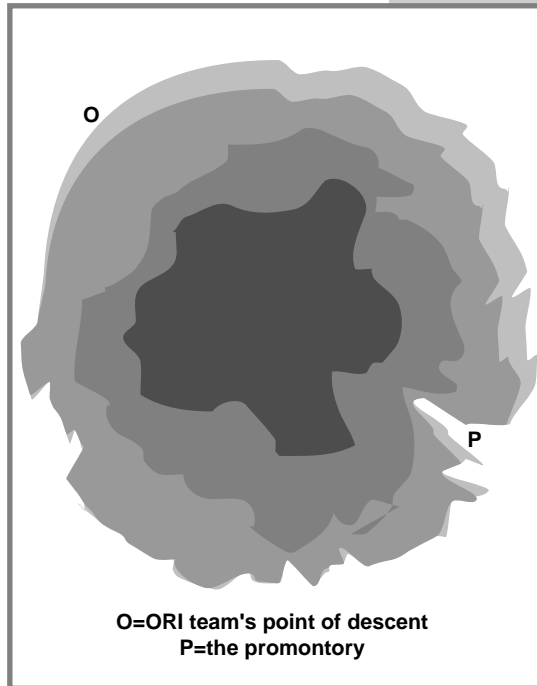
The Spyre, invisible even to most mages, exists still, but its power is greatly diminished. Yet it was enough to call to it Wildstrike energy sufficient to open a permanent gateway to the Shadow Realms and other extraplanar realms even more dire. Those who descend into the Pit are sucked into those places, never to return. Those possessed of the knowledge and the will can summon forth from the Pit such creatures as haunt the nightmares of men, but fortunately, such sages are rare indeed.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Promontory: This "cape" of land juts out into the Pit on its southeastern side. It is about 35 yards long, and very narrow. Those who stand on it seem to have a clearer, deeper view into the Pit, but they are rarely pleased by what they see.

ORI Descent Point: Drs. Wagner and Carstarphen chose a point almost opposite the Promontory from which to make their descent into the Pit. Not

only was descent possible from that point, but they suspected that the Promontory was "pointing" at something.



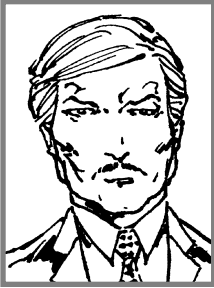
INFORMATION

Pit Diameter: Approximately 100 yards.

Pit Circumference: Approximately 314 yards.

Number of explorers known lost to date: 3.

Guard Members Securing The Pit: At least six at any given time; more if necessary.

ALOYSIUS ABERCROMBIE**ALOYSIUS ABERCROMBIE****Mental 9 Combat 7 Physical 5 Move 4****SKILLS:** Expert (Magic): 7; Acting: 4; Magic Skill: 10; Perk: 7th Circle Master of the Lodge**EQUIPMENT:** Magic items and geegaws as needed.**POWERS:** Magic Power Pool: 14 PPs

Every morning, a man, well-dressed in old-fashioned clothes and using a cane to walk, ambles into McLaren Park and sits down on a bench less than a hundred feet from the edge of the Pit. Whereas most people seem spooked by the place, he doesn't seem to mind it at all. He sits there all day, feeding the pigeons, enjoying the sun, and reading books that he carries with him in a large shopping bag from Harriman's department store that never seems to get torn or dirty.

An old man enjoying his retirement? Hardly. That old man is Aloysius Abercrombie, white wizard of the Inner Circle and Master Mage of the Lodge. It is his duty, given him by the Lodge, to watch the Pit during the day and monitor all comings, goings, and mystical fluctuations associated with it. (Another Master Mage, Jessica Talbot, must watch the Pit all night.)

Abercrombie began his life nearly 200 years ago in London. Born on Halloween, he displayed mystic talents from an early age and quickly caught the attention of the Brotherhood Arcane. After being initiated into the First Level of their mysteries, he was revolted by their black sorceries and fled the organization. Taking advantage of what little useful information he had learned during his time in the Brotherhood, he sought out members of the Lodge, explained his background to them, and requested membership in their organization. They sensed no ill intent in him, and, after some consideration and a testing of his powers, admitted him as a Lodge brother in the year 1869.

Since then, Abercrombie has slowly but surely ascended through the ranks of the Lodge, relying on diligence and hard work where others seek achievement through heroics and wild experiments. He achieved his position on the Inner Circle in 1938. He earned his place as a Master Mage due to his exemplary efforts in combating the Brotherhood Arcane during the Spyre Siege. His current duties result from his intimate understanding of the workings of the Spyre.

Abercrombie's chief areas of study have been magics relating to the mind and to manipulation of various mystic and mundane energies. Although he disdains combat, if need be he can call on tremendous forces to blast his enemies or whisk him away from danger.

**"THE PRICE
OF THE
WORLD'S
SANITY IS
THE LODGE'S
VIGILANCE."**

STORY SEEDS

1 The Return Of Captain Flash: Finally, Captain Flash comes back—but no one's happy about it. Having been warped and twisted by the dark energies of the Shadow Realm which held him captive for so long, Captain Flash is no longer human, but rather, some horrible crossbreed between horned demon, octopus, and man. His former powers of light manipulation are gone, replaced by the ability to generate mystical fields of shadow and related effects. But his speed still remains, and with it now comes greater abilities to harm his foes—tentacular arms that stretch out to grab its prey, wickedly sharp fangs and claws that rend their flesh, and huge horns on its head that gore them.

Demonflash, as it calls itself, comes ravaging up out of the Pit one day, killing a Guard agent before Aloysius Abercrombie can force it to depart without taking further lives. He then alerts the Lodge, which in turn will exert whatever influence it has to get the PCs to pursue and capture/kill Demonflash (the Lodge dares not act openly against Demonflash, for fear of revealing its existence, but will aid the heroes in whatever covert ways it can).

The GM should write up Demonflash in such a way as to make him powerful enough to stand toe-to-toe with the PCs for an extended fight. In order to keep the PCs from simply whaling away on him with their biggest attacks, leave open the possibility that Captain Flash can be rescued—perhaps his true face occasionally surfaces on Demonflash's body and begs for the heroes' help.

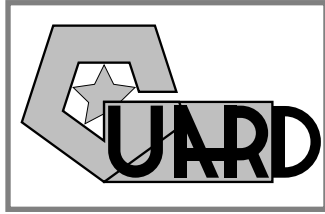
2 The Power Of Markoth: The Pit is the single greatest source of mystic energy in the Bay Area, and as such is the pinnacle of Markoth's scheme to siphon off said energy to fuel his attempt to retake the throne of Tangut. After absorbing the mystic energy of other locations (as detailed elsewhere in this book), he will go for the grand finale.

Unless the PCs anticipate Markoth and get to the Pit before he does, they will be alerted to his activities either by sensing the vast flow of evil mystic energy from the Pit, or because someone in the park (perhaps Aloysius Abercrombie) reports what's going on to the authorities. (Abercrombie may also aid the PCs if the GM desires; otherwise they find him unconscious near the Pit.) By the time they arrive, Markoth will be standing on the tip of the Promontory. A tremendous storm is building; the sky is almost black with clouds, and winds whip Markoth's long hair and robes in a frenzied, demonic dance. Shadowy mystic energy, its dark nature palpable even to characters who are not mystically aware, is pouring up from the Pit and into Markoth. As the PCs watch, Markoth slowly levitates off of the Promontory and into the air above the center of the Pit.

At this point, taking down Markoth will be tough—the mystic energies he has absorbed have increased all of his Characteristics and powers by about 50%! The forces he is calling forth from the Pit will tinge his own magics with a dark aura of evil, indicating that he is now corrupt beyond even what he was before.



PIER 44 GUARD STATION



With Bay City's prominence in this world of paranormal heroes, being home to the famous Champions, it is only normal to assume that the U.S. Guard would have a significant presence there as well.

When Bay City residents think of the Guard, it is most likely the Pier 44 facility that comes

to mind. This structure juts out over the north end of Bay City, with four large floors above ground and two below the surface of the water. This building is unusual to look at, as it seems to be virtually seamless. It is from here that the majority of all Bay City Guard activity originates.

On the whole, Pier 44 looks more like a military installation than anything else.

The perimeter is enclosed by cyclone fencing topped with concertina wire, armed guards constantly patrol the grounds, and the checkpoint is guarded night and day by a retinue of no less than four troops. Every security door requires a thumb print and an access code. These are just the obvious methods of security. Invisible to the naked eye are the camera surveillance installations, placed throughout the grounds, buildings, and perimeter, remote controlled, hidden sentry guns, and remote controlled mines. All these things are for "precautionary" security. Apparently, one can never be too precautionary when dealing with paranormal criminals.

Furthermore, the Guard building itself is topped by a helipad, with the launching pad for the various Guard VTOL aircraft not more than 150 m away. This, combined with the aquatic airlock and motor pool, provide Pier 44 with more than ample forces in the event of an open assault.

Once inside the main building, you'll find the brains of the Guard, including conference rooms, briefing rooms, advanced criminology labs, and the bureaucratic support staff. Then there's the training rooms, the substantial armory, and the "garage," where the Bay City Guard keeps its pool of vehicles. While many Guard aerial vehicles are housed at the main facility, the larger craft are kept on a special base at Bay City International Airport.

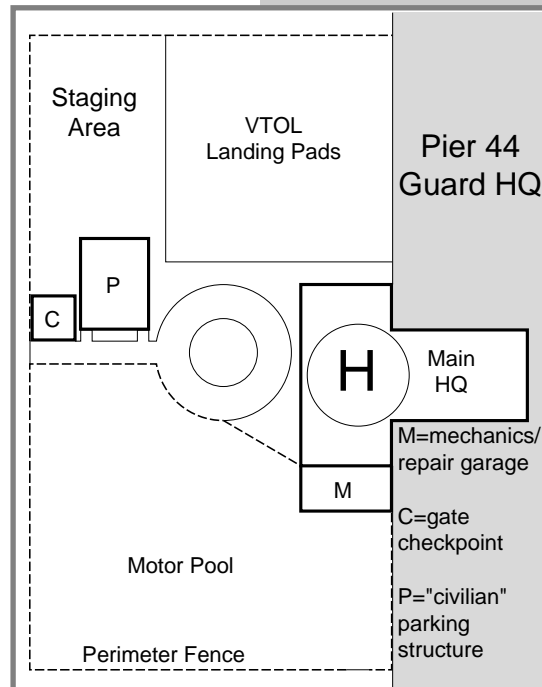
In addition to Pier 44, the Guard holds two other facilities in Bay City. The first is the Proving Grounds. Located in the south-central part of the Presidio, the Proving Grounds is a joint Odyssey Research Institute/Guard facility aimed at creating and testing experimental weaponry and equipment. It is here that most of the Guard's common tools were originally created, and it is from here that most of the next wave of Guard equipment will come. The Proving Grounds is located in three buildings, surrounded by an electrified fence which are patrolled by armed guards at all times, and is subject to even tighter security than Pier 44. No one goes to the Proving Grounds unless they are expected.

The second is the NorCal Containment Facility, located in eastern Oakland. The Containment Facility is essentially a mini-Stronghold containing six cells which can be configured for individual paranormal prisoners. The NorCal Containment Facility is not meant to be a real prison, but is rather for the transportation of criminals or for holding them until their court dates. Security is lighter than at Pier 44 or the Proving Grounds, but the response time from Guard agents stationed in Pier 44 is less than three minutes. As for any Guard Stronghold, big or small, a prison break for one of the super-villains within is a pipe dream.

HIGHLIGHTS

The West Coast's largest Guard Facility
The Proving Ground in the Presidio—the Guard's premiere experimental weapons facility.

The NorCal Containment Facility—Bay City's own miniature Stronghold.



INFORMATION

Location: Embarcadero and Pier 44, North Bay City (Pier 44 Facilities, Waterfront), The Presidio, North Bay City (Proving Grounds Facilities), Oakland, East Bay City (NorCal Containment Facility, Oakland)

Getting There: The general public has no need to go to any of the Guard's facilities. If you are expected, by car is the best way to go.

Phone Number: 911 (Emergency), (415) 555-3264 (General Offices).

RICA JANKOWSKI**GUARD AGENT RICA JANKOWSKI****Mental 5 Combat 6 Physical 5 Move 5****SKILLS:** Guard Agent 4, Bureaucratics: 5, Tactics: 4, Fighting: 4; Beautiful**EQUIPMENT:** As per standard Guard Agent (see *Alliances*, page 8)**COMPLICATIONS:** Sense of Duty to the Guard and its ideals, Unfailingly Friendly and Happy

Other than the friendship between Dwight MacReady and Jo Amos (Quantum) and basic professional cooperation, the new Champions have little in the way of official channels between them and the Guard. It's only a matter of time before the new Champions team once again gains an official Guard liaison, and it seems that Rica Jankowski will be it.

Hailing from a brief yet intense career with the NYPD, Rica joined the Guard three years ago and was transferred to Bay City. Her performance in the field has been exemplary. She's met the Champions before, and they seem to get along fine in the field.

Dwight MacReady, Guard Regional Commander, has been keeping an eye on Rica. In addition to being a top-notch agent and an able detective, she also suffers from an excess of personality. One would think that in Rica's line of work, a person would become hardened, or at the very least a bit more world weary. Not so with Ms. Jankowski. She's a woman with an attitude; she has a strong personality, a loud mouth, and a bright sense of humor. She's downright infectious. The way Dwight sees it, the Champions would really like to have a combat able liaison, if they are to have one at all, and Rica's ability and personality make her perfect for the job.

Amazingly enough, the personality Rica displays is the genuine thing. No lurking depression or lingering self-doubts. She loves life and she loves herself, and that's that. While everything may not be perfect in her life, she's led a pretty good one so far. Always one with a strong sense of duty, Rica is serving her fellows and her country where she thinks it best—combating criminals against whom normal folk are even more helpless.

Rica's a thin woman with an athletic build. Don't let her fool you though; she's a lot stronger than she looks and she's trained in several different kinds of combat techniques. Her dark hair is kept short, and it usually flies wildly about her pretty face. Many men have fallen prey to her blue eyes and smile, but few have succeeded in catching her interest.

Secretly, Dwight himself has a crush on Rica. Since he doesn't condone work relationships, he'll never act on it and she'll never know.

**"HEY! SMILE.
IT'S GOOD
FOR YOU."**

STORY SEEDS

1 Those Who Fight Monsters: Lt. Sherry Madsen is a paranormal bigot; she's always hated them because they have powers of which normal people only dream. Unfortunately for her psyche, she has begun to manifest paranormal powers herself, although no one but her knows this.

Madsen hasn't discovered all the full extent of her abilities, but she is definitely a powerful shapeshifter. Sherry is currently in denial about her powers, believing them to be the hallucinations of a fevered mind or vivid waking nightmares. Since her psyche, with all of its mindless hatred, is not ready to deal with the situation, she has almost no control over her powers. The only control she does have involves massive exertions of will in order to maintain her given form. But what if that concentration were to be broken?

Well, Lt. Madsen is also the head of the NorCal Containment Facility in Oakland, where super-villains come to cool their heels. Unfortunately, as agents escorted their latest capture of Oculon, the villain overcame his damaged restraints and escaped. During the ensuing battle, Sherry was hit by one of Oculon's devastating eyebeam attacks and nearly lost consciousness. In her daze, her subconscious came out to play, as did her repressed powers. Randomly shifting forms, Sherry lashed out at those agents who came to her aid and has gone insanely rampaging through Oakland. Gamemasters should create Lt. Madsen as a starting paranormal character, with Guard training and Shapeshift (No END cost) at 10 Power Points.

The Guard, along with various paranormals, have been mobilized to capture Lt. Madsen. She is a threat to both herself and the city, as she is randomly lashing out with insane rage. It will remain to be seen if she can gain understanding of her situation and control over her powers, or if the experience has permanently shattered her mind.

Unfortunately for all involved, reporter Sherry Baxter got there in time to get lots of good footage for the 10:00 news. It will turn into a scandal overnight. "How can the Guard protect us when it can't even protect itself?"

2 All's Fair ...: This tidbit is presented as a lighter note for Guard dealings. Dwight MacReady has a crush on Rica Jankowski, who is possibly the next Champions liaison. Not believing in work relationships, since they interfere with the job, Dwight has no intentions of ever acting on his feelings or of letting them be known. Unfortunately for poor Dwight, they're obvious.

Although Dwight is quite oblivious, Rica is more than willing to reciprocate. She's not afraid of work relationships, and has made more than one advance toward the Captain. But, he's doing the typical male thing and not noticing.

If characters are dealing with the Guard on a regular basis, or are the Champions, they might just want to tell the two to, "Get it over with already." Otherwise, it's just good color and good for a laugh.

OTHER GUARD PERSONNEL IN BAY CITY

LIEUTENANT SHERRY MADSEN



The head of the NorCal Containment Facility, Lt. Sherry Madsen has perhaps the highest stress position of all the Bay City Guard agents. It is her job to make sure that captured super-villains remain so and must constantly watch out for "visits" from her prisoner's "friends." Although a respected and capable agent, Lt. Sherry Madsen is usually at sociological odds with Capt. MacReady.

Unlike many of the other Guard agents in Bay City, Sherry is a bigot. She constantly refers to paranormals as freaks, among other less polite terms, much to the chagrin of her superiors. She believes that all paranormals are a threat to "common decent folk," and that they should all be registered (tagged) and be either impressed into governmental service or locked away. If Lt. Madsen knew of the existence of GSI, she would join up in a second and for all the wrong reasons.

If you're a human, Sherry's okay. She's average looking, with her blonde hair in a military cut, with hardened features. Normally, she's friendly enough, but it a bit overbearing and suffers from a closed mind. Currently, she's suffering from a veritable boatload of denial.

Just a few months ago, she woke up, looked in the mirror, and saw a face that wasn't hers. After a bout of extreme panic and screaming, her own features returned. Unfortunately for her, episodes such as this have happened several times since then, each time displaying various states of transformation. It appears that Lt. Madsen is an awakening paranormal after all, although the caused of these powers is unknown. She is desperately trying to deny this fact and pretend that these episodes were something else, such as fevered hallucinations or the like, since if it were true she would be the thing she most hates. How long she can keep this secret remains to be seen.

LIEUTENANT HARRY GULD



If there's one person that could be said to be Commander MacReady's right hand, it would be Lt. Harrison Guld. Harry's been with the Bay City Guard as long as Dwight, and the two have been friends at least that long.

Harry's not the best looking guy in the world, being a little rugged in the face, but he's likeable. Not particularly gregarious or outgoing, he is completely respectful and polite unless someone gives him reason not to be.

A highly reliable agent, Harry's mind is usually on his job, unless he's out drinking with Dwight off duty.

It's surprising that Lt. Guld is a hard-liner, and is one of the few members of Guard Special Investigations. He was recruited into GSI just a year ago, and he thoroughly agrees with the tenets of the group. It's not that he hates paranormals or anything like that; it's just that he believes that the people of the United States deserve the best protection they can get. GSI's plans are for a last resort only, and Harry hopes it will never come to that.

Harry keeps his membership in and the existence of GSI very secret. He never jeopardizes the organization by doing something stupid like sneaking in at night to transfer files. Harry simply observes and reports, like a good soldier.

LIEUTENANT MAGDA WATTS



Chief of Administration for the Proving Ground and Captain Trebeck's second in command, Lt. Magda Watts is a difficult woman. She has to be—she runs the highest security Guard facility in Northern California and is custodian to top governmental weapons secrets.

One can almost smell the bureaucracy seeping out of Lt. Watts. Her sharp features and eternal scowl only serve to exacerbate that feeling. If you plan on getting into the Proving Grounds, you had better have the right paperwork and authorization or you won't get past the main gate. From then on, unless you are Capt. Dwight MacReady, other top Guard brass, or the President, visitors are escorted by armed agents wherever they go on the premises, regardless of rank. This is all nothing compared to the hell that is requisition forms.

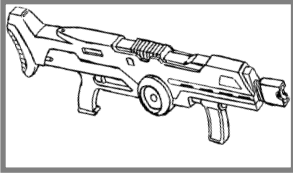
Eventually, all weaponry and equipment created at the Proving Grounds must be field tested by Bay City Guard agents. When the gear is ready, Lt. Watts notifies both the other two Bay City Guard facilities, who can then go about requisitioning it for specific field use. This process involves reams of paperwork before an agent can get the devices out the door. Upon return, the agent is required to fill out another ream of paperwork providing feedback on the prototype's performance, and they had best fill out all the blanks. Fortunately, Magda understands when prototypes come back damaged or destroyed, but that doesn't mean she likes it.

Even though she is quietly referred to as "Her Frigid Majesty," Magda is trusted implicitly. She may rub people the wrong way, but the Proving Grounds is one tightly run ship under her guidance.

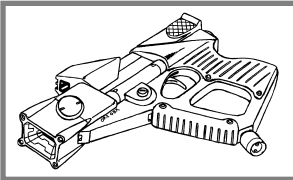
GUARD EQUIPMENT

The Guard has a variety of technological wonders at their disposal. Since the Guard in Bay City are so close to an experimental equipment lab (the Proving Ground), they often get to field test the latest toys. For other Guard Weapons, Equipment, Armor, and Vehicles, see pages 13-15 of *Alliances*.

WEAPONS



The **G33X Nullifier** still only exists as prototypes, but promises to be an impressive addition to the Guard arsenal. The size of a large assault rifle, the G33X Nullifier is a weapon which neutralizes a paranormal's offensive powers. Different versions of the Nullifier exist for the different manifestation of paranormal powers (by SFX). It is bought as a 9D6 Suppress against all of the powers of a specific special effect. Guard scientists have prototypes for use against cold/ice, electricity, heat/fire, kinetic, and sonic powers. Each different version is designated by the appropriate letter (e.g. the G33Xc would work against cold/ice powers.) Currently, this weapon is highly unreliable and doesn't carry enough of a battery capacity (only carrying 5 shots) to be truly useful in the field, but initial tests have been promising.



The **G8X Stun Pistol** is an experimental weapon, meant to bypass armor and other defenses to render a target unconscious in a quick, efficient manner. The current prototype is faring well in tests, with a ROF of 1 and a juicepack good for 10 shots.

GUARD WEAPON	DC	COST	SHOTS	NOTES
G33X Nullifier	*	2	5	ROF 1, Activation 10+, Focus (Grabbable)
G8X Stun Pistol	5	3	10	Armor Piercing, ROF 1, Focus (Grabbable)

EQUIPMENT

The still experimental **Guard Sampling Recorder** is a device which is used to measure paranormal powers in the field. The recorder not only records the use of a paranormal power on video and audio tracks, it also measures the relative "output" of that power, so that data can be cross-referenced with other paranormals to determine an approximate power level.

Guard Sampling Recorder: Detect Paranormal Powers, at Range, Discriminatory Sense, Eidetic Memory for recording results, Focus (Grabbable). Cost: 1 Power Point

ARMOR

The **GPE4X Guard Booster Armor** is an experimental improvement over the regular GPE3 Guard Armor, adding synthetic musculature and servos to increase the wearer's physical strength. The armor has the same protection as the GPE3 armor, but the GPE4X Booster Armor adds 3 points to the wearer's STR, and costs a total of 7 Power Points.

The **GPE5X Undercover Armor** is experimental armor, meant to look just like normal street clothes so an agent can investigate with a greater degree of protection. It provides protection equal to 8 KD and 8 EKD, and costs 2 Power Points. Guard scientists are trying to determine a way to protect the head while being inobvious, but their personal force fields still aren't working properly.

VEHICLES

The **GTV-47X Jet Pack** is the Guard's new experimental personal jet pack. It is designed to fit on the back of standard GPE3 Guard armor, providing them with 40 m/yds of Flight Movement at a cost of 6 Power Points. The Jet Pack is only capable of about one hour of flight before it needs to be recharged. Many Guard agents are still wary of strapping raw jet thrusters onto their back and soaring through the air, so field testing is going slowly since the GTV-47X has been classified as a highly dangerous experimental "aircraft."

The **GTV-199 Supersonic Transport** is similar to UNTIL's Quicksilver Jet in most respects. It is a high-speed combat aircraft which can carry up to 12 Guard operatives with full gear, and supplants the GTV-122 Air Transport when conflict is a possibility.

The **GTV-203 Fighter** is a small, but highly maneuverable and fast combat jet. The cloaking abilities of the GTV-203 rival those of VIPER's Dragon jet, deceiving nearly all forms of conventional sensory equipment. Meant to combat both flying super-villains and craft such as VIPER's Dragon, the GTV-203's are very effective in numbers.

The **GTV-24 Mini-Sub** is the Guard equivalent of a fighter jet under water. They are small enough to be carried alongside carriers, and the like. There aren't many of the GTV-24's overall, since aquatic combat is uncommon for the Guard.

GUARD VEHICLES

VEHICLE	MOVE	KD	SDP	CREW	PASS
GTV-199 SUPERSONIC TRANSPORT	400F	4K	16K	1	12
Blaster Turret (Range 1600, DC: 2 Kills, ROF 5, 200 shots) (x2), Afterburners: Mach 4					
GTV-203 FIGHTER	400F	2K	7K	2	0
Nose Blaster Cannon (Range 800, WA +1, DC: 2 Kills, ROF 10, 1000 shots), Afterburners: Mach 5, Ejection Seats, Radar, Stealth System					
GTV-24 MINI-SUB	40W	2K	5K	2	0
Infrared Blaster (Range 800 m/y, WA +1, DC: 2 Kills, ROF 1, 30 Shots)					

Key F: Flight W: Underwater



THE STEEL CITADEL



Bay City is a major center for industry, commerce, and culture, and is also known for the unusually high incidence of paranormal activity that take place there. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that VIPER, the world's premier paranormal crime organization, has an important base right in the heart of the Bay Area. Located underground, alongside a BART tunnel, beneath the intersection of 11th Street, Market Street, Van Ness Street, and Oak Street in downtown Bay City, the Steel Citadel is larger than the typical VIPER Nest—it has a complement of 27 agents, rather than the usual nine, and can quickly call on the forces of other VIPER Nests in the Bay Area (the East Bay Nest, the South Bay Nest, and so forth) if need be. In addition, the Steel Serpent, the Nest Leader, has numerous lower-level agents ("cannon fodder," as he refers to them) who can do little more than fire a blaster and parrot a few VIPER code-words.

The Steel Citadel is built in an area which was cleverly excavated by VIPER-paid construction companies during the construction of the BART system, and then walled up to keep prying eyes away. When the time was right, VIPER reopened the area and built the base, disguising the sounds of the construction work with those of the train system. The Serpentine computer that runs the base went online in late 1976; since then the base has only expanded. No super-hero has ever discovered the base's location or breached its security, as far as VIPER knows.

The Steel Citadel can be entered through several doors. The first is a secret passageway in the BART tunnel; this door is rarely used. The second is through the basement in an office building off of Market Street; the superintendent of this building is a low-level VIPER agent and will keep snoopers away from the basement.

The third is the elevator in an office building on 11th Street. An agent wishing to get into the VIPER base steps into the elevator (when no civilians are in it, of course), presses the button for the 22nd floor three times in quick succession, and the elevator immediately goes down, below the building's basement, to a tunnel which leads into the Citadel.

The unquestioned commander of the Steel Citadel is a Nest Leader who calls himself the Steel Serpent. Possibly Japanese in ancestry (or so say those who have heard his voice and seen his face), the Steel Serpent wears a suit of battle-armor resembling a cross between ancient samurai armor and a VIPER uniform. He carries a katana whose razor-sharp blade is reinforced by a force-field emitted from a generator in the sword's hilt; thus, the blade is unbreakable and can cut through armor with ease.

Below the Steel Serpent, the base's chain of command is as follows: Field Commander Hugh Oxnard, Intelligence Commander Paula Jacobi, Security Commander Don Evinrude, and then the three Squadron Commanders who command the operatives in the field. Several of them have aspirations of wresting control of the Nest away from its Nest Leader—a not uncommon state of affairs for a VIPER Nest.

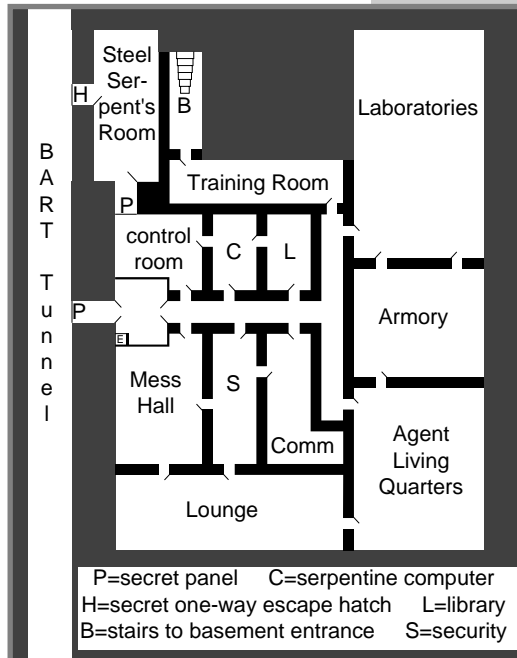
In addition to its state-of-the-art Serpentine computer network, the Steel Citadel has numerous other important facilities. Its laboratories are extensive, manned by unscrupulous scientists recruited by VIPER (several by Dr. Richfield Franck) to keep it supplied with the latest weapons, equipment, and high technology. Its armory is stocked with a wide selection of VIPER weaponry.

HIGHLIGHTS

Serpentine Computer: This highly advanced data processing system controls most of the functions of the Steel Citadel, maintains an encrypted link to the Serpentine computers of other Nests (and the Supreme Leader's even more advanced Serpentine system), and lets the agents play computer games in their off hours.

The Lounge: An entertainment area for the agents when they are off duty. Features two wide-screen TVs, a pool table, several video games, a small kitchen, and other amenities.

Armory: Every kind of blaster weapon a gadgeteer's heart could desire.



INFORMATION

Size of base: Approximately 70,000 square feet (part of which is occupied by generators and other equipment, of course)

Operative Complement: 14 scientists and technicians, 24 agents, 3 Squadron Leaders, 3 command staff Commanders, 1 Nest Leader (the Steel Serpent)

Superhuman Support: As one of VIPER's most important Nests, the Steel Citadel can call on VIPER Central Command for superhuman operatives if needed. In fact, there is usually at least one such agent living in the Citadel or elsewhere in the Bay area at any given time.

PAULA JACOBI**VIPER INTELLIGENCE COMMANDER PAULA JACOBI****Mental 6 Combat 6 Physical 5 Move 5****SKILLS:** Fighting: 5, Streetwise: 5, Conspiracy: 5, Acting: 7, Bureaucrats: 6, Disguise: 5, Lockpicking: 5, Mimicry: 5**EQUIPMENT:** As standard VIPER Agent plus whatever else she can scam from the armory.

Sometimes it's hard to be a woman in VIPER. There aren't many female agents, and they tend to suffer from a lot of sexual harassment and discrimination, but only those tough enough to take it would ever be recruited by VIPER in the first place. Paula Jacobi never let that sort of thing get in her way. The first time one of the male agents gave her a hard time, she broke his arm in three places.

The second time she killed two agents. Her VIPER superiors looked at what she'd done, smiled, and gave her a promotion.

It soon became apparent that, despite her fighting skills, Agent Jacobi's true talents weren't in combat—they were in espionage and intelligence gathering. Her knack for analyzing espionage situations and reacting to them correctly astounded her masters. She was routed into the VIPER Espionage Agent training school. There she studied under Genadii "The Cossack" Ruschenko, a former member of the KGB and perhaps the best intelligence agent ever to work for VIPER. Over the course of two years' training, she mastered the arts of her craft.

When her training was completed, she was posted to one of the New York City VIPER Nests and given an assignment to infiltrate the United Nations bureaucracy to look for weaknesses in the organization. She served there in an undercover position for four years, passing much useful information on to VIPER. Then she spent two years doing the same thing to an UNTIL branch office in Chicago. Delighted by her performance, her superiors promoted her again and gave her a small cell of VIPER Espionage Agents in Los Angeles to lead. Again, she performed flawlessly, and was eventually made Intelligence Commander at the Steel Citadel at the request of the Steel Serpent himself.

Jacobi is intelligent, quick on her feet, ruthless, and beautiful—and thus the perfect female spy. She has learned how to capitalize on her personal qualities, using them in the right combination to get what she wants out of her target. But she's more than just ruthless and clever; she's ambitious, too. She wants to be more than an Intelligence Commander, she wants to be a Nest Leader, and maybe even to go beyond that. She'll stop at nothing to get what she wants. As she works for the Steel Serpent, she is quietly spying on him, too, gathering as much information as she can about him and his way of operating. When the time is right, she will strike, taking him out and taking his place.

And her superiors will smile....

STORY SEEDS

1 Fast Train To Nowhere: BART announces plans to expand several of its lines—including the one that runs by the Steel Citadel. VIPER cannot tolerate this; any such construction would quickly reveal the existence of the base. Wheels are put in motion and pressure brought to bear on anyone that VIPER thinks can get the plans changed.

One such person is Keith Eberhart, semi-wealthy owner of a successful Bay City construction firm, and one of several businessmen who were hired as consultants by Baytrans when it began considering expansion to discuss the bid process for the project. Eberhart's firm, Eberhart Universal Construction, won't be bidding on the work, but Eberhart himself was intimately involved with the formulation of the plans and specifications for the job, so he knows what's involved and how much it should cost.

Eberhart turns up dead one day. His body is found in an alley a couple miles from his penthouse apartment (the body of his partner, Vince Camalari, is never found, but he is presumed murdered as well). He shows obvious signs of torture—burn marks, lash marks, a couple of broken fingers—and was killed by a gunshot wound to the head. His apartment is a mess; the entire place has been ransacked. It will take days to comb through the mess, but in the end, it will be determined that five things are missing: the plans for a 30-story office building Eberhart Universal is supposed to start constructing next month; proposed plans and specs for the BART tunnel expansion; Eberhart's electronic Rolodex; plans for a shopping center Eberhart Universal finished building last year; and Eberhart's cellular phone.

Everything stolen but the BART plans is a red herring—VIPER doesn't want its involvement known (hence the use of a gun, rather than a blaster, to kill Eberhart). If the PCs investigate and check out the jobs for which plans were stolen, they may, if they're lucky, find the Steel Citadel—in which case the Steel Serpent will hit them with everything he's got, hoping to kill them before his secret leaks out. Otherwise VIPER will lay low and keep trying to sabotage BART's plans by having a VIPER-owned construction firm submit the low bid (easy to do when you get the specs in advance of everyone else and are willing to spy on the other bidders to find out their bids) and then delay the project.

2 Search And Rescue: The Steel Serpent's agents capture a local superhero or vigilante (GM's choice) and hold him prisoner at a VIPER safehouse near Fisherman's Wharf (no point risking base security, after all). Unfortunately for them, some civilians saw the kidnapping take place and have alerted the police, who in turn alert the heroes. Investigating the scene of the kidnapping, the PCs will find a matchbook from a Wharf-area bar. If they stake the place out long enough, VIPER agents in civies on their night off will show up, ripe for capture and interrogation about where the missing hero is being held.



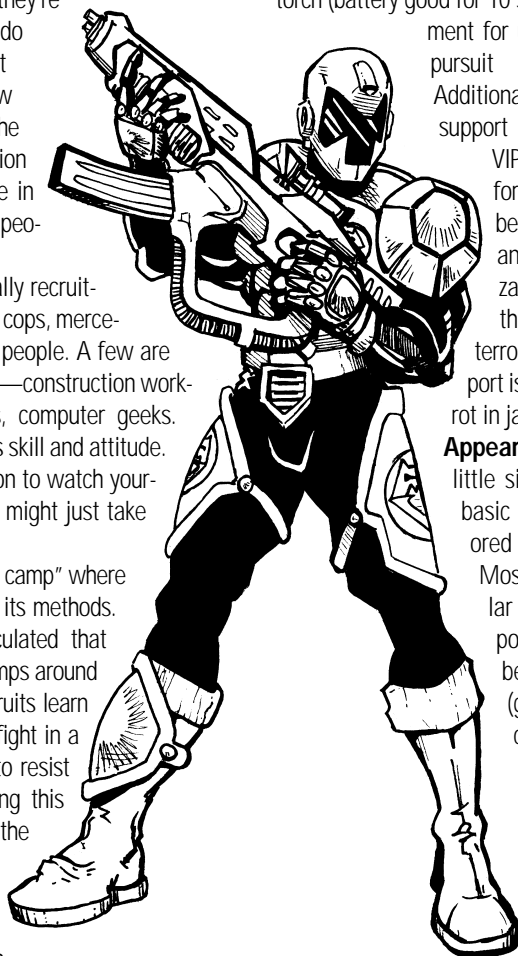
VIPER AGENTS

Background: Why does someone join VIPER? Criminal psychologists have put forth a long list of reasons: desire to belong to a strong, disciplined organization; greed; wanting to play with all those high-tech toys. But the truth is, most VIPER agents are just plain mean. This isn't to say they're not skilled—real VIPER agents, the ones the organization spends good money to train and equip, usually have backgrounds in the military, law enforcement, or similar careers. They know what they're doing. Trouble is, what they like to do most is hurt people, take things that aren't theirs, bully people, and throw their weight around. It's like joining the Mafia—being a part of an organization like VIPER confers power and prestige in the underworld, and that attracts some people.

Potential VIPER agents are typically recruited from disaffected military personnel, cops, mercenaries, espionage spooks, and similar people. A few are taken from more mundane professions—construction workers, bouncers, electronics specialists, computer geeks. The main thing the recruiters look for is skill and attitude. If you've got 'em, and enough discretion to watch yourself and keep your mouth shut, VIPER might just take you.

Recruits are sent to a sort of "boot camp" where they learn the basics about VIPER and its methods. Law enforcement officials have speculated that VIPER has maybe half a dozen such camps around the world in remote locations. The recruits learn how to use VIPER equipment, how to fight in a squad with other VIPER agents, how to resist interrogation, that kind of thing. During this training period, VIPER trainers evaluate the aptitudes of each new agent and determine where his talents can best be used. After basic training is completed, agents are then posted for further training in a specialized field—Espionage Agent, Flying VIPERs, or a dozen others—or sent straight to work as a front-line agent in a Nest somewhere.

Equipment: The basic equipment package for VIPER agents is as follows: **VIPER BCU** (Basic Combat Uniform), a distinctive armored uniform which includes rank insignia, the **VIPER Helmet**, which includes lowlight sensory equipment, encrypted radio system, and voice-activated, heads-up display computer system, the **VB-A1 Blaster Rifle**, the **VB-S1 Blaster Pistol** (intended as a sidearm or backup in case the Blaster Rifle is lost), and the **VIPER BEST**. The last is the Basic Escape Toolkit, "your



BEST friend," as VIPER's escape and evasion trainers say, and contains minor explosive charges, primitive pick gun, laser cutting torch (battery good for 10 seconds of operation), and other equipment for use in escaping enemies and evading pursuit.

Additional weapons, equipment, vehicles, and support will be issued to agents as needed.

VIPER is long past the days of "fire and forget" agents, when their recruits would be sent into the field with little training and less support; these days the organization concentrates on quality, rather than quantity, when fielding its army of terror. That means providing whatever support is necessary and not leaving your men to rot in jail if they're captured.

Appearance: The VIPER uniform has varied little since the organization's inception. The basic uniform is dark green, with gold-colored gauntlets, belt, boots, and helmet. Most of the common weapons are a similar shade of gold. Holsters, equipment pouches, and the like are hung from the belt; a backpack or ALICE-style sling (gold colored, of course) can be used to carry additional equipment. The VIPER cobra-head symbol is emblazoned over the left breast of the uniform for standard agents, and the right breast for officers (low-level "cannon fodder" agents have no symbol on their uniforms, which are not armored). Insignia of rank are sewn onto the upper arm of the uniform.

VIPER SPECIALIST AGENTS

As mentioned above, some VIPER recruits receive special training above and beyond the basic training all agents receive. Some of the different types of VIPER specialist agents include:

Aquatic Specialist: Sometimes VIPER needs to conduct operations underwater. In such a situation, it calls in its special Aquatic agents. Most Aquatic agents are disaffected U.S. Navy UDT members or SEALs; they are tough fighters if cornered.

Add: VIPER Aquatic Suit (Diving Gear) (5 OP, C:NM, page 125); Demolitions 4 (4 OP); +2 Hand To Hand and H-t-H Evade (4 OP).

Communications Specialist: These agents learn how to operate and repair VIPER's communications and sensory equipment.

Add: Computer Programming 5 (5 OP); Electronics 5 (5 OP); Expert (VIPER Commo/Sensory Equipment) 6 (6 OP); Hacking 6 (6 OP); Systems Operations (VIPER Equipment) 6 (6 OP)

Criminalistics Evasion Specialist: This rare type of specialized agent is usually found only in Nests in extremely large urban areas. He is an expert at cleaning up crime scenes, eliminating trace evidence, confusing investigators, and preventing VIPER's operations from being detected by criminalistics.

Add: Bribery 4 (4 OP); Criminology 5 (5 OP); Expert (Crime Scene Investigation) 4 (4 OP); Forensic Medicine 5 (5 OP)

Espionage Specialist: These agents are sent into law enforcement offices and other strategic targets undercover to gather information and send it back to VIPER.

Add: Acting 4 (4 OP); Bugging 5 (5 OP); Bureaucrats 4 (4 OP); Disguise 4 (4 OP); Lockpicking 6 (6 OP); Mimicry 5 (5 OP).

Flying VIPERs: These agents are equipped with special jetpacks allowing them to fly (20 m/y). They carry standard VIPER weapons, but are taught how to use them to best effect from the air, aerial combat maneuvers and tactics, and the like. They are also taught how to fly standard aircraft, though they are not as skilled in that regard as some VIPER Transport Specialists.

Add: VIPER Jetpack (Flight 20 m/y; Focus (Attached)) (2 PP); Acrobatics 6 (helps agent perform aerobatic maneuvers) (6 OP); Expert (VIPER Jetpack) 6 (6 OP); Pilot 6 (6 OP).

Heavy Weapons Specialist: When it's time to bring out the big guns, these are the men to do it. VIPER has trained them to use the biggest, meanest, nastiest weapons in its arsenal—things like the VS-10 Sonic Cannon, VIPER Surface-To-Air Missiles, the V-12 Destructor, and the VT-1 "Thunderbolt" Cannon. They are also trained to use vehicle-mounted weapons.

Add: Gunnery 6 (6 OP); Heavy Weapons 6 (6 OP).

Infiltration Specialist: Infiltration Specialists are VIPER's cat burglars. They're experts at getting into places they're not supposed to, grabbing something, and getting out again without being captured, or even seen.

Add: Lockpicking 6 (6 OP); Professional (Burglar) 6 (6 OP); Security Systems 6 (6 OP); +2 Stealth (2 OP); Surveillance 6 (6 OP)

Note: Some Infiltration Specialists are also taught how to use disguises to accomplish their objectives: add Acting 7 (7 OP); Disguise 7 (7 OP); Mimicry 5 (5 OP).

Melee Combat Specialist: Known to their fellow agents as "Kung Fu Joes" or "VIPER Ninjas," these agents are trained in advanced martial arts combat, melee weapons combat, and the like. Many super-heroes don't take

them seriously, but they have proven their worth to VIPER time and time again on missions requiring stealthy combat, infiltration, or kidnapping.

Add: +2 Hand To Hand and Hand To Hand Evade (4 OP); Melee Weapons 5 (5 OP); +2 to Melee Weapons Evade (3 OP); Karate at +2 Damage (+2d6 or +2 STR) (16 OP). Melee Combat Specialists are usually equipped with 2-4 weapons of choice; typically a sword is one of these weapons.

Note: For a true "VIPER Ninja," add Climbing 6 (6 OP); Contortionist 6 (6 OP); +2 Stealth (2 OP).

Surveillance Specialist: You can find out a lot by watching people closely and following them wherever they go. These are the agents who are experts at that sort of stuff. Whenever it's time to "case the joint" or track someone back to his base of operations, these are the men VIPER calls in. They are also generally skilled at other investigative techniques.

Add: Bugging 5 (5 OP); Computer Programming 3 (3 OP); Conversation 6 (6 OP); Driving 3 (3 OP); Hacking 4 (4 OP); Lip Reading 6 (6 OP); Lockpicking 3 (3 OP); Professional (Investigator) 3 (4 OP); Security Systems 3 (3 OP); Shadowing 5 (5 OP); +2 Stealth (2 OP); Surveillance 5 (5 OP); Gear: Binoculars (1 OP).

Transport Specialist: VIPER's fleet of vehicles numbers in the thousands, with dozens of different types of vehicles for air, land, and sea travel. Transport Specialist agents are trained in the operation of these vehicles, including their weapons. They're the getaway car drivers, so to speak, for VIPER.

Add: Driving (any 3 classes of vehicles) 6 (18 OP); Gunnery 5 (5 OP); Mechanics 4 (4 OP); Navigation 4 (4 OP); Pilot (any three classes of aircraft) 6 (18 OP); Professional (VIPER Transport Specialist) 4 (4 OP).

VIPER AGENT

CP: 49

OP: 22

PP: 12

INT	4				
WILL	4	RES	12		
PRE	4				
TECH	5				
REF	5	SPD	3		
DEX	6				
CON	6	SD	12	ED	12
					END 60
STR	5	REC	11		
BODY	5	STUN	25	HITS	25
MOVE	5	RUN	10	SPRINT	15
		SWIM	5	LEAP	5

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS

	AV/DV
E Hand-to-Hand: 2	7
4 Firearms: 4	9
3 Autofire Weapons: 3	8
E Hand-to-Hand Evade: 2	8
2 Melee Evade: 2	8
2 Ranged Evade: 2	8
2 Expert (VIPER): 2	6
1 Paramedic: 1	6
3 Stealth: 3	9
3 Streetwise: 3	7
2 Membership (VIPER Agent): 2	

COST POWERS

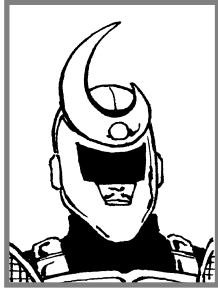
	END
6 VB-A1 Blaster Rifle: 7d6 Autofire Attack, ROF 5, 32 shots, Focus (Grabbable)	
1 VB-S1 "Shorty" Blaster Pistol: 5D6 Energy Blast, 12 shots, Focus (Grabbable)	
3 VIPER BCU: Armor 14 KD & 14 EKD, Focus (Attached), Activation Roll 8+	
2 VIPER Helmet: See in the Dark, High Range Radio Hearing, Focus (Attached)	

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 15 Enemy (UNTIL and The Guard) (More powerful, Worldwide, Imprison)
- 20 Criminal (Constant, Mild, Extreme)
- 8 Distinctive Features (VIPER Uniform) (Frequent, Easily concealed, Major)
- 5 Watcher (VIPER) (As Powerful, Worldwide, Watching)



THE STEEL SERPENT



Background/History: Kishiro Togama came to the United States with his family in 1937, when he was six years old. Wanting to escape the increasingly militaristic Japan, the Kishiro family had come to the United States to run their profitable import/export business from the land of opportunity. They settled in San Francisco.

But then the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and war found the Kishiros despite their attempts to escape it. Two months later, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 and consigned the Kishiros and thousands of other Japanese to internment camps. The Kishiros lost everything.

Three years later, they were released. Togama, 14 years old at the time of his release, left the camps with a deep hatred of the Americans and a desire to have nothing to do with them. However, his family ignored his pleas to return to Japan and began rebuilding the business. Through hard work and diligence they soon had it going again, but Togama wanted nothing to do with it. He spent his days studying the culture and ways of his ancestors. He particularly delighted in studying bujutsu, the arts of warfare. His favorite was kenjutsu, Japanese swordplay.

By the time he was 18, Togama had no contact with his family anymore; he could not tolerate their desire to Americanize themselves. But, unable to afford passage to Japan, he, too, was forced to fall in with Americans—in this case, the American underworld. When Willem DeVrie set out to create the private army/terrorist force he called VIPER, he needed assassins and those skilled in the martial arts. Togama fit both needs. and was approached about joining VIPER. Seeing in VIPER a means to strike at the Western culture, Togama joined willingly.

Over the next thirty years, Togama worked his way through the ranks of VIPER. His performance wasn't flawless, but his successes outweighed his failures, and he gradually advanced. In the mid-90s, shortly before the 1995 quake, he was made the Nest Leader of the Steel

Citadel. In honor of the promotion, he christened himself the "Steel Serpent" and had his true name expunged from VIPER's records.

Personality/Motivation: The Steel Serpent is little more than a child lashing out at a world that hasn't given him what he expected. When his family's business was taken away and they were thrown in a concentration camp, he subconsciously decided that the world was "out to get him," so it was up to him to strike back. He's spent the rest of his life doing just that. He is as cold and cruel as his namesake, able to kill, maim, torture, or steal without hesitation or remorse.

Although he cultivates an aura of culture and civility, this is just another way of rejecting the Western world he feels betrayed him and destroyed his family. Despite his airs of devotion to Japanese ideals, in truth all he offers them is lip service, for the only thing he is concerned about serving is himself.

Powers/Tactics: Although he has never realized it, the Steel Serpent is a low-level mutant. His physical abilities are much greater than normal, and he ages very slowly. He believes this to be a manifestation of his superior Japanese blood, but in truth, that has nothing to do with it.

The Steel Serpent's mutations make him a deadly hand-to-hand combatant. He has trained for several decades in kenjutsu, karate, and other "arts of the samurai" (as he calls them). His speed and strength make his "Steel Serpent strike" a deadly attack. He augments his martial skill with special VIPER armor that protects him from counterattacks. However, unless he picks up a VIPER blaster, he has no means of attacking at range.

Appearance: Despite the fact that he is over 70, Kishiro Togama appears to be in his mid-30s. He is Japanese with short, jet-black hair. He almost always carries a katana with him. At most times he wears Japanese robes; if combat is possible, he wears a suit of VIPER heavy body armor which he has redesigned to have a vaguely Japanese look.

"COME FEEL THE STEEL SERPENT'S STRIKE. IT WILL MEAN YOUR DEATH!"

THE STEEL SERPENT

CP: 70

OP: 78

PP: 22

INT	6				
WILL	6	RES	18		
PRE	8				
TECH	6				
REF	9	SPD	5		
DEX	8				
CON	6	SD	12	ED	12
STR	8	REC	14		
BODY	8	STUN	40	HITS	40
MOVE	5	RUN	10	SPRINT	15
		SWIM	5	LEAP	25

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 15 Enemy: UNTIL and The Guard (More powerful, Worldwide, Imprison)
- 25 Criminal (Constant, Strong, Extreme)
- 8 Arrogant (Frequent, Mild, Major)
- 8 Greedy (Frequent, Mild, Major)
- 13 Vow: Must keep VIPER's secrets (Frequent, Risk life & limb, Major)
- 6 Watcher: VIPER (More powerful, Worldwide, Watching)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS

	AV/DV
14 Karate (with Martial Arts Weapons added)	
2 Hand-to-Hand: 4 (REF)	13
6 Firearms & Melee Weapons: 3	12
7 Hand-to-Hand, Ranged, & Melee Evade: 3	11
1 Bribery: 1	9
3 Bureaucratics: 3	11
1 Business: 1	7
1 Computer Programming: 1	7
3 Concealment: 3	9
5 Expert (Japanese History & Culture): 5	11
5 Expert (VIPER): 5	11
1 Hacking: 1	7
1 High Society: 1	9
E Japanese: Native	
2 English: 6	12
3 Local Expert (Bay City): 5	11
1 Professional (Painting): 1	7
3 Stealth: 3	11
2 Streetwise: 2	10
3 Surveillance: 3	9
3 Tactics: 3	9
1 Weaponsmith (Swords): 1	7
3 Longevity	
7 Membership (VIPER Nest Leader): 7	

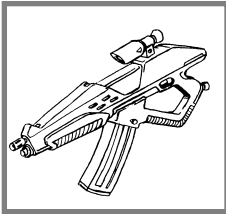
COST POWERS

	END
6 Katana: 4D6 Hand-to-Hand Killing Attack (8d6 w/ STR), 0 END, Focus (Attached) (Katana) (Total 8D6)	0+
4 Modified VB-S1 "Shorty" Blaster Pistol: 8D6 Energy Blast, 12 shots, Focus (Grabbable)	
8 VIPER Samurai Armor: Armor 20 KD & 20 EKD, Focus (Attached)	
2 VIPER Samurai Helmet: See in the Dark, High Range Radio Hearing, Focus (Attached)	
4 VIPER/Samurai Armor: Armor (12 KD, 12 EKD), Focus (Attached)	
2 Superleap: +20 m/y	2

VIPER EQUIPMENT

Here are a few examples of the weapons and equipment that VIPER agents have access to.

HAND-HELD WEAPONS



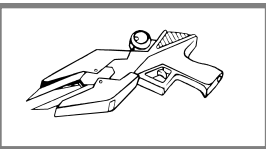
The **VB-A1 Blaster Rifle** is the standard field arm issued to VIPER agents. It is a blaster rifle which can be set on single-fire or autofire modes. In its standard form, it packs a solid punch; if necessary, VIPER technicians can modify it to increase the damage (up to +3d6) at the cost of possibly burning the weapon out completely (GM's discretion as to when this happens, though a critical failure might do it). The modified version is known as the VB-A2. The VB-A1 uses a 32-shot energy pack. See page 72 for the details of this weapon.

Also issued to almost all VIPER agents, the **VB-S1 "Shorty" Blaster Pistol** earned its nicknamed the "Shorty" for its stumpy-looking frame (compared to the VB-A1). It is the standard VIPER sidearm. Although not capable of autofire like the VB-A1, its blast still does significant damage. It uses an energy pack with 12 shot's worth of energy. See page 72 for the details of this weapon.

The **VL-A4 Laser Rifle** is used when expecting to face powerful super-heroes. Some foes seem very resistant to blaster damage, so VIPER issues these rifles, which use deadly laser energy. Like the VB-A1, it has single-shot and autofire settings. The VL-A4 is slimmer and more streamlined looking than the VB-A1. Its energy pack contains enough "juice" for 24 shots.

The **VL-S1 Laser Pistol** is the counterpart to the VL-A4 rifle. Again, this weapon is not standard issue, but is used only when superhero involvement is expected, the assault team has to cut through a vault door, or similar circumstances.

The **VS-A1 Sonic Rifle**: is an unusual weapon that usually only sees action against supers. It uses sonic energy to "scramble the target's brain," as VIPER weapons instructors put it, knocking him out without causing lasting harm (perfect for taking hostages). Weapon experts believe that this weapon was patterned after the Marksman's sonic rifle, which has felled more than one VIPER agent.



This variant on the VL-S1, the **VN-S1 Needler Pistol** uses a tightly-focused pulse laser beam to cut through armor with ease.

VIPER WEAPON	DC	COST	SHOTS	NOTES
VB-A1 Blaster	7	6	32	ROF 5, GF
VB-S1 Blaster Pistol	5	1	12	ROF 1, GF
VL-A4 Laser Rifle	9	8	24	Killing Attack, ROF 5, GF
VL-S1 Laser Pistol	7	4	10	Killing Attack, ROF 1, GF
VS-A1 Sonic Rifle	10	7	6	NND (Defense is Solid Ear Coverings, Hearing Flash Defense, Target Covers his ears), GF
VN-S1 Needler	8	5	8	Armor Piercing, ROF 2, GF

Key GF = Focus (Grabbable)

HEAVY WEAPONS

The **VS-10 Sonic Cannon** usually requires a three-man crew of Heavy Weapons Specialists to operate, though in emergency situations two will suffice. It rests on a tripod. It emits several forms of sonic energy—a damaging sonic blast (Energy Blast), a high-powered variant of the Sonic Rifle beam (NND Attack), and a focused beam that can cut through a tank (Ranged Killing Attack). Heavy Weapons Specialists who are going to operate this weapon are usually issued Ear Protectors (5 points' worth of Hearing Group Flash Defense).

Note: The "Focus (Attached)" Power Limiter is used for this and other VIPER heavy weapons. Although they are not actually "attached" to any character, this Limiter simulates the fact that it is difficult to pick up and move such a heavy, awkward object unless you have several people.

The heaviest weapon in VIPER's standard arsenal, the **V-12 Destructor** guarantees a hard fight for any super-hero. It is designed to take powerful heroes out in one or two shots, and often succeeds in that goal. It requires a crew of two to operate properly; with a crew of one, reduce damage to 15d6 and impose a -3 AV penalty to hit.

Only slightly less powerful than the Destructor, and offering the option of a more focused beam, the **VT-1 Thunderbolt** is a favorite among VIPER Heavy Weapons Specialists. It requires a crew of two to operate properly; with a crew of one, reduce damage to 13d6 for both attacks and impose a -3 AV penalty to hit.

HEAVY WEAPON	DC	COST	SHOTS	NOTES
VS-Sonic Cannon	*	19	32	AF
Standard Setting	13	—	—	ROF 1
Stunner Setting	13	—	—	NND (Standard Sonic)
Focused Setting	13	—	—	Killing Attack, ROF 1
V-12 Destructor	20	17	10	AF
VT-1 Thunderbolt	*	17	10	AF
Standard Setting	18	—	—	ROF 1
Focused Setting	18	—	—	Killing Attack, ROF 1

Key AF = Focus (Attached)

VIPER ARMOR AND UNIFORMS

The **VIPER Basic Combat Uniform (BCU)** is the well-known dark green and gold VIPER uniform issued to all agents. The VIPER cobra's-head symbol indicates officer or agent status (it's on the right breast for officers, left breast for agents), and rank insignia are sewn onto the upper arms. The uniform is made of an advanced armored cloth that protects the wearer from damage. See page 72 for details.

The standard-issue **VIPER Helmet** amplifies ambient light to allow the wearer to see in the dark, and contains advanced radio reception/transmission equipment. Even more important is the onboard, voice-activated, heads-up display computer system in the helmet. VIPER leaders can transmit information to their agents over their radio link and have it appear on the helmet's faceplate right in front of the agent's eyes!



THE CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

This large museum was founded in 1853, making it the oldest scientific institute on the West Coast. Its original home, a building in the city's center, was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire. Fortunately, most of the collections were salvageable, and a new Academy was built in Golden Gate Park in stages from 1916 until 1968. Its buildings are arranged around a central courtyard; the centerpiece of the courtyard is the fountain, Mating Whales, originally sculpted for the 1939 World's Fair.

To the immediate left after one enters is the "African Safari" exhibit. Most of the creatures on display were hunted in the 1930s and then donated to the Academy for its displays. The next area is the "Earth and Space" area. Its exhibits include a Foucault pendulum, a piece of moon rock, and other wonders. The SafeQuake exhibit, which simulates an earthquake of moderate strength, could become a part in a super-weapon designed by some megalomaniacal super-villain. The Morrison Planetarium is also located in this area. It shows many different programs relating to astronomy and similar subjects; shows change frequently, and include laser-light shows set to music (the Laserium). The optics in the Morrison Planetarium might be a target for technologically-oriented villains who want to build super-lasers.

The Academy has a large collection of human artifacts from cultures all over the globe and throughout history. In the Discovery Room, children can actually handle some of these objects. Also included in this section is "The Far Side of Science," a collection of "Far Side" cartoons by Gary Larson which involve animal behavior (Foxbat, take note ...).

As you continue on around the displays, you come to Life Throughout Time, a walk-through exhibit on evolution. It includes many specially-designed and interactive displays designed to teach the viewer about how life on Earth evolved. One of the exhibit's highlights is a Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton.

The cornerstone of the museum, the Steinhart Aquarium, is next. Although it was devastated in the '95 quake, it has been since been rebuilt. It is one of the oldest and largest aquariums in the United States. Its collection includes over 14,000 species of fish and aquatic animals, including sharks (for the super-villain who can't afford his own shark tank), piranhas (in an exhibit replicating the Amazon River), dolphins, and a Giant Pacific Octopus. Its giant Fish Roundabout tank is 55 meters in diameter. The Swamp, a sunken display area, is filled with reptiles such as alligators, water monitors, and snakes. It is surrounded by other display cages and tanks containing a wide variety of other reptiles and amphibians, including venomous serpents, poisonous South American tree frogs, and many others. The Steinhart also includes a "living coral reef" exhibit which includes giant clams and tropical sharks. Lastly, the Aquarium has a penguin exhibit which delights children of all ages.

After you've had your fill of fish and reptiles, go on to the Gem and Mineral Hall. It has more than 1,000 types of rocks and minerals on display, with special emphasis on types found in California. There is a walk-in vault where jewelry is displayed behind glass panels; visitors can also watch special exhibitions on how jewelry is made.

In addition to the permanent exhibits, the Academy has space for special exhibitions. The second floor of the Academy, which includes a 70,000-volume library, is a valuable source of information for Bay area scientists and citizens.

HIGHLIGHTS

SafeQuake: Experience what a real California earthquake feels like in this realistic simulation chamber.

Morrison Planetarium: A state-of-the-art astronomy showplace. Shows change frequently, and include the Laserium (laser-light shows set to music).

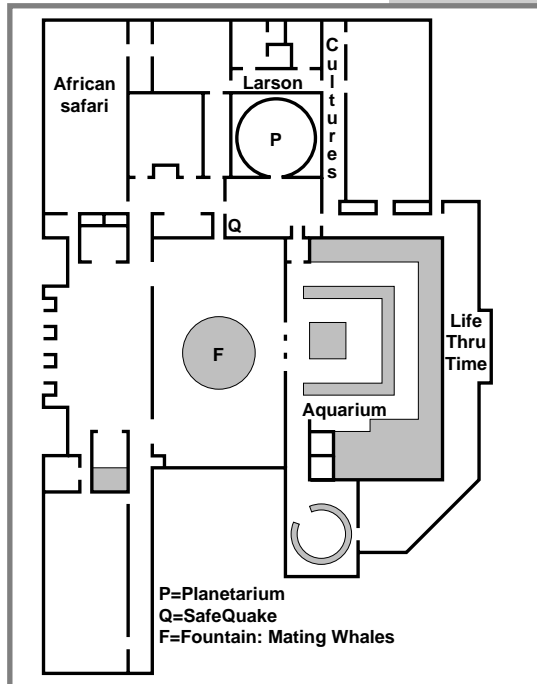
Life Through Time: A walk-through exhibit on evolution and the history of life on Earth.

Steinhart Aquarium:

One of the largest aquariums in the United States, with over 14,000 species on display, including sharks, piranha, dolphins, a Giant Pacific Octopus, penguins, and giant clams.

Gem & Mineral Hall:

Over 1,000 types of minerals are on display.



INFORMATION

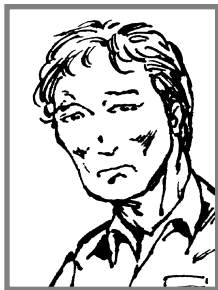
Hours of Operation: From September to June, 10:00 am until 5:00 pm; from July 4 through August, 10:00 am until 7:00 pm. Admission is free the first Wednesday of every month.

Dolphin Feeding Times: Every two hours beginning at 10:30 am.

Penguin Feeding Times: 11:30 am and 4:00 pm.

Laserium Shows: Thursday through Sunday evenings; there is an additional admission charge.

FREDERICK SMITHERSBEE (STINGRAY)



Frederick Smithersbee is the Director of the Steinhart Aquarium, and, as such, is one of the most important and influential members of the Academy community. He has worked for the Academy for nearly twenty years. He started as an intern in high school, came back there to work in the Steinhart after graduating from Stanford with a degree in biology, and now runs the Aquarium with the help of a dedicated staff.

One wouldn't think it to look at him, as frail and pale as he seems, but Smithersbee is a devoted outdoorsman and naturalist. He likes nothing better than a good hike in the woods or swamps to collect specimens and observe wildlife. He also rockclimbs, SCUBA dives, fishes, studies karate, and is a Duke in the Society for Creative Anachronism.

Smithersbee loves his job, and is deeply distressed by the seemingly constant raids upon the Aquarium by super-villains. VIPER comes in all the time to kidnap reptiles from the Swamp. Crimson the Archer stole several rare species of venomous South American tree frogs. Many different villains have stolen sharks or piranhas or various species poisonous fish to use in some nefarious scheme or other. It's got to stop! Smithersbee's pleas to Academy officials and the police for increased security have fallen on deaf ears. The Champions and other super-teams have ignored his letters requesting assistance. So, by God, he's going to become a super-hero himself!

Drawing on the resources of the Academy's library and human culture section, and his own knack for tinkering, Smithersbee has built himself a modified diving suit with special gauntlets which can transmit an electrical charge and fire darts. The darts are tipped with knockout drugs Smithersbee has concocted from the poisons of some of the animals in the Aquarium. His "costume" not only allows him to breathe underwater, it provides some armor against bullets, energy blasts, and other attacks. Christening himself "Stingray," he is ready to take on the next group of scumbags that want to rob his Aquarium.

"HANDS OFF THE JELLY-FISH OR YOU'LL FEEL MYSTING!"

STORY SEEDS

1 Day of the Stingray: At long last, Frederick Smithersbee gets his chance to prove that he's a hero, too. A villain or villainous organization (the GM should choose an appropriate group) raids the Steinhart Aquarium. A hero or heroes who happen to be visiting the Academy (maybe with their families or DNPCs) get to pull Stingray's fat out of the fire and stop the attack. Then they have to decide what to do with Stingray himself. Smithersbee is fairly competent, and could perhaps become an actual hero (if a low-powered one) with better training and equipment.

2 Night of the Laser: A technologically-oriented villain decides to hit the Academy. He and his allies have two goals: first, the optical equipment in the Morrison Planetarium, where a Laserium show is going on at the time of the attack; second, some of the gems and gemcutting equipment in the Gem & Mineral Hall. The criminals will split up with one group heading northwest to the planetarium, the other southeast towards the Gem & Mineral Hall. The PCs present have to foil the robbery.

3 Strange Tones: Markoth has also visited the Academy's library to alter its books on genetics to support his attempt to trick Radion into trying to usurp the leadership of the Scions of Caine. However, he was not as thorough here, since several of the books were checked out by Academy personnel when he visited. Accordingly, if Radion thinks to come here, Markoth's whole scheme will hinge on which books he reads. If Radion happens to choose the altered books, he will be convinced that Markoth is telling the truth and, infuriated, will smash his way out of the library.

If Radion chooses the unaltered books, he will return to Scions headquarters and inform Dr. Franck of Markoth's treachery. If this happens to occur just as the PCs confront Markoth at the Pit, then that confrontation may turn into a deadly three-way battle in which Markoth and the Scions will each try to destroy the other.

STINGRAY

CP: 60

OP: 57

PP: 30

INT	6				
WILL	6	RES	18		
PRE	6				
TECH	6				
REF	6	SPD	3		
DEX	6				
CON	6	SD	12	ED	12
STR	6	REC	12		
BODY	6	STUN	30	HITS	30
MOVE	6	RUN	12	SPRINT	18
		SWIM	36	LEAP	6

COST SKILLS, TALENTS & PERKS

	AV/DV
12 Karate	
2 Hand-to-Hand: 4	10
4 Melee Weapons	10
E Hand-to-Hand Evade: 2	8
2 Melee Evade: 2	8
2 Ranged Evade: 2	8
2 Animal Handler	8
2 Bureaucrats: 2	8
2 Climbing: 2	8
1 Computer Programming: 1	7
2 Expert (Medieval History): 2	8
5 Inventor	11
4 Local Expert (Academy of Sciences): 4	10
4 Science (Biology): 4	10
4 Science (Herpetology): 4	10
4 Science (Ichthyology): 4	10
2 Science (Oceanography): 2	8
3 Survival: 3	9

COST POWERS

	END
6 Armored Suit: Armor 16 KD & 16 EKD, Focus (Attached)	
6 Advanced SCUBA Gear: Life Support (Breathe Underwater) + Swimming +30 m/y + IR Vision, Focus (Attached)	4
12 Stingray Darts: 10d6 NND [KD of 8+], 16 shots, Focus (Attached)	
6 Electric Eel Touch: 12d6 Energy Blast, 8 shots, No Range, Focus (Attached)	

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 8 Sense of Duty: Must protect the Steinhart Aquarium (Frequent, Friend, Major)
- 8 Code of Honor: Will not kill (Frequent, Risk expulsion or embarrassment, Major)
- 8 Secret Identity: Frederick Smithersbee (Infrequent, Strong Major)



THE CAGE

Only recently opened, The Cage has become the premiere nightspot for those not yet old enough to drink. Established as a nightclub with everything an adult nightclub has except the booze, The Cage is a favorite among the city's teens. It appeals to college age patrons as well, although most come because of a fetish for young members of the opposite sex. Patrons obviously older than their mid-twenties are not appreciated.

The club itself looks like a warehouse both inside and out. The main floor includes a sizable dance floor, with state of the art (circa 1975) sound and light systems, tables and booths for relaxation and socializing, and a "dry" bar. Hanging a couple of feet off the floor around the dance floor are several cast iron cages, in which scantily clad teens often dance. The upstairs is completely open and appears as if it were made of suspended catwalks, containing several more tables. The bathrooms are concealed in the back, but if you're a man you'll want to avoid them.

The club derives its name from the cages suspended above the dance floor, in addition to the barred windows and the staff which dresses as prison inmates. It appears that one of the hiring requirements for The Cage is that the person has served time, or at least looks like they have. Overall, the staff looks rough, but the patrons don't seem to mind.

The Cage is only open Thursday through Sunday, but each night has a different theme. Thursday nights are 80s Retro, where teens can dance to strangely popular music which they couldn't possibly remember. Thursday nights are incredibly popular, as the wave of retro-80s has displaced the former retro-70s craze of the latter 90s. Fridays are Dance Madness nights, where the music is normal top 40 dance. Saturday nights are called Erotica, where teens dress in the most provocative and revealing clothing they can find, showing off their hard-earned physiques without being completely indecent. Music on Saturday nights leans toward an Industrial and Gothic bent. Sunday nights are Fetish Nights, where you can find the most bizarre leather and PVC fashions known to man. Music on Sunday night leans toward an Industrial bent. Dress codes on Saturday and Sunday are strictly enforced.

Not too surprisingly, The Cage gets a lot of flack from parents because of Saturday and Sunday nights. It seems that many of the parents of Bay City do not appreciate a club which openly advocates sexuality as part of its business. This doesn't prevent The Cage from staying open or the kids flocking there in droves, even if they have to sneak out of their homes to come.

Over the last year, The Cage has had its share of problems. It seems that an establishment with such a high concentration of teens is appealing to drug dealers of all sorts, including Mutaphetamine. The management of The Cage is trying desperately to discourage illicit drugs, even installing a metal detector at the doors so they have an excuse to search, but this has helped only marginally. The cops have had to bust several shady characters there; fortunately The Cage doesn't have a liquor license to lose. Things are better than they were, but they are still not great.

Drug problems aside, The Cage still enjoys a great deal of popularity. Security is high and relatively unforgiving, so young ruffians or ne'er-do-wells had best watch their step. Otherwise, it's a great place for the Bay City teen to go and dance the night away, as long as he observes curfew.

HIGHLIGHTS

Bay City's hottest underage dance club.

A different club each night:

Thursday—80's Retro.

Friday—Dance Madness.

Saturday—Erotica*.

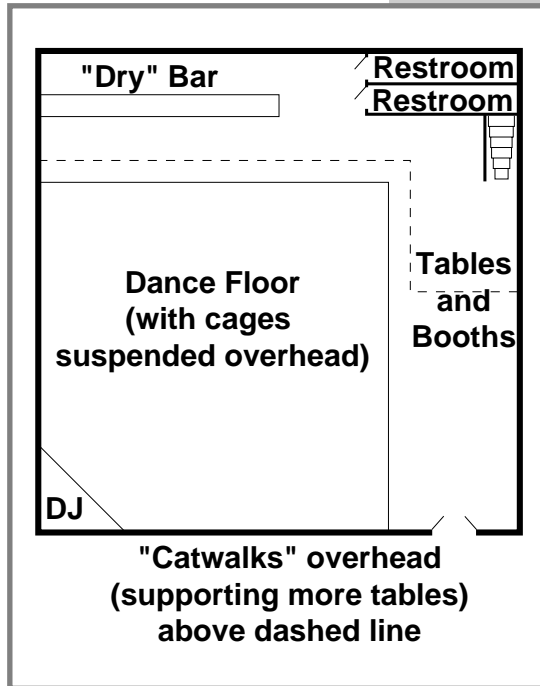
Sunday—Fetish Night*.

*Dress Codes enforced.

Large dance floor.

Tight security staff, observing curfews.

"Dry bar"—No alcohol allowed on premises.



INFORMATION

Location: 159 First Street, North Bay City.

Getting There: The Montgomery BART station is just a few blocks away, and Muni has lines that run to 1st Street.

Cover: \$5.00 every night.

Hours: 8:00 pm to 2:00 am Thursday through Sunday.

Phone Number: (415) 555-1132.

STEVEN "CARNAGE" LEESON**STEVE "CARNAGE" LEESON****Mental 4 Combat 3 Physical 6 Move 4****SKILLS:** Streetwise: 5; Business: 4; Perception: 3; Fighting: 4; Martial Arts (Streetfighting)**COMPLICATIONS:** Hatred of Drug Dealers; Distinctive Features: Scars, Tattoos, & Rough Face

Steve Leeson is one of the few examples of how the United States penal system is *supposed* to work. Formerly a first-rate car thief, he paid his debt to society over 36 months from late 1994 to early 1998. His time inside gave him the opportunity for introspection, and made him realize that his problems were his own. Working out whatever it was that moved him to criminal activity, Steve came out of prison a reformed man. His attitude now is that everyone needs to contribute and that everyone needs to belong.

One look at the man nicknamed Carnage and one can immediately tell that he hails from a rough background. Even though he keeps his black hair neatly slicked back, is always clean shaven, and normally dresses in suits, Steve's ripped muscles, rough face, hardened stare, scars, and tattoos prevent him from looking like your average businessman. None of the employees at The Cage know how Steve got the nickname of Carnage, and none seem anxious to ask him.

One of the things Steve learned about himself in prison was that he had never fit in or been part of anything as an adolescent. Thus, he decided to create something that would prevent this from happening to others. The Cage not only presented an interesting business proposition, since all the other underage clubs in the area were terrible, it also catered to his rather idealistic goal. With the support of his parole officer, several like-minded financiers, and a lot of personal hard work, The Cage opened its doors in the Spring of 1999.

Steve is a very hands-on sort of boss. One can always find him at The Cage any night it's open, from opening until closing. Rather than just supervise the staff, he goes right out onto the floor and helps out to make sure everything goes smoothly. When everything firmly is in hand, he then goes out and glad-hands to the kids, making sure they're enjoying themselves and getting as much feedback from them as possible. Steve is well-respected by both the staff and regulars of the club.

In light of his personally altruistic goals, Steve has been hit hard by the drug problems of The Cage. Frankly, he's enraged by the prospect, and will personally beat the living daylights out of anyone he finds peddling illicit drugs in his club. Whoever that might be, they'd better hope that the cops get there first.

**"EVERYONE
NEEDS TO
BELONG"**

STORY SEEDS

The Cage, being the hottest teen nightclub in Bay City, is a great place for younger characters to meet the paranormals from the Arcadian Academy or the younger Scions of Caine, including Cheryl Travis (Avatar), Brandon Medeiros (Target), and Christina Austin (Icicle). Cheryl's a Thursday and Friday kind of girl, Brandon likes Sundays, and Christina often goes on Fridays and Saturdays.

Of those at the Arcadian Academy, only Andrew Haining (Magus) is not a regular. Victor Quintero (Hy-Tek) is a big fan of Friday nights, Angelina Freeman (Trance) enjoys Sundays and sometimes Saturdays, Jean Moreau (Iceflame) enjoys Thursdays and Saturdays, Steven Anderson (Thrasher) loves to kick it on Sunday nights, and Brother X just goes when someone else needs a partner for the night. Kimberly Miyako (Sticker) probably wouldn't go out if Angelina didn't often drag her out.

This, of course, is not to say that they all go every week. But, since The Cage is the place to be, they go whenever they can.

If you choose to use The Cage in your game, remember that is a club for younger people only. Older folks will have to have some good reason for needing to be there, since the club doesn't particularly like their presence: "they might be pervos."

1 Arcadian Academy 90210: And now for a glimpse into the sordid affairs of young teen paranormals...

Victor Quintero is thrilled. Last Friday night, he met this beautiful blonde girl, and they hit it off quite well. They talked and laughed, and generally had a good time. The coup de grace, though, was that she kissed him on the cheek when they left. He's all hot to see her again, and they plan on meeting this next Friday at The Cage. Her name is Cheryl Travis, and even though they both go to the same school, they've never talked before.

Jean Moreau just broke up with her last boyfriend, James. No one's sad to see him go, though, even Jean; they all thought he was a dick. Now she's got a new boy, a 19 year old college student she met at the Stranger, by the name of Nick. Nick is tall, dark and handsome, and Jean is trying to get everyone to come down to The Cage on Saturday so she can show him off.

Young Steven Anderson has a problem. He's got it bad for one of his classmates—Angelina Freeman. Problem is, she's way older and way more mature, so how does he go about telling her? For now, the poor frustrated soul still goes dancing with her on Sundays, but he's getting obviously jealous when she gets hit on by other guys.

Beyond that, young Anderson seems to have gained an enemy from school. Brandon Medeiros just "doesn't like the way the runt looks." So far, it's been Brandon who's the bully, and Steven really wishes he could just use his power and go off on him. There have been a couple of tense moments when they met on the dance floor.



NEUFIELD TOWERS

Built in 1966 as part of President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" initiative, Neufield Towers is a housing project in East Bay City. Okay, let's call it what it is; it's part of a ghetto, all right? Three big buildings that are just houses for peoples' possessions and tombs for their souls.

Everyone had high hopes for Neufield Towers at first. Three buildings, each twenty stories tall, with room enough to house more than 300 impoverished families and give them the chance to spend their hard-earned money on something other than exorbitant rents. Skilled architects and construction engineers helped build it, landscapers helped make it look a little less bleak, and a few artists even donated sculptures or murals (including that big, Rodinesque sculpture in the central courtyard between the three buildings).

However, things began to go downhill almost immediately. The first problem was the Vietnam War. Nobody in this part of Oakland liked it; black boys seemed to be dying over there in disproportionately high numbers. Protests and riots flared up all over, including at Neufield Towers. All three of the buildings suffered from broken windows, graffiti, and other damage. After that vandalism became a worse and worse problem; it was as if the first few shattered pains of glass and spritzes of Paint-In-A-Can opened up a floodgate of harmful emotions in the neighborhood's inhabitants.

Drugs hit Neufield Towers hard. The heroin plague of the late 60s and early 70s reduced many of the people living there to junkies, looking only for their next high.

Those who didn't take the drugs became victims for the junkies as they stole, mugged, and robbed their way to another needleful of smack.

Then came crack. And crack brought gangs—gangs to sell it and fight over territory. Sure, there had always been gangs in Neufield, including some powerful ones back in the mid-1970s when "Oakland Tom" Watkins tried to unite all the Bay Area gangs into his "Black Mafia" and control the heroin trade. That didn't work—the D.E.A. came down hard on his butt when he began to get too big for his britches—but the younger generation of gangsters learned from him, and they passed their wisdom on to their kids.

The first gang to hit it big at Neufield Towers called itself the Badass Boyz. A guy named Deon Harrison ran that pack. They cornered the crack market at Neufield by gunning down the competition, sometimes in broad daylight; everyone got the message—they didn't care who saw them, they knew who was watching, and they'd get them, too, if they went to the cops. No one was that stupid, so the Boyz just kept selling, making a mint twenty bucks at a time. The cops finally wised up and came after Deon, and when they found him, he tried to shoot his way out. He's in prison upstate now, serving life for attempted murder and narcotics distribution.

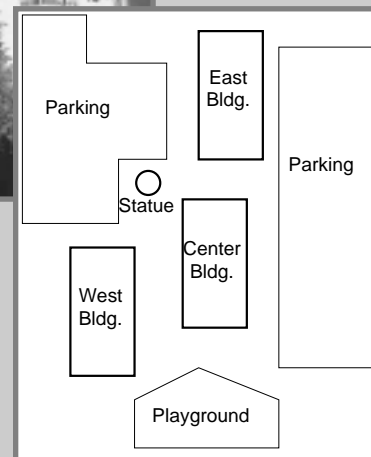
After Deon got sent away, the Boyz split up into different factions, each fighting the other for a slice of the pie. Today it's pretty much down to two gangs: the Masters and the Neufield Boyz. The Masters are on top right now. They've pretty much taken over the East Building and turned it into a crackhouse; any residents that want in and out have to ask their permission. But word on the street is that the Neufield Boyz are ready to come on strong and take back their turf.



HIGHLIGHTS

"What, are you kidding? Highlights? Ain't nuthin' high around here 'cept the crackheads, white boy."

—Long-time local resident **William Hancock**, advising the author to leave the neighborhood ASAP.



INFORMATION

Number of buildings in Neufield Towers: 3.

Number of stories per building: 20.

Number of occupied stories: 19 (first floor in each building is a lobby).

Elevator banks: 2 per building.

Central courtyard statue: Sculpted of stone, "Perseverance" depicts five men struggling to move a large stone up a mountain.

Local gangs: the Masters (short for "Masters of Disaster"), the Neufield Boyz, the Black Raiders, the Wardogs, the Neufield Crips.

RAYMOND "EL-RAY" HUBERTY**EL-RAY****Mental 3 Combat 5 Physical 4 Move 5****SKILLS:** Streetwise: 4; Firearms: 5; Local Expert (Bay City): 6; Fighting: 4**EQUIPMENT:** 9mm Pistol

El-Ray is one of the "OGs," or original gangsters (i.e., long-time members) of the Masters of Disaster. Born in 1979, he was raised by his grandmother, a resident of Neufield Towers, after his mother abandoned him. Raymond was just a young boy when the crack cocaine epidemic hit Neufield Towers. While he didn't take the drug—he was afraid of becoming a zoned-out junkie, like the ones he saw on the street every day—the dealers themselves fascinated him. They had fine clothes, fancy cars, jewelry, more money than they could spend, and guns. Lots of guns. Every time he saw two or three of them together, they had their guns out, talking about them, showing them off.

Then Deon Harrison came along. Compared to him, all the other dealers looked like bedraggled peacocks. Soon everyone at Neufield gravitated towards him, and almost before anyone knew it, he'd formed the Badass Boyz and taken over the drug trade in the project. Soon he began expanding his territory, selling drugs on nearby street corners, and then in other projects. When other gangs protested, the Badass Boyz would take care of 'em, hard and fast.

Raymond was one of many in Deon's orbit, and he soon became a "TG" ("tiny gangster," or new gang member) in the Boyz. Deon recognized talent, and soon El-Ray graduated from running bags of crack to selling the stuff himself. He had his own gun, too, a sweet piece he bought from one of his gang brothers.

When Deon was arrested and sent to prison for life, the Badass Boyz floundered without any leadership. Then El-Ray spoke up, telling everyone what had to be done. Several of the OGs and other members refused to listen to him—he was young, and hadn't been with the gang as long as they had. El-Ray and his followers broke away and formed their own gang, which El-Ray dubbed "the Masters of Disaster," or Masters for short. Since then the Masters have been fighting with the Neufield Boyz (the other major remnant of Deon Harrison's gang) and other gangs in and around Neufield Towers for control of the local drug trade. The Masters have taken the lead in that race, and El-Ray doesn't intend to slow down or let the others catch up.

El-Ray still lives with his grandmother in Neufield Towers, but she's too terrified of him to make him stop running with his gang. El-Ray's in control, and he's going to stay there.

**"YOU WANT
TO SELL
'ROUND
HERE? YOU
TALK TO ME,
FIRST!"**

STORY SEEDS

1 Gang War: El-Ray and the Masters decide to eliminate their rivals once and for all and begin a no-holds-barred war against the Neufield Boys. Drive-by shootings and knifings in back stairways become the order of the day. Several innocents are wounded or killed in the crossfire. Since the police can't seem to do much about it (the residents of Neufield Towers are too scared of the gangs to offer the cops any help), maybe the heroes can step in and try to resolve the situation. It won't be easy—a lot of the problems at Neufield Towers are longstanding social ones, and just eliminating one or two gangs (or gangsters) won't keep others from coming along to take their place. Perhaps if the heroes devote more time to the Towers, both in their costumed and civilian identities, they can begin to turn the place around. The residents want help, and want to make their home a better place to live, but they can't even begin to make improvements until the gangs are removed and stay gone.

2 Urban Renewal: Benjamin Hines, an unscrupulous Bay City property developer, has plans for Neufield Towers. He thinks that a commercial development would be perfect for that location. Of course, there are all those pesky families to get rid of first, and then he has to convince the government to sell him the land. So, with the help of a legion of hired thugs, Hines begins making Neufield Towers an even worse place to live. Residents are threatened. Even the gangs are threatened; a bunch of punk kids with guns and attitudes aren't much compared to a small army of hired mercs armed with military weapons. Hines' forces won't expose themselves too much; they'll attack at night, lean on people behind closed doors, hang around the playground and look menacing, and make threats over the phone. If that doesn't convince enough families to move, Hines may resort to bribery (at some point it will be cheaper to pay them to leave rather than to keep the mercs on his payroll).

Anyone who's too stubborn to move at this point will probably be driven out by stage two of Hines' plan. By bribing the environmental firm which the government has hired to evaluate Neufield Towers, Hines has manufactured a report indicating that the land on which Neufield Towers rests is contaminated with benzene, toluene, phenol, and other chemicals—some of which are known carcinogens. The government is now faced with the possibility of evacuating Neufield Towers and putting it on the Superfund list (meaning it won't be useable by anyone for anything for many decades). At that point, Hines will step in and generously offer to clean up the chemicals himself if the city will sell him the land and let him change it to commercial zoning—an offer the city is almost sure to accept.

Hopefully the PCs will be the flies in Hines's ointment. Through news reports, friends who live in or near Neufield Towers, or by hearing word of Hines' hired thugs, they should tumble to the fact that something fishy is going on, and investigate. If they can unravel the mystery, Hines will be disgraced and brought up on criminal charges.

SKIDS

Somewhere on the dim end of skid row, there's a bar aptly named Skids. It's the sort of place where forgotten people go to drown their sorrows and wonder if they've got a reason to live tomorrow. It's also the sort of place where those who skirt the edges of the law go to make deals. Respectable people don't go to Skids, unless they don't mind losing their wallet ... or maybe even their life.

Skids isn't much to look at. There's a small sign hanging out front, with a Budweiser logo and the name Skids. Inside, there is a bar, a couple of tables, one pool table, a bathroom, and that's it. The walls and the ceiling are painted black, to conceal smoke stains, and the only real decorations are the couple of cheap neon beer signs hanging on the walls. The tables are wobbly, the seat cushions are shot, and the felt on the pool table has a couple of large rips.

In addition to the derelicts and other dregs of humanity who frequent Skids, a number of petty criminals make deals or find work there. You might find Bobby Freist, a catburglar of some small note, Chuck Parham, a small-time drug peddler, or Eddie Leggio, a pimp (along with some of the girls in his stable) looking for business here. If you're looking for big-time hoods, look elsewhere. Skids is strictly for the small-time crook, but sometimes small-time crooks know plenty.

You will also find two other men who have become fixtures at Skids. The first is Ed Faulkes. Ed's in his early fifties, even though he looks to be 10 years older. Having lost his legs during Vietnam and his wife ten years past, Ed's got no real purpose in life other than to sit with his few friends and drink. Ed's usually the guy you'll find drunk and ranting around midnight, any day of the week. The second is Crazy Howard, a derelict who sleeps at Skids and drinks really cheap wine whenever he can scrape up a few dimes. Rarely coherent, sober or not, Crazy Howard often begins to prophesy when he's "divinely drunk." He's not asking for money at this point; he's just doing his duty to God.

Cops avoid Skids. They don't like the area of town and they've got no business being there. No one who frequents Skids is important enough; sooner or later they'll slip up and get busted in the act. If you're not a cop and you're getting a little too nosy around the bar, some of the rougher customers might teach you a lesson you won't soon forget.

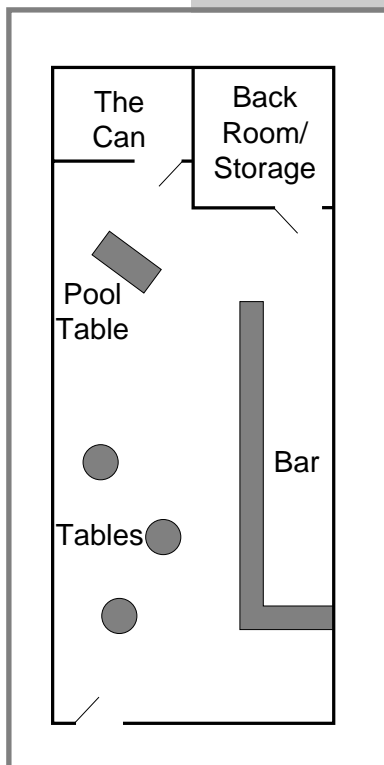
At one time, a long time ago, the name Skids was a joke. The bar itself was a fairly reputable corner bar, serving good booze in a clean and friendly atmosphere. But times change, and so do neighborhoods. The nice corner bar began to attract less and less respectable folks, and so the respectable ones stopped coming. The former owner sold it, and it has been part of Bay City's seedy underbelly ever since.

The man who purchased Skids, even though it was obviously well on its way to becoming a dive, was a man named Sergio Valenta. Sergio is a rough looking customer—big, bald, and tattooed, with several obvious scars. With his two golden earrings, Sergio looks an awful lot like Mr. Clean on a really bad day. Rumor has it that Sergio served with the Marines in Vietnam.

Sergio obviously wasn't a dumb man. He knew quite well where the bar was headed, but that's what he wanted. Dimming the lighting, painting the walls and ceiling black, buying the cheapest booze he could find, getting rid of tabs, and accepting only cash, Sergio turned Skids into what it is today—more than just a passing resemblance to its namesake.

HIGHLIGHTS

There really are no highlights to a place like Skids. If you're the rough sort looking for cheap booze and a fight, this is the place.



INFORMATION

Location: 28th Street, Oakland, East Bay City.

Getting There: Most people just walk or drive. Muni/AC Transit runs a few busses near 28th.

Hours: Noon until 2:00 am.

Phone Number: (415) 555- 4972.

Capacity: 30.

SERGIO VALENTA**SERGIO VALENTA****Mental 3 Combat 5 Physical 5 Move 5**

SKILLS: Athletics: 3; Trading: 4; Demolitions: 4; Stealth: 3; Weaponsmith: 2; Professional (Bartender): 5; Fighting: 4
COMPLICATIONS: Dependent: Wife (Rhiane); Occasional Traumatic *Nam Flashbacks



At one point in his life, Sergio used to be a happy man. He was a popular guy making his way as an auto mechanic, with at least a mildly promising future and a woman he loved. Then he got drafted into the Marine Corps. and sent to Vietnam. Life was only downhill from there.

Sergio won't talk about what happened to him in Southeast Asia. Whatever he saw or was told to do, it messed him up something fierce. Between general psychological problems and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Sergio lost anything he ever had. It took him eight years in a VA hospital before he was able to go back out into society and try to start his life again.

His re-entry was rough. Unable to hold a job for more than six months, Sergio lived his life on the edge of poverty for many years. Worse than that, he had to consistently fight the depression that was creeping up on him. His life had left him one bitter, cynical, and depressive man. Then, one night as he drank himself into oblivion, trying to find just one more reason to keep on living, he met the woman who would change his life.

This woman is now his wife, Rhiane. While Rhiane may not be the best looking or smartest woman in the world, she had a heart of gold and a smile that would melt a man's heart. Just being with Rhiane brightened Sergio's life, and he finally started to get back on track. He managed to hold down his job as a dock worker for a long time and saved up what money he could. Finally, he was sick of working for other people and he had enough money to think about starting his own business.

After thinking about it for a long time, Sergio decided that what he really wanted was his own bar. He knew that neither him nor his style would appeal to the "normal" folks, and so he wanted a bar that would appeal to people who had similar problems in life. From personal experience, he knew that sometimes you just need a basic place to go to drown your sorrows, where someone had an open ear. That's when he found Skids, a bar on its way down. He's owned the place since 1990, and he couldn't be happier.

Surprisingly, there's never any real violence at Skids. Well, at least not inside. To threaten the establishment, the owner, or the patrons quickly incurs the wrath of Sergio himself. As anyone knows, it's not wise to anger a trained killer.

"PICK YOUR POISON..."

STORY SEEDS

1 Street Contacts: Skids is the sort of place where paranormals might go to get information or lean on a few small-time hoods for information. You never can tell what these sorts might have heard, and sometimes the information is better than one might expect.

Sergio is understanding of the paranormals' desire for duty and justice, but he's intolerant of them randomly muscling his clientele. He has no problem with fights, just as long as they're basically fair, and a fight with a norm and a paranormal isn't fair from where he sits. His patrons are just trying to do their best to make their way through life, and no one should be getting in their way.

2 Big Time: Johnny Manic is in way over his head. He's a small-time data thief, albeit a good one, but he's always played things pretty safe—safe meaning that his physical well-being was not in danger. This time is different.

Two nights ago he was just randomly hacking into some data banks, when he came across an interesting document. It appears that someone was cataloging paranormal powers and identities. Figuring he could make an electronic transfer, he downloaded the file and erased it. He also dropped virus into the backup system, just to make sure it wouldn't show up in current files. Johnny figured he'd be rich and no one would know who'd stolen it.

Well, wherever he stole the data from, someone found out and the proverbial doo has hit the fan. First off, some very well-dressed Italian men with white ties showed up at his apartment yesterday morning. He managed to escape with his laptop out a window, but he had to lay low all day to figure out what's going on. With a little digging, he wasn't surprised that they were Mafia.

Later that day, he received e-mail from some federal agent who also knew. He wanted the data and all Johnny had to do was name his price. Johnny got one of his old accomplices to go to the drop with a dummy disk, only to watch his friend get shot and arrested from a nearby building.

Then, he found out today that word on the street is that some freaky looking paranormal chick who moves like a snake is gunning for him. So far, he's got the Mafia, some covert governmental agency, and God knows what after him because of this lousy file. He hasn't even read the thing! All he wants to do is get rid of it and start over.

Right now, Johnny's holing up and desperately trying to figure out what to do. While this is all going on, Sergio's let him hide in the back room of Skids until things cool down a bit so Johnny can either get clear of the data or get out of town. Maybe Sergio has a name or two he can drop for assistance.

3 A New Hang-Out: Recently, some of the more "normal" looking Wildstrikers have discovered Skids. It's one place they can go to get a drink where they won't be quickly judged. They're as welcome as anyone else down on their luck.

Unfortunately, a few of them are trying to muscle around the other patrons and the owner. Sergio can normally handle any sort of threat, but the paranormal powers of the tunnel dwellers is bit over his head, and he ain't above asking for a little help.



THE 51ST PRECINCT

Located near the intersection of O'Farrell Street and Taylor Street, right on the Ledge of the Tenderloin, the 51st Precinct is one of the busiest in Bay City. Every day it sees more than its share of muggers, pimps, hookers, gangbangers, junkies, and killers. Sometimes it seems like the Five-One is a tiny island of order in a sea of filth and chaos, and other times it seems like that sea has washed over it and drowned it.

The Five-One is housed in the Binford Police Building, built by the city in 1930. It displays every one of its more than seventy years. The outer brick is worn and crumbling, with that dark look of too many dirty rainstorms and too much soot and grime. More than a few of the reinforced glass windows, covered by steel bars, are cracked. The whole place has an odor of decrepitude and decay. (Incongruously, the front steps are made of a fine, light-grey granite and seem to have weathered the years well.)

The inside hasn't fared much better. It usually has a sort of antiseptic smell from the cleansers the janitors use to get rid of the vomit, blood, sweat, and plain old dirt. The floor tiles were once mint green, probably; today they're a sickly grey-green that isn't improved any by the banks of fluorescent lights overhead.

The first thing you see after you walk in the front door (and only cops are allowed in the back door, which is always locked) is the front desk. During the day, desk Sgt. Ignacio Portillo holds sway there. If you want to talk to a cop, book a suspect, or get some information, you have to go through him. He's a bitter, cynical little man who's certain he's seen all there is to see in his twenty years behind that desk. Nothing surprises him anymore. His nighttime counterpart is Sgt. Michael Garretty, who makes him look bright and enthusiastic by comparison, and is mean and spiteful to boot. Near the front desk is an elevator.

Behind the front desk, the first floor is occupied by several interrogation rooms (most of them wired to record sound and/or video), a meeting room where the Five-One cops assemble each morning, restrooms, and the men's and women's locker rooms where the cops change into and out of their uniforms. There are also stairs leading up to the floors above, and down to the basement. Although the basement is mostly used to store old files and equipment, the cops have cleared out enough space to set up a small gym with workout equipment they bought by taking up a collection among themselves.

The second floor contains desks and offices for the precinct's detectives, shift commanders, lieutenants, and so forth. Most of the floor is simply a wide-open area with no walls (only support columns). The actual offices line the outer walls, while the rest of the floor is filled with cubicles, desks, and the like.

The first part of the third floor is filled with offices for the higher-ups, and with offices for social services like Victim's Assistance, Child Services, and so forth. The rest of the third floor is occupied by Record Keeping, where the files on everything from the scumbags Five-One cops have arrested to the personnel files of the cops themselves are kept. Records Sergeant Haley Fujikawa runs things here, and nobody, not even Captain Garcia, starts poking around in the records without her say-so.

The fourth and final floor has the precinct's holding cells and evidence room. Both are heavily secured and well-guarded. No prisoners have ever escaped from the Five-One.

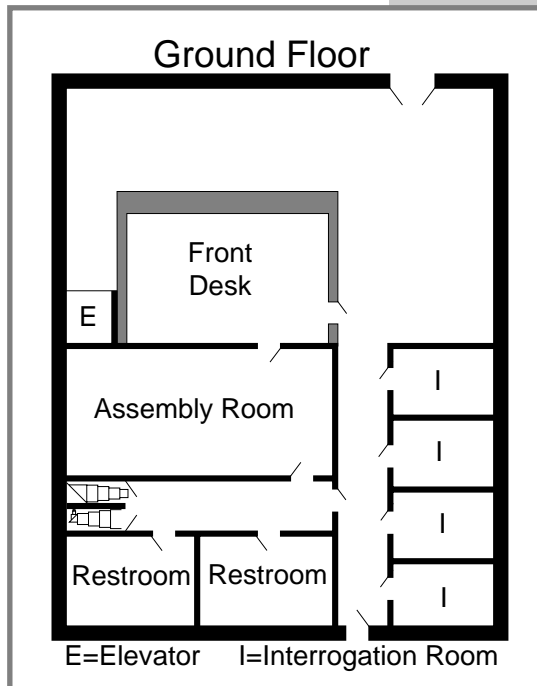
HIGHLIGHTS

The 51st Precinct had the lowest reported rate of incidents of gender and racial discrimination among cops in 2000.

No evidence has been reported missing from the 51st Precinct's evidence room in the last five years.

Officer Rene Elizondo of the 51st won the Bay City Police Department's Officer Marksmanship Competition in 1998.

Complaints of police brutality at the 51st Precinct reached a ten-year low in 1999, when only twelve such complaints were registered.



INFORMATION

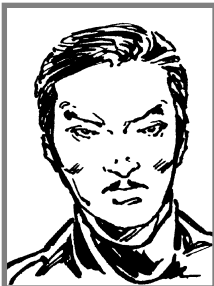
Captain Garcia and the 51st Precinct are in Division 17 of the Bay City Police Department, commanded by Commander Harry Lundquist.

The 51st Precinct has a City League softball team called the Blue Eagles.

The 51st's new "Community Outreach" program was instituted by the top brass to get more cops out of their cars and onto the streets where they can meet and talk to citizens. It has also made more cops available to speak to civic organizations and school children.

CAPTAIN VICTOR GARCIA**CAPTAIN VICTOR GARCIA****Mental 5 Combat 4 Physical 4 Move 3****SKILLS:** Criminology: 5; Deduction: 5; Professional (Police Officer): 6;

Firearms: 6; Local Expert (Bay City): 6; Perk (Police Officer): 7; Fighting: 3

EQUIPMENT: Glock 22 Pistol

Victor Garcia, a captain in the Bay City Police Department, grew up here in the city. After he graduated from high school, he went into the United States Army, and served a tour of duty in Vietnam. His experiences there changed his mind about making the military his career, so he did not re-enlist. He returned to San Francisco and began studying law enforcement at local community colleges and the Police Academy.

Young Officer Garcia was posted to several different precincts during his early career as a cop, but eventually he wound up at the 51st, where he has remained ever since. Something about the place appeals to him. It's got a lot of problems he can tackle, and he has the chance to help folks every day. Sometimes he even manages to make a lasting difference, like the time he talked Bobby Taylor out of trying drugs. Bobby's in college now at BCU, and Garcia couldn't be happier about that.

Officer Garcia displayed intelligence and insight into police work, so he soon went from Officer to Sergeant, and then to Lieutenant. He liked being a Lieutenant, since that position gave him some authority but still kept him in touch with the street. However, when old Captain Lawrence died and Commissioner Taggart offered him a promotion, he decided to take it. It meant a lot more money for his family, and the chance to slow down just a little—he wasn't as young as he used to be, after all.

Captain Garcia has been head of the 51st Precinct for nearly eight years now. He brought it through the '95 quake, the Wildstrike, and a minor corruption scandal back in early 1997 without any major difficulties. He has slowly but surely weeded out officers he suspected of being on the take, or incompetent, or both, and tried to replace them with younger officers whom he and his lieutenants, each of whom he trusts implicitly, could mold into dedicated policemen.

Captain Garcia lives in a modest house down in Burlingame with his wife, Clarice. They have three kids, Victor, Jr., Alphonso, and Maria, all of whom are now grown (though Maria is still in college). He is looking forward to retirement, and the chance to use his police pension to take Clarice on a few of those trips she's always wanted to go on. But he still gives 100% to the force every day, and will keep doing so until he turns in his badge for good.

"TO SERVE AND PROTECT—WE TAKE THAT MOTTO SERIOUSLY HERE AT THE FIVE-ONE"

STORY SEEDS

1 *Sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* A group of less than a dozen honest cops have started collecting protection money from the pimps and hookers in the Tenderloin. With the collusion of an equally corrupt watch sergeant, the individual officers covering that beat accept "donations" from the sex trade workers and put them all in a "pad," or pool of money. Each officer involved is entitled to one or more shares from the pad, depending upon rank, experience, and other factors. None of the victims of this shake-down racket are happy about it, but most pay, since the alternative is to be hassled by the cops constantly, which is bad for business. But one, a pimp known as Jack Flash, finally had enough, and refused to pay. The cops making the collection run that today began to beat him, and things soon got out of hand. Before they knew it, Jack Flash had suffered a cardiac arrest and died. The cops fled the scene. So far, no one knows what happened to Jack Flash, since the few Tenderloin inhabitants who saw the cops lead him into a dark alley have been too afraid to talk. Once the PCs begin investigating, though, they may come forward with what they know.

The PCs can get involved with this incident in many ways. Vigilante types may be inclined to investigate such a brutal murder without any pressure from the GM. Other characters can be drawn in if a social worker friend tells them about it, a street contact passes them the word that "something's going on," or if information uncovered earlier in the campaign has pointed a finger of suspicion at some of the cops of the Five-One. Characters who are reporters in their secret identities, or who know reporters, may be attracted by a potential story.

2 *Moonlighting:* When the cops at the 51st (or any other precinct) seize a large supply of illegal drugs, only a small portion of the drugs needs to be used in court. The rest of the drugs are supposed to be destroyed, and that's the responsibility of the evidence clerks. Two of the clerks at the 51st Precinct, Ralph Berkhalter and David Jackson, have taken advantage of this situation to set up their own drug ring—the "Blue Knightclub," it's called on the street. Rather than destroy the excess drugs, they smuggle them out of the precinct house and re-sell them on the street to dealers for about half of what a supplier would normally charge. Everybody makes out—the two cops supplement their pay, and the dealers get a discount on their product. Sooner or later, though, someone's going to begin to wonder why the supply of drugs on the street remains so steady, despite all the dealer arrests, and begin to investigate.

3 *Sex Crimes:* A policewoman working out of the Five-One, Louise Shannon, is found brutally raped and murdered in a Tenderloin alley. The last call that Police Dispatch had from her was that she was going to check out an illegally parked car. This call came in at 2:58 am. The coroner says that Officer Shannon died at about 4:00 am. Investigators have found semen and pubic hair evidence from the rapist, but their only other clue is some strange scorch-marks on her body. Thinking they might be from a superhuman, the cops have called in the PCs to help with the investigation.



THE CAVERNS

When the Wildstrike hit Bay City, the effects weren't just felt by the so-called "Wildstrickers," the people who absorbed some of the strange energies—the earth itself was affected, too. First, a large piece of ground collapsed in McLaren Park, creating the Pit. Then, there was another cave-in, this one over near Westbrook. Several acres worth of land simply collapsed like a ruined soufflé. As soon as the crisis ended, Baytrans headed over there and began digging things up.

To their amazement, the workers found an extensive system of natural caves and tunnels beneath the collapsed area. Some of the caverns were damaged by the collapse, but most appeared to be completely intact. The work crews didn't have the time or manpower to the explore the entire cavern network, but they did bring back reports that some of the cavern and tunnel walls were carved with strange pictures and writing.

The news of the Caverns, as they quickly came to be called, and the strange writing on the walls soon became a nine days' wonder. Bay Area scientists, including several from the Odyssey Research Institute, began discussing the information brought back by the workers. None of them recognized the language, or even the alphabet—if alphabet it was. It did not belong to any civilization known to man.

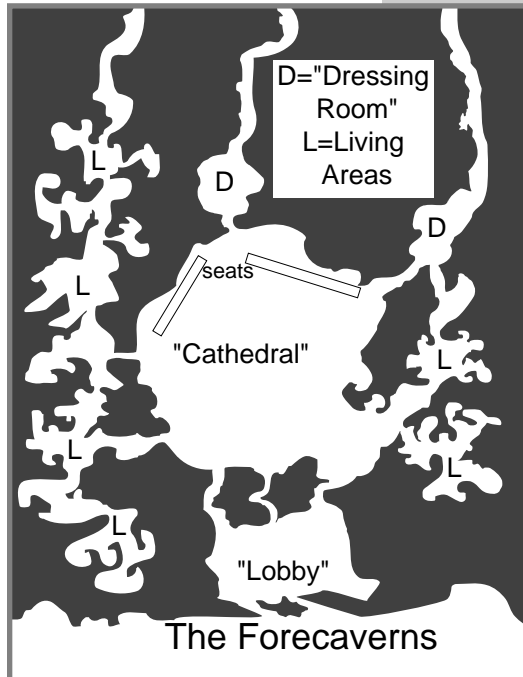
It was quite a puzzle, one the scientists couldn't resist for long. Impromptu spelunking expeditions were organized by ORI and several other groups, though at first they engaged in only the most cursory exploration and picture-taking. What they saw only whetted their appetite for more, and they immediately began planning a lengthy, detailed archaeological investigation of the Caverns.

For better or for worse, they never got the chance. By the time they got back there with their fancy scanners, squatters had moved in—and they were mean. Victims of the Wildstrike energy had taken over the place. Somehow they seemed drawn to the place, and were very protective of it, as if they considered it a brother Wildstriker—after all, they were both born from the same cataclysm. They refused to let the scientists inside the Caverns to look around. The scientists, realizing they were outgunned, backed off.

Gradually the number of Wildstrickers increased until the Forecaverns, the westernmost part of the Caverns, was filled with squatters, so they began exploring further and further east into the larger Cavern network. Some of those who went exploring never returned. Some came back reporting that there was nothing there except endless tunnels and a few dead-end caverns. The rest of the Wildstrickers learned not to go back in there unless they absolutely had to.

With the amount of living space now limited, and the number of Wildstriker "refugees" increasing daily, fights soon broke out for living space, food, and power. Eventually they became a sort of ritualized event held in the largest cavern open to the Wildstrickers, christened "the Cathedral." The other Wildstrickers would watch them for entertainment. Sometimes a "norm" from the outside world, seeking a cheap thrill, would sneak in to watch them, too.

Finally it occurred to one of the Wildstrickers, a mild-mannered physician known as Doc, that these fights could actually provide a source of revenue for his people. He began putting out the word. The city authorities know about the fights, but for whatever reason, turn a blind eye to them, and so the Wildstrickers prosper, after a fashion.



HIGHLIGHTS

The Lobby: The entrance to the rest of the Caverns. This cavern is where the evening's fight attendees mix and mingle before the bouts begin. There is a well-stocked cash bar built with money earned from attendance fees.

The Cathedral: A large, domed cavern where the fights are held. It is well-lit with lights powered by generators. Bleacher-like but comfortable seating is located along two walls; many evenings the seats are full. The central floor is a shallow depression which is filled with sand (the better to soak up the blood).

INFORMATION

Admission Price: Minimum of \$500 per person per evening, more for "Special Events."

Schedule: Gladiatorial bouts are usually held every Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday evening. "Special Events" are often scheduled for holidays. The especially wealthy sometimes commission their own evening of arena entertainment for special occasions.

Inhabitants: It is estimated that as many as 200 Wildstrickers live in the Caverns, of whom about 120 participate in the gladiatorial events to one degree or another. Deaths from fights are usually offset by new Wildstrickers moving in.

DOC

Doc

Mental 6 Combat 2 Physical 2 Move 2

SKILLS: Business: 6, Expert (Wildstrikers): 9; Local Expert (The Caverns): 6; Paramedics: 7; Professional (Doctor): 7; Perk (License To Practice Medicine): 5



Doc was not one of the first Wildstrikers to move down to the Caverns, but he has become one of the most important. In his former life, he was Doctor Richard Kazinski, a skilled general practitioner in Bay City. As a successful and wealthy physician, he felt blessed by life.

All that changed with the Wildstrike. Doctor Kazinski was awakened on the

night of the New Millennium by an intense pain in his face, neck, shoulders, and back. All he could do was scream and writhe in agony as his wife called 911. When the pain subsided, he got up and went to the mirror. His wife screamed when he turned on the light, and he almost fainted when he saw what had happened to him. His face was bent and twisted, and his once broad shoulders had been deformed by an odd-looking hunched back. He shut off the light and stumbled back to bed while his wife kept screaming.

The next few weeks were living hell. His wife, unable to live with a "freak," left him and filed for a divorce. He had trouble finding a lawyer to help him because his appearance revolted them, and finally had to settle for an inexperienced girl who ended up giving most of his money and property away to his wife for "emotional damage." He had to give up practicing medicine; none of his patients would let him touch them anymore. Finally, with nowhere else to turn, he made his way down to the Caverns.

The other Wildstrikers there welcomed him. They needed someone to tend their wounds and cure their illnesses. They also needed someone who knew a little bit about business and how to make things work in society. Soon "Doc," as they called him, became one of the most respected members of the Wildstrike community. Even seasoned, powerful warriors, who are used to having their requests obeyed unhesitatingly, listen respectfully to his advice and, more often than not, do as he suggests.

It was Doc who came up with the idea of using the Wildstrike fights to make money. The Wildstrikers needed things, like food and medicine and clothing, that they couldn't easily get. The gladiatorial fights have brought them that, and much more—generators for lights and heat and TV, comfortable bedding, and a sense of community (even if it's a rather odd community). They don't think of themselves as the freakshow that the norms see them as being; rather, they're a family—and Doc's the patriarch.

**"WE'VE GOT TO
LOOK OUT FOR
OURSELVES;
NO ONE ELSE IS
GOING TO HELP
US."**

STORY SEEDS

1 Cannon Fodder: Some less-than-scrupulous organizations (VIPER, the Scions of Caine, and other such groups) view the Wildstrikers not as a form of illicit entertainment, but rather as a source of cheap cannon fodder. Paranormals with one or two odd powers may not be able to stand toe-to-toe with most super-heroes, but they're better at it than agents with blasters, and in large groups are even capable of taking out super-heroes with ease. Accordingly, one or more of these groups has begun kidnapping Wildstrikers in lightning-fast raids on the Caverns. Those with useful powers are kept and brainwashed into serving their new masters; those without useful abilities are usually killed.

The Wildstrikers have not been able to resist these attacks with much success; they're not used to small unit tactical combat and aren't very well organized. Reluctantly, they will ask the PC heroes for help.

2 Ancient Mysteries: The carvings on the walls of many of the tunnels and caves in the Caverns are actually an ancient script of an hidden civilization. Thousands of years ago, these people visited our dimension. One among them, the wizard Zarenak, turned his mind to conquest and evil, and attempted to wrest the rule of the plane from its rightful kings. He failed, and fled far to the east, to what we know today as Bay City. There he and his followers lived until he died, and then he was buried in an elaborately decorated tomb, and all his followers committed suicide that they might follow him into the netherworld.

The Caverns are the remains of Zarenak's tomb. Although Markoth has not yet heard of the writings in the Caverns, much less had reason to investigate them, as soon as he does he will mis-recognize them for a relic of hidden Tangut. (Perhaps a curious Wildstriker or scientist will disturb a magical item whose mystic resonances attract him.) He will immediately explore the Caverns in search of lost Tangutan spells and magical items, and Zarenak's tomb as well. If he has to slay a few Wildstrikers to get what he wants, so be it. And if the PCs find out what's going on and get in his way, he will slay them as well. After all, with the power of Zarenak, he is sure to be able to win back the throne of Tangut, and he will let nothing stand in his way. And even when Markoth finds out he is mistaken about its source, he will still try to seize the power in the Caverns.

3 Panacea: Doc thinks that one of the Wildstrikers, Kardiak, who can produce mild poisons and other substances by touch, may hold the key to a cure for AIDS and other diseases. His body can produce amazing amounts of poisons, antivenins, antibodies, and other such substances, and one of them might be a much-needed cure for some disease. He has taken steps to alert friends in the medical community so he can get Kardiak out to them, but less ethical researchers have heard about what he's up to and informed PanStar. Seeking a monopoly on potentially valuable drugs, PanStar will send a strike team to the meeting between Doc, Kardiak, and Doc's friends to kidnap Kardiak.



Background/History: Jessica McDonald had it all. She was gorgeous (a former model, in fact), talented (a dancer and singer with two gold records), and in love. Her fiancé, Stewart Grist, was a high-powered Bay City record executive whom she'd met at an industry party. It was love at first sight, and soon the two were spending all of their free time together.

They decided to ring in the New Millennium together, just the two of them, no boring Hollywood parties filled with phonies and hangers-on. They started with a catered meal and some soft music, then watched some of the festivities on TV, and finally found themselves dancing out on the twentieth-floor balcony of Jessica's penthouse apartment.

Then, thousands of miles away, the Proprietor War ended and the awesome energies of the Third Gate Key flowed out of the Proprietor and into the world at large. They struck all over the globe, wreaking geological and personal havoc. One of the people the energy was attracted to was Jessica.

One moment she was dancing in Stewart's arms, blissfully content, and the next her head was spinning and colored lights filled her eyes. She started to pull away from Stewart, but he held on to her, trying to find out what was wrong with her. Then she felt him let go. When her eyes cleared in the next few moments, she saw him stumbling around the balcony as if he were roaring drunk, but she knew he'd only had a few glasses of wine. Then, before her horrified eyes, he stumbled against the railing, fell over it, and plunged twenty stories to his death. Jessica fainted.

She woke up in hospital bed. When she remembered what had happened, she began sobbing uncontrollably. A nurse rushed in to help her, but when she tried to comfort the distraught superstar, she immediately lost her balance, wobbled around the floor, and then tripped over a chair and fell, knocking herself out cold.

Terrified, and realizing she was somehow the cause of what happened to the nurse—and to Stewart—Jessica fled the hospital. She spent an entire night wandering the street, not daring to touch anyone. At daybreak she returned to her apartment and fell into an exhausted sleep. She stayed in her apartment for

the next few weeks, refusing to answer the door for anyone, not even the police. Then she saw a news report on the Caverns, and the Wildstrikers, and she knew what had happened to her—and where she had to go. She calmly got up, put on a good suit of hiking clothes, walked down to the Caverns, and entered the world of the Wildstrikers forever.

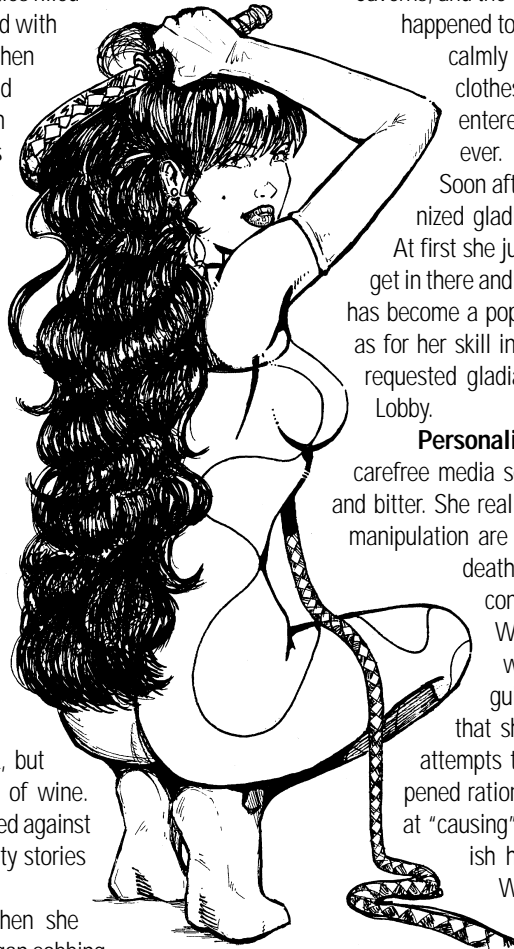
Soon after the Wildstrikers began their organized gladiatorial fights, Jessica got involved. At first she just watched, but soon she wanted to get in there and burn off some of her aggression. She has become a popular fighter, as much for her beauty as for her skill in the arena; she is one of the most-requested gladiators for the pre-fight mixer in the Lobby.

Personality/Motivation: Once a happy and carefree media sensation, Jessica is now depressed and bitter. She realizes that her new powers of vertigo manipulation are what caused Stewart to fall to his death. Despite the fact that she had no control over the fact that she received Wildstrike powers, or over what they would be, she is still wracked with guilt over Stewart's death, convinced that she caused it somehow. All of Doc's attempts to get her to think about what happened rationally have failed miserably. Her guilt at "causing" Stewart's death has led her to punish herself by consigning herself to the Wildstriker underworld, where she feels she will suffer and pay for her "sins." She has entered the Wildstrike gladiatorial combats

for the same reason, with a sort of unconscious "death wish" or desire to be punished that lead her to take foolish risks in combat—risks the viewing public loves.

Powers: The Wildstrike gave Vertigo the ability to play havoc with a person's (or creature's) sense of balance. Somehow her touch throws the inner ear out of focus, making the victim stumble, wobble, and usually fall. Those who have been on the receiving end of her "Spiral Touch" often appear to be extremely drunk, and are physically affected in similar ways.

Vertigo's Spiral Touch is almost always "on"—anyone who touches her, even accidentally, is affected (even if either of them is wearing thick clothes or armor). Unlike most powers, which fatigue the possessor when used, Vertigo's cause her fatigue—extreme fatigue—when she turns them off. As a result, she has been almost completely cut off from human contact, which has only



"ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND HE GOES; WHERE HE STOPS, ONLY VERTIGO KNOWS!"

served to further isolate her from the people around her and increased her depression.

Vertigo's powers are a potent weapon in the Wildstrike arena—not only can her mere touch disable an opponent, but anyone who touches her when attacking her is affected the same way! However, they are limiting, too. First of all, she has to get close enough to touch her target; her powers do not work at range, and this leaves her vulnerable to counterattack. To that end, she has turned her hobby of Pentjak-Silat (an Indonesian martial art) into a serious study. Her skill with certain weapons forms, most notably the whip, gives her some ability to reach out and bring an opponent to her draining grasp. Second, she's a one-trick pony—her Spiral Touch is all she can do. If her opponent is immune to it for some reason (and a few of the Wildstrickers are), she will immediately concede the bout.

In Fuzion rules terms, Vertigo's powers cost her no END to use, and are "always on." Anyone who touches or is touched by her is affected by them. If she wants to turn them off, she can do so, but must pay x3 END in every Phase in which they are shut down. If she is Knocked Out, her Spiral Touch will deactivate.

Appearance: Vertigo is one of the fortunate few Wildstrickers whose appearance was not affected by the Wildstrike. She is a strikingly beautiful woman, with exquisite features and long, black hair that reaches halfway down her back like an ebon waterfall. In the arena she wears a purple bodysuit with multicolored swirls spiralling all around it.

OTHER WILDSTRIKERS

A huge, hulking, immensely strong brute of a man with the mind of a twelve-year-old, **Bigfoot** is fiercely loyal to his fellow Wildstrickers and will lash out angrily at anyone who threatens them.

One of the fiercest and most feared fighters among the Wildstrike gladiators, **Hooks** is also one of the most bizarre appearing. The Wildstrike altered all of the hair on Hook's body, turning each strand (even eyelashes) into strong, barbed hooks. The merest slap from the back of Hook's hand is enough to rip clothing and flesh. His hooks are not effective against heavy armor, though they do make it easier for him to climb walls or cling to anything he grabs. Wildstrickers who tauntingly call him "Velcro-Man" live to regret it.

Kardiak's body can create poisons, drugs, and numerous other substances; if he touches you in anger, you usually wind up dead, unconscious, or catatonic. He can also create medicines for use by other Wildstrickers and norms.

Orbz's eyes are large and round, giving him a look of perpetual surprise. His eyes are his weapons; they emit beams of strange energy which saps the strength and vitality of those they touch.

Tall and regal-looking, **Sorcerer** was gifted with several psychic abilities by the Wildstrike: he can read minds, and to a lesser extent control them, and can blast his foes with "psychic bolts." However, use of his powers sometimes causes him tremendous pain.

Tantrum is an eighteen-year-old girl with a terrible temper. When she gets angry—in the gladiatorial arena, for example—her strength increases, she loses control of herself in a burst of berserk fury, and her body emits random pulses of explosive energy. Because this makes her dangerous to the spectators as well as the other Wildstrickers, she is rarely allowed to fight in the arena.

Tentacle's skin has been changed to a mottled, lizard-like hide which is nevertheless strangely malleable and slick. His arms can reach out for several yards to grab or trip his opponents (his entire body can also be stretched to a certain extent), and his strength is enormous.

Volt's body, twisted and mangled by Wildstrike energies, acts as a living battery. He is able to absorb electrical energy (from outlets, lightning bolts, batteries, and the like) and emit it in the form of powerful energy blasts. Sometimes he is able to absorb the strange energies emitted by other Wildstrickers, but not often.

VERTIGO

CP: 65

OP: 95

PP: 35

INT	5					
WILL	6	RES	18			
PRE	7					
TECH	5					
REF	8	SPD	4			
DEX	8					
CON	6	SD	12	ED	12	END 60
STR	6	REC	12			
BODY	7	STUN	35	HITS	35	
MOVE	7	RUN	14	SPRINT	21	
		SWIM	7	LEAP	7	

Cost Complications

- 8 Depression (Frequent, Moody, Major)
- 8 Code of Honor: Will not kill (Frequent, Risk expulsion or embarrassment, Major)
- 8 Public Figure: Well-known entertainment star (Frequent, Newsworthy, Major)
- 8 Oppressed: Wildstriker (Frequent, Snubbed, Major)
- 8 Rival (other popular Wildstrickers) (Frequent, Mild, Major)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS & PERKS

AV/DV

- 12 Martial Arts—Patai Silat (a style of Pentjak-Silat): Martial Block, Martial Dodge, Martial Grab, Kick (Offensive Strike), Martial Throw, Martial Arts Weapon (Whips, Rope & Chain Weapons)
- 4 Extra Damage: +2 DC with Martial Arts
- 2 Hand-to-Hand: 412
- 4 Melee Weapons: 412
- 2 Hand-to-Hand Evade: 412
- 4 Melee Evade: 412
- 4 Ranged Evade: 412
- 2 Acrobatics: 210
- 2 Acting: 29
- 1 Contortionist: 19
- 4 Expert (Wildstrickers): 49
- 3 High Society: 310
- 7 Local Expert (The Caverns): 712
- 7 Professional (Dancing): 712
- 7 Professional (Modeling): 712
- 7 Professional (Singing): 712
- 1 Stealth: 19
- 4 Wardrobe and Style: 411
- 6 Beautiful: 2
- 6 Combat Sense: +2 Initiative Rolls
- 3 Longevity
- 3 Renown (Wildstrike Gladiator): 3

COST POWERS

END

- 30 **Spiral Touch:** 8D6 DEX and 8D6 REF Drain, Returns at 1 pt. per Minute 0*
- 3 **Body Armor:** 10 KD & 10 EKD, Focus (Attached) 0
- 2 **Whip:** Stretching 4 m/y, 0 END, Focus (Grabbable)



THE STRANGER

No one really remembers for sure how long the Stranger Coffee House has been around, but it's been a long time. The Stranger is a fixture of the Bay City scene, catering to students, Bohemian-types, and depressed poets. This, of course, is a gross generalization, but that's what most people would say anyway.

The Stranger is a coffee house on the South side. It's an old Victorian home which has been converted, and sits right in the middle of an otherwise residential block. The neighbors complain constantly that patrons of the Stranger take up all the on-street parking, but the coffee house is still allowed to operate due to some ancient zoning loophole.

The inside of the Stranger is quite a sight. Old, strange artwork hangs everywhere. Perhaps the most significant piece is the portrait of Jean-Paul Sartre which hangs above the fireplace—the "patron" of the coffee house. In addition to the artwork, numerous knick-knacks litter the rest of the house. These small items are never ordinary; there's always something strange about them, as if they had all come straight out of the Addam's Family home. The regulars pay these things no mind, but they are of the utmost curiosity to new customers.

All rooms of the house, with the exception of the kitchen and the basement storage, are open to the public. Here you will find antique high-backed chairs, comfortable sofas, and, of course, coffee tables. The Stranger also boasts a rather large personal library, from which patrons can borrow to read during their stay.

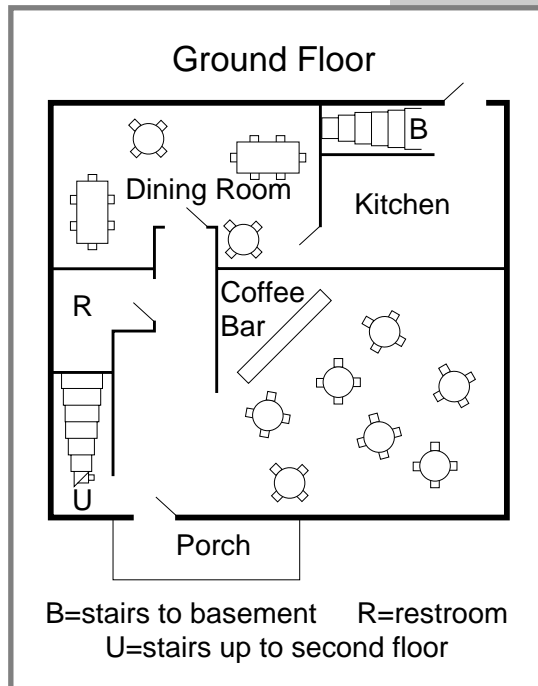
Rather than play the "alternative" music so common to coffee houses everywhere, the Stranger chooses to play soft, insinuating classical music during business hours. This seems to sit well with most of the Stranger's patrons, be they student, thinker, artist, or businessman. The first three of these groups are the most common, the last showing up on rare occasions.

The atmosphere of the Stranger is normally relaxing, but Thursday and Saturday nights are a bit different. Thursday nights, the Stranger is turned into the House of Pain, where angry poets and beat-niks can take center stage and woo everyone with their insight and profundity. One would truly be amazed at the poetry found here—some is truly inspired while the majority of it isn't fit to burn. Fortunately for most, the House of Pain only runs from 9 pm until Midnight. On the other hand, Saturday nights are Musing nights, where thinkers from all over the city can come and present their newest philosophies or debate their old favorites. Even Mercedes Targer, the owner and a first-rate Existentialist philosopher, joins in the fun of Saturday nights. The Musings officially begin at 8:00 pm and run until closing time.

There are less publicized events at the Stranger which are not so firmly scheduled: Weird things sometimes happen, and no one knows why. Weird things like a mirror that won't cast a reflection for just a moment, or items that have seemingly moved on their own, or strange noises from an empty room. None of these occurrences are common, nor are they truly significant. They are just unsettling when they occur, for those who don't immediately dismiss them. If asked, Mercedes will not comment, but simply smile enigmatically and change the subject.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Open 7 days a week, 6 am to 4 am.
- Old world atmosphere
- Open mic poetry every Thursday night, 9 pm to Midnight
- Philosophical debates every Saturday night, 8 pm until close
- Best beans in Bay City
- Full service coffee bar



INFORMATION

- Location:** 657 Jeter Redwood City, South Bay City
- Getting There:** The Sequoia Center Bart Station is only about a mile away from the Stranger.
- Phone Number:** (415) 555-6565
- Average Coffee Prices:** Regular coffee \$1.00, Specialty Drinks \$2.00 to \$4.00, dependent upon size

MERCEDES TARGER**MERCEDES TARGER****Mental 7 Combat 3 Physical 3 Move 3****SKILLS:** Concentration: 6; Conspiracy: 5; Jack of all Trades: 7; Business: 5; Expert (Youth Culture): 6; Science (Philosophy): 5; Wealth: 6**POWERS:** Life Support; Immune to Aging**COMPLICATIONS:** Secret Identity (she conceals her long life-span)

Mercedes Targer is the most recent owner of the Stranger coffee house, having purchased it in 1992. As has been tradition through all owners of the establishment, she has made few changes to the decor or atmosphere of the coffee house. Besides, she loved it or she wouldn't have purchased it in the first place. She has made certain to keep it in pristine condition and always purchases

the highest quality products to keep up a reputation for greatness.

The one big change made by Mercedes is the addition of two scheduled nights: *The House of Pain* and *Musings*. Since Mercedes herself is an upbeat sort of person, the House of Pain was really a subtle stab at many of the "typical" coffee house regulars. She gets a kick out of hearing the angst-ridden work of these angry young poets, although she would never admit to it.

Musings on Saturdays is really more her forte. Mercedes completed her Doctorate at UC Berkeley in Philosophy, concentrating on Existentialism and Sartre—another reason the Stranger appealed to her as a business opportunity. One can often find her joining in the discussions and debates on Saturdays.

Mercedes herself is an attractive African-American lady seemingly in her late-thirties. She wears her hair in short dreadlocks, and keeps herself fit, wearing clothing that shows off her physique. Even though she is a scholar of Existentialist philosophy, she is a bright and pleasant person. Mercedes is rarely without a smile, even when things are bad, and she always has a kind word for anyone.

If one were to look closely, there are strange things about the owner of the Stranger, just as there are strange things about the place itself. No one has ever seen Mercedes outside the Stranger. Many attribute this to the long hours she works at the coffee house and a desire for a private life, but this goes as far as never having been seen at the grocery store. No one knows if Mercedes dates. She seems to have few close friends, let alone lovers. In fact, with the way she reacts to flirtations, one might charge that she is asexual.

Perhaps the most disturbing fact, and the most difficult to ascertain, is that no record of a woman named Mercedes Targer exists before her enrollment in UC Berkeley in 1985. If confronted, Mercedes simply will not talk about her past, deftly changing the subject. The proprietor of the Stranger is a very enigmatic woman.

"HMM. THAT'S AN INTERESTING WAY OF LOOKING AT IT."

STORY SEEDS

1 Next on Arcadian Academy 90210... (Continued from The Cage, on pg. 78): Victor and Cheryl have been seeing a lot of each other lately. After the initial shock of mutual interest and excitement subsided a little bit, they've moved into more intellectual discussions. What better place to go than the Stranger, just a BART hop away? Victor is trying to make Cheryl have fun, since she's far too serious even though she keeps saying she really wants to enjoy herself. Cheryl is discovering that she really likes Victor's carefree and arrogant attitude, along with his natural playfulness. His influence is helping her lighten up a little, and she's feeling like she's just that much closer to the way her mother used to be. Young Avatar is also wondering if she's fallen in with the wrong group, since Victor and his other human friends are really cool. Little do they realize...

It's official. Nick wasn't just a rebound for Jean, and they're awful lovey-dovey now. He's deep and mysterious—just the way Jean likes them. Admittedly, there are people who look at him funny, since he's a college guy dating a sixteen year old girl. In fact, most of Jean's classmates don't trust him. Of them, only Victor thinks he's cool and Angelina Freeman seems to like him, perhaps too much, which is causing jealous friction between her and Jean. Nick and Jean hang out in the Stranger on weeknights, sometimes with Victor and Cheryl, whenever her schedule permits.

Not only is Angelina's liking Nick causing problems between her and Jean, young Steven Anderson is beside himself as well. He still hasn't figured out how to tell Angelina that he's got the hots for her, but now he's becoming insanely jealous of Jean's new boyfriend. Steven has gotten rather hostile toward Nick on several occasions; fortunately, the older man just looks at him and says, "Hey, calm down. You'll hurt yourself." Between this and Steven's growing problems with Brandon Medeiros at school, he's bound to blow a gasket soon.

2 The Mystery of Mercedes: The Stranger's setting is a pretty open one. As a Gamemaster, you can feel free to create the secrets behind the establishment and its owner as you see fit. Perhaps these phenomena are just the fertile imaginations of the creative sorts who frequent the coffee shop, and that Ms. Targer is simply a product of the Witness Relocation program. Perhaps the phenomena are real, and the product of things dwelling in the basement. Perhaps Ms. Targer is more than she seems. Perhaps the Shadow Realm has something to do with, or maybe the Lodge on a lighter note. If the phenomena at the Stranger is real, magically sensitive characters are going to pick up on it pretty quick. It's all up to you, and whatever will fit best with your game setting and plots.



LANCER PREPARATORY ACADEMY

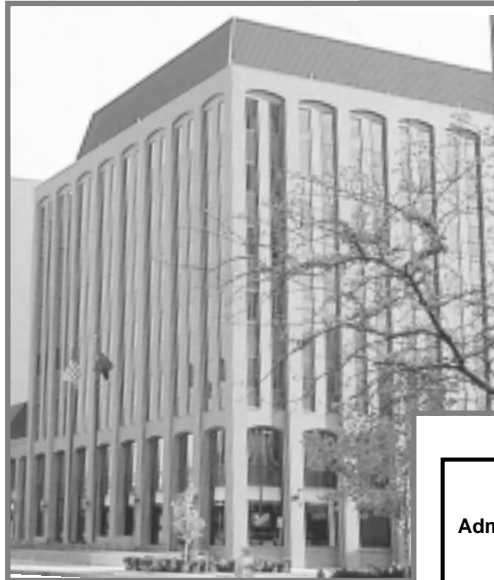
Founded in 1954, Lancer Prep is one of the premiere preparatory academies on the West Coast. Its goal, as stated in its promotional literature, is "to prepare students for high school by teaching them the fundamental knowledge of our society, and to prepare them for life by teaching them fundamental ethics and etiquette."

Lancer Prep is presently located in a new six-story building in downtown Bay City. Prior to 1995, it had a building in Mid-Bay City, but that building was destroyed in the 1995 earthquake. Fortunately the Board of Trustees had prepared for such a disaster and had the funds set aside to begin construction on a new building almost immediately. The new location was suggested by Trustee Donald Henderson, who thought that a downtown location would give the students easy access to educational opportunities such as museums, and social opportunities such as dances with students from nearby public schools.

Lancer Prep enrolls students for grade seven through nine. Its current enrollment is a little under 100 students. Although it could probably enroll more, the Board of Trustees has chosen to keep the number of students low, so that the teacher-student ratio remains fairly high. The Board has considered expanding Lancer to cover grades ten through twelve several times, but so far has not voted to accept such a proposal. The main impediment to increasing the size of the school is the expense in doing so; enough parents have inquired about adding those grades to make the Board confident that they could achieve a satisfactory high school-level enrollment, but the start-up costs are still tremendous.

Although the Board of Trustees makes all major governing decisions for Lancer Prep, the day-to-day control of the school is in the hands of Superintendent Leonard Massey. Assistant Superintendent Joyce Brookhaven, Faculty Committee Chairman Arthur Lackham, and Student Activities Coordinator Jill Hartzog all help him keep the school running smoothly. That's not always easy with nearly a hundred rambunctious teenagers, but somehow they manage.

Lancer Prep is organized into four Departments: Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Physical Education. Physical Sciences includes Mathematics (mainly algebra and geometry), Biology, and Earth Science. Social Sciences really only covers a single social studies course, Man and Society, which is taught throughout a student's three-year course of study at Lancer. It touches on such topics as anthropology, sociology, psychology, religion, and race and gender relations. Humanities includes History, English, and Art. Physical Education is self-explanatory; the school's gymnasium facilities occupy almost the entire fourth floor of the building. Coach Larry Henderson is one of the most beloved figures on the faculty, respected by student and teacher alike. Despite having a relatively small student body to choose from, he frequently puts together basketball teams that can hold their own in city competition. (Lancer Prep does not have any other sports teams, since it lacks the space for practice fields; the Trustees are considering buying some nearby land so that they can start a baseball team.)

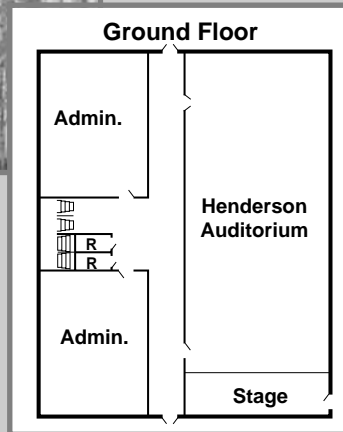


HIGHLIGHTS

Computer Lab: One of Lancer Prep's best selling points is its state-of-the-art educational computer laboratory. Established with help from Henderson International, the Computer Lab is an integral part of the Physical Sciences curricula; all students are expected to become computer literate.

Library: Lancer Prep has a large library for such a small school, containing nearly 30,000 volumes.

Henderson Auditorium: A large event space where the students meet every morning for assembly. Plays, concerts, and the like are also performed here by the students.



INFORMATION

Tuition: \$12,000 per year.

Enrollment: Approximately 100 students, evenly distributed between grades 7,8, and 9.

Governance: By twelve-member Board of Trustees. Each member of the Board is elected for life, or until he or she resigns or is forced off the Board by a unanimous vote of the other Trustees.

Superintendent: Leonard Massey, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent: Joyce Brookhaven.

SUPERINTENDENT LEONARD MASSEY, ED.D

LEONARD MASSEY

Mental 6 Combat 2 Physical 2 Move 1

SKILLS: Bureaucratics: 6; Education: 5; Expert (History): 5; Professional (School Superintendent): 8; Teaching: 8



Born in 1948 in rural Mississippi, Leonard Massey got into education in a roundabout way. He never finished high school, having been forced to quit school after tenth grade to help out on the family farm. After several years of farm labor, he joined the United States Marines. He served two terms in Vietnam, but his second term was cut short after nine months when he took some shrapnel in his right leg. Lamed for life, he was released from the Marines on a disability discharge and given a veteran's pension. He moved to San Francisco. Realizing that he wouldn't be able to do any kind of physical labor, he fell back on his mind, and began taking classes to get his high school equivalency degree. During this time he met and married Kelly Wallace, the daughter of a San Francisco grocery store owner, settled down, and had three children—Hannah, Aaron, and Mindy.

It was the birth of his children that got Massey interested in education. While he worked during the day, Massey studied for his education degree at night school. After he received his degree, he took a job teaching history at a local public junior high school, and kept on studying for advanced education degrees. He put his charisma to work in the classroom, bringing to his students a joy of learning and a desire to do well. He also cracked down on troublemakers and druggies that were ruining the academic atmosphere.

Massey gained national attention in the late 1980s when he got into a fight with a senior who was selling drugs and tossed him out a first-story window. Massey was later acquitted of assault charges when it was proven the student had attacked him first. After that, though, he moved from the classroom and into administration.

When the time came to choose a new Superintendent for Lancer Prep, the Board of Trustees considered dozens of applications, but in the end offered the job to Massey, who hadn't even applied. Flattered by the offer, Massey took the job, and has been at Lancer Prep ever since. Although stern, he loves his students and cares for them. He walks the halls during every class break, and knows all of the students by name. Although his strict discipline isn't popular with the students, the parents and the Board like it, so it seems he's at Lancer to stay.

"DON'T DO SOMETHING JUST BECAUSE ALL OF YOUR FRIENDS DO. DO WHAT YOUR HEART AND MIND TELL YOU IS RIGHT!"

STORY SEEDS

1 Mission High Mixer: It is the philosophy of Lancer Prep that its students should get out and meet other students—after all, they might not learn everything they need to know to get along in high school if they don't mingle with other junior high and high school students from time to time. To that end, mixers with nearby Mission High are often organized so that the two student bodies can get to know one another. Unfortunately, this also gives the students from the Arcadian Academy and Scions of Caine the chance to get in each other's faces . . .

Most male students at Mission High are attracted to Cheryl Travis (Avatar), and with good reason—she's gorgeous, friendly, and great at sports. This doesn't sit too well with Brandon Medeiros (Target) when he sees all the flirting going on at the mixer, though—he's got Cheryl in mind for himself, even if he's only thirteen (he looks, thinks, and acts several years older than this, due to his life experiences). He'll start picking fights with boys who pay too much attention to Cheryl, and will probably taunt a few of them into meeting him behind the gym, where he'll thrash them without any teachers being the wiser. Steven Anderson (Thrasher), who despises Medeiros, will probably take the opportunity to pick his own fight with the bullying mutant (neither will try to reveal their powers, of course, but it will soon become obvious to each of them that the other is more than human). Cheryl will stick up for her erstwhile comrade (not because she likes him, but out of a sense of camaraderie), and other Arcadians will weigh in on Thrasher's side, and so on. It's entirely possible for a whole slew of secret identities to be blown in just a few minutes—and just wait until they see each other in school on Monday!

However, there are a couple of adults who might put a stop to things before they go too far. One is billionaire Donald Henderson. A Lancer Prep Board of Trustees member, he was shanghaied into acting as a chaperone at the mixer when several Lancer teachers had to back out and he mistakenly let it slip that he was free that night. Esper, in illusionary disguise, has taken the place of a Mission High teacher so that she can keep a watch on her own young charges. Both will try to defuse the tension between their pupils, if possible without revealing anything to anyone. And the students, of course, will try to do an end run around them and go after each other.

2 Hard Target: Target's powers are spawned, in part, from the Shadow Realms. Slowly but surely, they begin to make him more and more violent, unpredictable, and dangerous. He really hates school and will soon lose control of his temper, lash out at some teacher or Superintendent Massey, and possibly end up with a murder rap on his hands. The other Junior Scions, not to mention the Arcadians, will try to stop him, if possible without revealing any secret identities—not even the other Scions want to see their teachers killed. And the buildup of eldritch energy within Brandon may just attract someone unpleasant—say, Markoth, who's been monitoring his condition all along?

MASON'S CURIOSITIES

Hiding on Java Street, off Masonic Avenue, is a small non-descript shop with a simple painted sign above the door, proclaiming it to be Mason's Curiosities. It's been there as long as anyone can remember, at least anyone who knows it's there. Mason's could arguably be called one of Bay City's best kept secrets, but the kind of people who say that are a bit odd to begin with.

From the outside, Mason's Curiosities is hardly impressive. It's an older building, one miraculously spared by the quake, which is in dire need of a new sign, a fresh coat of paint on its eaves, and some restorative masonry work. Fortunately, the outside is not what makes Mason's special. As with people, it's what's inside that counts.

The best way to describe Mason's is the kind of store where things go when they don't fit anywhere else. Coffins with the skeletons still inside, old records, bizarre medical equipment, fetal animals of all kinds, antique furniture, autopsy photos, native art, old underwear, strange blades from a dark continent, and the like can all be purchased at Mason's. You'd half expect to be find part of an alien wreckage or the bullet that killed JFK here. If what you're looking for isn't on display, just ask old Mason. He might have it hiding in back with all of the other weird things he hasn't sorted through just yet. If he likes you, you might just get to peruse Mason's "private reserve."

The shop isn't laid out in any particular order; everything just seems to have been put wherever it would fit at the time. The store's windows have long been covered by some sort of merchandise, and a variety of floor lamps provide the only illumination. Every inch of available space, floor, ceiling, and wall, has been covered with saleable goods. The only immediately recognizable features are the small sales counter just to the left of the door and old Mason himself, usually found smoking his pipe and reading some old musty book.

Mason himself is referred to as "spooky old Mason" by the local kids. He's a balding Englishman in his mid-fifties, with round spectacles and an eerie stare. His pasty white skin leads those who see him to believe that he hasn't seen the sun in decades, and indeed he probably hasn't. If you can get over his initial appearance, you'll find that he's a very friendly fellow. You might just find out that most of the items in the store were acquired by Mason himself, who appears to have been an adventurous sort in times gone by.

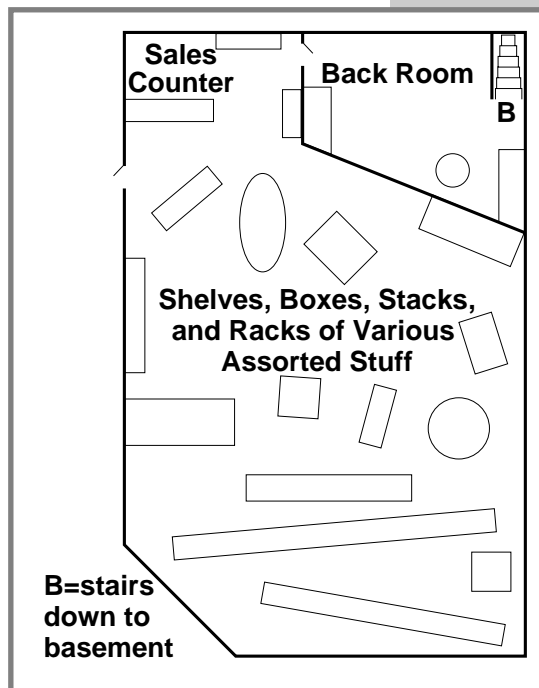
In truth, there is more to both the proprietor and the shop than an initial inspection of Mason's Curiosities might imply. For instance, one wouldn't suspect that the basement leads to a small set of natural caves or that Mason keeps a sizable study of old tomes within. Nor would one expect to discover that old Mason is indeed old—589 years old to be exact. Mason is an old mage of some considerable power who has "retired" to his studies while operating a unique little shop which peddles some of the curiosities he has acquired in his wide and varied studies.

Mason is also a member of the Lodge, but is more of an academic member than anything else. Mason's Curiosities is heavily magically fortified and protected, and the sub-basement caverns are often used as a secret Lodge meeting place. It is also sometimes used as a sort of safehouse. Of course, most customers have no inkling as to the hidden nature of the shop. Most simply view it as an interesting place where one can find objects of an obscure nature and leave it at that.

HIGHLIGHTS

Unique artifacts from around the world.
Old San Francisco charm.

Mason himself—an adventurer from times past.



INFORMATION

Location: Java Street, off Masonic Avenue, North Bay City.

Getting There: Muni runs near Mansell Street.

Phone Number: (415) 555-5212.

Hours: 10:00 am to 8:00 pm Tuesday through Friday, 2 pm to Midnight on Saturdays, Closed Sunday and Monday.

Established: 1953.

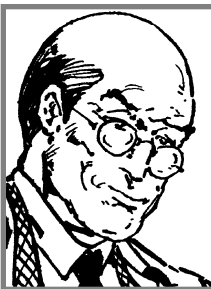
MASON

MASON

Mental 9 Combat 4 Physical 2 Move 2

SKILLS: Expert (Magic): 8; Expert (The Lodge): 7; Expert (The Brotherhood Arcane): 7; Expert (Esoteric Magical Knowledge): 10; Fighting: 4

POWERS: Magic Power Pool (6 PPs)



The man known as "Spooky old Mason" is a disheveled Englishman appearing to be in his mid-fifties. There is very little left of the dark hair on his head. The intense and distant stare emanating from behind his round spectacles has been called both disturbing and eerie by various patrons. Aside from these quirks of appearance, Mason, who appears to have no other name, is

a very friendly old man.

Initially, he may seem very quiet and introspective. He's just being polite. If one shows interest, Mason will quickly fall into friendly intellectual conversation. He's a very knowledgeable person, able to converse on nearly any topic, ancient or modern. While not willing to discuss much of his own life, one can determine that he's been all over the world and has done a great many things in his time. He seems to be a harmless man who has lived a very fulfilling life.

In reality, Mason is an old mage who's been alive for the better part of six centuries. As a member of the Lodge, he's always been one to pursue knowledge for knowledge's sake rather than race to rescue the human race. Thus, he's been everywhere and done nearly everything. Now that he's done all that, he's decided to retire with his amassed ancient library and just study. He runs Mason's Curiosities as a basic front. It gives him the appearance of normal life, it allows him to sell some of the amazing objects he's collected in his travels, and it doesn't impose on his work. It also gives him the opportunity to meet interesting people, something he's always enjoyed.

Mason still keeps in contact with the Lodge, albeit nowhere near as frequently as he once did. The majority of his continuing contact comes from his allowing the sub-basement caverns of his shop to be utilized by the Lodge as both safe haven and ritual grounds. Most still thoroughly respect him and his knowledge, but there are those who would like to see him come back to "active duty."

If one displays a keen mind and an interesting personality, Mason is apt to warm up quickly. These people have the opportunity to learn a lot from the old mage, and they might just pick up some really neat stuff for their home while they're at it.

**"HOLD ON, IT'S
AROUND HERE
SOMEWHERE..."**

STORY SEEDS

1 By Our Successors, We Will Be Known: While Mason is retired and is spending his remaining days enhancing his knowledge and recording his findings, he does indeed long to impart his learnings onto another. This is not to say he wishes to acquire an apprentice; quite the contrary. He simply wishes to find a sharp young mage of admirable intentions with whom he can share wisdom.

Mason's Curiosities seems like the sort of place where mages might shop as it caters to the unusual and the bizarre. A PC mage might stumble into Mason's and find some interesting items that will keep him coming back. If they start up a conversation with Mason, he will be his usual friendly self and hopefully intrigue the character further.

This simply presents an excellent opportunity for a character mage to find an interesting and knowledgeable mentor, albeit one who will never take direct action.

2 The Darkness Within: Alternatively, Mason may not be all that he appears, even on a hidden level. The being known as Mason was destroyed during the Wildstrike, and replaced by a dark entity from the Shadow Realms. This fact has remained carefully hidden from even the Lodge.

The entity, called Kelilin, was of the few to escape from the Pit since its creation. Kelilin was drawn to Mason's Curiosities, a place of magical power, and entered desperate combat with its protector. In the end, it prevailed and took Mason's persona and some of his memories to begin its charade. Since then, it has been observing and studying the Lodge, its tactics, goals, and powers, all while scheming for a way to bring its fellows forth to conquer a portion of this world.

Lately, Kelilin has become impatient and has been less careful in keeping up its charade as Mason. The GM should create Kelilin as a powerful denizen of the Shadow Realms, one powerful enough to have defeated a nearly six hundred year old mage. Kelilin has learned quite a bit about the Lodge already, and won't be shy about abandoning its current role to roam and prey at large if forced to. If forced out into the open, Kelilin will most likely attempt to contact the Cabal to join and guide its ranks. There it will not only command much respect, it will gain the aid of many allies—powerful allies.

Kelilin might also know more of what happened to Prof. Jacob Manning the fated night he gained the power which makes him Behemoth. It will more than likely, since it was still dwelling in the Shadow Realms at the time of Jacob's "visit," know whether or not Behemoth is truly possessed or not. It may be true, but Kelilin will do whatever it can to manipulate Behemoth to its best interests.

3 Shopping: On a completely mundane note, one of the characters could hear about Mason's Curiosities from a friend and choose to arrange a shopping excursion. This would introduce Mason's as an interesting setting to acquire unusual objects and it proprietor as a potential source of future information.



FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

Nestled off Fourth Street, near Minna, there is a utilitarian building which houses the First Universalist Church. Founded in 1987, the First Universalist Church is one of the strangest organized churches in the Bay Area, from the traditional point of view. The building itself is somewhat reflective of the faith it holds. It hardly looks like a church, with utilitarian brown brick and a few windows here and there. Many have said that it looks more like a YMCA than a house of worship. There is a reasonable amount of parking around the side in their parking lot. The only thing that identifies the church is a small, lighted sign in front of the building, detailing its name and services.

Compared to other organized religions, the First Universalist Church is odd. They hold to no particular religious dogma, instead believing that there is a great creator who is so alien to our human perspective that we cannot truly understand it or its plans. Thus, they worship no identified God, as most other religions do, nor do they utilize particular ceremonies or symbolism. They simply gather to explore the different facets of God as "theorized" by other religions and philosophies. The members of First Universalist Church are more organized, semi-Agnostic seekers than anything else.

As a church, they are fully recognized by the State, and benefit from that status. Their ministers are fully ordained and have all of the benefits of office, including the ability to perform legal marriages. On the other hand, many fundamentalist groups have branded them "heretic." On the whole, the members of the First Universalist Church really don't care, seeing themselves as far more practical and holding more understanding than these other worshipers.

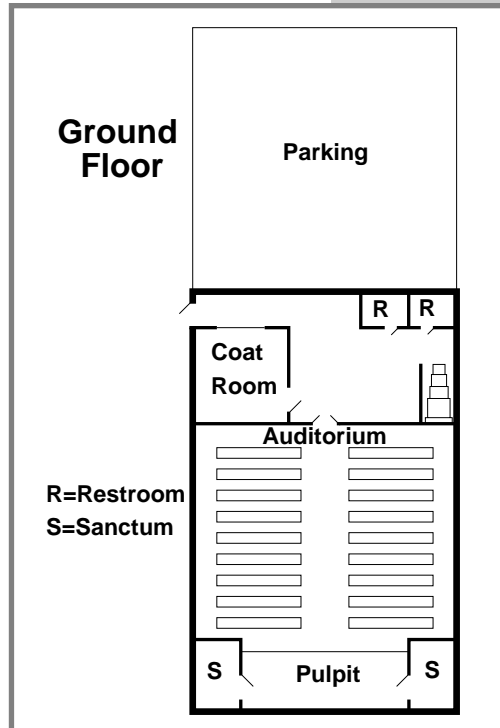
One current topic of much interest to the church is paranormals and where they fit into the whole religious scheme of things. Are they the descendants of those whom the Watchers bred with in old testament lore? Are they the gifted of a god? Are they simply a genetic deviation from the norm, accidentally made? Since the members are seeking truth in all its forms, this is just another piece of the puzzle. The First Universalist Church appreciates the presence of paranormals and often invites them to attend services, since they represent yet another of God's mysteries.

On the surface, the First Universalist Church seems innocuous and well-meaning. This, for the most part, is true. But, behind it all, is the secret Atlantis Society. The Society uses the church as a recruiting ground, where they can discover the best and most open minds to add to their ranks. Since the membership of the Atlantis Society consists of mostly non-extraordinary people, the church is an excellent "testing ground," if you will.

Currently, there are only three members who know of the church's hidden purpose. The first is Reverend Clark Janz, the senior minister at the church and a member of the Atlantis Society's inner circle. It is he who observes the congregation and determines who, if any, are worthy of induction to the Society. Only two have presented themselves so far. The first of these is Mary Ridgewell, a young quantum physics scientist at the ORI. Inducted into the Society only last year, she shows much promise and may soon be promoted within the ranks. The second is Kelly Payne, a dock worker. While Kelly may have chosen a blue-collar profession, he is a very intelligent man and an avid reader, which is why he was noticed by the Atlantis Society.

HIGHLIGHTS

Open Minded Services: The First Universalist Church seeks God, not ceremony or regulation. Come and discuss the creator in all its forms, and help us all achieve a greater understanding of our universe.



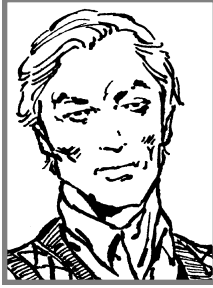
INFORMATION

Location: 4th Street & Minna Street (South of Market).

Getting There: Muni runs up and down 4th Street.

Phone Number: (415) 555-8874 (Office)

Services: Sunday at 9:00 am and 11:00 am, Monday at 8:00 pm.

REVEREND CLARK JANZ**REVEREND CLARK JANZ****Mental 7 Combat 3 Physical 3 Move 3****SKILLS:** Education: 7; Leadership: 6; Conspiracy: 6; Expert (Theology): 7; Perk (Member of the Emerald Council): 6

The Reverend Clark Janz is the kind of guy who one both likes and is irritated by at the same time. He's a nice enough man, being gregarious and bright, but he always has the air about him as if he knows more than you do and he's going to let you know it. Those who can't keep up with him are easily frustrated, but others are fascinated by the possibilities he suggests.

Clark Janz led a mundane childhood, spending most of his time reading as much as he possibly could. He studied everything from science and literature to religion and philosophy. It was these latter two topics that held the most interest to him, and those he pursued in his college career. Graduating from Stanford in 1972, he received doctorates in both theology and philosophy, concentrating in Jewish mystic traditions and Immanuel Kant respectively. He went on to teach at Berkeley for several years.

Reverend Janz stumbled across the Atlantis Society, sheerly by chance, in 1979. While attending an educational conference in Chicago, he fell into an interesting discussion of the eternal verities over drinks in the hotel bar. One lone female professor stayed up with him into the wee hours of the night, talking and debating. It wasn't long after that he received his invitation to join the secret order.

Several years passed as he continued to teach at UC Berkeley, and as he continued to rise within the ranks of the Atlantis Society. Clark was officially inducted into the inner circle and became a member of the Emerald Council in 1986. It was then that the idea for the First Universalist Church came to him. The Council agreed with the idea, at least in embryo, and several order members agreed to initially finance the church. It was created a year later.

Reverend Clark Janz is a tall, thin man in his fifties, with a full head of thick, grey hair. Normally dressed in slacks and polo shirts, one might not initially guess that he was a "man of the cloth." He normally wears a contemplative look on his face, and his piercing blue eyes have been known to unnerve the casual onlooker.

"IF A BELIEF DOES NOT WITHSTAND CHALLENGE, THEN IT IS NOT WORTH HAVING."

STORY SEEDS

1 Corruption From Within: True, both the First Universalist Church and the Atlantis Society seem innocuous. Their goal is simply the pursuit of knowledge, and little else. It takes outside intervention to cause the First Universalist to become embroiled in anything other than this goal.

Once one gets inducted into the Emerald Council, the true secret order within the Atlantis Society, one finds many of the answers to the mysteries which have been debated throughout time. This can be both disheartening and disturbing to many new members, as the answers they found weren't the ones for which they were hoping. On the other hand, many gain an incredible feeling of empowerment, some to the point of egomania. This is where trouble comes into paradise.

One woman, by the name of Isabel Villa Lobos, is one of those who fall into this last category. True, at first she became disillusioned and disturbed, but when she realized that she could pervert the goals of the Emerald Council, more precisely the Atlantis Society, to serve her own purposes, her megalomania surfaced. With the advent of the First Universalist Church, she finally saw her opportunity.

Working with Clark Janz, she helped create the church. While Clark still holds the noble goal of enlightenment, Isabel hopes much more for herself. She is subtly steering the church for her own ends, hoping to fill these people with false answers to their questions—false answers that will allow her to grow in influence and power.

Isabel's latest scheme is to create church growth and outreach. By placing Atlantis Society members as clergy and building churches and congregations throughout the country, even the world, she can condition these open minds to her liking. No one within the Emerald Council knows of her plans yet, nor will they if Isabel has her way. Eventually, given enough time to prepare with the rest of the Emerald Council out of the way, she could soon create a large following whose fanaticism might put the Moonies to shame.

2 To Grasp The Power: There are many who very much desire the Emerald Council's secrets for themselves. Benedict de Polon, also known as Dr. Richfield Franck, is one of those people. Having run afoul of the Emerald Council and the Atlantis Society several times over his centuries of existence, Dr. Franck believes that the knowledge they hold may be the key to finally realizing his dream—the age of the Children of the Keys.

To this end, he's kept an eye open for their operations and congregations. Now, he's discovered the First Universalist Church and believes he's finally found a back door. The only one of his current family who is of an intellectual level to appreciate the church or the Society is Thomas Andrews, a.k.a Darkbolt. Thus, Dr. Franck and Thomas Andrews have begun attending services, under assumed names, in hopes of infiltrating the inner circles.



THE THORN MANSION

During the 1930s, the Thorn family was very prominent in the shipping business, building bulk freighters for the companies of the world. The Thorns were considered a highly respectable family, and were very influential in city politics. During the height of their wealth and influence, they built the Thorn Mansion, a place of opulence and decadence.

Little knownst to the world at large, Mr. Eldred Thorn was a practitioner of the Black Arts. The Thorn Mansion was filled with secret passages and rooms—an insane maze to the uninitiated. No worker worked on the mansion for more than a week, so none other than the Thorns truly knew the secrets of the house. Likewise, the architectural plans for the house were destroyed upon completion, and the architect paid well for his continuing silence.

Deep in the bowels of the house, there exists a sub-level which served as Mr. Thorn's sanctum. It was here that he performed his arcane workings and conversed with demons, so the story goes. No one is quite sure what happened to Mr. Thorn. One day he simply vanished from his sanctum without a trace. He was never seen or heard from again. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Brenna Thorn hung herself in the entryway. At that point, the Thorn's only child Elizabeth shut herself into the house. All of her food and purchases were delivered, and few saw her. She died in 1967 of a cardiac arrest, leaving no heirs.

The place stood empty until Maxwell Toms came to town. After spending many years traveling, and being an aficionado of the bizarre, Maxwell had heard the stories of the Thorn Mansion and came to investigate. He purchased it two weeks later and began to refurbish it himself. In 1989, Maxwell Toms opened the "haunted" Thorn Mansion to the public. Visitors can be taken through many of the secret passages and rooms, and are given a full, if somewhat embellished, historical perspective of the house. Furthermore, the Thorn Mansion may be rented for parties or other events.

The mansion itself is foreboding. The exterior is entirely composed of dark woods, which, with its turrets and spires, gives it a foreboding. The front grounds are thick with trees and shrubs, while the back is a large and beautifully sculpted, terraced garden. The garden includes bizarre stone sculptures, beautiful night-blooming flowers, ponds, fountains, and hedge mazes. The garden is a popular area for party rentals.

The interior is even more foreboding than the exterior. Odd paintings, old furniture, black wrought iron, and other strange knick-knacks saturate the house. The secret passageways are dark and the secret rooms perhaps even more arcane. No one is sure whether this is really the way old Eldred Thorn decorated the mansion, or whether Mr. Toms added these touches to impress the tourists.

In reality, the house is haunted. Mr. Toms is a black magician of the same vein as Mr. Thorn himself, and is a full-fledged member of the Cabal. Strange creatures from the Shadow Realms have been set free in the house and grounds, and often come out to play at night. Thus, those who visit during daylight hours are ignorant of the house's true nature, but unless Mr. Toms forbids these creatures from interaction and makes the necessary threats, those attending at night may be in for a fright. The basement has been restored to its previous purpose, and members of the Cabal sometimes meet for nefarious midnight rituals.



HIGHLIGHTS

Haunted House: Ever since the Thorn family's death, strange things been happening in the Thorn mansion. Truth or fiction: You be the judge.

Rent the Facilities: The Thorn Mansion is available for that special occasion. Rent either parts of the Mansion itself, or the amazing backyard gardens for your next party.

INFORMATION

Location: 435 Black Mountain Road, Hillsborough, South Bay City.

Getting There: Private automobile. Public transportation does not go to this part of Hillsborough.

Phone Number: (650) 555-0202 (Information), (650) 555-0203 (Rentals).

Hours: Tours run every other hour, Thursday through Sunday, from Noon to 6 pm. Offices are open 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on the same days.

Average Rental/Night: \$500.00.

MR. MAXWELL TOMS**MAXWELL TOMS****Mental 6 Combat 5 Physical 3 Move 3****SKILLS:** Expert (Magic): 5; Expert (Other Dimensions): 4; Education: 6;

Conspiracy: 6; Expert (The Cabal): 5; Perk (Member of the Cabal): 5

POWERS: Magic Power Pool (8 PP), Mystic Shield (Force Field: 20 KD & EKD)**COMPLICATIONS:** Secret Identity; Obsessed with gathering power, Indebted to the Cabal

Maxwell Toms looks like aristocracy. He's usually dressed in the finest suits and coats, his grooming is perfect, and he speaks as if he's well educated. That, and he throws around money like it's water and is chauffeured about in his Rolls Royce. Otherwise, he's a good looking man of average build, with short, black hair.

Mr. Toms doesn't talk much about his past. You get the impression that he was born into money and that he hasn't really worked a day in his life. His days have been dedicated to his personal interest and pursuits, which have taken him across the globe and back. It seems he's content for the time being to settle down in Bay City and to live in parts of the Thorn Mansion, while displaying the rest to the public.

It doesn't take much to guess that Maxwell has a passion for the extraordinary. He's very knowledgeable about strange phenomena, psychic powers, magic, and the occult. He also has a collection of strange artifacts which are currently on display at the museum, including old tomes, strange carvings, and the like.

During his travels in Eastern Europe, Maxwell discovered the truth of magic and his knack for it. Honing his skills, the young Mr. Toms was taken in by the secret order known as the Cabal. His fascination for dark powers was finally realized, and he has been a loyal member ever since.

His true goal in buying the Thorn Mansion was to utilize its inherent power. Having it be open to the public is simply a ruse to make it seem that much more innocuous. In truth, the mansion was built using arcane principles on a site of power. The sanctum itself is the seat of that power and the house is its conduit. There, the black magicians of the Cabal consort with "demons" from the Shadow Realms and create plans of evil.

Even though Eldred Thorn was not a member of any magical order, Maxwell is intrigued by his disappearance and wishes to discover the truth behind it. Was Thorn removed by other mages? Did an experiment go awry? Or did he offend the denizens of the Shadow Realms with his demands? Hopefully, in time, Maxwell will discover this for himself.

**"BELIEVE YOU
ME, I KNOW
FULL WELL
WHAT I DO."**

STORY SEEDS

1 The Return of Kelilin: If you choose to use the alternative presented as **The Darkness Within** (see page 94), Kelilin could find an excellent ally in Maxwell Toms and a refuge at the Thorn mansion.

All things considered, it won't be long before Kelilin has to abandon his current game at Mason's Curiosities. He may be powerful, but he's been at it for a while and the Lodge is dangerous in its own right. It's only a matter of time before they sniff him out and try to destroy him. Unless Kelilin wishes to retreat back to the Shadow Realms or end his existence, he'll need to find new allies and a new place to dwell.

Perhaps before this happens, he senses the power of the Thorn Mansion or one of the Cabal's rituals. Mason's Curiosities is not that far away from the Thorn Mansion, astrally speaking. When he does come, he may present himself as the being they were originally attempting to summon, contributing to their myths of power. While hating every minute of it, Kelilin will play along as being bound by their magic until he gains enough knowledge. Then, he will reveal himself for what he is and attempt to make a mutually beneficial bargain. More than likely, the Cabal will accept his aid and counsel.

It shouldn't take long for Kelilin to enslave the less-powerful and virtually mindless denizens which dwell within the Thorn Mansion. The summonings which called them destroyed part of their minds, and perhaps Kelilin can restore them in return for their servitude. If so, he may not need the Cabal for very long, before he can begin to actualize his plans.

2 Dark Secrets: If you choose to keep Mason alive (see #1 above), he may know something about the Thorn Mansion. After all, many of the other Lodge members in the area are primarily concerned with the dangers of the Pit, whereas Mason is free to pursue whatever he desires. Perhaps he senses the evil power of the Mansion with its relatively close proximity, even though it has taken him a while to notice.

If he does, he may choose to investigate himself, but more than likely he'll ask some of his newfound friends to check it out first (one or more of the characters), since he's more interested in knowledge of the place than its potential threat to humanity. If bad things turn up, a crusade may be mounted against the Cabal and Maxwell Toms, including his friends and members of the Lodge. Better yet, the Cabal has succeeded in summoning a few powerful servitors from the Shadow Realms, turning it into an all out magical shadow war.

3 Knocking Him Down A Notch: As an alternative to #2, perhaps similar circumstances occur, but Kelilin still exists, masquerading as Mason. Maxwell Toms is too big for his britches, and has offended or presents a threat to the otherworldly being, but the combined might of the Cabal is too great for it to overcome by itself.



MINI-LISTINGS

This section features a number of different establishments that might be of interest to super-heroes and other people visiting Bay City. We've split them up into different categories for your convenience.

WHERE TO EAT

- \$** up to \$15 per person, excluding beverages.
- \$\$** \$15 to \$30 per person, excluding beverages.
- \$\$\$** over \$30 per person, excluding beverages.



AQUA

Carefully prepared and presented seafood draws the social set to this trendy eatery. The ahi tuna is not to be missed. **Price:** \$\$\$ **Address:** 252 California Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-9662. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 1, 41, California Street Cable Car.

BERKELEY THAI HOUSE

Thai cuisine at its very best. This restaurant is open for lunch and dinner, and features excellent food. **Prices:** \$\$ **Address:** 2511 Channing Way, Berkeley, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-7352. **Transportation:** MUNI line 82, Berkeley BART Station.

BIG JOES NO. 1

This burger joint also makes excellent traditional American dinners. The decor is simple: a counter and a few tables. Come early; it gets crowded. **Prices:** \$ **Address:** 345 San Bruno Ave., San Bruno, Mid-Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-3454. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 37K, North Airport BART Station

BLUE NILE RESTAURANT

Simple but pleasing decor provide the perfect background for inexpensive Ethiopian cuisine. Spicy and tasty. **Price:** \$ **Address:** 2525 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-6777. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 82, Berkeley BART Station.

CAFE ENRICO

Cafe Enrico has been serving up fine Italian food and fresh seafood with a excellent view of the Bay for years. Seafood Lasagna is a house specialty. **Price** \$\$ **Address:** 875 Island Dr., Alameda, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-0128. **Transportation:** MUNI line 51, Oakland City Center/12 Street BART Station.

CAPE

The first restaurant in what is now a national chain, Capes is a super-hero themed eatery. While the food is mediocre, the super-related decor and momentos make this a place worth visiting. On display here is Dove's Battle Harness, donated by the hero himself. **Price:** \$\$ **Address:** 452 Broadway, Burlingame, South Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-1544. **Transportation:** Muni Line 72, Broadway BART Station.

FUMIYOSHI

This might be the cheapest (and some of the best) sushi in the entire Bay Area. A favorite of the Stanford crowd. **Price:** \$ **Address:** 235 University, Palo Alto, South Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-3486. **Transportation:** Muni Line 98, California Street Bar Station.

HEIDI'S PIES

Heidi's serves traditional coffee shop fare as well as excellent pies. Open 24 hours. **Address:** 3496 El Camino Real, San Mateo, South Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-3486. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 1E, San Mateo BART Station.

IROHA

Iroha is one of the finest Japanese noodle houses in the North Bay City area. Located in the heart of Japantown, Iroha features ramen, udon and soba. **Price:** \$ **Address:** 1728 Buchanan, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-00321. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 14, 52.

IZZY'S STEAKS & CHOPS

This former speakeasy is now known throughout the area for its fine steaks. Amusing historic decor and friendly atmosphere are among its attractions. **Price:** \$\$ **Address:** 3349 Steiner, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-0487. **Transportation:** MUNI line 23.

KIRALA

A favorite of college students looking for a good meal, this Japanese restaurant features an authentic robata grill, sushi bar, and many interesting and tasty appetizers. **Price:** \$\$ **Address:** 2100 Ward Street, Berkeley, East Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-3486. **Transportation:** Berkeley BART Station.

LA POSADA

A classic *taqueria*, la Posada features super burritos, tacos, tamales, and other standards. However, their menudo is a must for the adventurous eater.

Price: \$ **Address:** 126 Laurel Ave., San Carlos, South Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-2327. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 1E, 82, Holly Street BART Station.

LIVERPOOL LIL'S

A friendly atmosphere and good food are the primary features of this restaurant. The menu features a good selection of English Pub-style food as well.

Price: \$ to \$\$ **Address:** 2942 Lyon, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-6664. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 23, 61.

MIZ BROWN'S RESTAURANT

One of the few classic coffee shops left in Bay City. Miz Brown's provides fine old fashioned breakfasts.

Price: \$ **Address:** 3401 California Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-2039. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 1, 41, California Street Cable Car.

MOM IS COOKING

The Bay City Examiner calls this the "best Mexican food in the Bay Area." Pleasant surroundings, good service.

Prices: \$\$ **Address:** 1166 Geneva Ave, Oakland, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-7000. **Transportation:** MUNI line 66, 19th Street BART Station.

RICO'S PLACE

This Italian restaurant is well known for its excellent lamb chops and penne with pesto and scallops.

Prices: \$\$ **Address:** 3267 El Camino Real, San Carlos, South Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-5743. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 1E, 34K, 92.

SCOMA'S FISHERMAN'S WHARF

Scoma's might have the best seafood on Fisherman's Wharf. This out-of-the-way restaurant is hard to get into, so be prepared for a wait.

Price: \$\$ **Address:** Foot of Jones St. at Jefferson St., North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-4383. **Transportation:** Powell-Mason and Powell-Hyde Cable Cars.

SCOTT'S SEAFOOD AND GRILL

A classic San Francisco restaurant, Scott's has been dishing up fine seafood and steaks for years.

Price: \$\$ **Address:** 2400 Lombard (at Scott), North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-8988. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 31, 54.

SHADOWS

A Peninsula institution, Shadows is the place to go for German food. Sauerbraten is the house specialty.

Prices: \$\$ **Address:** 310 Baldwin Ave., San Mateo, South Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-7936. **Transportation:** MUNI line 34K, San Mateo BART Station.

SILKS

This elegant restaurant, located in the Mandarin Hotel, might be one of the city's best-kept secrets. Fine food, elegant atmosphere. Fine American cuisine with subtle Asian tones.

Price: \$\$\$ **Address:** Mandarin Oriental Hotel, 222 Sansome Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-2020. **Transportation:** MUNI line 42.

SPENGER'S FISH CROTTO

Since 1890, Spenger's has been serving up some of the finest seafood in the Bay Area. The menu features fish of all kinds, and excellent seafood salads.

Price: \$ to \$\$ **Address:** 1919 4th Street, Berkeley, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-7771. **Transportation:** MUNI line 81.

STARS

Hot spot for socialites, high profile capes, and gossip columnists. Stars features a varied menu but is at its best with seafood dishes.

Price: \$\$\$ **Address:** 150 Redwood Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-7827. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 5, 42, 47, 49.

THE LONG SHOT

Created by famous chef Earl Strong, and his not-so-silent partner, the Marksman, the Long Shot features continental cuisine and an extensive wine list. The Marksman often dines here.

Prices: \$\$\$ **Address:** 345 Willow Avenue, Menlo Park, South Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-0585. **Transportation:** Willow Avenue. BART Station.

TILLIE'S TEMPTING FOOD

This East Bay City coffee shop was a favorite of military personnel stationed on Alameda. The closure of the base has only change Tillie's hours of operation, not its fine American food.

Price: \$ **Address:** 1500 Webster Street, Alameda, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-1737. **Transportation:** MUNI line 51.

TSING TAO CUISINE OF CHINA

While they do carry a full menu of classic Mandarin-style dishes, this restaurant is best known for its *dim sum* (small Chinese dumplings).

Prices: \$ **Address:** 200 Broadway, Oakland, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-8811. **Transportation:** MUNI line 87, Oakland City Center/12th Street BART Station.

WHERE TO DRINK

BRITISH BANKERS CLUB

A favorite with the Stanford crowd, the BBC features reasonable priced drinks and live music on the weekends. There is a cigar bar upstairs.

Address: 1333 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, South Bay City.
Phone: (650) 555-3387. **Transportation:** MUNI lines: 1E, 113.

CARIBEE DANCE CENTER

Dance to the sounds of the Carribean and other World Beat tunes at this night club. One of the high points of East Bay City for the singles' set.

Address: 1408 Webster, Oakland, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-4006. **Transportation:** Fruitvale BART Station.

CARNELIAN ROOM

Perched on top of the Bank of America Building in the Financial District, this stylish and upscale bar offers a fantastic view of the city from its 52nd floor location. Evenings only.

Address: 555 California Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-7500. **Transportation:** MUNI lines: 15, 42, California Street Cable Car.

CLUB DV8

A draw for the arty and alternative types, Club DV8 features some of the latest dance sounds. It also has regular poetry readings, tattooings, and other counter-culture events in its side rooms.

Address: 540 Howard, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-1419.
Transportation: MUNI line 12.

CLUB SONIC

Well known for its loud music, Club Sonic features Super-Hero a go-go every Saturday night, where the patrons dress up as their favorite Capes and dance the night away. Rumor has it that actual heroes patronize the club on that night.

Address: 545 Broadway, Oakland, East Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-8357. **Transportation:** MUNI line 87, Oakland City Center/12th Street BART Station.

FREIGHT AND SALVAGE COFFEE HOUSE

The home of the Berkeley Society for the Preservation of Folk Music, the Freight is not a bar, but does offer excellent folk and acoustic music six nights a week.

Address: 1111 Addison, Berkeley, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-1761. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 82, 143.



I-BEAM

This club features some of the best grunge and indie music in the city. It offers up and coming, as well as established, alternative rock bands from the Bay Area and beyond.

Address: 1748 Haight, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-8181.
Transportation: MUNI lines 6, 7, 66, 71.

LOU'S PIER 47

Conveniently located near the Bay City Guard Station, Lou's offers some of the best Blues music around. It draws top-notch performers along with educated and appreciative audiences.

Address: 300 Jefferson, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-0377. **Transportation:** MUNI line 32, Powell-Hyde Cable Car.

MAXFIELD'S BAR AND GRILL

Check out the huge Maxfield Parrish mural that gave this place its name as you enjoy the quiet and subdued surroundings.

Address: Sheraton Palace Hotel, 2 New Montgomery Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-8600. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 21, 31, 38, 42, 45, 71.

SAN FRANCISCO BREWING COMPANY

Micro-brewed beers and live music are the attractions of this brew pub. It gets very busy on the weekends.

Address: 155 Columbus, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-3344. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 15, 41.

THE LANAI

A Polynesian theme and tacky fruit drinks are this bar's main attraction. You can sit and watch the sun rise and set behind the bar six times an hour.

Address: 100 41st Avenue, San Mateo, South Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-0666. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 1E, 113, San Mateo BART Station.

THE WARFIELD

This is one of the best spots to see big name rock acts in the Bay Area. Although the barn-like theatre lacks character, it is still far superior to a arena-style stadium.

Address: 982 Market, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-7722.
Transportation: MUNI lines 5, 6, 7, 9, 21, 66, 71, Civic Center or Powell Street BART Stations.

YOSHI'S RESTAURANT & NITESPOT

Located in Jack London Square, Yoshi's hosts excellent jazz in a relaxed atmosphere. Many of jazz's most well-known acts have played here. Yoshi's offers fine Japanese food.

Address: 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-9200. **Transportation:** Oakland City Center/12th Street BART Station.

WHERE TO STAY

BEN FRANKLIN HOTEL



The Ben Franklin has been providing lodgings in San Mateo since 1916. Although old, the building is still quite comfortable. Visitors should avoid the coffee shop, however.

Address: 300 3rd Avenue, San Mateo, South Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-3426. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 1E, 113, San Mateo BART Station.

DOCKSIDE BOAT AND BED

This unusual hotel offers romantic evenings on a yacht, complete with lodging. Perfect for an in-city getaway, a honeymoon, or a romantic date.

Address: 77 Jack London Square, Oakland, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-5858. **Transportation:** Oakland City Center/12th Street BART Station.

HOTEL NIKKO

Located in Japantown, this ultra-modern hotel is full of Japanese charm. Although expensive, Hotel Nikko offers just about every facility imaginable.

Address: 222 Mason Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-1111. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 27, 38.

MARINA VILLAGE INN

This hotel features quiet waterfront rooms with private decks. Close to Oakland and Berkeley, the Marina Village Inn is just a short boat ride away from San Francisco. Complimentary berths for the guests' boats are provided at the marina.

Address: end of Triumph Drive, off Atlantic Ave, Pacific Marina, Alameda, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-9450. **Transportation:** MUNI line 51.

MARY ELIZABETH INN

This Methodist-connected hotel is located in an Edwardian building, and is for women only. A perfect base for quiet explorations of the city.

Address: 532 Hickey Blvd, San Bruno, Mid-Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-2382. **Transportation:** San Bruno BART Station.

SOUTHERN HILLS BED AND BREAKFAST

This converted mansion dates back to the 1910s, and makes a charming setting for a B&B. The owners, Martha and Bob Patterson, are friendly hosts, and Martha's delicious breakfasts are becoming well known up and down the Peninsula.

Address: 532 Hickey Blvd, San Bruno, Mid-Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-2382. **Transportation:** San Bruno BART Station.

STANFORD GARDEN HOTEL

With its convenience to Stanford University, its fantastic gardens, and its old world charm and elegance, the Stanford Garden is the place to stay when visiting Palo Alto.

Address: 1900 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto, South Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-8855. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 9P, 127.

THE AERIE

This Russian Hill Bed and Breakfast was converted from Dove's pre-Champions headquarters. The owners have kept much of the decor as the late hero left it. This B&B is small—only five rooms—so you'll need to make reservations at least one year in advance if you want to stay here.

Address: 1100 Union Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-5568. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 47, 52.

THE BEAU SKY HOTEL

Tastefully decorated in eclectic elegance, this hotel provides the definitive Berkeley experience. Located just a block from the UC Berkeley campus.

Address: 2520 Durant, Berkeley, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-7688. **Transportation:** MUNI line 81, Downtown Berkeley BART Station.

THE FRENCH HOTEL

A taste of Paris in Berkeley, this hotel is close to the Berkeley Campus. Each of its eighteen rooms is decorated with French charm.

Address: 1538 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-9930. **Transportation:** MUNI lines: 82, Downtown Berkeley BART Station.

THE QUEEN ANNE

Located in a former girls' school, the Queen Anne offers comfortable lodgings in a high Victorian building. The rooms' high ceilings give a good feeling of space.

Address: 1590 Sutter Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-3970. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 2, 3, 4, 76.

WASHINGTON SQUARE INN

Convenient to North Beach, this hotel is a favorite of visitors to old San Francisco. Its close proximity to Washington Square makes it a favorite with families as well.

Address: 1660 Stockton Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-4220. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 15, 30, 39, 41, 45.

WHITE SWAN INN

This building dates back to 1908, and is full of English antiques, furnishings, and paintings. This elegant and low-key inn is well known for its comforting hospitality.

Address: 845 Bush, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-1755. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 2, 3, 4, 27, 76.

WHERE TO SHOP

BASIC BROWN BEARS

This factory store, which sells teddy bears and other soft children's toys, is only open on the weekends. It offers a tour of its manufacturing plant, and products at discount prices.

Address: 444 DeHara Street, South Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-0781. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 19, 22.

BEST COMICS AND ROCK ART GALLERY

Classic comic books along with reproduction psychedelic posters. This store has just the thing to remind you of San Francisco in the turbulent '60s, including a reproduction of the hard to find first Champions poster, featuring Blaze, Dragon, Goliath, Mercenary, and the Marksman.

Address: The Cannery, 2801 Leavenworth Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-9247. **Transportation** Muni Line: 32, Powell-Hyde Cable Car.

BUFFALO EXCHANGE

If you're looking for a change of pace, or a change of clothes, this is the place. You can trade in your old threads and walk out a new person. You'll find items that are just coming into style, or just going out, and bargains galore!

Address: 2512 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-9202. **Transportation:** MUNI line 82, Berkeley BART Station.

EMBARCADERO CENTER

This three-level complex spans five buildings and eight city blocks. Make sure to pick up a map to help you navigate through the shops and restaurants.

Address: Battery Street between Clay and Sacramento, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-0500. **Transportation:** MUNI lines: 1, 41, 42, Embarcadero BART Station.

CHIRARDELLI SQUARE

This famous San Francisco landmark is a converted chocolate factory. Instead of machinery, it now holds a multitude of shops and restaurants. The Ghirardelli Ice Cream Shop and Chocolate Store is a must see!

Address: 900 North Point, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-5500. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 19, 42.

GUMP'S

Held in high esteem by discerning San Franciscans since 1861, Gump's carries antiques from all over the world. Its Asian emphasis makes the show room truly spectacular.

Address: 240 Post Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-1616. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 2, 3, 4, 76.



PERISTROIKA STORE

From hammer-and-sickle T-shirts to Russian Army watches, this store specializes in relics of the former Soviet Union.

Address: Pier 39, Fisherman's Wharf, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-7043. **Transportation:** MUNI line 32.

ROLO

Many of the clothing designs found here are inspired by street fashion. Rolo features expensive and extroverted attire for men and women, perfect for the daring individual who wants to cut a dashing swath through the Bay City social scene.

Address: 1301 Howard Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-1999. **Transportation:** MUNI line 12.

SHAKESPEARE & CO BOOKS

This store is a favorite of students at UC Berkeley and anyone else who loves reading. The sprawling premises hold shelves of used books. Be prepared for a search; many treasures are waiting for those patient enough to dig them out.

Address: 2499 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, East Bay City. **Phone:** (510) 555-8916. **Transportation:** MUNI line 82, Berkeley BART Station.

"SUPER"-NIRS

As you might guess from the name, this store carries super-hero (and super-villain) souvenirs. You can find everything from a non-functional replica of the Marksman's sonic rifle to a Lady Blue T-shirt.

Address: 345 42nd Avenue, San Mateo, South Bay City. **Phone:** (650) 555-8963. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 1E, 113, San Mateo BART Station.

THRIFT TOWN

One of Bay City's largest thrift stores, Thrift Town is packed from floor to ceiling with secondhand furniture, clothes, books, appliances and lots more. Just the ticket for furnishing an apartment on a budget.

Address: 2101 Mission Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-1132. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 14, 49, 16th Street Mission BART Station.

WILKES BASHFORD

This six-floor store carries high class men's clothing. Extremely well stocked, and the sales force is very knowledgeable. A favorite of the San Francisco elite.

Address: 375 Sutter Street, North Bay City. **Phone:** (415) 555-4380. **Transportation:** MUNI lines 2, 3, 4, 30, 45, 76.



BAY CITY STORY SEEDS

Bay City is a popular place. Many of the world's most powerful villains make their homes here. And you can't be a world threatening organization if you don't have at least an important branch office in the area. For people who operate in the paranormal world, Bay City is where it's at.

Given this concentration of villains and evil groups, you'd expect to find a lot going on here. And you'd be right; just about every group has some kind of long-term plans under way. This section details some of those plots. Unlike the previous story seeds, this section concentrates on long term goals and actions, rather than discreet stories. Read on to find out what some of the major players are up to . . .

VIPER

You'd think that with a visit from one of the VIPER big-wigs (pg. 50) and revenge plans underway (pg 139) that the local VIPER nest would have its hands full. But you'd be figuring without the Steel Serpent's ambitions. Our brave Nest Leader has a few other irons in the fire.

The Serpent's ultimate plan is a long-term one, starting with VIPER's attempt to buy some local politicians. Unfortunately, VIPER's first try isn't working out so well (pg 36). But they won't give up, and they *will* be able to find some willing dupes.

Once they've gotten their bought people into place, they can move on to phase two of their plan: They will attempt to get State or City legislation passed banning vigilante and paranormal activity in the area. Once they've gotten those pesky Capes out of their way, they will be able to operate unhampered by any serious opposition.

THE BROTHERHOOD ARCANE

The Master has detected Markoth's maneuverings for mystic power (as detailed in many other places in this book.) While he can applaud one of his "brothers" growing in power, he can't let such

an opportunity pass by without some kind of action. And if this action causes Markoth's plans to fail, that's just hard luck. After all, it is extremely greedy of the sorcerer not to share with his fellows.

Over the course of several weeks, various members of the Brotherhood will make their way to Bay City. They are preparing a massive ceremony for an upcoming auspicious night. In order to enact this event, however, they need to collect certain . . . components, including several suitable human sacrifices.

On the night in question, the seven mages will begin their ceremony and create a power siphon that will drain Markoth (and many other magical sources in the area). This power will be used to create a horrible artifact, the **Porcelain Mask of Yin Wu**. This item allows its user to command huge crowds of people to do his bidding, and create horrible zombies. The Master intends for this mask to be used to create terror and appease his dark masters. If this happens, it will be a dark time for Bay City. And to make matters worse, Markoth won't be bothered by the temporary power loss.

THE AXIS

Quiet for so long, this group is getting ready to make its presence known. **Dr. Karl Volger** knows that overt action would be futile at this time; all too often he's moved before he was ready, always to

his regret. This time, he will make sure he has all of his pieces in place before he makes his move. This time he will be more subtle.

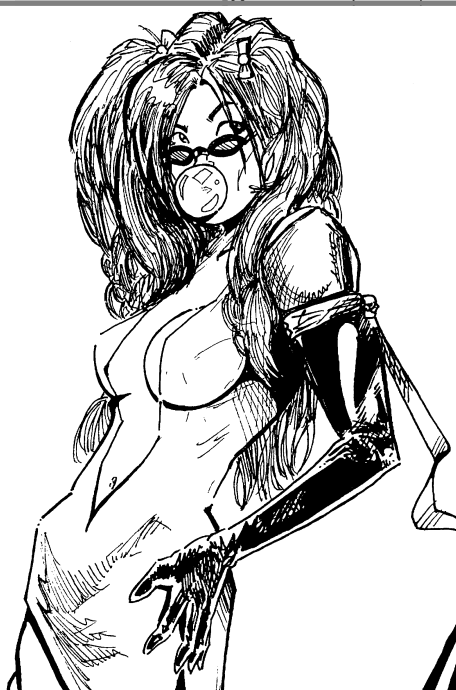
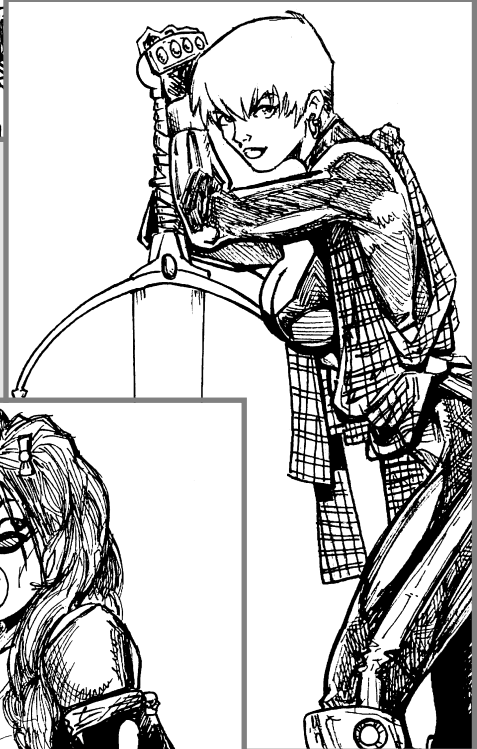
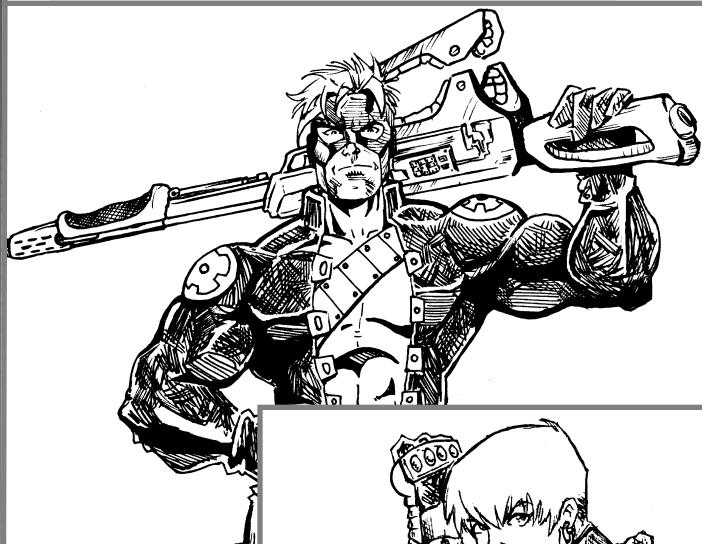
Slowly, Volger is building his power base. He will send his few minions out to talk with the punks and skinheads, to attempt to rally them to his cause. He plans on enticing them with honeyed words and hard cash.

Once he has bound them to him, he will begin their indoctrination. Their beliefs can easily be changed to Volger's way of thinking. They will form the core of his new shock troops. He will make leaders of the best of them, and examples of the worst of them, the deviants. And on the middle ground he will conduct his experiments, ever seeking the ubermen that his Fuerher wanted.

Once Axis has some followers, Volger will turn his attention to other groups. There are militia groups that can be warped, along with those of the reactionary right. Once this power base is in place, the Axis will rise, and take its rightful place.



THE C H A R A C T E R I S T I C S





CRUSADER

Secret Identity: Mike Livingstone

Background/History: The Andalusian sunlight filtered down through the leaves, warming Sir Michael's head and shoulders through his heavy armor. But that warmth was as nothing compared to the fire in his heart. At last, at last! After so many travails and perils, he was approaching the castle of his old enemy, the Moorish alchemist Benedict de Polon. The Alchemist would finally be brought to richly deserved justice; Sir Michael would carry his head back to England on a spear, that the King's subjects might see the price of working evil in Albion.

Of a sudden he passed from beneath the trees and into a clearing before a deep stream. In the distance, high atop a mountain, Sir Michael could see the Alchemist's castle. But there was a bridge that must be crossed to get over the stream—and before that bridge, seated on a jet-black horse, was the Knight of Brass.

"Hold, Sir Michael of Livingstone," said the eldritch thing in its brazen voice. It was not a man, but a construct built by the Alchemist with his foul sorceries—yet it fought with the skill of a true knight, as Sir Michael well knew. "You cannot pass."

"Nay, spawn of Satan, pass I will, and onto the castle to slay thy master. Let me by, or you too will be destroyed in your turn."

The Knight said nothing and couched its lance for the charge. Sir Michael took the Knight's lance on his shield, and thrust it aside. But the second pass was more conclusive; as the Knight's lance shattered on Sir Michael's shield, Sir Michael's caught the Knight square in his brass chest and lifted him out of his saddle. He fell to the ground with a horrible brazen clatter.

As the Knight got to his feet and drew his enchanted brass sword, Sir Michael dismounted and drew *Hasufring*, the blade given him by the Archbishop so many years ago. He kissed its hilt and then readied himself for the Knight's attack.

The Knight came on swiftly, using his strength and speed to try to overpower Sir Michael and slay him. The battle was brief and brutal, and raged for several minutes. Finally, Sir Michael knocked the Knight to the ground, and, offering no quarter to the arcane thing, brought his sword down upon its helmet, shattering it. The Knight dropped its sword and lay still.

Sir Michael turned back to his horse—only to see another man seated on a horse before the bridge! This one seemed no knight, though; he wore a cloak and robe, and had no sword, but carried instead a staff from which hung a silver lamp.

"Do you, too, contest my right to pass?" Sir Michael asked.

"No, Sir Michael of Livingstone, I do not," said the man, if man he were, in a sepulchral voice. "But it would be of no use to you to do so."

"Nay, I must cross that bridge to reach the castle of the Alchemist."

"Your enemy is no longer at his castle. He has fled before you, into the days to come. If you would pursue him, you must ride with me."

"So be it, then, man, or specter, whatever you be. I would ride to the ends of the world to find him."

"I am the Night Rider," it said. "Climb up on my Steed, and we will start the chase."

Sheathing *Hasufring*, Sir Michael did as he was bid. When he sat astride the Steed, at once the world seemed dark and shadowy and chill, filled with fog and mist rather than clean Spanish sunlight. As the Night Rider rode on through the fog, it seeped into Sir Michael's mind, and slowly he forgot ...

* * *

The chatter of machine guns filled the air as Major Victory, Captain Lightning, and Crusader crept through the woods towards the concentration camp. The British soldiers were engaging their German counterparts, leaving the super-heroes free to pursue their objective.

Neither the Major nor the Captain knew much about Crusader. He had offered his services to the Allied command in 1942. For all his mysteriousness, neither of them could deny that his efforts on behalf of the Allies had been invaluable. No one except the Major himself had defeated more Nazi villains than Crusader, and his knowledge of their present target—Nazi scientist Dr. Reichart Frege—was unparalleled.

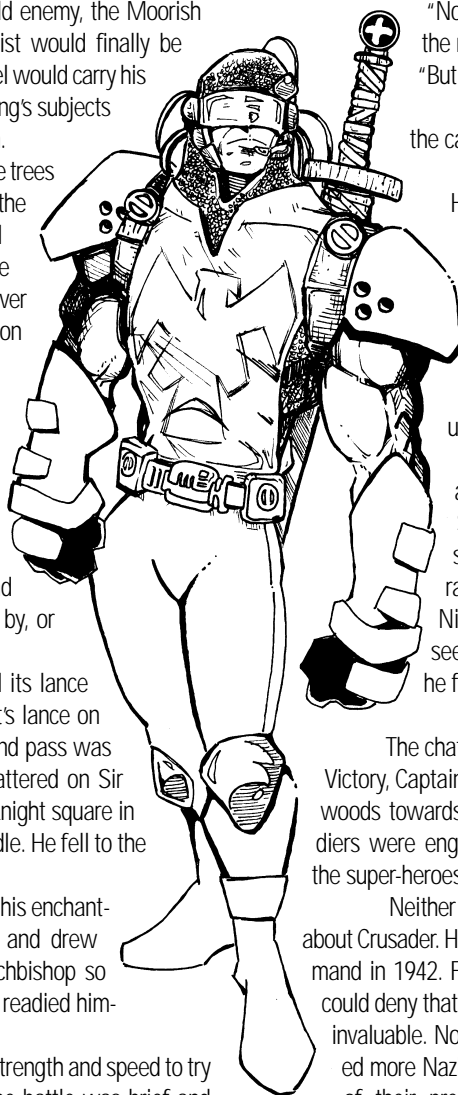
As they approached the wire-mesh fence surrounding the camp, Crusader drew his sword. "Why do you use that?" Captain Lightning asked. "Isn't it kind of useless when everyone else has a gun?"

"I like it," Crusader replied. "Besides, it has its uses." With one swift, silent stroke, he cut through the fence. Major Victory grinned at Captain

Lightning as they made their way into the camp.

Ten minutes later it was all over. The guards had been subdued, all resistance quashed, and the camp's hundreds of prisoners freed. But Dr. Frege was nowhere to be found. They'd searched the entire camp. Crusader gritted his teeth in frustration.

Then, looking towards the gates of the camp, he saw something no one else could—a familiar dark-robed figure. His memo-



**"A NOBLE
HEART IS A
FAR GREATER
WEAPON
THAN ANY
BLADE."**

ries of life as Sir Michael came flooding back to him. Sighing with resignation, he walked over to the Night Rider and vanished from the world.

A few minutes later Major Victory asked Captain Lighting, "Have you seen Crusader? I can't seem to find him."

* * *

"At least if you're going to use a sword, use a modern one," the beautiful girl in the short white dress said to him. Hers was a blade of pure energy, no metal in it at all save the hilt she held. But then again, she had wings, too, so it wasn't all that strange.

"A sword is not just a weapon, Avatar. It is a symbol of honor, and nobility, and devotion to duty. I am sorry to see you soil yours in the service of the likes of the Scions of Caine!" They exchanged a quick flurry of sword-blows. His was but a blade of tempered steel, but he had treated it, and his shield, with a substance that allowed them to resist Avatar's Trepharian energy-blade. The girl was good, no doubt about it, but she lacked his years of experience. With a final feint, he decoyed her blade out of defensive position, then hit her in the head with the flat of his blade—not hard enough to cause permanent injury, just to knock her unconscious.

Without thinking, he raised his sword to deliver a coup de grace. All of a sudden he saw not a girl lying before him, but a soulless automata of brass that he must destroy. But then he caught himself, and blinked his eyes—and it was Avatar he saw.

He shook his head worriedly. These strange visions were becoming more and more frequent. He needed to find out what they meant soon, lest they endanger him and those he has sworn to protect.

Personality/Motivation: Crusader is in truth Sir Michael of Livingstone, a fourteenth-century knight of England. He has been brought forward in time by his ally, the enigmatic Night Rider, in pursuit of his archenemy, Benedict de Polon, the Alchemist—whom we today know as Dr. Richfield Franck. Sir Michael's attempts to slay de Polon in the thirteenth century and in 1945 proved fruitless; now he will be able to fight him in the modern day—once he realizes who Franck really is.

Although Crusader still possesses all of the nobility, honor, valor, and courage of Sir Michael, he has no memory of his days as a knight. He thinks of himself as Mike Livingstone, a Bay City University history professor, and remembers nothing of his true life prior to 1996—though he has an inexplic-

able fondness for using a sword in his modern-day crusade. However, of late he has suffered from mysterious visions, scenes of medieval life that he cannot explain. The Veil of Lethe that the Night rider cast over him is failing, and one day soon, he will come into his true memory.

Although Crusader does not remember the fourteenth century, he does remember, and is remembered for, his fight against the Nazis (he is unaware of how he got to the present day, however). He has persistently refused to answer questions about his disappearance/reappearance.

Crusader prefers to work alone. For this reason he opted to stay in Bay City and protect it when the Champions went to fight the Proprietor—a decision he now regrets. He was in the new Champions, briefly, but could not get used to working with a group and resigned. Something in him cries out for solitude, and he listens.

Powers/Tactics: Crusader is a highly skilled warrior and detective. In his years in the modern world, he has learned to adapt his swordfighting skills to the exigencies of super-hero combat, and to investigate his enemies using the tools of modern science. Even without his blade, he can be a deadly fighter, but his chief weapons are his sword (a magic blade that has come with him through the ages) and his shield gauntlets (which can also shoot small disk-shaped projectiles).

Appearance: Crusader's costume is an odd blend of the medieval and the modern. His armor, although made from high tech materials, resembles his old knight's chain, which he covers with a surcoat and knight's belt. He wears futuristic headgear that contains various devices that aid his senses. His gauntlets incorporate small shields, and he still carries *Hasufriug*.

"Mike Livingstone" is a handsome man, with blonde hair, blue eyes, and a wise and noble bearing.

CRUSADER

CP: 81

OP: 156

PP: 40

INT	7			OffX:	28	DefX:	28
WILL	8	RES	24				
PRE	10						
TECH	7						
REF	10	SPD	5				
DEX	10						
CON	7	SD	14	ED	14	END	70
STR	7	REC	14				
BODY	8	STUN	40	HITS	40		
MOVE	7	RUN	24	SPRINT	36		
		SWIM	7	LEAP	7		

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 25 Enemy: The Alchemist/Dr. Franck (As Powerful, Worldwide, Death)
- 10 Amnesia: Does not remember life as Sir Michael of Livingstone (Constant, Mild, Major)
- 8 Code of Honor: Chivalric and noble-hearted (Frequent, Risk Expulsion or Embarrassment, Major)
- 8 Sense of Duty: Must protect innocents from crimes and stop evildoers (Frequent, Friends, Major)
- 8 Secret Identity: Mike Livingstone, History Professor (Infrequent, Strong, Major)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS AV/DV

- 16 Martial Arts—Crusader Combat: Basic Strike, Breakfall, Defensive Strike, Ki Strike, Martial Arts Weapon, Martial Block, Martial Dodge, Martial Grab
- 4 Extra Damage: +2 DC to Martial Arts
- 2 Hand to Hand: 414
- 6 Melee Weapons: 616
- 2 Firearms: 212
- 4 Use Power: Missile Batting14
- 2 Hand-to-Hand, Melee Evade: 212
- 6 Ranged Evade: 616
- 6 Acrobatics: 3 & Contortionist: 313
- 8 Bugging: 4 & Computer Programming: 411
- 8 Concealment: 4 & Deduction: 411
- 8 Criminology: 4 & Forensic Medicine: 411
- 6 Demolitions: 2, Electronics: 2, Hacking: 29
- 3 Driving (Motorcycle): 313
- 12 German: 4, Japanese: 4, Spanish: 411
- 4 Lockpicking: 411
- 9 High Society: 3, Streetwise: 3, Interrogation: 313
- 6 Expert (World History): 613
- 4 Local Expert (Bay City): 411
- 3 Expert (The Underworld): 410
- 4 Wealth: 4
- 15 Ambidexterity, Blind Reaction, Combat Sense: 3
- 9 Handsome, High Pain Threshold, Intuition
- 9 Longevity, Rapid Healing, Light Sleeper

COST POWERS END

- 8 **Hasufriug:** Multipower, Focus (Grabbable)
- 1m **Pommel Strike:** 12d6 Energy Blast, No Range 6
- 1m **Blade Strike:** 5d6 Hand-to-Hand Killing Attack (10d6 with STR Added in), 0 END 0+
- 1m **The Blessed Hilt:** 8p6 Suppress vs. all powers with a Magic special effect 6
- 1m **The Power of Faith:** 16 1/2d6 Dispel vs. any one power with a Magic special effect 6
- 2 **Sure Strike:** Find Weakness with Blade Strike, Skill of 10
- 7 **Crusader's Armor:** Armor 22 KD & 22 EKD, Focus (Attached), Activation 8+
- 10 **Shield Gauntlets:** Multipower, Focus (Attached)
- 1m **Missile Batting:** Missile Deflection vs. any ranged attack
- 1m **Shield Disks:** 9d6 Armor Piercing Attack, 6 Charges
- 3 **Crusader's Helmet:** High Range Radio Hearing, IR Vision, Flash Defense (Sight): 5 pts., Focus (Attached)
- 2 **Swingline:** Swinging 20 m/y
- 2 Running: +10 m/y Run, +15 m/y Sprint 2



THE MARKSMAN

Secret Identity: Donald Henderson

Background: Some people are just born to be heroes. Donald Henderson was one of them. His heritage left him no choice.

The Hendersons had been adventurers for as long as anyone could remember. The American branch of the family carried this tradition to extremes. Richard Henderson came to California in the late 1700s. There he married the daughter of the Alcalde, and received a large grant of land in the northern region of the state. The present Henderson holdings have their start in that grant.

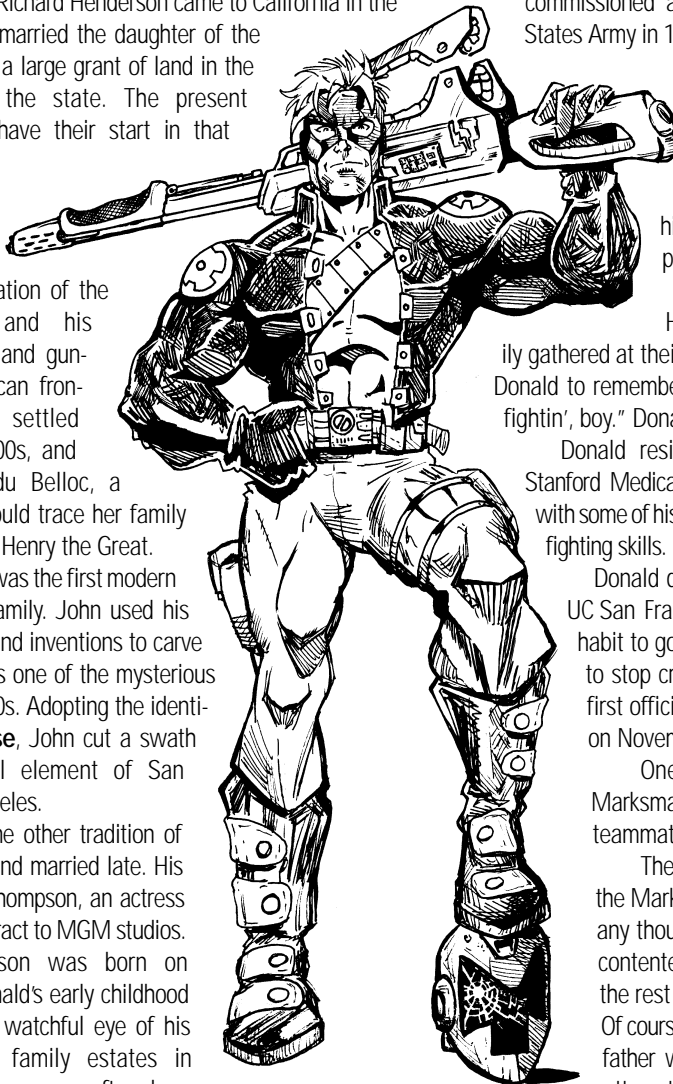
His son, James, was a doctor and lawyer, well known for his exploration of the African continent and his exploits as a healer and gun-fighter on the American frontier. James finally settled down in the late 1800s, and married Angelique du Belloc, a Frenchwoman who could trace her family back to the nobility of Henry the Great.

Their son, John, was the first modern hero in the modern family. John used his tremendous intellect and inventions to carve a career for himself as one of the mysterious masked men of the '30s. Adopting the identity of **The Black Rose**, John cut a swath through the criminal element of San Francisco and Los Angeles.

John followed the other tradition of the Henderson men, and married late. His bride was Maureen Thompson, an actress and singer under contract to MGM studios.

Donald Henderson was born on October 14, 1945. Donald's early childhood was spent under the watchful eye of his grandfather on the family estates in Hillsborough. His father was often busy with world-spanning business and adventures, and his mother was still making movies for MGM.

Donald spent a lot of time with his grandpa, who taught him many things: how to hunt, how to track, and how to get along with people. James also instilled a sense of responsibility and duty in his grandson. "God has given our family gifts, boy," he'd say. "We've got to pay back His generosity."



"NOW, ARE YOU GOING TO COME QUIETLY, OR ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME CRACK A SWEAT?"

Donald attended the Military Academy at West Point, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Army in 1957. He quickly found himself assigned to Intelligence, which suited him just fine. He was part of the advisory group in Laos in 1960, and he was in Berlin when the wall went up. This taste of combat and danger whetted his appetite for adventure, and he was prepared for a career in the army.

Things changed when James Henderson died in early 1962. The family gathered at their estate to read his will. In it, he urged Donald to remember his debt. "There's more to life than fightin', boy." Donald resolved to honor his wishes.

Donald resigned his commission and attended Stanford Medical School. In his spare time, he fiddled with some of his father's old inventions, and practiced his fighting skills.

Donald did his internship and residency at the UC San Francisco Medical Center. It became his habit to go out into the rougher sections of town to stop crime (and blow off a little steam.) The first official appearance of the Marksman came on November 8, 1966.

One thing led to another, and the Marksman met up with the rest of his future teammates on a cold January night in 1967.

The new Champions team took up much of the Marksman's time. Soon, he had abandoned any thought of going into medical practice. He contented himself with research, and devoted the rest of his attention to the Champions.

Of course, fate kept throwing in distractions. His father was murdered by VIPER in 1977 in an attempt to take over Henderson Electronics.

Donald Henderson took over as Chairman of the Board of the family conglomerate, and the Marksman attempted to bring his father's killers to justice. The Arcadian Academy was founded, and became another draw on his time. But whatever the outside distraction, the Marksman's first loyalty was to his team. The Champions was legendary. The Marksman and his teammates faced just about all of the world's

most dangerous villains. They traveled to distant star systems and other dimensions. They saved the world countless times. They stood as the preeminent super-hero team of their time.

And then they all died.

All but their leader, that is. Through no fault of his own, the Marksman wasn't there for the final battle. His fight had come three days early, at the side of perhaps his worst enemy, Dr.

Destroyer. The two took their best shot at stopping the Proprietor ... and failed.

That failure weighed heavily on the Marksman's mind. He couldn't go on with the knowledge that his friends had died, and he hadn't been there to stop it. Or, at the very least, die with them. So he did the unthinkable.

The Marksman retired from super-heroing. His left leg had been crushed in his battle with the Proprietor, and it wouldn't heal right. As so much of his fighting style depended on his awesome agility, he was doubtful that he would be able to function in the super-powered world.

With the Champions turned over to Quantum and the rest of her new team, the Marksman was free to turn to other pursuits; to retire. For the first time, Donald Henderson's life came first. But would that be enough to fill the void? Only time would tell...

Personality: The Marksman of old was a happy-go-lucky, flippant man. He acted as though he had been anointed by the gods, and nothing could go wrong. He walked as though he was standing on top of the world.

All of that died with his team. The new Marksman is a much grimmer man. He's seen the worst that the world has to offer, and it has affected him. While he hasn't become a cynical, bitter hero, he is a lot more serious now than he has ever been in the past.

He knows that his failure to die in the Proprietor War wasn't his fault, but he still feels guilty and he is trying to find ways to atone. His work with at the Arcadian Academy is one way. If he can just train the students well enough, they might be spared the fate that befell his comrades.

As Donald Henderson, he's launched himself into more charities and public works than ever before. In addition, he's joined the social set in a big way. He can often be found at society affairs, and maintains boxes at the Opera, the Ballet, the Symphony, Pacific Bell Park, and New Candlestick Park. He's actively looking for someone to share his life with.

However, there is still a great void inside of him. He feels like a man adrift. The loss of his companions, some of whom had been with him since the formation of the team, is a devastating one. But, after all is said and done, he is a Henderson, and he will do his duty.

Powers: The Marksman is a mutant, from one of the strongest mutant lines in existence. His line also gave birth to the Hunter (the two are distant cousins), and other famous heroes throughout history. Unlike other

branches of the line, however, the Henderson strain is a subtle one. The Marksman's powers and abilities reflect this.

The Marksman has only three real "powers." The first is his mind and body. Both are incredibly efficient, and function at levels far above that of a normal human. His intelligence, strength, and reactions are super-human, and his life span is incredibly long. The second is his vaunted "healing ability." The Marksman is able to recover from even the most terrible of wounds in a matter of hours. The fact that his leg has yet to fully heal is a mystery that needs to be solved.

His third and final power is his senses. The Marksman is blessed with eyes that are incredibly keen, and hearing that is abnormally sensitive. He can spot the weak point in an opponent's defenses, and target a foe via his hearing alone.

Of course, the Marksman backs all of this up with the Mark XXXII Sonic Rifle, Flex-Mesh Armor, and a variety of other gadgets. These, along with his years of experience, skills at intelligence gathering, science, and martial arts, and his indomitable will make even a crippled Marksman a formidable foe.

Occupation: Donald Henderson serves as Chairman of the Board of Henderson International, a multi-national high technology conglomerate. As the majority owner, he is one of the ten richest men in America. He is also very active in charities and social activities in Bay City.

Appearance: Henderson stands about 6' 2" tall and has blue eyes and black, wavy hair. Although he is over fifty-five years old, he looks as though he is in his early thirties. He uses a cane to compensate for a limp, the reminder of a "recent bad skiing accident. Even with the limp, though, Henderson cuts a dashing figure." The Marksman has updated his costume for the new millennium. While his costume is still predominately red, his jacket, boots, and accessories are now black.

THE MARKSMAN

CP: 90

OP: 190+

PP: 66

INT	9			Offx:	34	Defx:	26
WILL	5	RES	15				
PRE	8						
TECH	9						
REF	11	SPD	6				
DEX	7						
CON	7	SD	14	ED	14	END	70
STR	8	REC	15				
BODY	12	STUN	60	HITS	60		
MOVE	4	RUN	8	SPRINT	12		
		SWIM	4	LEAP	4		

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 8 Secret Identity: Donald Henderson (Infrequent, Strong, Major)
- 25 Enemy: Eurostar (As powerful, Worldwide, Death)
- 13 Enemy: Dr. Destroyer (More powerful, Worldwide, Capture)
- 25 Feels guilt over the death of his team; will not let such things happen again (Infrequent, Extreme, Extreme)
- 30 Flippant (Constantly, Mild, Minor)
Sense of Duty: Must act in a heroic manner (Risk life & limb, Severe, Extreme)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS

AV/DV

- 16 Martial Arts—*Owan Ki Do: Cung Thu* (blocks [Martial Block]), *Cuoc Phap* (kicks [Offensive Strike]), *Khao Go* (locks [Martial Grab]), *Tao Phong Cuoc* (sweeps [Strike with +2 AV, Target knocked Prone]), *Than Phap* (evasion [Martial Dodge]), *Thu Phap* (hand techniques [Martial Strike]), Breakfall, Use Martial Arts Weapons
- 4 Extra Damage +2 DC
- 10 Hand-to-Hand: 617
- 10 Firearms: 1021
- 13 Hand-to-Hand, Melee, & Ranged Evade: 512
- 5 Acrobatics: 512
- 7 Acting: 715
- 3 Bugging: 312
- 6 Computer Programming: 613
- 3 Conversation: 311
- 8 Criminology: 4 & Forensic Medicine: 413
- 14 Disguise: 7, Forgery: 716
- 8 Electronics: 4 & Mechanics: 413
- 6 Stealth: 613
- 3 Concentration: 510
- 10 High Society: 5 & Streetwise: 513
- * Languages, Expert, Sciences (Many): 5+14+
- 8 Shadowing: 4 & Surveillance: 413
- 14 Paramedic 8 & Perception: 817
- 12 Tracking: 6 & Research: 615
- 12 Ambidexterity, Blind Reaction, Handsome: 2
- 24 Renown: 10; Wealth: 14

COST POWERS

END

- 1 **Champions Communicator**
- 12 **Sonic Rifle MK XXXII:** Multipower, Focus (Grabbable), 4 Clips of 32 Charges
1m **Tight Beam:** 10d6 Armor Piercing Blast
1m **Rapid Pulse:** 10d6 Autofire Attack
1m **Needle Beam:** 8d6 Armor Piercing Killing Attack
1m **Sonic Blast:** 11d6 Explosion
1m **Sonic Scream:** 6 Phases Flash vs. all Hearing
- 7 **Flex-Mesh Armor:** Armor 22 KD & 22 EKD, Focus (Attached), Activate 8+
- 1 **Counter-Fire:** Missile Deflection vs. All Attacks, Focus (Grabbable [Rifle])
- 6 **Gas Pistol:** 8d6 NND, [Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing), Target holds his breath], Focus (Grabbable), 4 Clips of 4 Charges
- 8 Find Weakness with all attacks, Skill of 14
- 11 **Enhanced Senses:** Discriminatory Smell, IR Vision, Targeting Sense: Hearing, Tracking Scent, UV Vision, See in the Dark
- 7 **Healing Ability:** Regeneration, REC in Hits every Minute, Regenerate Lost Limbs
- 1 **Long Life Span:** Life Support: Does not age
- 4 Mental Defense & Power Defense: 10 pts each
- 1 Lack of Weakness: +5
- 2 Flash Defense (Sight & Hearing): 5 pts.



SHADOWBEAST

Secret Identity: Kirk McIntyre

History: "It all started when I was ten. Life had been pretty normal up until then—growing up in the suburbs in a middle-class family in a middle-class home. I remember my dad saying something about the neighborhood going to hell. There had been muggings and robberies the last few years, where before that the worst crime we saw was a good egging or a dog barking in the early hours of the morning. I was young, though, and it didn't mean much to me.

"Friday nights were my parents' night out on the town. They'd leave me and my sister, Lisa, in the care of our teenage baby sitter, Carol Johnson. We'd watch TV, play some games, I'd terrorize my sister and Carol would yell at me. This was all ritual. Unfortunately, fate had something else in store this particular night.

"Me and my sister had been put to bed, and my parents weren't back yet. I was just falling asleep when I thought I heard someone outside my bedroom window. I got up and looked, but I didn't see anyone so I went back to bed. Then I heard a loud crash and shouting. Being a foolish and brave ten year-old, I got up and went out to see what was going on. There was this big guy with a ski-mask, and he was hurting Carol. So, I yelled at him and attacked him. Smart, huh? I got back-handed into a wall and knocked out.

"To make a long story short, I woke up later and was fine. On the other hand, this guy had raped Carol multiple times and had beaten her to death. I was a little too young to understand everything, but I understood enough. They never caught the guy, even though he did the same thing to four other women. Needless to say, this experience did not breed a well-adjusted teenager.

"After that, the only thing I wanted to be was a cop. I was going to go out and make the streets a safer place. Young and idealistic, I still had a lot of pent-up rage. Well, I got my wish and joined the South San Francisco Police Department. It didn't take long before I was promoted to Sergeant and got my transfer to homicide. I saw a lot during that time—more than anyone should. Something inside me snapped. Let's just say that I came down a little too hard on a couple of suspects, as far as my superiors were concerned.

Little did it matter that they got caught red-handed; I was supposed to treat them with the cop equivalent of care and dignity.

"Three big things happened to me at that point. One, I took a good hard look at the United States justice system. I was sickened by what I saw. Criminals getting off easy, prisons that were more like country clubs, and rampant indifference on everyone's part. This wasn't justice, it was crap on a plate. These low-lives needed to pay, and they sure weren't paying as things were. Two, I had

my first serious police psychological examination. I failed it, big time. My mind was a mess from everything that had happened, and there was no way they were going to allow me to stay on the force. I had become a liability. At least they had the decency to attribute my "illness" to my experiences on the force, so I was set up with a mental disability pension.

"Three, I was diagnosed with a rare, degenerative nerve disease. It wasn't genetic, it wasn't transmitted, it just happened. I was told that I had maybe five years left to live, and that in the intervening time I would get weaker and weaker to the point of paralysis. I had no idea what to say or do, and was in hard-core denial for about the next three months. I didn't share this with anyone and holed up in my apartment.

"Finally I accepted that I had no future and that I was indeed dying. I came to grips with these cold hard truths and did the only thing a guy can do—I kept living as best I could. Avoiding depression, I made myself keep a bright outlook on life and tried

to do the things I always wanted to do. Unfortunately, psycho pay wasn't much, so I couldn't do a lot. And, no matter what I did, I still had that nagging hatred hiding deep in my brain.

"It was a year later that my life changed for the better. I was sitting in my living room when I felt this presence. A voice in my head started babbling strangely, saying cryptic things about 'drawn to you,' 'one mind, one being,' and more. It took a little while to decipher, but I understood that, for whatever reason, it needed to fuse with a human and that human, while having to take on its responsibilities, would be gifted with a powerful body, a long life, and extraordinary abilities. As I hesitated, not knowing what to think, it mumbled something the equivalent of 'justice must be served.' I just nodded my head, and in it went.

"This thing and I have been together ever since. It keeps me alive and more, and, from what it tells me, I do the same. Little did



**"SOMETIMES
JUSTICE
COMES
FREE"**

I know that I was merging with a ferocious occultic spirit named Shadowbeast. In the end, we have the same goals so we get along just fine. Sure, both of us are a little bit violent, but don't deny the fact that the people we punish deserve to pay. Sometimes even with their lives.

"Hold on. Shadowbeast says in these times evil has no mercy. I think what he means by that is that we need to fight fire with fire. Amen."

Personality: There are two distinct personalities living within Kirk McIntyre's body. The first is that of Kirk himself. Kirk is normally a serious-minded sort, and is still sometimes a little wary of what he has become. With Shadowbeast in his head at all times, sharing his thoughts and his senses, he has become a bit anti-social. It's either that or end up looking crazy when he talks to "himself" in public. He feels that his solitary existence, although self-imposed, is a small price to pay for his supernaturally enhanced health. Shadowbeast may be a pain sometimes, but at least Kirk will live a full life and still be able to walk.

Shadowbeast is an enigmatic creature, from an alien place. While he and Kirk seem to have a good relationship, based on dire need, Shadowbeast still often speaks in riddles and makes demands with no explanation. It seems plain that Shadowbeast is a force for "good," since it demands justice for those who do wrong and has a violent hatred for demons and other malevolent magical beings, but no one knows if this is out of altruism or for other veiled and selfish reasons.

The combination of the two can be downright deadly. Between Kirk's violent tendencies and the power and extraterrestrial outlook of Shadowbeast, the merged beings can quickly get out of hand, and use far too much force.

Powers: Since his merging with Shadowbeast, Kirk has gained several otherworldly powers. Perhaps the most impressive is Shadowbeast survivability; he is now virtually unkillable. This is not to say that he does not get hurt, just that he regenerates at a highly accelerated rate, including the regeneration of lost limbs or organs. Shadowbeast can even regenerate from certain death; it seems the only way this being can die is if Kirk and Shadowbeast are completely separated. His senses have become heightened, and he can now track an individual by the stench of their soul and is unhampered by the dark. Kirk can also become like a ghost, passing through material objects with ease, instantaneously teleport at will, and

grow claws of pure night. Shadowbeast uses his powers to become an unshakable stalker, the unstoppable embodiment of justice. Between his senses, his insubstantiality, and his teleportation, nothing can stand between him and his prey. Additionally, it only takes an instant for him to transform from Kirk into Shadowbeast and back.

Occupation: For all intents and purposes, Kirk is considered to be on disability from the police force. The meager checks derived from "psycho pension" comprise the entirety of his legal income. On the other hand, Shadowbeast is a not only a night-time avenger, he is also for hire. He earns cash from police and governmental bounties and rewards. Sometimes other paranormal hero groups require someone with his unusual abilities, and hire Shadowbeast as a "consultant." In these cases, consultant equates with mercenary. After all, a man has to have something to live on.

These same mercenary activities may lead him to less savory patrons. If one criminal organization wants a competitor taken out, they might be able to hire Shadowbeast. They'd just better hope he doesn't decide to come back and bite the hand that feeds him.

Appearance: Kirk is a good-looking guy in his mid-twenties. His muscles are well-defined, and he wears his brown hair shoulder length and keeps himself clean-shaven. However, without Shadowbeast's constant attention, Kirk is a shadow of himself—gaunt, emaciated, and weak. When Kirk becomes Shadowbeast, his appearance is less than human—a dark being made of shadow, with glowing red eyes, enshrouded by a flowing, tattered cowled cape. When Shadowbeast speaks, it is in an unearthly voice that sounds like the wind rushing through dead trees.

SHADOWBEAST

CP: 81

OP: 90

PP: 47

INT	5	OffX	28	DefX	29	
WILL	7	RES	21			
PRE	4					
TECH	4					
REF	8	SPD	4			
DEX	8					
CON	10	SD	20	ED	20	END 100
STR	16	REC	26			
BODY	10	STUN	50	HITS	50	
MOVE	9	RUN	18	SPRINT	27	
		SWIM	9	LEAP	9	

Cost Complications

- 8 Secret Identity: Kirk McIntyre (Infrequent, Strong, Major)
- 8 The Voice of Shadowbeast, which talks to him in his head (Constant, Severe, Minor)
- 25 Nerve Disease, countered by Shadowbeast (Infrequent, Mild, Extreme)
- 4 Obsessed with Justice (Frequent, Mild, Minor)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS

AV/DV

- 2 Hand-to-Hand: 412
- 4 Firearms: 412
- 5 Hand-to-Hand Evade: 715
- 7 Melee Evade: 715
- 7 Ranged Evade: 715
- 4 Athletics: 614
- 4 Acrobatics: 412
- 4 Criminology: 48
- 5 Deduction: 510
- 6 Expert (Occult): 611
- 5 Interrogation: 59
- 5 Shadowing: 510
- 9 Stealth: 917
- 4 Surveillance: 49
- 10 Tracking: 1015
- Scent Tracking.....17
- 3 High Pain Threshold
- 3 Longevity

COST POWERS

END

- 1 Instant Change to Shadowbeast
- 14 **Unkillable:** Regeneration REC in Hits per round, regenerate lost limbs or organs, regenerate from death unless Kirk & Shadowbeast are separated)
- 8 **Wraithform:** Desolification 4
- 2 **Soul Scent:** +2 tracking by scent
- 2 **Eyes of Night:** See in Dark
- 6 **Harrowing:** Teleport 10 m/yds, x32 NCM (320 m/y) 1
- 6 **Claws:** (4d6 Hand-to-Hand Killing Attack, 8d6 w/ STR) 3+
- 8 **Shadow Fading:** Invisibility to all Sight, with Fringe, 0 END, Only in Darkness or Shadows (-2 Power Point Limiter) 0



SPEEDSTER

Secret Identity: Gerald Spence

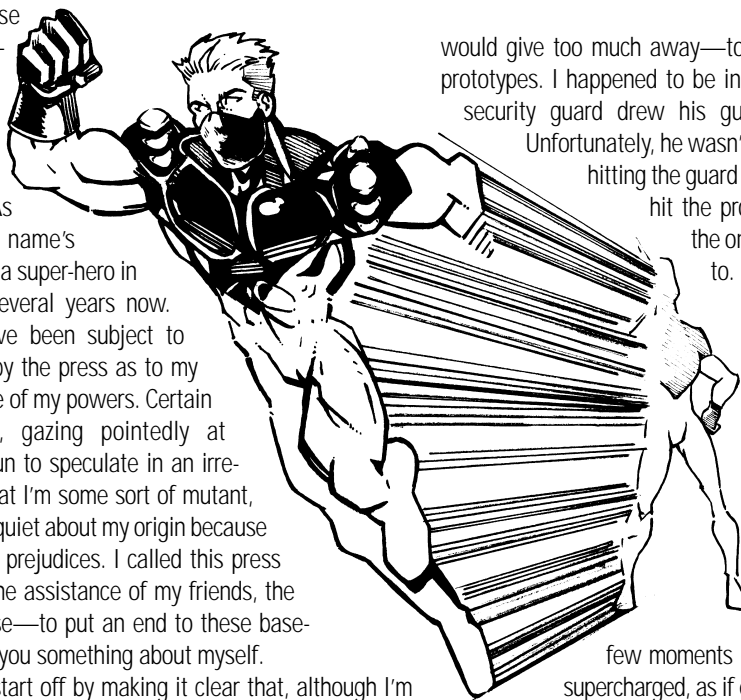
Background: The nervous-looking young man in the purple and gold costume approached the podium and tapped on the microphone. "Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen? Can you hear me? It's time we got started.

"Thank you for coming today. As you know, my name's Speedster. I've been a super-hero in the Bay Area for several years now. During that time I've been subject to increasing scrutiny by the press as to my origin and the source of my powers. Certain sources," he said, gazing pointedly at Pinchot, "have begun to speculate in an irresponsible fashion that I'm some sort of mutant, and that I have kept quiet about my origin because I harbor anti-mutant prejudices. I called this press conference—with the assistance of my friends, the Champions, of course—to put an end to these baseless rumors and tell you something about myself.

"Now, let me start off by making it clear that, although I'm not a mutant myself, I have nothing against them, except maybe the ones that become super-villains. I've worked with mutant heroes more times than I can count, and I have nothing but respect for them. Mutant or non-mutant, I don't care; it's how you act that counts, not what you are or what your skin color is. Me, I just happen to be a non-mutant.

"So, how'd I get these powers? Well, that's kind of a long story, but I guess you reporters are used to those, so here goes. Back when I was just a kid, about fourteen or fifteen years old, I had a job at a laboratory here in the Bay Area. I'm not going to tell you which one, or what I did there, or anything like that, but I will say that it was involved in some cutting-edge research. Two of the things it studied were superconductivity and so-called "cold fusion." Needless to say, these are some areas of study that could lead to very profitable real-life applications, and there was a lot of competition in the scientific community to develop these things. Some of the competition was willing to do just about anything to get a leg up on everybody else.

"One of these competitors, I've never known which one and don't think I ever will know, came after the company I worked for. They sent a super-villain—again, I'm not going to say who, that



would give too much away—to steal my employer's notes and prototypes. I happened to be in the lab when he attacked. The security guard drew his gun, but the villain was faster.

Unfortunately, he wasn't particularly *accurate*. Instead of hitting the guard with the energy bolt he threw, he hit the prototype cold fusion generator—the one I happened to be standing next to.

"The explosion threw me across the room and right into some of the superconductivity equipment and displays. All kinds of chemicals and energies and whatnot washed over me, I have no idea what all, really. Don't try this at home, kids!" A few reporters laughed at the joke.

"Well, anyway, I came to a few moments later. My whole body felt kind of supercharged, as if every cell was bursting with energy or something. The scientists and the security guard were all unconscious; I guess the explosion knocked 'em all out.

That super-villain was nowhere to be seen; after all, there was nothing left for him to steal. I got up to run over to check out the other guys—and in the blink of an eye I found myself all the way across the building! It took me a little while to realize what had happened. Somehow the accident had given me powers of super-speed. I could run faster than just about anything, or anyone. It took me a few minutes to adjust, to learn to differentiate between normal movement and super-speed, but I got the hang of it pretty quick. Then I went back, helped the other guys, and called the cops.

"I never let on to anyone what had happened to me, but I knew I'd been given a gift, and I had to put it to good use. You know, you guys have heard all this before, I'm sure. I decided to become a super-hero, fight crime, "Truth, Justice and the American way," all that. I've been doing it for quite a few years now, and I hope to keep doing it for a long time to come.

"That's about it, unless you've got any questions."

A blonde-haired TV reporter sitting near the front was the first to shout out a question. "Why didn't you participate in the Proprietor War?"

Speedster looked chagrined. "I knew one of you'd ask that. I hate to say it, but it's kind of ridiculous—I was on vacation. With my powers, I can get to places few people can, and when I get away from it all, I get away. I don't take a cell phone, or a computer, or watch TV, or anything like that. I left Bay City in late November, after Thanksgiving, and didn't return until mid-January. I guess it was really more of a "leave of absence" than a vacation; I took it to work

"I'LL HAVE YOU IN JAIL BEFORE YOU CAN SAY, 'DAMN, HE'S FAST!'"

some on my memoirs, ironically enough. But anyhow, by the time I got back, it was all over. I salute those heroes who sacrificed their lives in the Great Dome to save the world, and I wish I could have been there with them."

"Any plans to join the Champions?" shouted another reporter.

"Not at this time; they haven't asked me. If they do, I'll gladly consider their offer."

"Who are you dating?"

"No comment," Speedster said with a grin.

The press conference went on for a while longer, but it ended before Speedster got tired of the ridiculous questions. Reporters! They could use their position and insight to really help the world, but instead all they did was look for sensationalistic, attention-grabbing headline fodder. What a waste of time. But at least the mutant thing was laid to rest. So what if it's a lie? No one would ever know, and Mom won't get upset.

Personality/Motivation: Gerald Spence, Speedster, is a hero who embodies many of the virtues that people think of as the "heroic ideal." Kind-hearted, generous almost to a fault with his time and abilities, noble, self-sacrificing, brave, and resourceful, he is one of the most successful and beloved crimefighters in Bay City. Despite his constantly-voiced complaints about only getting to spend "57 seconds a day" fighting crime, he actually spends a lot more than that. It's his girlfriend whom he only gets to see for about 57 seconds a day, which might explain why the relationship seems to be perpetually in trouble.

Speedster's mother, Patricia Spence, is the most valued person in his life. His father died when he was just a little boy, and he was raised by his mother alone. She worked hard and sacrificed to send him to college, and then to law school. He's frightened about how she would react if she found out he was a mutant, so he's gone to great lengths to keep that fact secret—even to the extent of lying to the press, public, and other heroes, something he feels very guilty about. The ironic thing is, she has minor super-powers herself! Although not nearly as gifted as her son, she has a touch of superspeed. Gerald never has figured out how she was able to work two jobs, do the chores, and spend time with him while he was growing up, all without seeming frazzled or stressed—but even a little speed goes a long way when applied to mundane tasks. Ironically, she hides her powers from him, afraid that they would upset him.

In costume and out, Gerald is a serious, determined man whose seeming lack of humor makes him a "straight man" for "less uptight" heroes. He is a creature of habit who lives his life in as calm and ordered a fashion as possible. Even his office down at the courthouse is kept neat.

Powers/Tactics: As his name makes clear, Speedster is able to run and move at super-fast speeds. According to some estimates, he's the fastest super-human currently alive, and one of the fastest ever (though these estimates, from Superhype, are notoriously unscientific and unreliable). Both his actual moving speed and his reflexes are so fast that he can punch someone multiple times before they can react, spin people around so fast that they lose their breath and collapse, and pull plenty of other "speed tricks." His one weakness is that he lacks defense against bullets, knives, and similar attacks; he counts on dodging, blocking, or outrunning them rather than on armor.

Occupation: In his civilian identity, Speedster is Gerald Spence, an Assistant District Attorney for Bay City. He has been an ADA for many years now, and really enjoys his work. He has yet to face the ethical quandary of having to prosecute a villain whom he captured as Speedster, and isn't sure how he will react when that happens. His girlfriend, Jerri Dawson, is a local civil attorney.

Appearance: Speedster prefers a simple costume, as he rarely stays in one place long enough for people to get a good look at him. His one-piece skin-tight is predominately a light blue with a black upper body and gloves. His upper face and hair are uncovered.

Gerald is a pleasant looking man with brown eyes and light brown hair. He is clean shaven, and keeps his hair cut relatively short. When not in his Speedster costume, he dresses in two-piece suits he buys from discount men's stores.

SPEEDSTER

CP: 83

OP: 96

PP: 56

INT	6			Offx:	28	Defx:	28
WILL	6	RES	18				
PRE	6						
TECH	4						
REF	13	SPD	7				
DEX	11						
CON	7	SD	14	ED	14	END	70
STR	7	REC	14				
BODY	8	STUN	40	HITS	40		
MOVE	15	RUN	30	SPRINT	45		
		SWIM	15	LEAP	15		

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 8 Secret Identity: Gerald Spence (Infrequent, Strong, Major)
- 8 Code of Honor: Will not kill (Frequent, Risk expulsion or embarrassment, Major)
- 10 Enemy: The Masters of Fortune (More Powerful, Worldwide, Imprison)
- 5 Hides his mutant nature from his mother (Infrequent, mild, major)
- 8 Sense of Duty: Heroic; Must protect society from crime (Frequent, Friends, Major)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS

	AV/DV
E Hand-to-Hand: 2	15
3 Use Power: Superspeed Attacks : 3	16
5 Use Power: Superspeed : 5	16
4 Hand-to-Hand, Melee, & Ranged Evade: 2	13
5 Acting: 5	11
3 Bureaucratics: 3	9
1 Criminology: 1	5
5 Expert (Super-humans): 5	11
1 Forensic Medicine: 1	5
3 High Society: 3	9
3 Local Expert (Bay City): 5	11
2 Persuasion: 4	10
4 Professional (Prosecutor): 4	10
5 Research: 5	11
5 Science (Superspeed Physics): 5	11
3 Stealth: 3	14
1 Streetwise: 1	7
3 Wardrobe & Style: 3	9
2 License: (Attorney): 2	
4 Membership (Assistant District Attorney): 4	
5 Contact (Various, in Bay Area Judicial System): 5	
5 Contact (Various, in Bay Area Law Enforcement Community): 5	
8 Renown (World's Fastest Superhero!): 8	
15 Combat Sense: 5	
3 Handsome	

COST POWERS

	END
16 Superspeed : Multipower	
2m Running: +50 m/y Run, +75 m/y Sprint, X16 NCM, 1/2 END Cost	4
2m Supersonic Running : Supersonic "Flight", Mach 2, Must remain in contact with the ground.	
1m Up Walls And Over Water : Flight 30 m/y, must remain in contact with a surface (2 Power Points)	3
2m Swimming: 40 m/y	3
12 Superspeed Attacks Multipower	
1m Rapid-Fire Punch : 10d6 Autofire Attack, ROF 5, No Range	6*
1m Vortex Attack : 8d6 NND [Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing), Target holds his breath], No Range	6
1m Wrap 'Em Up : Entangle, 10d6 SDP, 6 KD, 6 EKD, No Range	6
12 Attack Slipping : 50% Physical and Energy Damage Reduction	
8 Vibration Field : Force Field 20 PK, 20 EKD	4



THE MASTERS OF FORTUNE

History: The Masters of Fortune holds the distinction of being the longest-lived super-villain team in the history of super-villainy. The Masters have been operating, with a fairly stable membership, since the group was founded by the Black Paladin in 1965. The newly-awakened Black Paladin realized that he lacked the power to face the Prometheans by himself, and so determined to recruit a band of “loyal knights” to fight at his side.

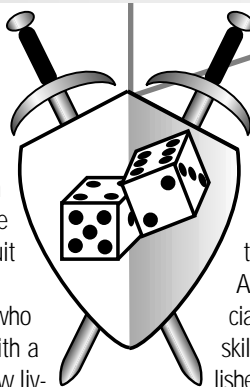
His first recruit was Cateran, a Scottish woman who claimed to be immortal and who, like him, fought with a sword. The two of them, creatures of another time now living in a strange “modern” age, shared a certain bond that ripened into a warm sort of friendship (assuming someone with Black Paladin’s personality can ever truly call another person “friend”), but nothing more than that. Cateran soon became his chief lieutenant and second-in-command of the Masters of Fortune. (Black Paladin chose that name for his group because he felt that having them around would let him take control of his own destiny; unfortunately for him, that did not prove to be the case.)

His next recruits were twin mutants, Heatwave and Streamer, who at that time were quite young (less than 20 years old). Heatwave held sway over flame and heat, and his great power impressed the Paladin, even if his childish attitude and whining did not. Streamer’s powers involved light and color, and though they were weaker than his brother’s powers, at least his behavior was acceptable.

The Paladin felt that three “knights” would be enough to enable him to defeat the Prometheans, but his judgment was lacking, for their first attack on the Prometheans ended in defeat. Though none of them were captured, they were forced to flee in disgrace. Furious, the Paladin tried to institute a training regimen and classes on tactics, but he didn’t get very far; his tactical skills were straight out of the thirteenth century, and none of the others really wanted to learn tactics anyway.

Instead, the group learned from experience. Constant clashes with the Prometheans, the newly-formed Champions, and other groups honed their skills and their ability to work together effectively. New members occasionally cycled in and out, but none of them lasted very long. The next permanent addition to the group was the villain Frost (no relation to the Champion of the same name). Frost and Heatwave never got along—their personalities clashed just like their powers did—but they managed to work together nevertheless.

This isn’t to say that the Masters of Fortune were always successful—they weren’t. In fact, they were frequently defeated by higher-powered super-teams and spent time in Stronghold. Usually, though, one or two members would remain at large and manage to free the others before too long. The Paladin in particular showed an uncanny knack for preserving his own freedom. There were also other periods where the members went their own ways for a time, pulling solo jobs or working with other groups, but sooner or later Black Paladin and Cateran got them back together.



A sixth member, the Crimson Archer, joined the group in the early 1980s. Although Heatwave had some knowledge of explosives and other gadgetry, on the whole the team lacked an expert in those fields, and the Crimson Archer was recruited in part to fill that gap. A former special forces soldier, the Archer possessed a wide variety of skills that no one else in the group had, and he soon established himself as Cateran’s second-in-command.

Yes, Cateran’s second, for it was not long after the Archer joined the Masters that Black Paladin disappeared. Cateran thought that he’d been slain while on a quest to retrieve a magical tome from a castle in Switzerland, but whatever happened, he never returned. She took over leadership of the group, backed by the Crimson Archer. Despite an early failure (a raid on a military transport convoy in which Frost was severely injured by UNTIL agents), she soon became an able leader. Even the death of the Crimson Archer during a fight with Speedster in 1995 did not shake her leadership.

In the late 1990s, Cateran was in one of her rare periods of incarceration in Stronghold. It proved to be a blessing in disguise—Heatwave, Streamer, and Frost all went off to fight with the Proprietor, and died in the Great Dome. Grief-stricken over the loss of her friends, Cateran escaped Stronghold and set out to recruit a new group of Masters of Fortune. Within just a few months she had Tungalak, Hummingbird, Whitestar, and Crimson the Archer at her side. Now she’s ready to make the Masters of Fortune a name to be feared.

Organization: Cateran is firmly in charge of the new Masters. Despite overtures to Black Paladin, he has ignored her and has nothing to do with the new group. The others are all too inexperienced at small supergroup tactics to know what to do, and they follow Cateran’s lead and orders closely—for now.

Tactics: Cateran has good tactical sense, as does the new Crimson the Archer, but none of the other members do yet, though Cateran is training them. For the time being their tactics are primitive at best—“use Tungalak as a shield and move forward,” for example. But sometimes simple methods are the best ones; the group has proved to be pretty effective so far.

Goals: Despite her protestations to the contrary, Cateran and the Masters of Fortune aren’t in this business for the money. The group actually has more funds than it could spend in a lifetime of crimes. Cateran is keeping the group together because it allows her to continue to live the lifestyle of a super-villain. After all these years as a criminal, she just can’t imagine life any other way.

The rest of the members have their own reasons for staying in the group. Hummingbird craves excitement and Tungalak simply has no other place to go. Whitestar and Crimson the Archer are in it for the murderous thrills. Cateran is aware of her teammates’ motives, and plans accordingly. Thus, the Masters of Fortune can be found doing almost anything. A group without an overall goal is hard to anticipate, which may explain why the Masters of Fortune have enjoyed such a long career.

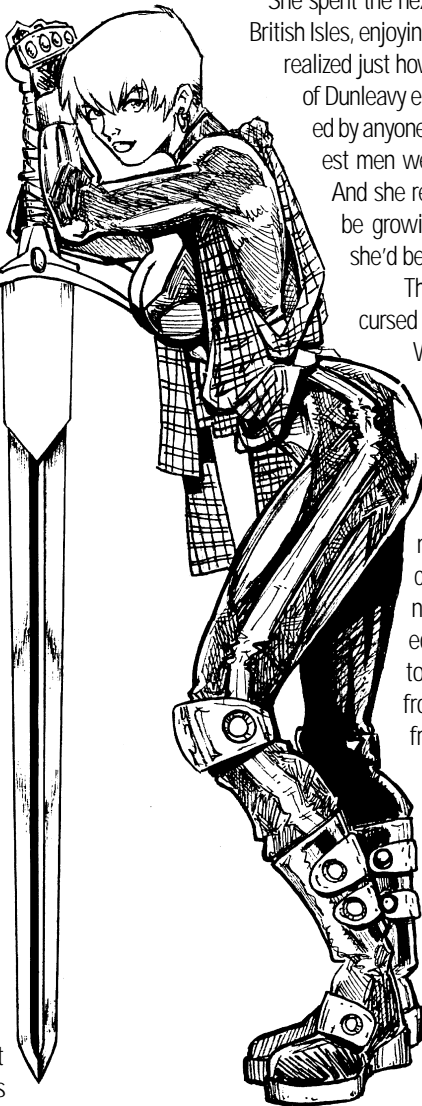
Secret Identity: Heather McGowrie

Background/History: Heather McGowrie has never found a place or time she could truly call her own. Born in Scotland in 1644, she was a woman trapped in a man's world. Though she grew up tall and lanky and strong—stronger than any of her brothers or their friends—she was forced into a woman's lifestyle. Sewing and cooking and tending to small children wasn't what she wanted, though. She wanted to ride, and wield a sword, and fight, and have adventures! The only time she truly felt alive was when the old men were telling stories and tales and she could shut her eyes and feel as if she were taken away into another world.

When she got old enough that young men were coming 'round to court her, she'd finally had as much as she was going to take. They were all so weak and soft-seeming and close-minded that she just couldn't stand the thought of being with any of them. They weren't truly men, they were boys playing at it, and damned if she'd play along with them. Finally she stole a horse and rode away, thinking to ride to Edinburgh or London or some other city and make her fortune there.

She was stopped by a band of brigands and freebooters, or caterans as they were called then in the Highlands, before she'd ridden half a day. Her pretty horse, and pretty self, were rich prizes indeed for this band. But the pretty girl had fangs, as they found out when she broke the arms of two of them and crushed the skull of another with a blow from her fist. Almost before they knew it, she'd convinced them to let her join them.

She liked the life of a brigand, for it offered her a freedom from the constraints and demands of society like none she'd ever experienced before. She learned how to fight, and ride, and kill, and take what she wanted. Soon she was leading the brigands herself, and the "Men of the Heather" became a group to be reckoned with. More and more men, hearing of her and her men's exploits, came to join her. But it was too good to last; the lairds of the clans could no longer stand for her depredations and pillaging, and came against the Men with a small army of Highlanders. Seeing no reason to stay and be defeated, Cateran took to her horse and left her men to die.



"YOU MIGHT WANT TO BE RECONSIDERING THAT COURSE OF ACTION, LAD."

She spent the next few years roaming about Scotland and the British Isles, enjoying her freedom. It was during this time that she realized just how strong she was—why, she lifted the Stone of Dunleavy easily with but one hand, that had not been lifted by anyone at all in seventy-five years! The biggest, burliest men were no match for her in contests of strength. And she realized something more—she didn't seem to be growing old. Her face showed twenty years, but she'd been on this Earth two score or more.

That last thought scared her. Had she been cursed by the Devil to walk the Earth forever like the Wandering Jew? Feeling that her mortal soul was in peril, she rode to the nearest abbey and asked to be admitted. Seeing the trouble that lay upon her soul, the Mother Superior admitted her as a lay sister.

The religious life lasted about a month for Heather. She soon found she couldn't stand it. Every minute of the day and night was regimented, ordered, and regulated. What a waste! She quickly came around to thinking of her longevity not as a curse from the Devil, but as a gift—from God or from whom, she didn't know, and she didn't really care anymore. She just decided to make the best of it.

She spent the next two centuries wandering the world. She saw the glittering spires of London, and visited the king's court in the noble garb of a lady. She explored the Black Forest and wrestled bears in the Russian taiga. She watched Schliemann excavate Troy. She crept in disguise into Mecca and traveled the Ottoman Empire in the same guise. She learned how to sail, and traveled the length and breadth of the British Empire. And then, at long last, she came to America.

The 1920s and 30s found her in New York City. Now here, she thought, here is a country where people know how to live! No centuries-old traditions, no caste system, and rules that let just about everyone do anything he—or she—wanted. She took to it like a fish to water. Whenever she needed money, a little bit of robbery or theft did the trick nicely.

Then came World War II. She'd managed to avoid the First World War by staying in the Orient, but this time she wanted to get involved. She went back to Europe and, in disguise, joined a Scottish regiment. She acquitted herself nobly and well, and, when the war ended, decided to return to America. This time she decided to try the West Coast.

She found San Francisco to her liking. There were a few of these “heroes” out there who sometimes tried to keep her from robbing banks, but she never had much trouble with them—fancy clothes aren’t enough to overcome three hundred years of experience. She decided to join in their fun, and adopted the name “Cateran” for her brigandish exploits.

She was still in the Bay Area when the Black Paladin awoke and formed the first Masters of Fortune. Now, here was a real man, possibly the first she’d ever met—powerful, determined, willing and able to take what he wanted from the world. Although she didn’t feel romantically attracted to him—she was long past such foolishness—she admired his style, and felt a certain bond of comradeship with him. Both of them were warriors out of time, trapped in a world very unlike that in which they’d grown up. She agreed to join his group, and soon became his right-hand woman.

She spent twenty years as part of his group. It had its ups and downs; there were times when they were rolling in money, and periods when, for the first time in her life, she found herself in jail. She couldn’t stand it: she almost went stir crazy, but the Paladin and his men always broke her out. Then he didn’t come back from that ridiculous quest to Switzerland in search of some magical book. Suddenly she found herself leading the Masters on her own. She soon decided she liked it; it was like leading Heather’s Men, almost.

Then she got thrown in Stronghold again. Not only did confinement infuriate her, but without her, the Masters went off and got themselves killed fighting for this Proprietor person. Grief and rage increased her strength to the point where she was able to escape from Stronghold. She began recruiting a new Masters of Freedom. Today, that task accomplished, she’s looking forward to plenty more years of freebooting.

Personality/Motivation: Cateran is very much a free spirit. Not only does she intensely dislike being confined, bound, or restrained in any way, she won’t take orders, won’t do what people expect from “a lady,” and won’t restrict her options at all if she can help it. She’s her own woman, and no one else’s. She’ll do as she pleases, and damn those who don’t like it.

Now over 350 years old, Cateran has developed a somewhat fatalistic view of life. People, places, ideas, they all grow old and pass away sooner or later, all but her. For this reason she avoids becoming attached to people or to objects; she knows she’ll lose them eventually, and does-

n’t want the pain of loss. As a result, she often comes across as world-weary, cynical, and coldly unsympathetic, even though for the most part she’s none of those things. She grieved deeply over the deaths of her friends during the Proprietor war for example—but knowing they’d have died soon enough anyway, she got over her grief quickly. She enjoys her freebooting, high-living lifestyle and wouldn’t trade it for any in the world.

Despite centuries of experience as a warrior, Cateran prefers not to fight, or to kill, if there are other options. Fighting’s stupid if you can grab the swag and run away, after all. And killing doesn’t usually do much but start feuds. Oh, she’s killed before, dozens or hundreds of times, in battle and out of it, but she’d just as soon not slash someone with her sword if a blow from her fist will knock him out of the fight.

Powers/Tactics: Cateran is a mutant with much greater than normal human strength, resilience, and reflexes. Had she lived millennia ago, she’d probably be revered today as some sort of goddess, but in today’s world she’s had to settle for the life of a super-villainess.

Cateran carries a Scottish claymore for use in battle if she need it, but she prefers “roughhousing” and fisticuffs more than cutting people to ribbons. She’ll only draw the sword if someone makes her angry, is resistant to her strength, or draws a weapon on her first.

In many ways, Cateran’s out of combat skills are more important to the Masters than her strength. She been all over the world, speaks several languages, and knows how to do all kinds of things. She’s especially adept at disguising herself; she’s lived half her life walking in “someone else’s shoes.” Cateran has an annoying habit of calling all men “lad” unless they are noticeably elderly (e.g., old wizards with long white beards).

Appearance: Cateran looks pretty good for a 350-year-old: short red hair, the face of a beautiful 30-year-old woman, a trim, muscular, well-built figure. But she’s also 6’4” tall, and thus rather imposing. Like any sensible fighter, she tends to wear trousers in lieu of a kilt or skirt.

CATERAN

CP: 95

OP: 115+

PP: 15

INT	8			Offx:	29	Defx:	31
WILL	9	RES	27				
PRE	12						
TECH	6						
REF	9	SPD	5				
DEX	9						
CON	14	SD	28	ED	28	END	140
STR	10	REC	24				
BODY	10	STUN	50	HITS	50		
MOVE	8	RUN	16	SPRINT	24		
		SWIM	8	LEAP	8		

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 13 Enemy: The Guard (More Powerful, Single Country, Imprison)
- 10 Hates to be confined, limited or told what to do (Frequent, Strong, Major)
- 8 Code of Honor: Treats foes honorably, prefers not to kill (Frequent, Risk expulsion, Major)
- 8 Outsider (Frequent, From distant place, Major)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS

	AV/DV
12 Martial Arts—Wrestling	
1 Hand-to-Hand: 3	12
6 Melee Weapons: 6	15
2 Firearms: 2	11
16 Hand-to-Hand, Melee, & Ranged Evade: 6	15
6 Acting: 3 & High Society: 3	15
6 Animal Handler: 3 & Navigation: 3	11
3 Climbing: 3	10
6 Disguise: 6	12
4 Expert (World History since 1650): 4	12
N Gaelic (Native)	
4 Gambling: 4	10
* Languages (Many): 5	13
* Local Expert (Many Places): 5	13
3 Mimicry: 3	15
3 Oratory: 3	15
5 Riding: 5	14
5 Stealth: 5	14
3 Streetwise: 3	15
3 Trading: 3	15
3 Weaponsmith (Swords): 3	9
3 Animal Empathy	
3 Beautiful	
12 Combat Sense: 4	
6 Wealth: 6	

COST POWERS

	END
8 Claymore: 6d6 Hand-to-Hand Killing Attack (12d6 with STR), 0 END, Focus (Grabbable)	0+
2 Healing Factor: Regeneration, Recover REC in Hits every Hour	
2 Mutant Durability: Life Support (Immune to Aging and Disease)	
2 Mental Defense: 10 pts.	
1 Power Defense: 5 pts.	



CRIMSON THE ARCHER

Secret Identity: Richard Atwood

Background/History: Old Pepe heard the drone of the plane overhead. It didn't sound right. He wasn't an expert on planes, but there was definitely something wrong with this one's engine. And it was going down fast—too fast. He watched it until it dropped below the level of the trees, and then, a few moments later, he heard the explosion when it crashed against the side of the mountain.

Shouting to the sisters to send help quickly, he hurried to the scene of the crash. The plane, a small passenger craft, was a twisted, flaming wreck. No one could have survived. He turned around to go back to the orphanage to say a prayer for the dead.

Then he heard the baby crying.

Scarcely able to believe it, he rushed back to the wreckage to look for the child. All he had to do was follow the sound of the wailing. Praise God, there it was! There didn't seem to be a scratch on the baby—a miracle, for certain, though the sisters might frown if he said so out loud. He burned his hands and face getting to the child, a boy, but he got him out alive and unharmed.

He brought the baby back to the orphanage and gave him to the sisters. They didn't know what to do—they had no way of identifying the baby, and so no way of contacting any living relatives. They decided to keep the child and wait for someone to come in response to the pilot's SOS.

No one ever came. Whether the pilot wasn't able to call for help, or no one heard him, or he was ignored, the sisters didn't know. But since God had given them this child and the means to raise him, raise him they would. They named him Ricardo.

Ricardo grew into a strong, healthy boy. His childhood was a hard one, though. The other children at the orphanage taunted him because of his white skin and blonde hair, and the nuns expected him to pay attention to everything they said and study his lessons. Only Pepe ever treated the boy with any kindness. An old Indian, he had no children of his own, and seemed to think of Ricardo as the son he'd never had. Soon the boy was helping Pepe do his chores around the orphanage and listening to his stories.

And learning archery. Pepe knew how to use a gun, but when he went hunting for the orphanage, he preferred the bow he'd learned to use as a boy. It was so much quieter and more elegant than guns that scared away all the game for miles around when

you fired them. Ricardo became infected by Pepe's love of the bow, too, and began to spend all of his free time practicing archery.

Ricardo had a real talent for archery—his eye-hand coordination was superb, and his instincts for the sport were excellent. He was good at hunting, too, and soon was accompanying Pepe on his weekly forays into the forest. Pepe was glad of the company, and the help, but there was a gleam in Ricardo's eye when he looked down the shaft at his prey that disturbed Pepe. A gleam of what—lust? rage? morbid fascination? Pepe couldn't tell, but it scared him.

Ricardo's unusual mannerisms only increased as he got older. He became quiet, sullen, withdrawn. He no longer paid any attention to the taunts of the other children, he just turned his back on them as if they didn't matter. His dislike of schoolwork and willingness to defy the nuns became worse, too. Only on the archery ground did he seem to come alive. He was intense, driven, a perfectionist who wanted every shot to hit the bullseye. None of the other children could begin to match him there.

Then, one hot summer day, when Ricardo was 16, he finally did something about the taunts. He took his bow and arrows and shot three of the children dead as they ran away from him, screaming. He was smiling the entire time. When he was done, he left the orphanage forever and ran away into the forest ...

... and straight to the Sendero Luminoso. He'd heard of the Maoist guerrillas who hid in the jungles, even seen them or heard their gunfire on a few occasions. He knew they would put his talents to good use, and he was right. At

first they nearly killed him, thinking him a spy of some sort, but he soon convinced them of his true intentions, and his skill. They gave him just the job he was looking for—assassin.

Within four years, the Peruvian government and other enemies of the Sendero Luminoso were referring to Ricardo as *El Espectro de la Selva*, "the Ghost of the Jungle." He moved through the forests and city streets undetected, then visited swift, silent death on his target with his arrows.

But by then, Ricardo had had enough of the jungle. He didn't want to stay in this Latin American backwater forever, listening to the Sendero Luminoso fighters spout their ridiculous Marxist drivel. He ran away again, this time to Lima, and from there to Rio de Janeiro. In Rio he found work with certain criminal groups, including, eventually, the Colombian cartels. That earned him contacts



"ROBIN HOOD WAS A WIMP. I'LL SHOW YOU ARCHERY!"

with certain mercenaries who got him other jobs around the world. He spent the next ten years doing “work” around the globe for many different employers. He didn’t care who he worked for, as long as the pay was good, and he got to kill.

Finally he decided to retire and enjoy his hard-earned money. “The game” just wasn’t a challenge anymore; it had gotten too easy, so it wasn’t any fun. Where better to retire to than sunny California in the glorious U.S. of A.? He hired an agent who bought him a large house, sight unseen, in some place called Hillsborough. The signature on the deed read, “Richard Atwood.”

After he moved his things in, he took a closer look around. The house was fine, except for the basement. It wasn’t big enough; he wanted room to set up a workshop and an underground archery range. He began looking at the east basement wall, wondering if it would be feasible to take it down and expand the basement. The bricks felt pretty sturdy, but...

Suddenly a door opened in the wall! He wasn’t sure what had happened, but he must have touched a hidden catch of some kind. He pulled the door further open, and looked inside it as automatic lights came on.

He couldn’t believe his eyes. He saw a target range, and archery equipment and arrows more advanced than anything he’d ever dreamed of! Not just broadtip arrowheads, but explosive arrows, tangler arrows, and dozens more. And the bows! Never in his life had he seen such high-tech beauties. And there was this red costume...

“And just what would you be doing here, lad?” said a female voice in the doorway.

“Who the hell are you? Get out of my house!”

“Before you go gettin’ ready to shoot me with one of those arrows, lad, let me explain to you where they come from.” Now it was Cateran’s turn to explain a few things. When she got around to offering him the role of the new Crimson Archer, he looked around again, at all that equipment, and then he smiled.

This was going to be a whole new challenge.

Personality/Motivation: Richard Atwood is one of the least pleasant people you could ever meet. He is a stone-cold killer who will commit murder at the drop of a hat. Usually he expects to be well-paid for his “services,” but a few times he’s taken on a difficult job just to prove he could do it. He even seems to derive a sick sort of pleasure from killing. One of

the hardest things he’s had to do since joining the Masters of Fortune is learn to restrain his murderous impulses; Cateran won’t tolerate casual violence, and she could snap him in two like a twig if she got mad enough—not to mention what Tungarak could do to him if she wanted him to. He’s contented himself with wounding targets in the arms and such, but that may not last forever.

On the other hand, the job’s certainly proven to be as challenging as he expected. There’s nothing Richard likes so much as a good challenge, something that pushes his abilities to the utmost. He expects plenty of that in the days and years to come.

Powers/Tactics: Crimson the Archer, as Richard renamed himself, is probably not quite as skilled as the first man to wear the costume. However, he is nevertheless an extremely adept archer. He uses an arsenal of arrows, from ordinary bladed and blunt ones to tangler arrows, acid arrows, explosive arrows, and many others to help the Masters of Fortune accomplish their criminal objectives.

Appearance: Crimson the Archer has completely redesigned the old Crimson Archer’s costume and equipment. While the old Archer was a powerful foe, his costume was much too dated for Richard’s tastes. Now, Crimson the Archer goes into battle with the latest high tech equipment at his disposal.

Crimson wears a black body suit, with red armored plates strapped on over it. Having learned much from the career of his predecessor, Crimson’s bow is now built into his gauntlets (it folds back along his arm when not in use). He uses both back and thigh quivers to hold his supply of arrows. Only half of Crimson’s face is concealed by his sighting reticle and monocle; the rest is uncovered, as is his dirty blond hair. Crimson the Archer cuts a fearsome looking figure on the battlefield.

CRIMSON THE ARCHER

CP: 65

OP: 114

PP: 34

INT	6			OffX: 26	DefX: 25
WILL	6	RES	18		
PRE	6				
TECH	7				
REF	7	SPD	4		
DEX	7				
CON	6	SD	12	ED	12
				END	60
STR	6	REC	12		
BODY	7	STUN	35	HITS	35
MOVE	6	RUN	12	SPRINT	18
		SWIM	6	LEAP	6

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 10 Reputation: Murderous super-villain (Frequently Recognized, Strong, Major)
- 10 Can’t resist a challenge (Frequent, Strong, Major)
- 10 Casual killer; sadist (Frequent, Strong, Major)
- 15 Enemy: UNTIL and The Guard (More Powerful, Worldwide, Imprison)
- 8 Overconfident (Frequent, Mild, Major)
- 8 Secret Identity: Richard Atwood (Infrequent, Strong, Major)
- 6 Watcher: Cateran (More Powerful, Worldwide, Watching)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS

	AV/DV
12 Martial Arts—Karate	
2 Hand-to-Hand: 4	11
4 Firearms: 4	11
7 Use Power: The Crimson Bow: 7	14
6 Hand-to-Hand & Melee Evade: 4	11
6 Ranged Evade: 6	13
3 Bribery: 3	9
3 Climbing: 3	9
3 Concealment: 3	9
3 Demolitions: 3	10
3 Disguise: 3	10
3 Driving: 3	10
3 Electronics: 3	10
6 Expert (Archery): 6	12
3 Interrogation: 3	12
3 Inventor: 3	10
4 Professional (Assassin): 4	10
4 Professional (Archer): 4	10
3 Security Systems: 3	10
3 Shadowing: 3	9
7 Stealth: 7	14
5 Streetwise: 5	11
3 Surveillance: 3	9
6 Tracking: 6	12
3 Wealth: 3	
3 Blind Reaction	
3 Handsome	

COST POWERS

- 10 **Armored Costume:** Armor 25 KD, 23 EKD, Focus (Attached)
- 10 **The Crimson Bow** Multipower, Focus (Attached)
- 1m **Hunting Point:** 10d6 Killing Attack, 8 Charges
- 1m **Clothyard Shaft:** 7d6 AP Killing Attack, 4 Charges
- 1m **Blunt Point:** 12d6 Energy Blast, 8 Charges
- 1m **Blast Arrow:** 10d6 Explosion, 3 Charges
- 1m **Smoke Arrow:** Darkness vs. Normal Sight in a 12 m/y radius, 2 Charges
- 1m **Tangler Arrow:** Entangle, 7d6 SDP, 20 KD/EKD, 3 Charges
- 1m **Flare Arrow:** Flash, 2 Phases vs. All Sight, Area Affect 8 m/y, 3 Charges
- 1m **Swingline Arrow:** Swinging 20 m/y
- 1 **Monocular Sight:** IR Vision, Enhanced Perception (Sight): +6, Focus (Attached)
- 2 Missile Deflection vs. Arrows & Projectiles
- 3 Find Weakness with Arrows, Skill of 10



Secret Identity: Paul Grissolm

Background/History: Here's how Tungarak himself told it to Cateran when they first met: "Okay, see, I'm an archaeologist. All right, all right, maybe that's cutting it a bit fine, I never actually finished college and got my degree, but I know as much as those stuffed-shirt profes-

sors. I do.
"I was part of an expedition that was exploring some old Indian pueblo dwellings in Arizona."

"What tribe, lad?" Cateran asked.

"What tribe? I dunno, who cares?"

"I thought you were an archaeologist—don't you know whose houses you're digging around in?"

"Oh. Err, well, like I said, maybe that's not really the right term. 'Explorer of unusual places in search of artifacts that collectors will pay for,' that's more like what I do."

"Hmmm."

"But I did study archaeology in college! I tell you, I know as much as those professor types, at least when it comes to what's profitable, and what's not, and why."

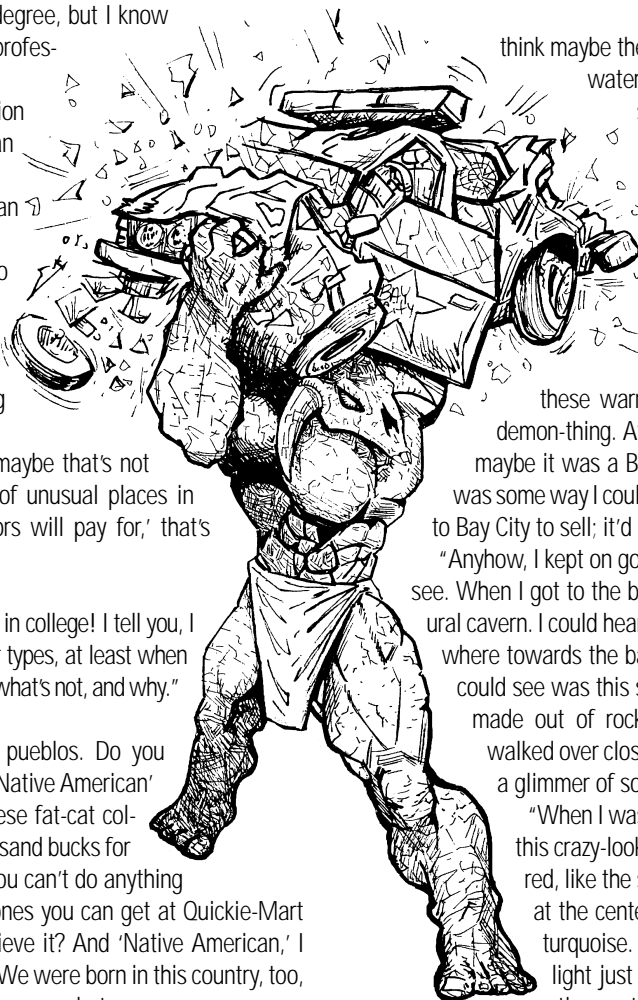
"I see. Go on."

"Anyhow, I was in these pueblos. Do you have any idea how popular this 'Native American' stuff is these days? Some of these fat-cat collectors, they'll pay, like, five thousand bucks for a piece of pottery! An old one you can't do anything with, not even as good as the ones you can get at Quickie-Mart for five-ninety-five. Can you believe it? And 'Native American,' I mean, come on, gimme a break. We were born in this country, too, right? We're as 'native' as they are, what a bunch of crap!"

"Oh, of course, lad," said Cateran.

"*Aaanyhow*, I found these pueblos, way back in a sort of box canyon in Arizona. They were fresh—I think I was the first one to find them, ever. And that always means big bucks! When I get to things before the Museum and Preservation Crowd, I make mucho dinero, know what I mean? So I'm looking around, see, and finding all kinds of great stuff. Pottery, beaded necklaces, utensils, couple'a kachina-doll like thingies, more stuff than I can carry, really. I was beginnin' to think about how I could make repeat trips without someone getting wise to what I was up to when I saw the stairs.

"I walked down these stairs that had been cut right into the heart of the mountain. The walls were smooth, though, so I



**"RRRRAARRR!!
TUNGARAK
SMASH!! SEE? I
SHOULD HAVE MY
OWN TV SHOW!"**

think maybe the tunnel itself was carved out by water, and the Indians just cut the steps into it. All along the wall they'd painted these pictures, too. They were really gorgeous ones, even I could see that, done with all sorts of ochres and reds and blacks, and even some blues that I think they made from ground-up turquoise. They showed

these warrior guys fighting this big rocky demon-thing. At least I think that's what it was, maybe it was a Buffalo Devil. I wondered if there was some way I could cut this wall out and get it back to Bay City to sell; it'd be worth a fortune.

"Anyhow, I kept on going down, using my flashlight to see. When I got to the bottom, there was this large natural cavern. I could hear this little trickle of water somewhere towards the back, but I couldn't see it. What I could see was this sort of pedestal-altar-table thing made out of rock in the center of the room. I walked over closer to it, and my flashlight caught a glimmer of something on top.

"When I was close enough, I saw that it was this crazy-lookin' chunk of stone. It was sort of red, like the stone on some of the mesas, but at the center there was this kind of pool of turquoise. Man, it was really beautiful! The light just glinted off of it, sending reflections out all over the cavern. It didn't look like any Indian art I'd ever seen, but it was so pretty that I knew I could get something for it, so I took it and stuck it in my pocket.

"After I loaded up my backpack and sack with all the stuff I could carry, I got out of there. I was already plannin' to come back just as soon as I could; if my luck held out I could

pick the place clean before anyone else knew about it. It was gonna be hot!"

"I drove back to Bay City and met up with the guy who usually buys my stuff. He was impressed, wanted to know where I'd found it, but I kept quiet, of course, and told him there might be more soon. Didn't sell him that pretty rock, though. Somehow, I just couldn't do it, I wanted to keep it for myself. Hell, I got enough money for the other stuff to live on for months, so I didn't need to let it go anyway, right?"

"I was gonna go out and celebrate, paint the town red and all that, but I wasn't feelin' real good after all that climbin' around and the drive, so I went home and sacked out. Couldn't go to sleep, though. The pain got so bad I was just rollin' around and moaning.

Man, it was the worst thing I've ever been through. Finally it got a little better and I fell asleep.

"I woke up when the bed broke. It's a good thing I live on the first floor; otherwise I'd've gone through the floor and maybe landed on somebody and hurt 'em. My body was all made of rock! Just like I am now. Must've happened while I was sleepin'. I couldn't find that pretty stone I took from the pueblo, either; it must've caused me to transform into this big rock guy.

"I gotta tell you, it sounds simple now, but I was pretty much freakin' out! I couldn't figure out any way to change back to me—still haven't—and every time I touched something I'd break it. Soon I was just so angry I smashed everything, even the walls! It's a wonder nobody called the cops, but the kinda neighborhood I was living in, most people keep away from the cops, know what I mean?

"After I calmed down some and all, I got outta there. I hadda figure out what to do. Well, I couldn't fit in my car, or even hold the key for that matter, so I began skulking my way across the city—not easy to do when yer seven feet tall and made outta rock! Finally I made it to a friend's house, and he called some friends, and he called some friends, and they got me hooked up with some guys who were pulling a bank job. Bank job's easy when you can rip the vault door off its hinges! We'd've all been rich, but the Champions got there before we could get away. I put up a good fight with Behemoth, but then that Solitaire chick zapped me with some mental thingle, and down I went. Stronghold bound. Imprisoned, that is."

"And that's where you come in. Thanks for busting me out, la... err, Cateran. I really appreciate it."

Personality/Motivation: Tungalrak (his name comes from an Indian legend he claims to remember from college, about the rock-demon he saw depicted on the walls of the pueblo he looted), or Paul Grissolm to use his real name, is not what he appears to be at first glance. Anybody who looks at him thinks, "Oh, sure, big dumb super-strength guy, how stereotypical." Anybody who listens to him talk walks away with the impression that a clueless teenage gravel pit has just spoken to them—in short, that the speaker's an airhead. The truth is, Paul's a pretty smart guy. Not book smart, but street smart, a guy with a lot of common sense. But he learned how to speak in the era of MTV, so he doesn't come across as all that intelligent no matter how insightful what he is saying might be.

Paul was a petty crook, putting his knowledge of archaeology (yes, he has some, though not as much as he thinks) to work to find and collect artifacts that are worth money on the black market. His thoughts haven't risen much above that since Cateran recruited him for the Masters of Fortune. Bank robbery is his idea of a big-time crime, and all he thinks about is getting his hands on the loot. He's learned to love a good fight, but he doesn't really want to hurt anyone; I mean, c'mon, this is all for fun, right? I try to get the money, you try to stop me, I beat you up (not badly), and I get the money. That's how he looks at the super-villain business. He doesn't like Crimson or Whitestar at all; they're *waaaay* too serious about all this.

On the other hand, he *loves* Cateran—head over heels, hubba-hubba, the whole nine yards, ever since he first laid eyes on her. He knows there's no hope for a relationship, not while he's still a big rocky guy, but he can't help how he feels. He will pretty much do anything she asks him to, or that has to be done to protect her.

The other thought that's uppermost in his mind right now is finding out a way to change back to his normal self. He'd like it best if he could switch back and forth between forms, but he'll accept a one-way ticket back to Paul if that's all he can get. He takes every opportunity he can to talk to super-mages, hoping that one can help him out.

Powers/Tactics: Tungalrak has been infected with a Native American earth elemental-type spirit. This gives him incredible strength and resistance to damage, the ability to tunnel through the earth and project blasts of rocks or sharp stones, and similar powers. He isn't very experienced at using his powers yet, but that will change quickly.

Appearance: Tungalrak's body is seven feet tall, made out of red rock like that of the Arizona mesas, shot through here and there with veins of turquoise. His head has assumed the shape of a buffalo skull.

TUNGARAK

CP: 78

OP: 29

PP: 63

INT	4			Offx:	25	DefX:	27
WILL	4	RES	12				
PRE	10						
TECH	4						
REF	6	SPD	3				
DEX	6						
CON	12	SD	24	ED	24	END	120
STR	14	REC	26				
BODY	12	STUN	60	HITS	60		
MOVE	6	RUN	12	SPRINT	18		
		SWIM	6	LEAP	6		

COST	SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS	AV/DV
3	Hand-to-Hand: 5	11
2	Use Power: Earth Powers: 2	8
4	Hand-to-Hand & Melee Evade: 3	9
2	Ranged Evade: 2	8
4	Expert (Antiquities Black Market): 4	8
1	Expert (Art History): 1	5
4	Expert (Bay Area Fences): 4	8
4	Local Expert (Southwest Indian Archaeological Sites): 4	8
1	Science (Anthropology): 1	5
1	Science (Archeology): 1	5
3	Streetwise: 3	10

COST	POWERS	END
19	Rock Body: Armor 30 KD, 30 ED, Hardened	
3	Rock Body: Lack of Weakness -15	
3	Rock Body: Knockback Resistance -15 m/y	
8	Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing, Doesn't need to eat, breathe, or excrete, Safe Environments: Vacuum/High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Heat/Cold, Immunities: Aging & Disease	
13	Tunneling: 10 m/y per phase through KD/EKD of 17	1
12	Earth Powers Multipower	
2m	Avalanche Blast: 12d6 Energy Blast	6
1m	Earthquake: 10d6 Explosion, Only affects targets on the ground (-2 Power Points)	6
2m	Stone Shards: 5d6 Autofire AP Killing Attack	6

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 15 Distinctive Features: Big Rock Spirit (Constant, not concealable, Major)
- 30 Large Size & Weight (Constant, Severe, Extreme)
- 10 Reduced Manipulation: Large rocky finger (Frequent, Strong, Major)
- 8 Secret Identity: Paul Grissolm (Infrequent, Strong, Major)
- 15 Enemy: UNTIL and The Guard (More Powerful, Worldwide, Imprison)
- 8 In Love with Cateran (Frequent, Mild, Major)

Secret Identity: Melissa Saunders

Background/History: Ever had that dream where you wake up and you're real tiny, and everything around you looks gigantic? Well, it happened to Melissa Saunders for real.

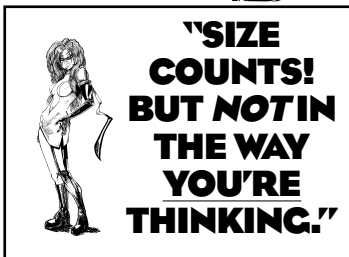
One night when she was just shy of sixteen, Melissa went to bed. She'd been reading *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* for one of her high school classes. Everything was perfectly normal, but when she woke up, her bed, furniture, and everything else in her room had become gigantic! She screamed, but no one seemed to hear her (she figured out later that her voice hadn't been loud enough to be heard because of her small size). After she stopped panicking, she realized that it wasn't that her furnishings had all gotten bigger—it was that she'd gotten smaller. By sizing herself up against the pillow, she figured she was only about an inch tall!

She sat there and tried to figure out what to do. Couldn't tell her parents—heck, they usually didn't even have time to talk to her in the morning anyway, they were so busy rushing off to work in the city. Didn't want to tell any of her friends, either; some things, she understood, were best kept secret.

For that matter, how was she even going to get to school? It would take her two hours just to walk to the bus stop at her size. Could she even get out of bed? She crawled to the edge and looked over. It was a loooong way down. Well, nothing for it; she'd have to jump and hope she didn't break her leg. She gritted her teeth, closed her eyes, and leapt . . .

. . . only to find herself suspended in mid-air! She wasn't falling. She concentrated hard for a second, and found that she could move herself. She could fly! Within five minutes, she was zipping around the room just as pretty as you please, executing midair spins, hairpin turns, and all sorts of fancy maneuvers. She landed on the floor near her desk. Now this flight thing was pretty cool, but she wasn't all that sure about the Tom Thumb routine. Maybe if she concentrated real hard on being normal size again? . . .

Within a few seconds, she was back to her normal self. She found out she couldn't fly at that size, though; that only seemed to work when she was tiny. She got her biology textbook out of her backpack and flipped through it for a second, looking for something she'd read the other day. "Mutation: a change in a gene which



results in a new inheritable characteristic." Wow, she thought, that must be it, I'm a mutant. I mean, I haven't been in any lab accidents or bitten by any radioactive butterflies or anything, what else could it be? Cool.

When you're sixteen, without significant parental supervision, and you have powers of shrinking and flight, what can you do? You've got it, spy on your rivals at school. And get into the teacher's desk and look at the test before you take it.

Soon, Melissa was making straight As, and the gossip mill was buzzing with hateful little stories about all the popular girls who'd been snubbing her since fifth grade. All in all, it was a very good junior year.

It wasn't long before Melissa graduated to petty theft. Nothing major—small pieces of jewelry, a little cash here and there, anything small enough and light enough for her to carry in her "Hummingbird" form (as she called it). It was during one of these "shopping runs" that she learned about some of the other powers that she had. She was lifting a small, but nevertheless very valuable, diamond ring from a jeweler's in the mall when an annoyingly diligent sales clerk saw her. "Hey, come back here!" he shouted, waving his hands and trying to catch her.

"Leave me alone!" she shouted in that tiny, squeaky voice she has when she is small. Suddenly she stopped, turned around, and walked the other way as if nothing had happened! Intrigued, she flew up behind him and said, "Cluck like a chicken!" In a moment he was strutting around making clucking noises. A little experimentation brought a couple of other mental powers to the fore as well—a psychic blast and minor-strength psychokinesis.

And when you're seventeen and find out you have mind control powers, what do you do then? That's right—you get the captain of the football team to take you to the Senior Prom. And you make your parents give you a car for graduation.

But petty theft and idle amusement didn't satisfy Melissa for long. She had all these powers, why shouldn't she use them? Before long she had graduated from petty theft to making her living stealing and fencing jewelry and similar small, valuable items. After she had proven herself trustworthy, her fence turned her on to some spy-jobs that she was ideal for. Soon she was making

more money doing industrial espionage and surveillance work than by stealing, and having a fine time. Sure, her parents thought she was attending community college, but a little mental control here and there ensured that she got top marks without ever having to attend class.

Hummingbird came to Cateran's attention when Cateran needed to find out some information about a computer corporation that the Masters of Fortune wanted to hit. She needed to know where the plans for certain experimental microchips, as well as the prototype chips themselves, were kept so that they wouldn't have to waste time. Hummingbird got the information Cateran wanted, and in almost no time. Cateran was impressed.

The second job Hummingbird did went just as well. Heatwave, that infantile idiot, had gone and gotten himself captured by the kids of the Arcadian Academy while trying to rob a convenience store—a *convenience store*, of all things. After letting him rot in Stronghold for a while, Cateran decided to break him out. She needed to know which cell he was in, and what security was now like. Would Hummingbird take the job on?

This was the most serious thing anyone had ever asked Hummingbird to do. She thought about it for a while, then agreed; it was time to test her abilities to the max. After a few reconnaissance flights, she went in. Stronghold's sensors were good, but not good enough to pick up something as small and fast as she was. She got Cateran the information, with no one at Stronghold the wiser; Cateran, in turn, got Heatwave out.

When Cateran was forming the new Masters of Fortune, she immediately thought of Hummingbird. Her abilities as a scout or a surprise attack were well worth having. At first, Hummingbird passed on the invitation; being in a super-villain group usually meant fighting super-heroes, and she didn't want to get in any fights. But gradually the idea grew on her, and Cateran cleverly appealed to her vanity. It wasn't long before she signed on for good.

Personality/Motivation: Hummingbird isn't a hardened criminal. She's more of a young adult on a lark. She loves her powers and what she can do with them. She likes being able to spy on people without being detected, to make them do whatever she wants, to get whatever she wants without having to pay for it. She really isn't into the whole self-sacrifice, devotion to the cause of good routine that most heroes go in for; she's essentially a selfish, petty, rather vain person who'd rather look out for herself than use her powers to help others.

However, her villainous tendencies run strictly to the larcenous. She has no desire whatsoever to play nasty tricks on super-heroes (okay, maybe a little prank or two every now and then), or to get in fights with them—or anybody else, for that matter. If someone pulled a gun on her, she'd probably freak out. This is really just a big game to her, something to do for kicks. The thought of killing someone—something that Crimson and Whitestar often talk about—is almost enough to make her sick.

Hummingbird gets along well with Cateran, who takes a protective attitude towards her, and with Tungalak. She and Paul have a lot in common in their attitude and upbringing, and have become fast friends. They often band together to voice opposition to Crimson's and Whitestar's more violent approach to business. That leaves Cateran, the team leader, as the tie-breaking vote, and she usually sides with Hummingbird and Tungalak. If Paul weren't so infatuated with Cateran, he might wake up and realize that he'd be much better off with (and have a much better chance with) Hummingbird.

Powers/Tactics: Hummingbird is a mutant with the power to shrink her body down to about 1" tall. When she shrinks, her cells become extremely compact, which somehow makes her resistant to damage. She cannot vary her height other than to become 1" tall; she could not, for example, become one foot tall. When shrunk, she also gains the ability to fly, and two mental powers, mind control and mild psychokinesis.

Hummingbird's main function is to be a scout and spy. She dislikes combat intensely and will avoid it if at all possible.

Appearance: Hummingbird is a very attractive young woman in her early 20s, with long blonde hair and blue eyes. When shrunk, she wears an a short dress, asymmetrical boots (with large, Dr. Martin-style, footpieces), and long gloves with trails. She doesn't use a mask, preferring to don cool sunglasses instead.

HUMMINGBIRD

CP: 65

OP: 43

PP: 36

INT	5			OffX:	20	DefX:	34
WILL	7	REX	21				
PRE	6						
TECH	7						
REF	9	SPD	5				
DEX	8						
CON	7	SD	14	ED	14	END	70
STR	6	REC	13				
BODY	6	STUN	30	HITS	30		
MOVE	6	RUN	12	SPRINT	18		
		SWIM	6	LEAP	6		

COST	SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS	AV/DV
1	Use Psychokinesis : 1	10
3	Use Mental Powers : 3	10
9	Use Flight : 9	16
E	Hand-to-Hand Evade : 2	10
2	Melee Evade : 2	10
5	Ranged Evade : 5	13
3	Acrobatics : 3	11
E	Concentration : 2	9
5	Expert (Gems & Jewelry) : 5	10
4	Professional (Shopping) : 4	9
4	Stealth : 4	12
4	Wardrobe and Style : 4	10
3	Beautiful	

COST	POWERS	END
10	Shrinking : 3 Levels (1/32 height (about 1"), 1/4096 weight (about 3.5 ounces), +6 to DEX for DV purposes, -6 to all PER Rolls made against her, +6 m/y Knockback when she is attacked, 0 END	0
10	Cellular Cohesion : 50% Physical & Energy Damage Reduction, Only while shrunk (-2 Power Points)	
6	Flight : 40 m/y, Only while shrunk	4
8	Mental Powers Multipower, Only while shrunk	
1m	Mental Domination : 10d6 Mind Control	5
1m	Mental Blast : 5d6 Mental Attack	5

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 13 Code of Honor: Will not kill (Constant, Risk bodily harm, Major)
- 5 Airhead (Frequent, Misplace minor, Major)
- 15 Enemy (UNTIL and The Guard) (More powerful, Worldwide, Imprison)
- 5 Watcher: Cateran (More powerful, Single country, Watching)
- 8 Secret Identity: Melissa Saunders (Infreq., Strong, Major)
- 5 Vocal Impairment: Very hard to hear when shrunk (Frequent, Only whisper, Major)

Secret Identity: Arthur Kosigian

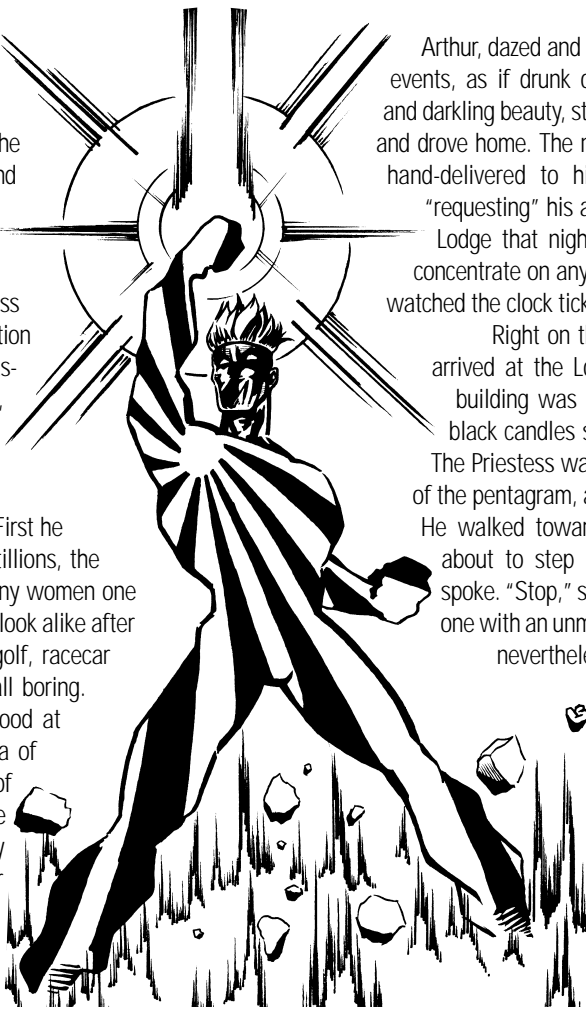
Background/History: It's amazing what rich people do when they're bored. Some of them buy and swap boats, sportscars, horses, things like that. Some of them buy and swap entire companies. Some of them take up skiing, polo, golf, or "extreme sports" like skydiving. And sometimes some of the really stupid ones get involved with the occult . . .

Arthur Kosigian's family emigrated to the United States in the mid-19th century and moved to California. His great-grandfather started a small produce business. His grandfather, despite the setback of the 1906 earthquake, built that small produce business into a group of markets and a produce distribution business. His father has turned it all into a massive chain of supermarkets, distributorships, and related businesses. Arthur had it good all of his life, no worries about anything, and all the money he could possibly spend.

But he was bored. Bored bored bored. First he tried the social circuit—the parties, the cotillions, the picnics. It was boring. There are only so many women one can sleep with, after all, and they all start to look alike after a while. He tried sports—polo, yachting, golf, racecar driving, about a dozen others. They were all boring. They were pleasant enough until he got good at them, then they lost their appeal—the idea of slow, steady improvement and perfection of skills was not something he cared about. He even tried getting involved with the family business (shudder!). He quickly vowed never to do anything like that again.

One day a friend mentioned some interesting "meetings" that he'd been attending. The Esoteric Lodge, it was called. Did Arthur want to come along? Lacking any better alternative, Arthur went, expecting to see a bunch of fat men in robes chanting meaningless gobbledegook and waving candles in the air.

He received quite a surprise when he got there. There weren't any fat old men; all of the participants were young, good-looking men and women, about his own age. They said they used magic to retain their youth—several claimed to be in their fifties! And then, after the candles were lit, the Priestess came out. Arthur's attention was immediately riveted to her. She was tall, and gorgeous, with a regal bearing that attracted all eyes. She noticed Arthur's gaze, and smiled at him. She kept smiling at him throughout the ceremony. Somehow she seemed as attracted to him as he did to her. Yet when the ritual ended, she walked out without a backward glance.



**"THE POWERS
MAY BE WHITE,
BUT THE
HEART, I
ASSURE YOU, IS
QUITE BLACK."**

Arthur, dazed and confused by the evening's events, as if drunk on new-found knowledge and darkling beauty, stumbled out to his Porsche and drove home. The next morning a letter was hand-delivered to his penthouse apartment "requesting" his attendance at the Esoteric Lodge that night at midnight. Unable to concentrate on anything else, Arthur sat and watched the clock tick away the hours.

Right on the stroke of midnight, he arrived at the Lodge. The interior of the building was dim, lit only by a ring of black candles surrounding a pentagram. The Priestess waited for him at the center of the pentagram, a large book in her hands. He walked towards her. Just as he was about to step into the pentagram, she spoke. "Stop," she said in a soft voice, but one with an unmistakable air of command nevertheless. He stopped.

"Do you desire initiation into the Esoteric Mysteries?" she said. "Yes!" he said, the eagerness unconcealable.

"If you enter the pentagram, and take unto you the Book of Mysteries and open it to learn the things therein,

you can never turn your back on them, or on those who taught them to you. You must pledge your soul and heart to the Esoteric Brotherhood, and swear to hold secret all that you learn from your Brothers. Will you swear?"

"I will."

"Swear to me then, your soul and heart, that you will belong to the Esoteric Brotherhood for now and for ever, and that its secrets will be your secrets, in this life and all lives to come."

"By my soul and heart, I swear it!"

"Enter the pentagram."

Arthur stepped over the candles and into the pentagram. And that night, in the dark of the moon, he opened the Book of Mysteries and began to learn the wisdom therein. And when the sun rose he shut the Book and went home, where he fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

He returned the next night, and the next, and every night afterwards. The study of the Esoteric Mysteries fascinated him, intrigued him—obsessed him, really, like nothing he had ever felt

before. It was strange to him, to hold interest in a thing for so long, and not become tired of it. That he might be imperiling his soul much more than he already had by swearing it to the Brotherhood never troubled him.

Over the course of years, Arthur's knowledge of arcane lore increased in slow and carefully measured steps. His masters taught him, but they taught him things that were hidden behind veils and beneath shadows, such that he had to struggle to pierce the veil and lift the shadow to learn the truth they concealed. Finally his comprehension of the Esoteric Mysteries reached the level where the Brotherhood allowed him to participate in minor rituals as a postulant. Arthur performed well the tasks set him, and before long had progressed from minor rituals to major ones. He still knew no spells, but he felt confident that he was on his way to the True Wisdom where such powers would be revealed to him.

Then there came a night, a shadowy May Eve, when he was chosen by the Brotherhood to speak five words in one of their darkest, vilest rituals, a ritual of Binding and Pacting with a demon of the Shadow Realms. Arthur spoke his words, and spoke them well, but the tongue of the Master whose words formed the keystone of the spell faltered, and the demon was loosed upon them. Arthur felt a great wave of terror and pain pass over him, and then a white light filled his eyes, and he collapsed.

He awakened in a hospital room with an odd amulet on his neck—apparently the Brotherhood had brought him here and given him the amulet for protection rather than trying to help him itself. Yet he felt no pain, and his body showed no wounds. And so, bitter at the abandonment by his Brothers, he tore their amulet from his neck.

Suddenly the white light filled his eyes again. When it cleared, he felt a strength, an invigoration, such as he had never felt before. Whatever had been summoned in that ritual, it had given him unimaginable power! With but a thought he projected a blast of bright white energy at the wall, smashing a tremendous hole in it, and then flew away from the hospital.

Soon the papers were reporting a new super-villain who called himself Whitestar. He'd blasted his way into an armored car, stealing three million dollars and killing two guards. Ceteran read about him, and decided he was just what the Masters of Fortune needed.

Personality/Motivation: Whitestar is a cold-blooded, violent, arrogant son of a bitch. His native arrogance, born of his family's wealth and

his own innate abilities, has been multiplied many times over by his having received superpowers. Most members of the Masters can only tolerate him in short doses, except for Crimson the Archer, who gets along fairly well with him.

Whitestar has no compunctions about killing or using violence to accomplish his objectives; in fact, he seems to prefer it. One of the things that he looks for from his membership in the Masters of Fortune is the chance to get in fights, hurt people, and break things. He seems to fairly revel in the destruction and chaos he causes and the evil he does.

Whitestar gets bored easily. Another attraction of the Masters, and of super-villainy in general, is that it usually keeps his interest fairly well, and is a challenge. But if there isn't a crime to work on, a battle to fight, or some other way for him keep himself occupied, he's bored. And when he's bored, he's temperamental and vicious. His teammates have learned to leave him alone to brood when he gets like that.

Powers/Tactics: Whitestar's powers derive from a Shadow Realms creature which the Esoteric Brotherhood's (read: the Brotherhood Arcane's) ritual called forth and accidentally loosed into his body. He can fly, project energy bolts, and drain the vitality from other men ("leeching their souls," he calls it). Although he knows a lot of arcane lore, he is not a wizard and cannot cast spells. He may one day learn enough to do so, however.

Appearance: Whitestar's costume is black with a large, multi-rayed white starburst enveloping his left shoulder; rays from the starburst run down each of his arms and his left side and leg. Small red lines outline the rays. He also wears a black face mask with a white starburst on the forehead between the eyes.

WHITESTAR

CP: 69

OP: 39

PP: 57

INT	5			OffX:	28	DefX:	26
WILL	7	RES	21				
PRE	7						
TECH	5						
REF	8	SPD	4				
DEX	8						
CON	7	SD	14	ED	14	END	70
STR	7	REC	14				
BODY	9	STUN	45	HITS	45		
MOVE	6	RUN	12	SPRINT	18		
		SWIM	6	LEAP	6		

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS		AV/DV
2	Use White Energy Powers : 2	10
3	Use Flight: 3	8
E	Hand-to-Hand Evade: 2	10
2	Melee Evade: 2	10
4	Ranged Evade: 4	12
1	Expert (The Esoteric Brotherhood): 1	6
1	Expert (Magic)	6
5	French: 5	10
2	Gambling: 2	7
3	High Society: 3	10
3	Seduction: 3	10
3	Stealth: 3	11
3	Wardrobe and Style: 3	10
4	Wealth: 4	
3	Handsome	

COST POWERS		END
12	White Light Field : Force Field 25 KD & 25 EKD, 1/2 END Cost	3
12	White Light Field : Darkness vs. Normal Sight, 8 m/y radius, Personal Immunity, 1/2 END Cost	3
7	Flight: 25 m/y, x8 NCM	3
18	White Energy Powers Multipower	
2m	Whiteforce Blast : 12d6 Energy Blast	6
2m	Whiteforce Beam : 9d6 Killing Attack	5
2m	Leeching The Soul : 6d6 Ranged BODY Drain	9
2m	White Flare : Flash vs. All Sight, 6 Phases	5

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 8 Arrogant (Frequent, Mild, Major)
- 8 Overconfident (Frequent, Mild, Major)
- 15 Enemy: UNTIL and the Guard (More powerful, Worldwide, Imprison)
- 30 Enemy: The Brotherhood Arcane (More powerful, Worldwide, Death)
- 8 Secret Identity (Arthur Kosigian) (Infrequent, Strong, Major)
- 8 Greedy (Frequent, Mild, Major)

THE CASTLE: THE MASTERS OF FORTUNE'S BASE

Ah, home sweet home. For the Masters, home is an underground base built beneath part of the San Bruno Mountains, near the Cypress Hills Golf Course. Black Paladin had it built about twenty-five years ago by an unscrupulous construction firm. Just for good measure, he later killed anyone who had been associated with the project to be sure that it would remain a secret.

The main entrance to the base is an old mansion now run as the Southern Hills Bed-and-Breakfast by Jim and Martha Patterson. It's a pleasant little getaway among the hills, separated from the hustle and bustle of the city, but not so far away that visitors can't get back to the city quickly if they have to. Cateran owns it, under an assumed name, but hired the Pattersons to run it. Jim Patterson is a career military man (not of any great rank or responsibility), and Martha his wife of 28 years. Although they're nice folks who do a good job running the bed-and-breakfast, they don't have a clue about their mysterious Scottish employer or what's really going on right beneath their feet. Even if they did, Cateran pays them so well they would probably turn a blind eye to the whole affair. Each member of the Masters has a room constantly reserved for him or her at Southern Hills, thus allowing them easy, unquestioned access to the secret elevator that admits them to the base.

Deep below Southern Hills, reachable only by a lengthy elevator shaft, lies The Castle, as Black Paladin christened the base. Since Black Paladin designed it, many parts of it, such as the living quarters and dining area, resemble an actual castle—the walls look and feel like dressed stone, the ceilings seem to be supported by wooden beams, and so forth. There are even fireplaces, but they can only be used when Southern Hills' main fireplace is in use, since the smoke from them is hidden by mingling it with the smoke from Southern Hills' fire.

The base has three levels. The first, and lowest, level contains the ventilation equipment, power generators, independent water supply, spare parts, and other equipment necessary to keep the base running comfortably. (The base is set up so that the inhabitants can survive for about two years, give or take, if cut off from the outside world. Since it's also been constructed with nuclear-biological-chemical warfare defenses, the Masters of Fortune could conceivably wait out a nuclear war here in safety—though the base certainly could not withstand a near strike by a powerful nuclear bomb.) It also includes several laboratories. However, since the Masters do not presently have any members who are very scientifically inclined, most of the labs are abandoned right now; a few simple maintenance robots keep them clean and functional in case anyone ever wants to use them. Whitestar has turned one lab into his "occult library and conjuring-room," complete with a bookcase of dusty tomes, a pentagram

inscribed on the floor, and a desk lit by a candle on a skull. Whitestar has forbidden the others to enter this room. Hummingbird occasionally sneaks in to look around anyway, and Cateran has not acknowledged his "order" at all, but the Archer and Tungarak seem to respect his wishes. Lastly, the bottom level also includes a hangar where the Masters' only vehicle, a VIPER Dragon which they stole and modified to suit themselves (they trimmed it down to increase its speed and make it quieter; they don't need its weapons or extra passenger space most of the time, so they got rid of them). The hangar's automatic door is concealed in a small, deep crevice in the San Bruno Mountains that is not easily visible from the outside, even close up.

The second level of the base is where the elevator shaft ends (there are separate, smaller elevators, and stairwells, for the inhabitants to use to move from level to level within the base). It includes the rest of the labs; the computer and communications room; a medical room with "automated combat doctor" machinery and an expert system for diagnosing diseases and other medical conditions; and a gym/practice room equipped to handle the rigors of superhuman exertion, training, and combat. The gym isn't nearly as well-equipped as, say, the Champions' Chaos Chamber, but it serves the Masters of Fortune just fine. Next to the gym is a vault/storage area where valuables are kept. Nearby is a VR Holography Chamber designed by Heatwave and Streamer (okay, they were annoying, but they had some smarts, too) which the team uses to plan runs on targets. Some of the members make recreational use of it, too, but Cateran discourages them from doing so, since she doesn't want them to get caught up in their own private little VR fantasy worlds and lose track of their work.

The third level of the base is given over to quarters for team members, a cooking and dining area, and recreational facilities. The rec-rooms include a couple of televisions, a high-quality stereo system, a pool table that can be converted into a ping-pong table, a couple of pinball machines and video games, decks of cards (though few of the others are foolish enough to play for money with Cateran or Crimson the Archer), and some computers for playing games on. There is also a large jacuzzi that Hummingbird in particular enjoys.

Although all of the Masters have quarters at the base, most of them don't stay there for any great length of time—each of them has one or more homes in the city that they prefer. Crimson likes the house he bought that belonged to his predecessor; it has all the equipment he needs to practice archery and craft new arrows, and facilities he can't hope to duplicate at the base without going to a lot of trouble and effort, which he'd prefer not to do. Whitestar doesn't care to "slum" at the base; his penthouse apartment is a *lot* more luxurious and has many similar features (such as a jacuzzi). Anything it doesn't have he can go somewhere and get (with the exception of the VR room). He can also have lady friends over to his apartment, something he cannot do at the base. He likes being able to keep his occult paraphernalia there, though,

since that way it doesn't attract unwelcome attention from visitors to his apartment. Hummingbird likes the base, especially the jacuzzi and VR room, but the possibility of Crimson or Whitestar being rude or annoying and spoiling her day often makes her stay away. Her larcenous exploits have provided her with enough income to keep herself in fine style in her own apartment, and anyway, there are no dance clubs at the base! Tungarak stays at the base almost all the time, since he cannot move about freely in society; he feels kind of trapped there, but uses the VR room as a way to "escape." That has gotten him interested in computers; Cateran is looking into the possibility of hiring someone to create a device that would allow him to type on a keyboard.

As for Cateran herself, she has homes all over the world, including Bay City. She would choose her house in Hillsborough over the base just about any day, since the base seems rather "confining" to her. However, she knows that she has certain responsibilities as team leader (and as the team's most experienced super-criminal), so she's often at the base, planning crimes, looking for jobs to pull, or mediating disputes between the members. However, regardless of their other feelings, all of the members agree that the base makes a great place to hide out after (or just before) pulling a job, a central meeting location, and a place where they can relax without fear of discovery.

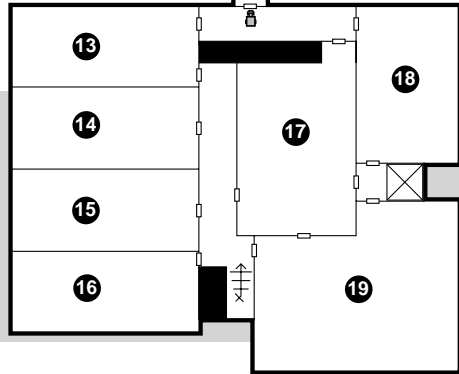
In case anyone ever discovers the main entrance to the base and comes after the Masters, they have an escape route—a tunnel on the third floor out that takes them outside to the Olivet Memorial Park Cemetery. The entrance on that end is hidden inside a mausoleum purchased by Black Paladin when he built the base. Just inside the base's entrance to the tunnel there is a fast electric cart (40 m/y per Phase) for use by those who cannot fly or run quicker than that.

Closed-circuit TV cameras (recessed into the wall to make them difficult to tamper with) and laser cannons (6d6 Ranged Killing Attack, AV 13, 6 Shots each) located every 100 m/y along the tunnel keep it secure; the base's computer recognizes the Masters themselves and will not fire on them, but will shoot anyone else who enters the tunnel.

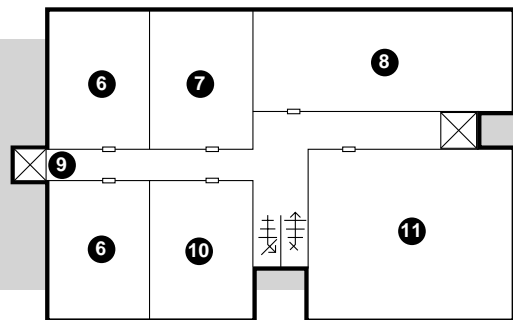
MAP KEY

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Launch Tube | 11 VR Chamber |
| 2 Occult Library | 12 Escape Tunnel |
| 3 Storage | 13 Crimson's Bedroom |
| 4 HVAC, etc. | 14 Tungarak's Bedroom |
| 5 Hanger | 15 Hummingbird's Bedroom |
| 6 Lab | 16 Whitestar's Bedroom |
| 7 Computer | 17 Dining Room |
| 8 Gym | 18 Cateran's Bedroom |
| 9 Elevator to B&B | 19 Rec Room |
| 10 Medical | |

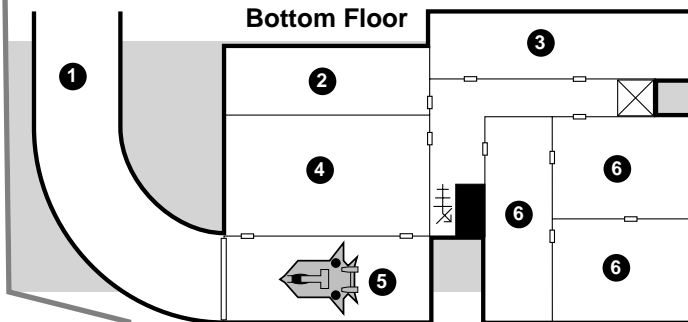
Top Floor



Middle Floor



Bottom Floor



STORY SEEDS

1 Missing Person: Hummingbird has had no contact with her parents since shortly after she left high school. Frankly, she never saw much of them, since they were so busy with their careers, and she can get along by herself just fine. But they're worried; she began acting so strangely during her later years in high school, and during the short time she went to college, and now she seems to have disappeared! Then, one night, as they were leaving a restaurant in downtown Bay City, they saw someone up ahead who looked like her! She was with some tall redhead. Before they could catch up to the two of them, a nondescript blue van pulled up and the redhead hustled their daughter into the van—they're sure it was her, they got a good look at her as she was getting into the van—and then the van drove away. Under close questioning, they may remember that the driver of the van was a man with long blonde hair, and that the van appeared to be riding low to the ground.

(What happened was this. The Masters were casing a near-by bank for a robbery. However, the Champions (or the PCs) were spotted in the area, so they decided to pull out fast without committing the robbery. Tungarak was in the back of the van (causing it to ride low) and Crimson the Archer was driving. They picked up Cateran and Hummingbird and got out of the city.)

The Saunders, being "important people" (read: rich and with high-powered jobs in the business world), decide to skip over the police—"They never find missing persons anyway, that's why you see them on the backs of milk cartons so much"—and go straight to the PCs with a request for assistance. They think their daughter's fallen in with some cult (why else would a big red-headed woman be able to force her into a van without any protest on her part?). The heroes may recognize Cateran from the Saunders's description, or guess who she is after a little research, but finding Melissa will be difficult. Getting her to give up her current lifestyle will be nearly impossible, though they may be able to do it—Melissa is not a bad-hearted person, just self-indulgent and lazy.

2 The Best of Friends: The group dynamics of the Masters of Fortune are not among the best. Crimson the Archer and Whitestar are violent (Crimson actually enjoys killing); Tungarak and Hummingbird are not (Hummingbird will avoid conflict whenever she can); Cateran is generally non-violent, but can easily become the most lethal person in the group if provoked. This leads to splits between the violent and non-violent factions that Cateran has to mediate—usually hers is the deciding vote on how jobs will be conducted. This "schizophrenic" group nature may be confusing to the PCs if they encounter the Masters on occasions when the vote has gone differently than it has in the past (say, the Masters suddenly become much more violent than the PCs are used to). This could even happen in mid-scenario, if the Masters' initial plans fail and Cateran changes her mind about how to conduct the later stages of the job. Clever PC groups will try to figure out what's going on, and may even be able to exploit the rift in the

group. Tungarak and Hummingbird, for example, might be susceptible to reformation and even super-heroing, if presented with the right reasons and role-models. They're both used to surviving by crime, though, so some way of compensating for that lack of income and luxury would have to be found to really sway them—as would a way of breaking Cateran's hold over Tungarak.

3 Unsolved Mysteries: It was mighty strange when everyone working for Filmore Construction was murdered over the course of just a few days twenty-five years ago. The police never got any leads; they suspected that the killings were the work of a *really* disgruntled ex-employee with a big knife, but never developed any solid leads. That didn't really satisfy some of the victims' families. They pooled their money and hired some private detectives a few years ago. Those detectives have been digging into county records, what few Filmore Construction records still exist, and any other source of information. They've found some useful information—a witness who saw "an armored guy with a cloak" in an alley near the scene of one of the killings, and some Filmore documents and accounting records that hint at an "off the books" job that was performed before the killings took place. By process of elimination, they have come to the conclusion that Black Paladin is connected with the murders (and they're right, of course). This has in turn caused them to research the Masters of Fortune, particularly Cateran, the only member from that time who is still alive (other than the Paladin). Once they realize that some serious steps are going to have to be taken, though, they will contact the PCs, since they are not able to take on super-humans. Cateran knows nothing about the killings, and will get a little testy if someone insists that she does after she denies it.

4 Overdue Books: Whitestar's occult library comes from the Esoteric Brotherhood, a.k.a. the Brotherhood Arcane. They are not pleased with the fact that he simply abandoned them after they "gave" him his amazing mystic powers. They want their books back, and the soul and heart that he promised them at his initiation as well! When their team of mystically-powered supers comes after the Masters of Fortune, Cateran will have to turn to the PCs for assistance in repelling the attack. What will she be willing to give up to keep her team together? What will the PCs ask for to help save Whitestar's life?

5 Humanity's Price: Tungarak isn't happy with his current condition. While he would really like to find a way to be able to change between his earth spirit form, and his human form, he'd just settle for a complete cure at this point. To further complicate matters, word of a tome of esoteric lore has reached the ears of Whitestar. He really wants to get his hands on this book, but the current owner, Mason (see pg. 94) won't sell it to him. Since Whitestar suspects that he'll be able to reverse Tungarak's condition with one of the spells in this volume, he enlists his teammate's aid. Word of this will reach the PCs when the duo try to rob Mason's Curiosities.

The spell does exist, and will work. The only problem is that it requires a human sacrifice. Is Tungarak willing to pay that price?



FOXBAT AND FRIENDS



History: Foxbat burst onto the super-villain scene in a blaze of glory back on June 10, 1975. His master plan had the police and the Champions baffled. Of course, that first master plan had everyone confused; it didn't make any sense. But it did involve the San Francisco Giants, lawn mowers, and a great big pot of glue.

It wasn't too long before the Champions put an end to the whole thing. Foxbat took his capture and brief stay in jail in surprisingly well. "What goes around makes me dizzy!" he yelled as he was led away. "Look behind you, because that will be the front!" No one had a clue what he might have meant.

That first encounter with the loony villain set the tone for later conflicts. Foxbat was constantly coming up with master plans, getting distracted, getting captured, escaping from prison, and starting the whole process over again. While his actions rarely endangered anyone, he was an annoyance.

Along the way, Foxbat got the idea that behind every great super-villain was a horde of agents, pushing him in front of—that wasn't it. But the general idea was sound. Foxbat raided VIPER's ranks for Exo-Skeleton Man, found Harmonious Fist wandering around in an alley, and generally recruited others minions as he ran into them.

Occasionally, Foxbat would get it into his head that he was a hero, and try to help. The results were generally worse for the Champions than when he was a villain. Even more feared were the times when he would fixate on something.

For several horrible months in 1982, Foxbat went around billing himself as "Frost's pal, Foxbat!" After all, every great hero needed a pal, and Foxbat was just the man for the job. Wherever Frost would go, Foxbat was sure to appear.

That came to an end when Foxbat fell in love with Orchid, the Champion's teleportalist. He was everywhere, bringing her flowers during the middle of a fight with Dr. Destroyer, sending her chocolates, and generally being a pain in the rear. Like all things with Foxbat, however, this didn't last long. He became distracted and drifted off to something else.

Then came the rise of the Proprietor. Like so many other villains, Foxbat flocked to his banner. Of course, the crazy villain had his own master plan for betraying the Proprietor. In the end, it all came to naught when everyone in the Great Dome was killed.

This should have been the end of the loon, but Foxbat had prepared for his death. It was only a few months later that his nephew, Jason Brouder, took up the cause. It seemed that the new millennium wouldn't be spared Foxbat's particular brand of lunacy.

Organization: There isn't any real organization among Foxbat's crew. There's the man, and then everyone else. Fortunately for Foxbat, none of his people have private agendas that they are aware of. This keeps them plugging away on his latest master plan without complaint. Or at least without too much complaint.

Tactics: Foxbat's tactics are completely flexible. That's because he doesn't have any idea of what tactics he should use. While his minions can be quite dangerous individually, they are rarely used together with any efficiency.

His combat plans are as confusing and grandiose as his master plans, and have about the same chance of working. Foxbat also has a tendency to lose track of what he's doing in the middle of combat. Fighting with Foxbat is hard on everyone.

Goal: Foxbat wants to rule the world. He also wants to corner the world's supply of bubblegum. And he wants everyone to pay homage to the Blessed St. Bob. Foxbat's ever-changing goals are as bizarre as he is. This unpredictable group will keep the heroes hopping as they try to figure out what's next.

Secret Identity: Jason Brouder

History: The end of the Proprietor threw the world into shock, and brought countless changes. Many of these changes were bad and some of them were good. Others were mixed; some bad, some good. Some people would call the latter life. Certainly, that's how it felt to Jason.

It was like when he won the Silver Medal for Gymnastics in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. What should have been one of the best days in his life was marred by his team mate (and best friend) shattering his arm during the Rings.

Jason got a coveted medal; Alex got a cast and months of physical therapy. Things like that just happened to Jason. Whenever a good event occurred, it was sure to be leavened by something bad. Of course, when Jason was going through a bad patch, he could always count on something nice occurring to take the edge off. He considered himself the ultimate example of the yin-yang.

This time, it was his Uncle Freddy. Word had come to Jason's family that his mother's brother had been killed in the Great Dome. They'd always figured he'd come to a bad end, but Jason was devastated. Freddy had been his favorite relative. Just about everyone's got a mother or father, but how many kids have **Foxbat** for an uncle? He used to get the best birthday and Christmas presents from his black-sheep uncle when he was a kid.

Uncle Freddy's lawyer informed the family of the terms of his will. The entire estate, including Freddy's Bay City penthouse, had been left to his favorite nephew, Jason.

Jason was speechless. He had been devastated by his uncle's death. This sudden gift of wealth didn't make up for it, but it sure helped ease the pain. A few days after the meeting in the lawyer's office, Jason was on his way to Bay City.

Upon his arrival, Jason went to the Russian Hill apartment that had suddenly become his. He'd never visited Uncle Freddy in Bay City, so he was amazed by the luxury of his new home. Jason was thinking of settling down; he was tired of doing the gymnastics thing and living off his medal. Bay City seemed like the natural place to start the next phase of his life.



**"RENTAL
CARS ARE
THE DEVIL'S
TUNA!"**

Little did he know what that would be . . .

Jason spent the next few weeks cleaning out the mass of, well, junk that his uncle had accumulated. There was just no figuring where some of the stuff had come from. Other than the clutter, the place was perfect for Jason. It even had a built-in gym, so he could keep up his exercise routines.

During the third week of cleaning, Jason found something very strange. It was a hidden door, concealed behind the "shrine" to Bob Denver. There was a hidden catch which caused the shrine to slide open, revealing a hidden elevator. Curious, Jason rode the elevator down, to the third basement of the building.

There he found all of Uncle Freddy's Foxbat gear. It was like Christmas all over again! Jason fingered the armored fabric of the costumes, and posed with the famous Ping-Pong Ball Gun in his hand. he walked through the room, touching and handling each piece of gear. He wasn't sure what he was going to do with it. Maybe he'd open a Foxbat museum or something.

Jason stepped back to admire the collection, absent-mindedly fiddling with a small disk-shaped object he had picked up. As he turned the disk over in front of him, he accidentally activated it, and a beam of white light shot out and hit him in the forehead. He stood there, transfixed.

Apropos to nothing, the Trepbarians are a war-like race. The overwhelming concern of each Trepbarian warrior is to perfect his fighting art, and then to find a worthy student to teach all he knew. In

this way, a Trepbarian warrior knew that he would never truly die. As long as his knowledge survived, he would be immortal. Occasionally, though, a warrior would face a situation of certain death before he found his student. In that case, the custom was to prepare a Mind Disk, which would store all the warrior's accumulated knowledge. His family would pass it on to an honored student, so that the warrior would not completely pass from the circle.

The beam from the modified Trepbarian Mind Disk hit Jason, and began its work. Humans are not quite Trepbarians, however. Their minds function in different ways. And so this disk didn't

quite work as it was intended. Instead of merely conveying the skills and experiences, it did something different

"What th—Jason, is that you?" came a thought in his mind.

"Uncle Freddy? What's going on? What are you doing? I thought you were dead."

"Dead? Is Disco dead? The dodo? David Caruso's career? Ha! I'm as dead as any of those! I'm—Urk. Wait a second"

"What are you doing in my mind?!?"

"Freaking alien technology. Not trustworthy. Take my advice, son. Buy American. Buy an American. I prefer Congressmen; they're often quite inexpensive, compared to Senators."

Jason dropped the Mind Disk, but it was too late. Foxbat, knowing was about to do something extremely dangerous, had copied himself into the Mind Disk, which he had recovered from a crashed Treptharian ship a few years ago. The device had created a copy of Foxbat's mind in Jason's brain. Jason still had control of his body, mostly, but now he had a passenger: His loony, but loveable, Uncle Freddy.

After Jason had recovered from the shock, the two of them had a conversation. It didn't help much; talking with Freddy was like talking with Yoda. Only Yoda made sense. Finally, though, Jason was able to get through to his uncle and come to some kind of understanding.

Freddy wanted the Foxbat tradition to continue, and Jason couldn't see a reason why it shouldn't. He felt he was up to the physical challenge: He was a world-class gymnast, and Uncle Freddy had bought him a kung-fu school for his eighth birthday. (Most uncles settle for giving lessons, but Freddy always did things in a big way.) He shouldn't have any physical problems with the super-villain thing.

Freddy agreed, and since he was around to provide sage advice (and master plans) he was sure Jason would have no trouble with the job. In agreement, Jason began to practice with the equipment. Soon, Freddy felt he was ready, and the new Foxbat was ready for his first outing!

Disaster might be too harsh a word, but only just barely. Foxbat went to complete some unfinished business with the Steel Serpent and the only thing that almost got finished was Jason. He escaped with only his life and a deep, abiding hatred for VIPER.

Another month of training and practice, and Foxbat was ready to act again. This time, he caught the VIPER agents by surprise. They were busy

dealing with some armored foe, and Foxbat was able to sucker-punch them. Ok, keep them busy enough for Exodus to get his systems back on line but that was close enough. Anyway, that reminded Freddy, who cackled "If two are company, and three a crowd, then four must be a freakin' circus. I like the circus. Where are the elephants?"

Jason got the point. The old Foxbat always had a cadre of low-powered villains and agents to help him. They had all perished with Foxbat, but maybe it was time to recruit some new ones.

Exodus seemed agreeable to the idea, and became the first member of the new gang. That was the turning point: things only got better. And once more, Foxbat became a name to be feared. Or dreaded, at the very least

Personality: Foxbat's got two of them, lucky him. Jason is a happy-go-lucky, fairly well adjusted man. He's polite, friendly, and not nearly as loony as his uncle. However, he has been warped by the Mind Disk, and isn't what you would call stable. Like the Foxbat of old, he has an attention span of about three seconds.

Freddy is as loony he ever was. He still spins out his ludicrous, multi-staged master plans, and tends to find new obsessions in the middle of a battle. Prone to fixating on something, or someone, Foxbat can be extremely annoying.

Powers: Although he is a low-level mutant (his mother's family is distantly related to the Hendersons and the Wilders), Foxbat doesn't have any real paranormal powers. What he does have is a tremendous array of bizarre gadgets (now maintained by Exodus) which augment his martial arts and gymnastic abilities.

Appearance: Foxbat still wears his gold and black cowled costume, and carries a ludicrous pistol. Jason is a lithe and slim brown-haired man who stands about six feet tall. He is extremely good looking, with perfect teeth and a lady-killer smile.

FOXBAT

CP: 76

OP: 148

PP: 43

INT	7			Offx:	27	Defx:	31
WILL	6	RES	18				
PRE	7						
TECH	5						
REF	9	SPD	5				
DEX	9						
CON	8	SD	26	ED	26	END	80
STR	8	REC	15				
BODY	9	STUN	45	HITS	45		
MOVE	8	RUN	26	SPRINT	39		
		SWIM	8	LEAP	18		

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 8 Secret Identity: Jason Brouder (Infrequent, Strong, Major)
- 30 Enemy: VIPER (More Powerful, Worldwide, Kill)
- 5 Just wants to fight and have a good time as a super-villain (Frequently, Severe, Minor)
- 8 "Split Personality" (Frequently, Friendly to him, Major)
- 3 Lecherous (Frequently, Risk Embarrassment, Minor)
- 30 Loony (Constantly, Severe, Extreme)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS

AV/DV

- 16 Martial Arts: Kung Fu
- 9 Extra Damage: +3 DC with Martial Arts
- 4 Hand-to-Hand: 615
- 5 Firearms: 514
- 4 Hand-to-Hand Evade: 615
- 8 Ranged Evade: 817
- 6 Acrobatics: 615
- 5 Athletics: 514
- 4 Stealth: 413
- 3 Leadership: 310
- 4 Persuasion: 411
- 5 Seduction: 512
- 5 Streetwise: 512
- 5 Jack of All Trades: 510
- 4 Acting: 411
- 4 Disguise: 49
- 6 Oratory: 512
- 1 Singing: 18
- 1 Education: 310
- 6 Professional (Gymnast): 613
- 3 Ambidexterity
- 3 Handsome
- 3 Blind Reaction
- 3 Longevity
- 3 Night Vision
- 3 Perfect Pitch
- 25 Derived Stats: +10 PD & ED

COST POWERS

END

- 2 Running: +10 m/y Run, +15 m/y Sprint
- 1 Superleap: +10 m/y Leap
- 7 **Armored Costume:** Armor, 18 KD & 18 EKD, Focus (Attached), 8+ Activation Roll
- 9 **The Dread Fox-Blaster:** Multipower, Focus (Attached), 8+ Activation Roll, 64 Charges
- 1m **Blaster:** 13D6 Energy Blast
- 1m **Auto-Blaster:** 11D6 Autofire Attack, ROF 5
- 1m **Sticky Stuff:** Entangle 9D6 SDP, 12 KD & 12 EKD
- 1m **Da Bomb:** 11D6 Explosion
- 1m **Gas Shell:** 9D6 NND [Life Support: Need not breathe]
- 21 **Fox-Gadgets:** Variable Power Pool, 14 Power Points, All Powers must use the Focus Limiter

Secret Identity: Jerry Miles

History: June 30, 1978: He gazed up at the sky in wonder, his four-year old mind bursting with joy. This had to be the coolest place in the whole world! He could see flying men and ships and stuff. When he grew up, he was going to play with them. He couldn't wait.

July 4, 1986: This was better than fireworks! From the roof of his East Oakland house, he could see Foxbat gliding over the Bay, dogfighting with two Flying VIPERs. That was cool! The primitive VIPER jetpacks couldn't keep up with the maneuverability of the cowed villain's glider wings, and Foxbat soon downed the duo of agents, only to be taken out himself by the Dove. Jerry wasn't sure just what was happening, up there in the skies, but he *knew* that he was going to join them, one day.

October 14, 1988: He raced down the halls, away from his pursuers.

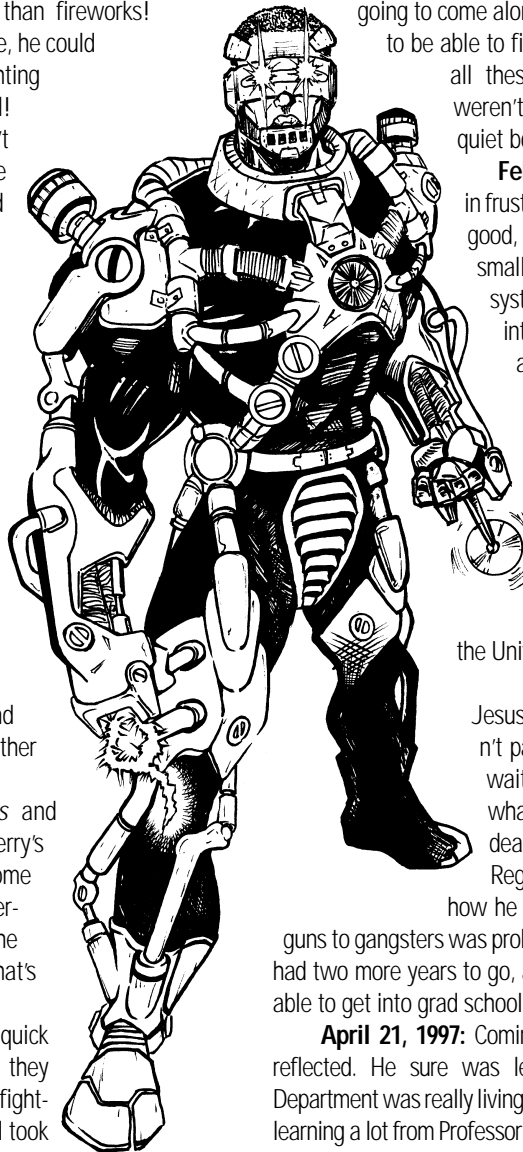
"We gonna trash you, geek-boy!" they yelled. "You make us look bad, smart-mouth, and you pay for that now!"

Jerry turned a corner, and bolted for the exit doors. Locked! He was trapped. His pursuers saw this and slowed down. They looked at one another and smiled. This was gonna be fun!

A stack of *Popular Mechanics* and *Superhype!* magazines slid from Jerry's grasp as he watched his tormentors come closer and closer. Spurred on by the terror written all over their target's face, the youths moved in for the kill. And that's when he let them have it.

He took the first one out with a quick spin-kick. The other two were easy; they were so shocked that this "geek" was fighting back that they just stood there and took it. When they were down, Jerry made sure they woke back up, then kicked them in the face, one by one. They wouldn't mess with him again.

They were so stupid. Sure, he read books and pulled grades. He had to get smart. He knew he wasn't a mutant, and if he wanted to have powers, he'd have to do it the hard way. That took learning, so he studied.



**"YO! I'M GONNA
GIVE YOU A
FEAR OF
TECHNOLOGY..."**

But what was the use of having powers if someone was just going to come along and knock you down? No, Jerry had to be able to fight, too. So he'd been learning karate all these years. These wanna-be gangstas weren't the first to learn the hard way that this quiet boy had hidden depths.

February 24, 1994: Jerry hit his keyboard in frustration. Damn! His base concept looked good, but he'd never get a power source small enough and strong enough to run his systems. This sucked! If they had let him into the UNTIL Academy, he would have access to all of that cool, cutting edge technology. But those suckers could hold a cat's past against him. It wasn't his fault that he had to break Donnel's arms; Donnel kept trashin' his stuff. But the police didn't see it that way, and the Academy's Admissions Board only looked at the record. The police record. Good thing the University of California system didn't.

His computer started beeping at him. Jesus, now he was running late. And it didn't pay to keep Deon and the Badass Boyz waiting. Not when they were itching for what he was bringing them. Jerry didn't deal in drugs, but he still doubted that the Regents of UC Berkeley would approve of how he paid his tuition. In their minds, selling guns to gangsters was probably just as bad. But he didn't care. He had two more years to go, and then he'd have his degree, and be able to get into grad school.

April 21, 1997: Coming here was the right thing to do, he reflected. He sure was learning a lot; Stanford's Engineering Department was really living up to its world-class reputation. He was learning a lot from Professor Naedleman, who had been hired by the Guard to analyze the power sources from some captured VIPER weapons. Jerry was helping the good professor with the analysis. Helping? Damn, he was practically doing the whole thing himself. But there were some tests he had to run that he didn't want Naedleman seeing. So he was running some tests late at night.

Jerry moved through the lab with confidence. He set up the test bed, and strapped the source down. The tests wouldn't take long; he'd be in and out in an hour, with no one the wiser.

About halfway through the run, Jerry heard some noises from the other side of the door. He moved toward it just as it was flung open by a green-clad figure. Oh crap! he thought. Freakin' VIPER's come to recover their captured toys.

Moving without thought to protect his experiment, Jerry snap-kicked the first agent, and spun around to throw a back fist at the second. But the third member of the VIPER 5-Team was fast, and snapped off a quick burst from his VB-A1 Blaster. Jerry went flying back into his test equipment. There was a flash of energy, and then darkness . . .

When he woke up, he was in a hospital bed. The place was crawling with Guard investigators, who wanted to know what had happened. Jerry spun a tale claiming he was working late when the VIPER goons showed up. The Guard bought the tale and, fortunately for Jerry's grant, so did Professor Naedleman. Jerry got over his injuries, but he didn't get over his grudge against VIPER. He had been on the right track, and they ruined it! He'd get even with them; he knew that.

May 8, 2000: He laughed. Who would have thought that it would work out like this? It took him almost a year after the accident to realize that he had been changed by it. He couldn't shoot energy beams from his eyes, and he wasn't invulnerable, or anything like that, but he had been changed. His body was now capable of emitting energy. Not enough to hurt anyone, but it sure solved his power source problem!

Once he figured out what had happened, he finished his degree, and went to work on the EXODUS Powered Exo-Skeleton, the key to jourey out of the mundane and into the paranormal. While he had never been able to come up with a power source that could could his design, he didn't have to worry about that little problem now.

It was time for a test drive. He still held a grudge against VIPER, so a little payback was in order. Using his scanner, he broke one of their encrypted commo frequencies, and bounced one of their little operations.

Things didn't go according to plan. There were a *lot* of VIPER agents, and Exodus' system still had a few bugs. He was on the verge of defeat when a familiar brown and black cowed figure came bouncing into the alley. "Stand and deliver, you green and yellow freaks!" shouted Foxbat.

This gave Jerry enough time to get Exodus' systems back on line and blast the offending agents. They went down in a heap, and Foxbat looked over at Jerry in surprise.

"Thanks for the assist. You need a job?"

Jerry remembered looking up in the sky back in July of '86 and being inspired by this man. What the hell; this sounded like it would be fun. "Sure," he replied. "Why? You lookin' for a good engineer?"

Personality/Motivation: Jerry always wanted to have powers that set him apart from mortal man, much the way his intense intellect set him apart from the people he grew up with. Had he been accepted into the UNTIL Academy, he would have become a hero. However, that agency saw fit to reject him. Jerry knew from that day on that he would walk on the other side of the law.

As Exodus, Jerry isn't interested in money, power, or even revenge. He just wants to fight in the super-powered arena. It doesn't matter to him if he bashes on heroes or villains; as long as he's out there, being a part of the scene, he's happy.

Powers/Tactics: Exodus wears a powered exo-skeleton that grants him some pretty amazing abilities. The EXODUS system carries a number of weapon systems, from eye lasers to a hand-mounted cutting saw. This array of weaponry gives Exodus a wide variety of combat options.

The exo-skeleton provides some protection as well: Exodus is virtually immune to handgun fire, and resistant to heavier rounds. The build-in optical enhancement systems allows him to see in almost any conditions. And Exodus has a few more tricks up his sleeve, just in case something should go wrong.

None of this would be possible without Jerry's own ability to generate electricity. While he can't hurt people with this ability, he can use it to power his exo-skeleton. Combined with his natural fighting abilities, this makes Exodus a dangerous foe.

Jerry loves to fight, but he's smart about it. He uses the terrain and tactics to his best advantage. He does take great pains to keep normals out of the line of fire, trying not to hurt anyone who couldn't take it.

Appearance: Outside of the exo-skeleton, Jerry is a fine looking black man of about twenty-eight. He stands six feet tall, and keeps his black hair cut short. Jerry dresses in style, and is generally cheerful and friendly.

EXODUS

CP: 70

OP: 90

PP: 41

INT	9			OffX	26	DefX	24
WILL	4	RES	12				
PRE	5						
TECH	9						
REF	7	SPD	4				
DEX	7						
CON	7	SD	14	ED	14	END	70
STR	7*	REC	14	*See powers for extra STR			
BODY	9	STUN	45	HITS	45		
MOVE	6	RUN	12	SPRINT	18		
		SWIM	6	LEAP	6		

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 30 Enemy: VIPER (More Powerful, Worldwide, Kill)
- 5 Just wants to fight and have a good time as a super-villain (Frequently, Severe, Minor)
- 8 Secret Identity: Jerry Miles (Infrequent, Strong, Major)
- 10 Vulnerability: 1 1/2xSTUN from Electrical Attacks (Frequently, Common, Major)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS

	AV/DV
12 MARTIAL ARTS: Karate	
4 Hand-to-Hand: 6	13
4 Use Exodus Weapons Systems : 4	11
1 Hand-to-Hand Evade: 3	10
3 Ranged Evade: 3	10
2 Athletics: 4	11
5 Streetwise: 5	11
3 Trading: 3	9
3 Demolitions: 3	12
5 Electronics: 5	14
4 Mechanics: 4	13
3 Security Systems: 3	12
4 Weaponsmith [Energy Weapons]: 4	13
4 Computer Programming: 4	13
6 Education: 8	17
5 Science [Engineering]: 5	14
5 Science [Power Systems]: 5	14
3 Science [Weapons Designs]: 3	12
4 System Operations [EXODUS Systems]: 4	13
5 Tactics: 5	14
1 Teaching: 3	9
4 Contacts: Gang Contacts in East Bay City: 4	

COST POWERS

	END
2 Electric Zap : 2D6 Energy Blast	2
11 *Armored Chassis : Armor 26 KD & 26 EKD	
4 *Vectored Thrust : 30 m/y Flight	3
9 *Exodus Systems : Multipower	
1m *Fist Blaster : 11D6 Energy Blast	5
1m *Hand Blades : 4D6 Hand-to-Hand Killing Attack (8D6 w/STR)	3+
1m *Eye Lasers : 6 Phases Flash vs. All Sight	5
1m *Hydraulics : +5 STR	3+
1m *Smoke Generator : Darkness 9 m/y to all Sight	5
1 *Optics : IR Vision, UV Vision, Enhanced Perception: +3 Sight	
1 *Radar Scope : Radar Sense	
1 *Commo Gear : High Range Radio Hearing	
1 *Flash Defense (Sight) : 10 Phases	
6 Find Weakness with Fist Blaster, Skill of 14	

*All powers marked are bought with a Focus (Attached) Limiter

ANGELA FONG



History: The gods seem to smile on certain people. No matter what these people do, it always seems to come out right. Angela was one of these—she was so lucky, she seemed to be blessed.

But her blessing was also her curse. She was so used to things going her way that she was bored. She just couldn't see going to college like her brothers, and settling down into a boring job as a doctor or lawyer (the only approved professions in the Fong family.) Angela wanted more excitement out of life.

The Fongs were shocked when their baby girl decided to become a smoke jumper instead of going to Stanford University. They told themselves that this was a passing phase, that it wouldn't last.

They were right—it didn't last. Despite the danger, Angela got bored after a year of fighting fires. It wasn't edgy enough for her tastes, so she went off to learn to fly helicopters. That proved too mundane as well. Angela was a natural pilot, of course, and that just made things too easy. She had to move on.

She tried stock car racing next. Boring. Then it was training and hand feeding sharks. Mundane. Professional Wrestling? She tried it, and found the woman's leagues to be a joke. It was too staged for her tastes; there wasn't enough of a chance to get hurt.

From there, her career choices turned towards the seamier side of life. She became a professional gambler, and lived on her luck and wits. Her luck never failed her, and she was run out of Las Vegas with the Mob on her trail. Now, *that* was exciting.

Angela headed to Montana, where she learned how to fly airplanes. Jets and propeller planes, of course. It was just her luck to learn from an old A-6 Intruder pilot with plenty of combat experience. He also had a lucrative side business flying people around with no questions asked. After Angela got her license, she became his partner.

This line of work lasted for quite a while. Angela flew all over the world, ferrying some of the world's most wanted criminals. But even the

thrill of this illicit job began to wear thin. Angela was just thinking of finding something else when the Mob spotted her.

Still mad about Las Vegas, they sent an enforcer to hit her at the airport. It looked bad for Angela, but, as luck would have it, her mysterious client that day was none other than Foxbat. The villain, thinking the thug with the gun was after *him*, went to work, and in a few short seconds took care of the enforcer.

"Um . . . thanks!" stammered a wide-eyed Angela.

"Think nothing of it, Jeeves. Now, bring the car around or we'll be late for the Contessa's tea." By the end of the plane flight, Foxbat had hired Angela on a full time basis. She was happy for the change; the Mob seemed to be serious this time. Besides, this was one job that didn't sound like it would *ever* be boring!

Personality: Optimist doesn't even begin to describe Angela's outlook on life. Bright, perky, and cheerful, Angela's happy even when she's depressed. One of her great joys in life is trying to cheer up Sol, who's gloomy outlook is the perfect counterpoint to her attitude.

Powers: Angela is actually a low-level mutant. Her powers manifest as her outstanding luck. Things seem always to break her way because she *helps* them break her way. The most obvious manifestation of this is her Damage Reduction, which represents her ability to duck, dodge, and otherwise avoid the main thrust of any attack.

Angela brings many different skills to the mix. She's an expert pilot and driver, of course, and a skilled wrestler. She is also adept at many dangerous sports (although she wouldn't know how to play a safe one).

Appearance: At 5'8", Angela is very tall. Her willowy figure helps give the illusion that she is even taller. Thanks to her Chinese heritage, she has long black hair and brown eyes and her slender frame conceals surprising muscles. When not in "costume," Angela dresses in designer gowns or less formal (but still stylish) blouses, skirts, and/or slacks.

ANGELA FONG

CP: 64

OP: 105

PP: 34

INT	5					
WILL	6	RES	6			
PRE	6					
TECH	4					
REF	8	SPD	4			
DEX	8					
CON	6	SD	12	ED	12	END 60
STR	7	REC	13			
BODY	8	STUN	40	HITS	40	
MOVE	6	RUN	12	SPRINT	18	
		SWIM	6	LEAP	6	

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 25 Enemy: The Mob (More Powerful, Single Country, Kill)
- 5 Cheerful and Optimistic (Frequently, Severe, Minor)
- 8 Secret Identity: Angela Fong (Infrequent, Strong, Major)

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS AV/DV

- 12 Martial Arts: Wrestling
- 9 Extra Damage: +3 DC with Martial Arts
- 3 Hand-to-Hand: 513
- 6 Firearms: 614
- 3 Hand-to-Hand Evade: 513
- 5 Range Evade: 513
- 3 Shadowing: 38
- 3 Surveillance: 38
- 1 Tracking: 16
- 7 Driving: 715
- 7 Pilot: 715
- 3 Athletics: 511
- 3 Stealth: 311
- 3 Persuasion: 511
- 3 Seduction: 39
- 5 Wardrobe & Style: 511
- 5 Gambling: 59
- 3 Navigation: 39
- 3 Survival: 39
- 6 Beautiful: 2
- 12 Luck: 4

COST POWERS END

- 12 **Incredible Luck:** 50% Physical & Energy Damage Reduction
- 7 **Armored Jumpsuit:** Armor 18 KD, 18 EKD, Focus (Attached)
- 1 **Radio:** High Range Radio Hearing, Focus (Attached)
- 5 **Shot-Launcher Gun:** Multipower, Focus (Grabbable), 1 Shot with 7 extra Clips
- 1m **Glue Shell:** Entangle with 8D6 SDP, SD 20, & ED 20
- 1m **Bomb Shell:** 11D6 Explosion
- 7 **Auto-Pepper Pistol:** 10D6 Autofire Attack, ROF 5, 30 Shots, Focus (Grabbable), 8+ Activation Roll

"DON'T WORRY. EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE FINE—AT LEAST FOR ME!"

SOLOMON GOLDBERG



History: Solomon hated his life. He detested his job, loathed his co-workers, and despised his boss. Oh, why did he every become a CPA?

Actually, he knew. It was his mother. As he grew up, the only son of a Jewish widow in Queens, she'd tell him "You should be a lawyer, Solly, or an accountant, like your Uncle Hy. That's a good life; you can get a little something for yourself." Sol heard this mantra constantly;

it was his mother's *Sh'ma*.

When it came time to go to college, Sol went the easy route, and studied accounting. Number-crunching. Bookkeeping. However you slice it, it was all just fiddling with numbers. Numbers that represented someone else's money. Was this any way for a grown man to make a living?

Sol didn't think so. But what could he do? He was trapped. Trapped in a no where job, working with no where people.

He sought excitement where he could find it. He went skydiving, rock climbing, scuba diving, and even took up boxing. While he collected a great number of bumps, bruises, contusions, and even a broken nose, it didn't change anything. He was still an accountant.

Then came a fateful day in June. He was at his desk, thinking about quitting time when a brown and black cowled figure came tumbling through the window. "Alright, nobody move, and everyone gets hurt!" it screamed. "No, wait. That's not right. *Shut up! Shut up! I can handle it!* Nobody hurts, and everybody moves! I mean—aw, the heck with it. Freeze!"

It was Foxbat! In short order, the he and Exodus (who had entered via the door) had the office under control, and were hacking into the computer. That's when they ran into a snag. All of the office's files were encrypted. Unknown to Sol, but not to his boss (or to Foxbat), this firm had several clients who were involved with VIPER, who demanded the tightest security measures. Without the encryption key, Exodus couldn't get the information Foxbat needed.

The villain turned to Sol's boss to demand the encryption key. But the boss, much more scared of VIPER than of Foxbat, refused to divulge it. Things were about to get ugly when Sol stepped in. Pushing Exodus to one side, he quickly entered the key, and the data began to appear.

Soon, the duo of villains had what they needed, and prepared to leave. As they headed for the door, Sol's boss recovered his composure enough to snarl "Goldberg, you're *fired!*" Well, that was just fine with Sol. He grabbed his coat and hit the elevator.

When he reached the lobby, he found a strange van waiting at the curb. The door slid open, and Foxbat peered out at him. "Hey, what are you waiting for? Get in; we've got places to go." Bemused, Sol went along for the ride. He's been cruising with the Fox-man ever since.

Personality: Sol was a man being slowly worn down by his life. He didn't want much; just some excitement. And fate heard his call, and sent him into Foxbat's clutches. There are times (no more than five or six occasions a day) when Sol knows he made the wrong choice. Hanging around with Foxbat and his crazy crew is nerve-racking, and Sol just doesn't have the go-to-hell attitude of the rest of the crowd. He's just as glum and pessimistic as he ever was. He doesn't seem to ever enjoy himself, and the rest of the group wonders what he is doing there. Heck, he wonders that himself.

Still, it beats the hell out of being an accountant.

Powers: Sol doesn't have any paranormal abilities. He's a pretty decent boxer, and is becoming a fair shot with his blaster. He earns his keep with his business skills. A villain has to stay one step ahead of the most dreaded of all foes, the IRS, and Sol helps Foxbat do just that. Bad attitude and all, he's become a vital cog in Foxbat's machine.

Appearance: At thirty-two, Sol isn't an impressive physical specimen. He's about 5'9" tall, medium build, and only in moderate shape (for a supervillain, anyway). Unfortunately for him, his nose is his most prominent feature, overwhelming the rest of his face.

SOLOMON "SOL" GOLDBERG

CP: 49

OP: 72

PP: 19

INT	6			OffX:	18	DefX:	20
WILL	5	RES	15				
PRE	3						
TECH	4						
REF	5	SPD	3				
DEX	5						
CON	5	SD	10	ED	10	END	50
STR	5	REC	10				
BODY	7	STUN	35	HITS	35		
MOVE	4	RUN	8	SPRINT	12		
		SWIM	4	LEAP	4		

COST SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS

	AV/DV
8 Martial Arts: Boxing—Jab (Defensive Strike), Hook (Offensive Strike), Block (Marital Block), Clinch (Marital Grab)	
6 Extra Damage: +2 DC to Martial Arts	
2 Hand-to-Hand: 4	9
3 Firearms: 3	8
2 Hand-to-Hand Evade: 4	9
4 Ranged Evade: 4	9
2 Perception: 4	10
1 Athletics: 3	8
5 Bureaucrats: 5	8
5 Business: 5	11
2 Education: 4	10
4 Expert (Accounting): 4	10
4 Expert (Banking): 4	10
4 Expert (Money Laundering): 4	10
6 Professional (Accountant): 6	12
5 Research: 5	11
3 Eidetic Memory	
3 Lightning Calculator	
3 Schtick: Things just seem a little darker and gloomier around Sol, like he's got a raincloud following him around or something.	

COST POWERS

	END
7 Armored Jumpsuit: Armor 18 KD, 18 EKD, Focus (Attached)	
5 Blaster Rifle: 7D6 Armor Piercing Blast, Focus (Grabbable), 10 Shots	
4 Programmable Grenades: Multipower, Focus (Grabbable), 4 Shots (for the whole thing)	
1m Concussion: 10D6 Explosion	
1m Flare: Flash, 4 Phases vs. All Sight Group, Area Effect 8 m/y Radius	
1 Radio: High Range Radio Hearing, Focus (Attached)	

**"FOR THIS I
GAVE UP A
PROMISING
CAREER AS AN
ACCOUNTANT?"**

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 30 Enemy: VIPER (More Powerful, Worldwide, Kill)
- 5 Gloomy and Pessimistic (Frequently, Severe, Minor)
- 8 Secret Identity: Solomon Goldberg (Infrequent, Strong, Major)

Secret Identity: None

History: *Cogito, ergo sum.* I think, therefore I am. Proteus holds to that philosophy like a mantra for life. After all, he has nothing else.

He's a man of mystery—if indeed his is even a man. He doesn't know where he came from, or how he came to be. *Cogito, ergo sum.* It's not much, but it is all he has.

He remembers his first thought. In fact, he can remember everything. Everything but who he is, and why he is here.

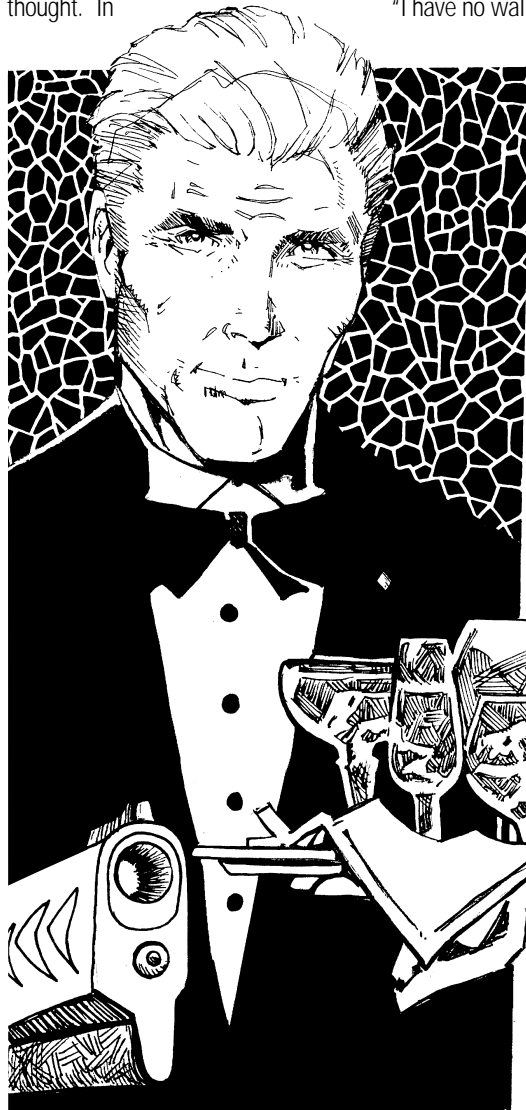
Proteus became aware of himself in Bay City. He knew it was January 2, 2000, and that he was on Larkin Street. Aside from that, everything was a blank.

All around him, people move as if they were zombies, stunned by some great even. Proteus didn't feel stunned; he just felt a deep thirst for knowledge—he needed to fill the void that he found inside. Instinctively, he headed into the Main Library, where he began to read books and newspapers at an amazing speed.

Someone came to interrupt his reading—it was closing time. Rather than put up a fuss, he left. Proteus spent the night wandering the streets of Bay City, observing the nightlife. With each passing hour, he became more and more familiar with how humans acted.

The next day found him back at the library, consuming more books. That night, he walked through the Tenderloin, absorbing the images that surrounded him. One of them made a deep impression on him.

Out of sheer curiosity, Proteus had wandered down an alley. There were two men, huddled in a corner. They looked up as this stranger approached them. The first smiled at his companion. This would be easy pickings.



**"A CHANGE
WILL DO
SOME
GOOD!"**

"Yo, dude, you wandered in the wrong alley. Gimme your wallet, and we won't hurt you." The two men stood, threatening Proteus. "I have no wallet. Is this a mugging?" he asked curiously.

"Yo, this is gonna be more than that, man. Fork it over!" The first man pulled out a knife from within his coat and lunged at the bemused figure.

He side-stepped, and noticed that his hand had changed into a knife. It seemed only fitting that he stab the knife into his attacker's side. That seemed to end the problem, as the other man fled.

This was unusual. He knew from his readings that some people had paranormal abilities. However, he had not considered that he might be one of them. This seemed to change things.

He spent the next day experimenting with his new-found powers. He found that he could change his form, make weapons, and even shoot bolts of energy. The more he found he could do, the more he felt that he had some purpose. He was tasked for *something*. He just had to find out what it was.

Proteus spent the next couple of months searching. He actively sought out violent confrontations, to see if he could learn more about his task. He didn't, but he kept discovering more about his abilities. He also found that thrashing on people was fun. It filled some other need he had.

He would have given up on discovering his purpose, but he had no choice.

Something deep within him kept him moving, kept him searching. It drove him to study super-villains, looking for *something*.

Finally, it happened. Proteus was monitoring the police band radio when he heard the call. The new Foxbat was sticking up Shane's Diamonds. Foxbat was one of the local villains Proteus had yet to meet. Curious, he made his way to the scene of the crime.

Foxbat was in fine form that day. He was capering around, humiliating the police who rushed to try to stop him, and otherwise having a grand old time.

"Ha! Diamonds trump clubs, and Donald Trumped Ivana. But it didn't last!" he cackled. Nobody had a clue what he meant.

Foxbat was so intent on expounding on his Master Plan™ (via allegory, of course. Those were the rules.) that he didn't notice the Guard's SWAT team moving into place.

"Freeze!" the Sergeant yelled. Foxbat looked up into the barrel of the biggest blaster he had ever seen. Sheepishly, the villain raised his hands in surrender. *This* wasn't in the master plan!

Suddenly, the blaster barrel grew a fist, which reached back and smacked the Guard agent in the face. He stumbled back, dropping his blaster. The discarded weapon swirled and changed into Proteus, who grabbed Foxbat by the arm.

"I think we should leave now," Proteus told Foxbat as he started to drag him away.

"Yes, this is it! The final piece. The final price! Act now, because prices will never be lower. Tax, license, dock fees, and bail not included. Your mileage may vary. Professional stunt driver on a sealed track; don't try this as home . . ." Foxbat babbled as Proteus led him away to safety, but the shapechanger didn't hear him. He was content; the compulsion to search had been quieted. He knew that there was something he was supposed to do next, but he didn't know what it was. However, that was his standard state of affairs. For now, it was enough just to be. *Cogito, ergo sum . . .*

* * *

The being who calls itself Proteus is actually the result of a botched summoning. **Jonas Astaire**, leader of the Cabal, had decided that the world had suffered Foxbat's presence long enough. The lunatic villain needed to be disposed of; he had interfered with the Cabal's plans once too often.

The Cabal's resources are strongest in the arcane, and it was natural that Astaire chose to deal with Foxbat using mystical methods. He gathered twelve of his closest acolytes to him, and together they prepared a summoning that would call a demonic assassin from the Shadow Realm to come and kill Foxbat and consume his soul.

Astaire read the omens, and chose the dawning of the new millennium as the most auspicious time for such an undertaking. What he didn't foresee was the cataclysm that occurred that night.

The Cabal's dread ceremony was interrupted by the event that came to be known as the Wildstrike. Their arcane energies went astray, and several of them were killed. However, they did achieve some success. They called Proteus, and even instilled some measure of a purpose in him.

However, Proteus appeared a continent away, and his purpose was buried deep in his mind. For now, they believe they have failed.

Personality: Mercurial seems to have been coined to describe Proteus. His moods and his entire personality can change at the drop of a hat. He can take on the attitudes and moods of the person he is with, or he can take on a personality that is totally opposite. It makes him a perfect addition to Foxbat's crew.

Deep down, Proteus hasn't given up his quest to find meaning in his life. Unfortunately, his true purpose *is* to kill Foxbat. It will be interesting to see if he can overcome his nature once he discovers this.

Powers: Proteus' abilities spring from the Shadow Realm. As such, he has most of the standard powers you'd expect from a Shadow Realm demon: He can see in the dark, he doesn't need to eat or sleep, he doesn't age, he can shoot bolts of eldritch energy and he's resistant to mental attacks and adjustment powers.

His main ability is that he can manipulate his form. He can change his shape into just about anything he has seen, from the smallest desk-top object to a sky scraper. However, he can't just grow into a giant version of himself; he needs to mimic something he's seen. This limits him greatly. Proteus can change to a form about 200' tall, and theoretically become stronger than Grond. However, there aren't very many 200' tall mobile forms out there, so it's doubtful that Proteus will ever be able to use the full potential of his powers.

Appearance: Proteus can, of course, appear as anything he likes. Generally, though he appears as a blond-haired man in his early thirties, who dresses and acts like Foxbat's butler. Proteus still thinks that he is a human being, and considers his "true" form to be man-shaped. While he can change himself into anything else, he really doesn't like to, and will quickly revert to his standard shape.

PROTEUS

CP: 69

OP: 59

PP: 78

INT	5			OffX:	25	DefX:	29
WILL	5	RES	15				
PRE	5						
TECH	3						
REF	9	SPD	5				
DEX	9						
CON	8	SD	16	ED	16	END	80
STR	9	REC	17				
BODY	10	STUN	50	HITS	50		
MOVE	6	RUN	12	SPRINT	18		
		SWIM	6	LEAP	6		

COST	SKILLS, TALENTS, & PERKS	AV/DV
2	Hand-to-Hand: 4	13
2	Firearms: 2	11
2	Use Eldritch Blast : 2	11
2	Hand-to-Hand Evade: 4	13
4	Ranged Evade: 4	13
5	Acting: 5	10
5	Mimicry: 5	8
9	Expert (Current Events): 9	14
7	Local Expert (Bay City): 7	12
6	Research: 6	11
3	Ambidexterity	
3	Direction Sense	
3	Eidetic Memory	
3	Speed Reading	
3	Time Sense	

COST	POWERS	END
10	Shape Change to any form, 0 END	0
14	Armor 28 KD & 28 EKD	
7	Regeneration: Get back REC in Hits per Minute; Can also regenerate lost limbs & organs	
2	See in the Dark	
8	Eldritch Blast : 14D6 Energy Blast, 8+ Activation Roll, 3x END Cost	21
21	Shape Changed Abilities : Power Pool, 15 Power Points, May only buy abilities that his current shape has (such as flight, shrinking, growth, and the like)	*
5	Minor Shapings : 3D6 Hand-to-Hand Killing Attack (6D6 with STR)	2+
2	Power Defense: 10 pts.	
2	Mental Defense: 10 pts.	
7	Auto-Pepper Pistol : 10D6 Autofire Attack, ROF 5, 30 Shots, Focus (Grabbable), 8+ Activation Roll	

COST COMPLICATIONS

- 30 Vulnerability: 2x Stun & Hits from White (Good) Magic Attacks (Infrequent, Common, Extreme)
- 4 Vow: Mysterious Mission (Infrequent, Risk life & limb, Minor (for now))
- 13 Extreme Curiosity (Frequent, Severe, Major)



VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

VEHICLES

While the old Foxbat maintained a huge supply of vehicles suitable for super-crimes, the new villain only has a few at his disposal. Foxbat is looking to expand his motorpool, but he is hampered by the lack of time to build high tech wheels. If he is going to acquire new vehicles, he's probably going to steal them.

Vehicles do play an important part in Foxbat's operations. While both Exodus and Proteus can fly, Foxbat's other two loyal agents are earthbound. The Cowled Crusader's Jet-Glider Wings aren't particularly suited for high-speed retreats either. For now, though, the group must make do with the Foxbatmobile and, more realistically, the Action Van.

THE FOXBATMOBILE

This sleek sportscar was designed to get a pair of villains into (and out of) the action quickly. Its low-slung body and gold and black paint scheme make it a chick magnet, at least in Foxbat's eyes. When there are no warrants out for his arrest, Foxbat can often be found cruising the streets of Bay City in his cool set of wheels, looking to pick up women.

The initial design of the Foxbatmobile was simple—it was supposed to drive fast, handle well, and look cool. However, sometime in 1985 Foxbat happened to watch a James Bond movie. After that, his vehicular needs changed. It wasn't enough for the car to go fast it also had to do stuff.

The redesigned Foxbatmobile now boasts heavy armor, twin blaster cannons, ejection seats, radio trackers, a crime laboratory (in the trunk), anti-aircraft missiles, a cutting-edge security system, and a seven disk CD-Changer with six speaker surround sound. Awesome! Oh, and it still goes pretty fast.

FOXBATMOBILE

83 OP

GROUND TRANSPORT AND CHICK MAGNET • **DAMAGE** = 60 SDP, KD = 35 • **FORM:** Vehicle • **CONSTRUCTION:** Microlight 4 Body • Micro4 Armor • **MOVE:** 103 (206 MPH) • **WEAPONS:** Twin Mega Blasters (10D6 Energy Blasts, Linked), Anti-Aircraft Missiles (2K, +3 WA, 4 Shots) • **OPTIONS:** Crime Lab, Escape System, Security System, Sensors (Radio Trackers), High Style (+3 PRE), Enhanced Maneuver (+2 MV) • **MV:** 0

THE ACTION VAN

Foxbat also needed a larger transport' to get his crew to the scene of the crime, and to make away with the loot. (You ever try to get 1,000 left shoes into the trunk of the Foxbatmobile? It's not happening.) So he came up with this simple but effective van design. The van is slow but well armored, and incorporates a Trepharian cloaking system that makes it invisible to radar.

ACTION VAN

10 OP

GROUND TRANSPORT AND LOOT HAULER • **DAMAGE** = 100 SDP, KD = 45 • **FORM:** Vehicle • **CONSTRUCTION:** Microlight 6 Body • Micro5 Armor • **MOVE:** 48 Move (96 MPH) • **OPTIONS:** Security System, Sensors (Radar Detector), Stealth Field • **MV:** -2

EQUIPMENT

Besides the Dread Fox-Blaster, Foxbat uses a variety of gadgets to help in his crimes. These tend to change from job to job, depending on his needs. The old Foxbat was a master gadgeteer, but the new Foxbat isn't as talented in that area. He's been relying on Exodus' skills to come up with new gizmos. So far, this arrangement has been working out well.

JET-GLIDER WINGS

Foxbat loves to fly—glide actually. He hasn't been able to come up with a man-sized jet pack that he's been happy with. So he settles for the Jet-Glider Wings, which are small, inobtrusive, and way fun.

Jet-Glider Wings: 30 m/y Gliding, Focus (Attached), with 60 m/y Flight, Focus (Attached), 4 Charges, Only for Gaining Altitude (-4 Power Points). Cost: 3 Power Points.

THE COWL

Foxbat's cowl can hold an amazing amount of stuff. Along with his huge ego, he can cram in all types of sensors, flash visors, sound filters, radios, and can openers. The example provided represents a pretty full cowl; in some circumstances, he might trim down the amount of equipment he's jamming in.

Cowl: IR & UV Vision, See in the Dark, Flash Defense (Sight): 10 pts & (Hearing): 5 pts., High Range Radio Hearing, Radar Sense, Focus (Attached). Cost: 8 Power Points.

BOUNCER BOMBS

Foxbat is fond of things he can throw, so he and Exodus worked up these little gems. Although they look like tennis balls (complete with yellow fuzz) and bounce like tennis balls, they are actually powerful concussion grenades. They can be set to explode on impact, on time delay, or after a specific number of bounces. Tennis, anyone?

Bouncer Bombs: 12D6 Explosion, Focus (Grabbable), 1 Can of 3 Charges. Cost: 5 Power Points.

GRABBER GLOVE

This gadget came out of Exodus' study of magnetic fields. Exodus found that if he was very careful, he could build a device that could project a very powerful and tightly focused magnetic beam. This beam could be used to snatch ferrous objects and pull them towards the gun. Foxbat had it made into a glove weapon. The Grabber Glove uses a lot of power. Exodus has created an energy supply that will allow the glove to function at variable levels. Unfortunately, using the glove at full power will quickly exhaust the battery.

Grabber Glove: Telekinesis STR 8, Focus (Attached), Only works on ferrous objects (-4 PP), Only for grabbing objects and pulling them towards the glove (-4 PP), 3x END Cost plus 50 END Reserve. Cost: 2 Power Points.

THE BELFRY

Foxbat's secret headquarters are located at 1100 Union Street in North Bay City. It consists, of course, of the apartment that Freddy left to Jason, and the hidden underground rooms. While the old Foxbat didn't operate out of these quarters, the new one doesn't see a real reason to inconvenience himself and his people by living in some dank hole in the ground.

The apartment (actually, a co-op) takes up the entire twelfth floor. That's not too unusual as each floor of this Russian Hill building holds only one or two residences. With six bedrooms and seven bathrooms, the Belfry, as the group calls it, is easily large enough for all of their needs. The living room's large picture windows give a fantastic view of the city.

There is a small penthouse on the roof (the thirteenth floor) that has been converted into an exercise room and gymnasium, which is filled with state-of-the-art equipment. Most of the group uses these facilities regularly. The only exception is Proteus, who doesn't need to exercise to stay in shape. Most of the group resents him for this.

The sixth bedroom has been converted into a library and a shrine to the Blessed St. Bob. A hidden switch causes the shrine to slide aside, revealing a hidden elevator. This elevator leads down to the hidden third basement, where Foxbat keeps all of the good stuff.

The basement holds the workshops where Foxbat's array of gizmos are made. Foxbat has turned the construction chores over to Exodus, who is much better at that kind of thing. Of course, Exodus doesn't mind; it allows him to play with cool technology.

Foxbat also keeps his Foxbatmobile down here, along with his spare costumes and trophies. The basement has a lot of high-tech laboratories and troop barracks that are just gathering dust. Most of the facility seems to have been built by a master villain who needed the space and facilities for his master plan of world domination, or world destruction, or something like that.

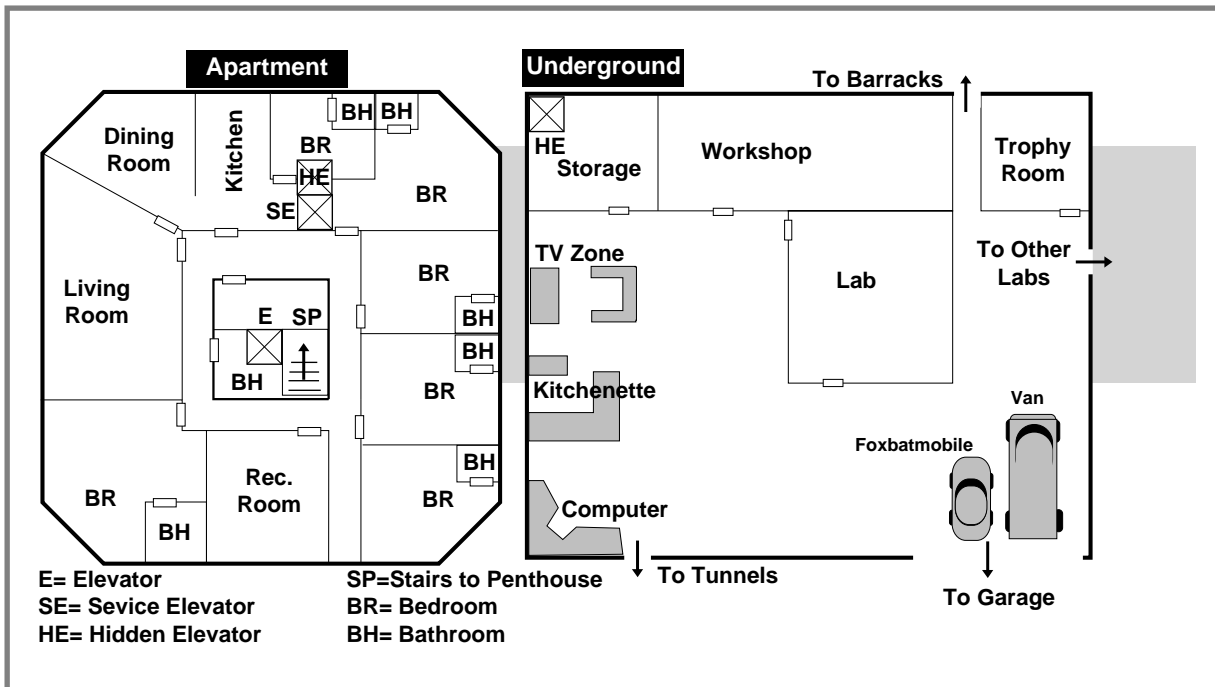
That's not the case, however. This area was constructed by the original Foxbat, in the depths of a master plan that called for all of this space. Of course, he never got around to using it—that plan was abandoned soon after the base was built, and most of the facilities were just left to deteriorate on their own.

Exodus and Angela are slowly exploring the rest of the base, to see what they can bring back on line. While they aren't sure what they'll do with the labs and such, they both feel that these resources are just too valuable to be allowed to rot away.

The Belfry has a powerful computer, based on Trepharian technology, available to it. Once again, its capabilities are far in excess of what the group currently needs. However, Exodus finds it useful for designing new gadgets.

There is street access from the basement, in the form of a long tunnel leading up to Leavenworth Street. This tunnel exit is well-camouflaged; it leads to a private garage in the building. The back wall of the garage rolls back, revealing the tunnel. While Foxbat currently only maintains two vehicles: the previously mentioned Foxbatmobile and Action Van, the base has space for many more.

The Belfry provides an optimal operating environment for the entire Foxbat crew. Its Russian Hill elegance, combined with a central North Bay City location is all any villain could ask for. Foxbat would be extremely unhappy if anything were to happen to his digs, and would take great pleasure in exacting his revenge. Even if the heroes find out about the Belfry, Foxbat won't leave. Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.





STORY SEEDS

1 The Master Plan™: Foxbat is at it again, and this time he can't fail. Once the elements of his newest and greatest Master Plan™ come together, he'll be unstoppable! And there is nothing the heroes can do about it.

Over the course of three weeks or so, the heroes will begin to become aware of some strange crimes. High-tech warehouses will be robbed not of computer components, but of huge supplies of electro-static neutral packing peanuts. Several junk yards will report the theft of car chassises, real junkers that haven't moved in years. A local Baskin-Robbins store was held up by Foxbat himself, demanding a triple cone of rocky road, dipped, and *no nuts!* (The last has nothing to do with the plan; Foxbat just wanted some ice cream.)

Strangely enough, the ice cream store happens to be near Bay City University. If the heroes investigate, they will find that an odd van has been seen in the area for several days. Good detective work (or contacts among the student population) will turn up a student who saw Foxbat climb into the van. She knows it was Foxbat because he was wearing his costume, and stopped to ask her directions to Ackerman Hall. He also asked for a date in two nights; it couldn't be the next night because he was "busy." (She turned him down.)

A check at Ackerman Hall will reveal that there will be a presentation of a new type of paint tomorrow evening. This formula, developed by an art student, can absorb radar waves. Foxbat intends to crash the meeting and steal the paint.

The heroes can lay a trap for Foxbat in any number of ways. The villain will be alone; he's not expecting much resistance. If the heroes can capture him or prevent him from getting the formula, they will bring his plan to a crashing halt.

If they ignore the threat, or fail to stop Foxbat, he'll have gained the last thing he needed to complete his masterpiece—the Amazing FoxMech. This construct, built from old cars and high-tech electronics, filled with electro-static peanuts, and covered with radar-absorbing paint, is actually a fairly powerful robot. It should be tough enough to give the heroes a real fight. Its goal is to make it to Ronald Reagan Naval Station, where it will try to smash a battleship. It'll fail, but the heroes don't know that.

2 Swatting Flies: Some groups have no sense of humor. High on that list is VIPER. The local nest has been plagued by Foxbat ever since he reappeared, and the Steel Serpent is tired of it. He's going to bring this to an end.

To this end, he's spread money around to try to find out where Foxbat will appear next. When he does get a location on the crazed villain, he'll send out a squad of agents, along with Boa Constrictor and Freon (on loan from VIPER HQ) to get rid of Foxbat once and for all!

This is sure to be a messy affair. The fight is going to happen in a public place and the VIPER agents won't care who gets in the way. The heroes may find out about this through increased VIPER activity, or they may just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Can they prevent a bloodbath?

3 The Real Master Plan™: Foxbat is at it again, and this time he can't fail. Once the elements of his newest and greatest Master Plan™ come together, he'll be unstoppable! And there is nothing the heroes can do about it.

The heroes may well become aware of the plan through a series of bizarre robberies, including the theft of three miles of shoe laces from a factory. If they poke around, they'll also find that some cargo hooks and a lot of chain are missing from local construction sites.

Foxbat's trying to keep a low profile on this one, but he needs a large helicopter to pull it off. If the heroes have an ear to the ground, they'll probably catch word that Foxbat is trying to score some transport, and be able to intercept him at the airport. If not, they'll just have to wait for the grand unveiling.

The Master Plan is simple: Foxbat plans to abduct the Transamerica Pyramid, and hold this landmark building for ransom. He's used the items he stole, plus some other high-tech equipment, to create an "anti-gravity harness." He's going to have Angela fly the helicopter over the building, drop the harness, and fly away. His demands will come later.

Of course, this isn't going to work. The end result will leave the helicopter impaled on the point, and Foxbat and his crew looking for the nearest exit. Can the heroes prevent this disaster, or at least minimize the damage?

4 Memories: It is only a matter of time before Jeremy Astaire discovers that his summoning wasn't a total failure. After some arcane research, he'll discover what he needs to do to activate his assassin. As soon as he can do that, it will be all over for Foxbat.

Foxbat won't have any idea that his butler is about to become a psychotic assassin, out for his blood. In true Foxbat fashion, Proteus will become aware of his real mission in some public place.

Proteus will have no choice but to attack Foxbat; the initial rush of the compulsions is too strong to resist. Proteus is more powerful than his prey, who will attempt to evade the attacks and get away.

This adventure works best if some of the heroes are out at a restaurant, having lunch in their secret identities. They'll become aware of a problem when Foxbat comes rolling over their table, scattering the dishes. He'll be quickly followed by a shape-changing form, who is swinging pointy tentacles and other things around, in an attempt to skewer the fleeing villain.

Will the heroes pitch in to stop Proteus? Will they use this opportunity to bag Foxbat? Or will they sit back and watch? And will Proteus be able to resist these homicidal urges, or is he doomed to become a demonic assassin?

5 Friendly Foe: It was bound to happen. Foxbat has become fixated on one of the heroes. He's following him around, calling himself the hero's pal, and making a nuisance of himself. There aren't any current warrants out on Foxbat, so how will the hero get rid of him? Foxbat is causing him nothing but trouble. Will the hero chase him away, or will he try to rehabilitate Foxbat? And what happens when Foxbat decides that the hero is "no fun?" This one should be played up for its comic aspects.

THE GROWING SMALLER

FUZION ERRATA

GROWTH ADDITION:

Characters who have Growth should be easier to spot. So when other people are making Perception Skill Rolls to see a character who is Grown, they will get a bonus of +2 to their AV for every 3 pts. of Growth the target character has.

Example: *Meteor is searching the battlefield for Giant, the Growing Man. Giant has 8 pts. in Growth, making him quite tall. Meteor gets a +4 Bonus to her AV when making her Perception Check.*

ABSORPTION CORRECTION:

Absorption must be designated as working against either Physical Attacks (SD & KD) or Energy Attacks (ED & EKD) when the power is purchased. We accidentally left that out of the original write-up. Also, Absorption should be limited by special effect. In general, people who absorb energy from all energy or all physical attacks should be rare. Far more common are those people who can absorb energy of a given special effect. This would be a Power Limiter, depending upon the commonality of the special effect in the campaign. Absorbing from a Common Special Effect would be a -1 Limiter. Absorbing from an Uncommon Special Effect would be a -2 Limiter. Absorbing from an Extremely Rare Special Effect would be a -4 Limiter.

Example: *Meteor wants to buy absorption limited to Heat/Flame attacks. Well, those are pretty common in the New Millennium universe, so she gets a -1 Limiter. If she wanted to absorb against Biochemical Attacks, that would be Uncommon, and she would get a -2 Limiter. If she wanted to absorb against Gate Key Energy Attacks, she would get a -4 Limiter as such manifestations are extremely rare.*

AUTOFIRE CORRECTION:

There was a mistake made in the **Hosing Them Down** section of the Autofire rules on page 148 of *Champions: New Millennium*. The text should read:

HOSING THEM DOWN: When using autofire against a **single target**, a normal Attack is made. To determine how many shots hit, use the **Autofire Ratio** listed below. For every X points the Attacker's AV exceeded the Defender's DV by, one additional round hits the target, up to the maximum number of shots fired.

Campaign Style	Autofire Ratio
Everyday	1
Competent	1
Heroic	2
Incredible	2
Legendary	3
Superheroic	4

Example: The Autofire Ratio is set at 2. This means for every 2 pts. 1 roll over what I need to hit, 1 shot hits. Round the fractions up.

The Catch? There's a 1 point attack penalty for every 10 shots fired (your gun is jumping around).

Another Example: Jake Gronski is using a M-16 to hose down an evil cult. Jake is from a Legendary campaign with the Autofire Ratio set at 3. Jake, being a talented shot, has a AV of 12. (He's got a REF of 7, an Autofire Weapons skill of 5, a WA [Weapon Accuracy Bonus] of +1, and a -1 modifier for firing 10 shots; we haven't rolled the dice yet.) His target has a DV of 8 (a DEX of 6 and a Ranged Evade Skill of 2 + 10 [using the HERO Option]). Jake, on his 3d6 roll, scores a 13, so his total AV for this attack is a 25. The AV of 25 minus the DV of 18 results in a difference of 7. Jake hits. The Autofire Ratio is 3, so we divide that result of 7 by 3, for a total of 2.3, which we round up to 3. Jake will hit the cultist with 3 shots.

We also left out the Rate of Fire (ROF) information for the generic guns on page 148 of *Champions: New Millennium*. Here it is:

WEAPON TABLE (REVISED)			
ARCHAIC RANGED WEAPONS	RANGE (M/Y)	DC	ROF
Bow	20 per pt. of STR up to 140 m/y	4	1
Longbow	20 per pt. of STR up to 200 m/y	7	1
Crossbow	200	4	1/2
MODERN RANGED WEAPONS	RANGE (M/Y)	DC	ROF
Colt Revolver	50	4	1
Light Pistol (.22)	50	2	2
Medium Pistol (9mm)	50	3	2
Large Pistol (.357, 10mm Auto)	50	4	2
Magnum Pistol (.44)	50	5	2
Bolt Action Rifle	100	6	1
Shotgun (12-ga.)	40; Area Affect	5	2
Shotgun (10 ga.)	40; Area Affect	6	2
Magnum Hunting Rifle	700	10	2
Submachine Gun	200	3	20
Assault Rifle (5.56mm)	300	6	25
Assault Rifle (7.62mm)	400	9	20
Machine Gun	800	10	10
Autocannon	400	14	22
Recoilless Rifle	400	15	1
Light Cannon	400	16	1
Tank Cannon	1000	17	1
Infantry Laser Gun	400	12	1
Man-Portable Railgun	400	14	1
Energy Pistol (Blaster, Laser, etc)	60	5	2
Energy Rifle (Blaster, Laser, etc.)	400	7	2

THE MUTANT ORIGIN TABLE:

We left this table out of the Origin Path Section (*C:NM*, pages 110-111.) So, here it is. Use it when referred to the Mutant Origin Table and the Campaign Origin Table (for the roll of an '8' on the Power Source Table.)

Mutant Origin	
2D6	Origin
2-7	Gate Key Line: From one of the "known" mutant families. Character and GM determine which one.
8-11	New Source: GM determines the source of your mutation.
12	Other: GM makes a up new origin source.

ENTANGLE:

The mechanic for the Entangle Power published in *Champions: New Millennium* is incorrect. Please replace the old Entangle with this new Power: Entangle: This Power can be used to restrain an opponent or create a barrier. An Entangle can be webbing, ice bonds, turning the ground to mud, or anything else the player can think of. An Entangled character can use his STR or any other non-Focused attack to break out of the Entangle.

Entangle Cost: 1 pt. per 1d6 of SDP. +4 SD & ED for +1 pt; +3 KD & EKD for +1 pt. Entangle costs END.

EVADE SKILLS REVISION:

Upon due reflection, the skills **Melee Evade** and **Hand-to-Hand Evade** should be combined into a single skill called **Melee Evade**, which is used for any type of melee combat. Splitting the skills into two categories doesn't make much sense. For older characters, simple take the higher of their Melee Evade or Hand-to-Hand Evade skills. The new Melee Evade Skill becomes an Everyman Skill, replacing Hand-to-Hand Evade (*C:NM*, page 120)

SKILL CORRECTION: PERFORMANCE

The Talent **Beautiful** (*C:NM*, page 123) states that it adds +1 to the Wardrobe & Style, Persuasion, and Performance skills. There is no Performance skill *per se* listed in *Champions: New Millennium*. To correct that omission, consider the following skills to be "Performance" skills for the purposes of the Beautiful Talent: Acting, Oratory, and Singing.

NEW SKILLS

CONSPIRACY

This is the knowledge of how to influence individuals and organizations secretly, and how to plan and orchestrate such plans. (INT)

JACK OF ALL TRADES

Assorted (and rather limited) skills in tinkering, fixing, craftsmanship, first aid, and other handicrafts. A character with this skill will have some ability at those tasks, but is unsuited for long-term projects, and will never be as good as someone with a dedicated skill in one of those areas. (TECH)

PERFORMANCE

The skills of acting, some stagecraft, singing and musicianship. This skill represents more of the actor or entertainers craft than the ability to completely assume a role, as described in Acting (*C:NM*, page 121.) This skill counts as a "Performance" skill for the purposes of the Beautiful Talent. (PRE)

NEW TALENTS

LUCK

Luck is that quality which helps events turn out in the character's favor. The GM may have the character make a Luck Roll when he is totally overwhelmed in combat, when he has no idea of how to find what he's looking for, when an opponent is escaping, or any other time that outrageous fortune could save him when he doesn't expect it.

The GM should never let Luck rule a situation; he has full control over when, how often, and how much Luck will help a character. If it is necessary for a character to be captured, then he should be, regardless of Luck. Similarly, if a character does something really stupid, the GM should not feel compelled to have the character saved through good fortune. In any case, Luck shouldn't come into play very often. Luck should always be a pleasant surprise to the player, not something he can depend on.

When the GM asks for a Luck Roll, the player rolls 1d6 for every 5 Character Points of Luck his character has. Each 6 that's rolled counts as 1 point of Luck. The GM should then decide what (if any) lucky event happens to a character. The more points of Luck that the character rolled, the luckier he should be. The Luck Table gives some general guidelines to follow when determining the effects of Luck.

As an optional rule, the GM can allow Luck to help characters who have Gambling Skill. In this case, every 6 rolled for the Luck should work as a +2 to the Gambling Roll.

Luck costs 3 Option Points per Level.

NEW POWERS

ATTACK POWERS

Note: To bring Attack Powers into line with the new system of Adders and Limiters (see *Alliances*, pages 95 - 96), we are changing the way that we are expressing the costs of certain Attack Powers. Formerly, a Power such as Affects Desolid was described

as costing " . . . 1 pt. per 1D6 of damage, subtract 2D6 from the final total." Now, such powers will be written as "Affects Desolid Cost: 3 Power Points. for 1D6 of damage, +1D6 per +1 PP thereafter." **This does not change the cost of the power**, merely how we state it. In effect, each -1D6 from the final total becomes a +1 Adder instead. This should make all of the powers compatible with the Adder and Limiter system.

Autofire Armor Piercing Blast

This is an Armor Piercing (AP) Blast that has an increased rate of fire. Like a regular AP attack, this attack halves the defense of its target for that blast (see *C:NM*, page 151; 6). The increased ROF allows the character to shoot up to his ROF in shots per attack, following all of the rules for Autofire Attacks (*C:NM*, page 148; 2 and in this book's errata). Note that each shot fired per phase costs END; if the character shoots a 5-round burst at a target, it would cost him 5x the END cost for a single blast.

Autofire Armor Piercing Blast: 6 Power Points for 1D6 of damage, +1D6 per +1 PP thereafter for a ROF of 5. Increase the ROF by 5 for +1 PP. Costs END.

Cone Area Attack

This is an Energy Blast that affects a cone-shaped area. The area is defined as a 60 degree cone of affect which radiates out from the target spot. Cone Area Attacks follow all of the normal rules for buying an Energy Blast, but use the Area Affect To-Hit rules. (See Ranged Attacks.)

Area Attack Cost: 5 Power Points for 1D6 of damage in a 60° cone 4 m/y long, +1D6 and 2 m/y of length per +1 PP thereafter. Costs END.

Line Area Attack

This is an Energy Blast that affects a straight line about 2 m/y wide; the length depends upon the power of the attack. The line must be straight, and always emanates directly away from the attacker. Line Area Attacks follow all of the normal rules for buying an Energy Blast, but use the Area Affect To-Hit rules. (See Ranged Attacks.)

Line Attack Cost: 5 Power Points for 1D6 of damage in line directly away from the attack, 2 m/y wide and 4 m/y long, +1D6 and 2 m/y of length per +1 PP thereafter. +1 PP for 2x line length. +2 PP to change the orientation of the line. Costs END.

MOVEMENT POWERS

Extra-Dimensional Movement

This Power is the ability to travel from one dimension to another. The base version allows the character may transport himself to a single other location in another dimension; this location must be chosen when the Power is purchased. Advanced versions of this Power allows the character to transport himself to a related group of dimensions (the 9 Hells, alternate earths, etc.), to any place in

any dimension or even through time. These additional abilities must be purchased for the power.

Normally, a character with Extra-Dimensional Movement can only move himself and his clothing. This can also be increased.

Extra-Dimensional Movement does not give the character any enhanced movement in our world; a character in New York cannot transport himself to Valhalla and then back to Tokyo. The GM should either say that characters return to earth in the same location that they left it, or that they have only travelled as far as they travelled in the alternate dimension.

This Power is extremely tricky, and can be difficult to use in a campaign setting. The GM must regulate Extra-Dimensional Movement in some fashion; otherwise it will be used every time that the characters get into trouble. At the very least, this Power should be unreliable—if the character misses a Skill or Activation Roll, he will be transported off course to another dimension (or time). This Power is best used by the GM when it fits into his plans; otherwise it should be strictly regulated.

Extra-Dimensional Movement Cost: 4 Power Points to transport character to a single point in another dimension. +2 PP for a related group of dimensions; +4 PP for any point in any dimension. Travel through time for +4 PP. 2x mass for +1 PP. Costs END.

ADJUSTMENT POWERS

Dispel

A character with this Adjustment Power can turn off the Power of another character. Dispel is all-or-nothing; that is, it either completely turns off a Power or it has no effect. To use Dispel, make a normal Attack Roll against the target. If you hit, roll the appropriate number of dice. For every 5 pts. of effect rolled, reduce the target's appropriate Power by 1 Power Point. If the Power is reduced to 0 Power Points (or less), it shuts down; that is, it stops working. If the victim of the Dispel wants to restart the Power, he can, but he must start from scratch—any preparations must be performed again. Obviously, Dispel is more effective against Powers that are difficult to turn on or take a long time to activate (like many magic spells).

When using a Dispel against a Power with Limiters, the Limiters are ignored when determining the level of the Power.

Example: *Solitaire is trying to Dispel the blast from Markoth's Wand of Pain. The Wand is a 12 DC Energy Blast, bought with a Grabbable Focus Limiter. Even though the Wand only cost Markoth 8 Power Points, Solitaire must Dispel 12 Power Points of effect, which is what the Energy Blast would cost without the Limiter.*

Dispel normally only applies to a single Power; for example, a character could only Dispel Energy Blast or Regeneration. The target Power must be chosen when this Power is purchased. To buy a Dispel that affects any Power of a given special effect—one at a time—costs +1 Power Point. A Dispel which affects all Powers of a given special effect costs +4 Power Points.

Dispel can be used to protect the character from incoming Powers, but the character must have a saved action to do this.

Assuming that the Dispel applies to the attack, the character aborts his action to use the Dispel and rolls the Dispel dice (without having to make an Attack Roll.) The effect of the Dispel is then determined normally.

Example: *Solitaire purchases 22d6 of Dispel that will work against any single Power with a magical special effect. This costs $(11 + 1) = 12$ Power Points. Later Solitaire is attacked by the Necromancer. Knowing she's faster than her opponent, Solitaire saves her action and waits for the Necromancer to make his move. The Necromancer casts an Energy Blast spell. Solitaire uses her saved action to cast her Dispel, to try to stop the incoming Energy Blast spell. Solitaire rolls her 22d6, achieving a total of 77 points. Dividing by 5, her player declares that she Dispels 15 Power Points of Energy Blast. Since the Energy Blast was only 13d6 (13 Power Points), the Dispel is successful, and the Energy Blast disappears.*

Dispel Cost: 2d6 of Dispel costs 1 Power Points. Affect any single Power of a certain special effect for +1 PP; Affects all Powers of a certain special effect for +4 PP. Cost END.

END Reserve

Occasionally, a character might want to create a Power (or set of Powers) that function off of an END supply that is independent of the character. To do that, the character should purchase an END Reserve (aka END Battery). These END Reserves can simulate the generator and batteries of a suit of Power armor, the reserves of a magical wand, or any other effect where the energy does not come from a character's own END. This END Reserve can be used to provide END for any number of Powers, however, the Powers must be designated as using the character's END or the END Reserve when they are purchased. A Power that can draw END from either the character's personal END or the END Reserve is bought with a +1 Power Point Adder.

END Reserves need to purchase a Recovery in order to regain their END. In general, END Reserves will get their REC in END once per Turn. This can be moved down the Time Chart (C:NM, pg 139) to simulate a Reserve that recharges slowly. Each step down the Time Chart is a -1 Power Point Limiter. Unlike the character's normal END, an END Reserve is not reduced to 0 when the character is knocked out.

END Reserve Cost: 50 END for 1 Power Point, 3 REC for 1 Power Point. END Reserve costs no END to use.

NEW ADDER

AREA EFFECT (RADIUS)

This Adder allows you to make any Attack Power affect a circular area. Such attacks use the Area Effect To-Hit Rules (C:NM, pg 148).

Area Effect (Radius) increases the cost of the power by 4 Power Points and allows the Attack Power to affect a circular area with a radius of 1 m/y for each Power Point in the Power, excluding the cost of this Adder.



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