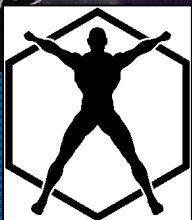
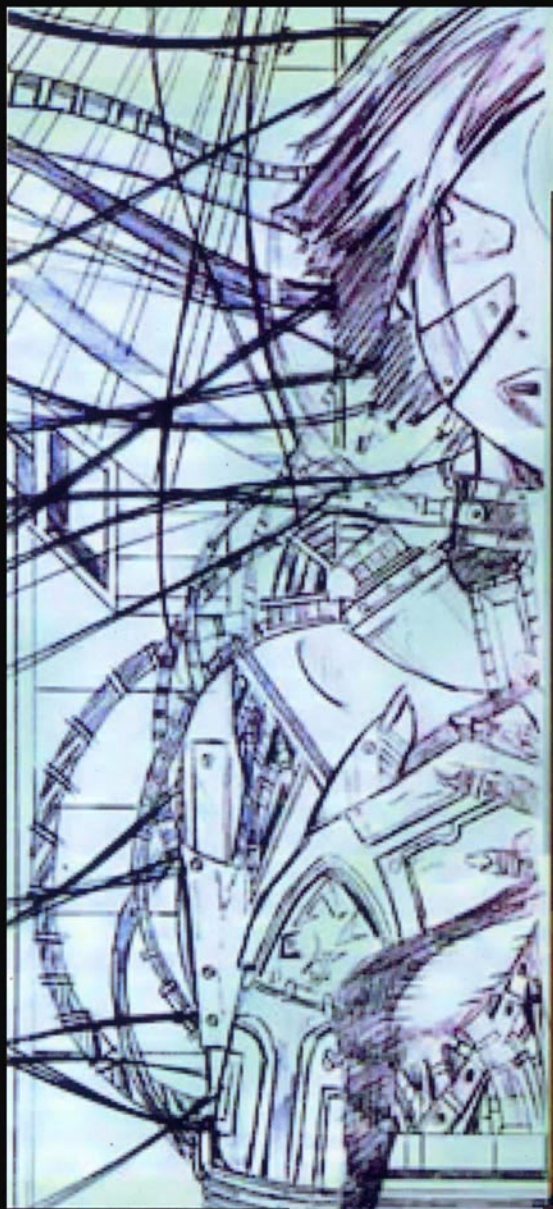


# DIGITAL HERO

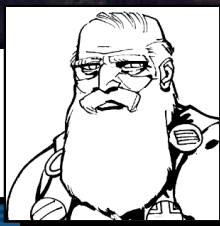
# #16

DEC 2003



In this issue:

- Lawyers
- Demons



- Bikers
- Agents
- Giants



- Charging
- Inventing
- Gardening

SEVENS  
03



# Table of Contents

## HERO HIGHWAY

### WHEN LAST WE LEFT OUR HEROES...

Keep up with the news from Hero Games. This issue – *UNTIL: Defenders of Freedom* come to the rescue. 2

### HEROGLYPHS

See how Steve Long himself answers rules questions. This issue – Charge into action with new rules for Charges. 3

### HERO UNIVERSE

The Sentinels couldn't last a week without their support staff taking care of things back home. 6

### YOU GOTTA HAVE CHARACTER

Robert Hooke was an inventor, an artist, an architect, and a scholar... but by no means a gentleman. 15

### YOUR HOROSCOPE FOR: LIBRA

You have the right to an attorney, so call Irving M. Probalino, Esquire, for all your supervillainous needs! 25

### BIKER HERO

Strap on your leathers and rev up your engines. Motorcycle riding characters finally get their due. 28

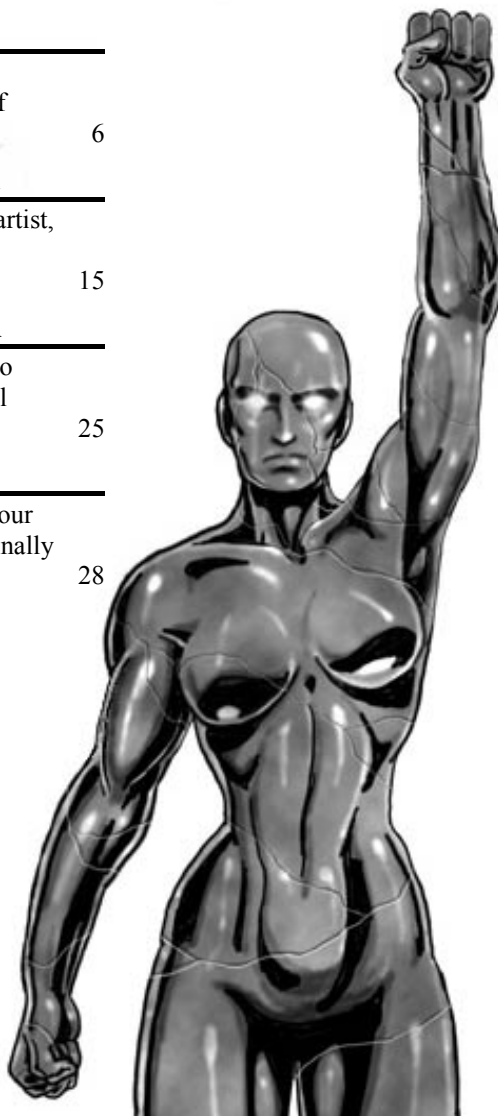
## CHARACTER CORNER

### CRUCIBLE

A gemcutter has been melded with a succubus, and the result is very pretty, but definitely not nice. 57

### MONOLITH

A Sioux woman is being forced to use her giant stone alter ego on the shady side of the law. 61



## DIGITAL HERO

### Publisher

Hero Games

### Editor

Dave Mattingly

### Authors

W. Jason Allen

Steven S. Long

Allen Thomas

Jason Walters

W. Ross Watson

Darren Watts

### Artists

Robert Hooke

Bill Jackson

Derrick Thomas

Ron Salas

### Cover Artist

Derek Stevens

### Online

[herogames.com](http://herogames.com)

### To Subscribe

[herogames.com/digitalhero](http://herogames.com/digitalhero)

HERO System™ is DOJ, Inc.'s trademark for its roleplaying system.

HERO System Copyright © 1984, 1989, 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

Champions Copyright © 1984, 1989, 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

Justice Inc., Danger International, Dark Champions, Fantasy Hero, and Star Hero Copyright © 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

No part of this electronic magazine may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or computerization, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publisher: DOJ, Inc., 1 Haight Street, Suite A, San Francisco, California 94102.

Issue #16 (December 2003)










# When Last We Left Our Heroes...

by Steven S. Long

Last month we concentrated on bad guys – monsters, to be specific. This month let's turn the tables and focus on the good guys... specifically, the men and women of UNTIL.

About the time you read this (or not long thereafter), we'll publish *UNTIL: Defenders Of Freedom*, the first fully detailed, book-length look at the agents of the United Nations Tribunal on International Law. It's chock-full of information for both players and GMs; unlike *VIPER*, it's not a GM-oriented book. All the secret info is locked away in the GM's Vault so the players can't access it, but can still make use of the rest of the book when creating characters, NPCs, and the like.

*UNTIL* has seven chapters:

-  Chapter One, *A Union Of Justice*, details the history of UNTIL, from its roots in the formation of the United Nations itself after World War II to its activities and current state of affairs as of late 2003. The focus here is on the highlights, leaving plenty of room for GMs to insert their own events into the UNTIL timeline or change things to suit their own campaigns.
  -  Chapter Two, *Under One Banner: The United Nations*, details the nature, structure, and purpose of the UN itself. Since UNTIL is an arm of the United Nations, it's important for you to have some understanding of the organization that controls it. This chapter also covers international law, which affects many of UNTIL's activities. If you ever wanted to know how extradition works, what diplomatic immunity means, or what a "state" is, this chapter will tell you.
  -  Chapter Three, *The World's Police*, describes the structure of UNTIL itself, from Secretary-Marshal Wilhelm Carl Eckhardt down to the agents and squads who fight supercrime in the streets every day. It includes a detailed table of organization so you can figure out exactly which units of UNTIL agents are posted where. Lastly, it discusses UNTIL's activities around the world.
  -  Chapter Four, *The Front Lines: Agents Of UNTIL*, describes the rank-and-file agents who make up the bulk of UNTIL. In addition to covering recruitment and training, it includes Package Deals for twenty different types of agents, with options and variations for many. Also
-  Chapter Five, *UNTIL Technology*, describes the many amazing devices UNTIL uses in its war on supercrime. From blasters and lasers, to high-tech body armors, to computers, to vehicles of all types, UNTIL has an extensive arsenal, and Chapter Five tells you all about it. This chapter also covers UNTIL's major facilities around the world, including the Guardhouse (UNTIL's version of Stronghold), the GATEWAY space station, the NAUTILUS undersea base, and UNTIL's super-submarine, the *Aegir*.
  -  Chapter Six, *Fighting Crime*, discusses UNTIL's tactics and procedures. More importantly for many campaigns, it covers how UNTIL relates to teams of superheroes, and how your PCs can join UNTIL's Superhero Liaison Program. It also includes descriptions of and character sheets for the members of UNITY, UNTIL's own superteam.
  -  Chapter Seven, *Gamemastering UNTIL*, describes how to incorporate UNTIL into your *Champions* campaign for best effect – or create an entire UNTIL-based game. It's even got information on using UNTIL in other genres, such as Fantasy, Dark Champions, or Science Fiction.
- Last but not least, *UNTIL* concludes with several Appendices. The first couple contain information on UNTIL slang, commonly-used UNTIL acronyms, a who's who list of UNTIL personnel – reference sources that make the book easier to use. The last one contains some pre-built UNTIL Agent Templates for the GMs use.
- Thanks to *UNTIL*, you won't have to let *VIPER* run roughshod through your campaign world anymore. Now the thugs in green-and-yellow have an enemy that's their equal – the heroes in blue-and-white!

— Steven S. Long  
HERO System Line Developer

# HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

## Charge!

### Expanded Rules For Charges

Here are a few expanded rules and explanations for Charges, one of the most popular Limitations in the book. Some of them come from the Rules FAQ (but are restated here for clarity), and others are brand new.

### Using Multiple Charges

Characters often define weapons with multiple settings, or similar types of devices, as Multipowers (or, less commonly, other Power Frameworks). Typically these Multipowers have Charges for the entire reserve, representing a fuel cell, clip of ammunition, or other “power source” for the entire weapon or device. That raises the possibility of some slots in the Multipower using more than one Charge. For example, if you have a Laser Rifle, maybe slot #3, Overpowered Shot, represents providing extra power to the weapon to create a more powerful beam. This qualifies as a separate Limitation on the slot (not the Multipower reserve) called *Requires Multiple Charges*. The accompanying table indicates the value of Requires Multiple Charges.

REQUIRES MULTIPLE CHARGES	
Limitation Value	Number Of Charges Used
-1/4	2 per use
-1/2	3-7 per use
-3/4	8-12 per use
-1	13-17 per use
...and so on.	

This chart assumes the character has a fairly high number of Charges – 65 or more – for his Multipower. For each step up the Charges Table, add an additional -1/4 Limitation value (though a slot can never require more Charges than the entire Multipower has at full strength). Thus, for a Multipower that has 16 Charges for the entire Multipower, a slot that consumes 4 Charges per use gets a -1 1/4 Limitation.

## Conserved Charges

Sometimes a device, power, or ability needs Charges to represent the fact that it gets used up, runs out of power, or the like — but not every use of the device, power, or ability should necessarily consume a Charge.

Consider, for example, the *macahuitl* — the Aztec “sword,” consisting of a sort of wooden club with razor-sharp bits of obsidian set into each edge. The obsidian blades become dull from repeated use, which you can represent with Charges... but not every “activation” of the macahuitl uses up a Charge. Sometimes an attack misses, or cuts through so cleanly that it doesn’t dull the stone.

In *HERO System* terms, you can simulate this with *Conserved Charges*, which reduces the value of Charges based on how likely it is that any given activation of the power will use up a Charge. The reduction listed in the accompanying table is based on a roll – the GM makes the roll each time the character activates the power, and if he rolls less than or equal to that number, a Charge is consumed.

Alternately, you can define circumstances in which a Charge is or is not used up, and assign a Limitation value to that based on the rolls listed in the table. With the macahuitl, for example, you might define it this way: activating the power uses up a Charge if the Attack Roll indicates a hit, the Attack Roll misses by only 1 or 2, the attack is Blocked, or the circumstances otherwise indicate the obsidian blades have impacted something hard enough to chip or dull them. The GM assigns this a value of 1/2 less Limitation, similar to an 11- roll.

CONSERVED CHARGES	
Roll	Reduction In Value
14-	3/4 less Limitation
11-	1/2 less Limitation
8-	1/4 less Limitation

This reduction in value can convert Charges from a Limitation to an Advantage.



## Adjusting Charges

Sometimes a character wants to use an Adjustment Power to affect not a power, but that power's Charges. Examples include a superhero with electricity powers who wants to "juice up" a run-down battery (Aid Charges) or a magic spell that removes bullets from a gun (Drain Charges).

To do this, the character must define his Adjustment Power properly. First, unless the GM rules otherwise, the Adjustment Power has to work against a particular special effect, *and* be defined as only affecting Charges: Aid Electricity Charges; Drain Bullets Charges. That prevents the ability from becoming unbalancingly powerful. Second, the character must apply a +¼ Advantage, *Charges Adjustment*, to the power. This signifies that the change in Charges doesn't fade normally. Instead, added Charges remain until used up, and removed Charges remain lost until the character recovers them normally the next day (or physically gets them back, in the case of things like Drained bullets or arrows that remain in existence).

To determine the "cost" of each Charge in a device or power, divide the Active Points in the power by the number of Charges it has. That gives a "Character Point cost" for each Charge. Then you can apply the Adjustment Power as per normal.

## Increased Reloading Time

Clips are a popular option for guns and many other devices that have Charges. Reloading a clip of Charges normally takes a Full Phase. If it takes longer than normal for a character to reload a clip, the character can increase the value of his *Charges* Limitation, as indicated in the accompanying table. A character with Fast Draw can reduce the increased reloading time by half with a successful roll.

### INCREASED RELOADING TIME

Value	Increased Reloading Time
¼ more Limitation	2 Full Phases
½ more Limitation	1 Turn
¾ more Limitation	1 Minute
1 more Limitation	5 Minutes
...and so on.	

## Recovery Time Issues

Here are some expanded and optional rules for recovering used Charges.

### REDUCED RECOVERY TIME

As noted in the rules, the default for Charges is that a character recovers them once per Day (unless they are Recoverable Charges, in which case it depends on how long it takes him to get them back).

Generally, characters should not use Recoverable Charges to simulate a power with Charges that return more quickly than once per day (they're primarily appropriate for Charges based on physical objects the character can retrieve), but the GM can allow this if he wishes. For example, a character could define his Recoverable Charges as returning per Hour instead of per Day.

Alternately, the GM can more precisely allow for rapid Charge recovery by reducing the value of the *Charges* Limitation based on how quickly the character regains Charges. The accompanying table lists the suggested reduction values.

### REDUCED RECOVERY TIME

Reduction	Charges Recover Per...
¼ less Limitation	6 Hours
½ less Limitation	1 Hour
¾ less Limitation	20 Minutes
1 less Limitation	1 Minute
1¼ less Limitation	1 Turn

Characters cannot reduce the recovery period for Charges below 1 Turn.

This reduction in value can convert Charges from a Limitation to an Advantage. For example, if a character has 4 Charges (-1) that recover on per Turn basis (1¼ less Limitation), it becomes a (1 - 1¼) +¼ Advantage.

### INCREASED RECOVERY TIME

The *Increased Recovery Time* addition to the value of Charges is described on page 184 of the *HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* rulebook (as is the *Never Recovers* addition, which is essentially just an extension of Increased Recovery Time).

As a default, characters cannot apportion the recovery of Charges with Increased Recovery Time over the course of the defined time – they all come back at the end of the period. For example, if a character has a power with 30 Charges and Increased Recovery Time of 1 Month (-1), he cannot regain 1 Charge per Day or the like; instead, all 30 Charges come back at the end of the month. However, a GM can choose to allow apportionment if desired, but if he does so, he should reduce the value of the Limitation (or increase the value of the Advantage) by  $\frac{1}{4}$  (or more) to reflect the beneficial change.

The value of Increased Recovery Time has a cap of -2, since that's the value of *Never Recovers*. By definition any recovery period, no matter how long, is less hindering than never having the Charges come back.

There's no hard-and-fast rule that limits how many Charges a power with Increased Recovery Time or *Never Recovers* can have. However, as always, the GM should use his common sense, dramatic sense, and appreciation for game balance issues when evaluating a power with these Limitations. Charges which *Never Recover* are primarily intended for intriguing power constructs with a small number of Charges, like a magic wand with a restricted "battery" of magical energy, not for more routine powers.

Generally speaking, a power cannot have both Recoverable Charges and Charges which *Never Recover*; by definition, the special effects justifying these two Limitations are so incompatible as to be exclusive. A GM might allow a character to combine the two if he felt it wouldn't cause game balance problems and was justified by proper character/power conception.

### Multiple-Use Charges

There are some situations in which a character wants a single supply of Charges to work with more than one power or device. The typical example is a character with multiple weapons that all use the same type of ammunition – if he runs out of bullets for his 9mm submachine gun, he can take the clip out of his 9mm pistol and use those bullets for the SMG. For example, in the *UNTIL* sourcebook, it's mentioned that all UNTIL weapons of a particular type (e.g., all blasters) can use each others' energy packs if necessary.

In some cases the GM can write this off to "special effects" without worrying about it further. But if the GM wants to account for the increased utility of the Charges in this situation, he could reduce the value of the *Charges* Limitation by  $\frac{1}{4}$  – or possibly even  $\frac{1}{4}$  for every x2 powers/devices the Charges can work with.



## Hero Universe by Darren Watts

Hyvää päivää, assembled Hero fans, and welcome to yet another installment of Champions Universe, where the history of the world is delved every thirty days or so, unless I get into deadline trouble! This month, part three of the deathless tale of the Sentinels, America's most convoluted supergroup, this time concentrating on the bit players in the early days of their saga.

Once the Sentinels had agreed to remain in contact as a team, they quickly decided they needed a central meeting place, much as the Defenders of Justice had maintained a secret headquarters in the Empire State Building and the Fabulous Five were currently operating from an office in Manhattan. Though neither MeteorMan nor Rocketman were willing to move from their home areas full time, they agreed to return to New York on a semi-regular basis for meetings and in case of emergencies. Dr. Phantom volunteered the use of her mansion in Connecticut, and the Sentinels agreed to make it their first formal headquarters.

The mansion itself was located in the small town of Berwick, and stood on the shore of Long Island Sound. It had been built in the early 1800s by a local silk importer, but had several different owners before Dr. Phantom purchased it in 1959. (Indeed, one of the owners in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century was an amateur spiritualist named Orford, who frequently performed séances on the property. The house and grounds became "haunted" by the spirit of an evil witch named Amera Cosgrove, who returned in 1963 and several times thereafter to menace the Sentinels.)

When Dr. Phantom purchased the mansion she added several security features, including a complete computerized security system with cameras, microphones, and electronic locks, all monitored from a computer panel in the basement. Over the next few years, she and Rocketman added several additional upgrades, including beam-stunners mounted in the main hallway and under hidden panels in the front lawn and steel-fiber nets that were fired from mini-cannons in several locations around the grounds.

The mansion itself has two full floors and a smaller basement. The main floor includes Dr. Phantom's master bedroom, a well-stocked library, full dining room with a massive kitchen across the hall, a veranda, and sitting room. There is also a solarium that Dr. Phantom converted into the official Sentinels meeting room, with a massive table and an experimental videophone hookup connecting the team to the DoD's Scientific Inquiry main office. The eastern side of the building has two full garages

(one two-car and the other housing three) that surround an enclosed garden with a separate, gated entrance. The second floor has another full living room and auxiliary kitchen, as well as four more bedrooms (not including those used by Ruth and Ray). The basement was mostly a wine cellar and laundry room, converted by Dr. Phantom and Microman into a fairly well-equipped set of miniature labs.

The building itself sits on several acres of woodlands, and about 100 meters from the shore of Long Island Sound. In later years, Microman and Rocketman would add a tunnel running from the basement labs to an underwater mooring where the Sentinels' minisub was kept. There is also a landing pad in the woods east of the mansion itself, originally designed for Dr. Phantom's helicopter but later used by the team's VTOL jet.



### Ruth Willmore

**Background/History:** Ruth Dawley Willmore was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1905, to a solidly middle-class family (her father was a middle-school principal). At the age of eighteen she fell in love with (and eloped with) Max Willmore, explorer and “professional adventurer.” The two traveled through Europe and Asia together, but broke up after a few years under circumstances neither will discuss (though they finally reconciled in 1965 and remained friends until his death). Ruth returned to America, and eventually went to work for the Army’s Department of Scientific Intelligence as the caretaker of a top-secret facility in upstate New York known as Project Rainbow, which was disguised as a rickety old house but concealed an extensive maze of underground labs and barracks. During World War II, Project Rainbow was the US Government’s primary weapons design facility, and while working there Ruth became friends with the brilliant inventor (and part-time superhero) Michael Maven, and his young daughter Marion (who spent a lot of time in the above-ground house).

After the war, Ruth traveled the world, paying for her expenses by taking odd jobs and occasionally working as a cook in various restaurants. She remained in contact with Marion, who spent most of the 1950s completing her education and becoming one of the Defense Department’s foremost inventors herself. In 1960 Marion adopted the superheroic identity of Dr. Phantom, and asked Ruth to come back to Connecticut to take care of the mansion she had purchased to use as her base in her career as a crimefighter. Ruth, who was tiring of travel, happily agreed.

Ruth soon made herself utterly invaluable to Dr. Phantom and her teammates in the Sentinels, who adopted the mansion as their first team headquarters. Always referred to as “Mrs. Willmore” by everyone except Dr. Phantom, Ruth kept the house clean and in good repair despite the numerous supervillain attacks, alien invasions, and lab accidents she endured. She used her world-class skills as a chef to provide the Sentinels and their guests with amazing meals on a moment’s notice. Almost all of the Sentinels adored and admired her personally, not least for the astounding bravery and resolve she would show when staring down some fearsome beast that had dared to mess up her beloved rose garden out in back.

Ruth accompanied the team for a brief period when they moved to Sentinels Island, but decided she didn’t care much for life at sea and retired from the team’s service in 1973 (not before personally training her replacement, of course). She moved back to Berwick and the mansion, and lived there until her death (from a heart attack) in 1982.



**Ruth Willmore**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes	
5	STR	-5	10-	Lift 50 kg; 1d6 HTH	
9	DEX	-3	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3	
10	CON	0	11-		
8	BODY	-4	11-		
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 15-	
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5	
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6	
10	COM	0	11-		
1 PD				0	Total: 4 PD (3 rPD)
2 ED				0	Total: 5 ED (3 rED)
2 SPD				1	Phases: 6, 12
3 REC				0	
20 END				0	
16 STUN				0	

**Total Characteristics Cost: 5**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
 Leaping: 1"/2"  
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
5	<i>Unflappable:</i> +10 PRE; Only for Defense (-1)	0
9	<i>Keen Senses:</i> Enhanced Perception: +3 to PER Rolls	0

**Perks**

- 6 Contact: The Maven Family 11- (Very Useful Skills or Resources, Very Good Relationship)
- 1 Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance – Cleared by DoD

**Talents**

- 3 Absolute Time Sense
- 6 Combat Luck: 3 PD/3 ED
- 3 Lightsleep

**Skills**

- 3 Bureaucratics 12-
- 3 Conversation 12-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 2 KS: History 11-
- 4 KS: The Sentinels 13-
- 2 Language: French: Fluent Conversation
- 3 Mechanics 12-
- 1 Paramedics 8-
- 7 PS: Cook 16-
- 3 PS: Housekeeper 12-
- 3 Stealth 11-
- 3 Trading 12-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 70**

**Total Cost: 75**

**50+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Distinctive Features: Charming Little Old Lady (Concealable, Not Distinctive in Some Cultures)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Loyal to Marion Maven (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Hates When Villains Mess Up Her House (Common, Moderate)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 75**

**Personality/Motivation:** Ruth Willmore was an imposing woman despite her diminutive stature. Her manners and bearing were impeccably proper, but when provoked her rage was capable of daunting gods and alien emperors alike. She cared deeply for each of her “charges” in the Sentinels, but was closest to her old friend Dr. Phantom and Microman.

**Quote:** “I don’t care if you are the Avatar of Chaos, you will not take that tone with me, young man!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Ruth Willmore had no superhuman powers, though anyone who tasted her peach cobbler might dispute that. She was careful to stay out of the way if any violence broke out. She was taken hostage occasionally by various of the team’s enemies, an event which infuriated her each time it occurred.

**Appearance:** Ruth Willmore was a small woman, standing just under five feet tall. She wore her graying hair at shoulder length or occasionally up in a bun. She was in excellent shape for a woman of her age.



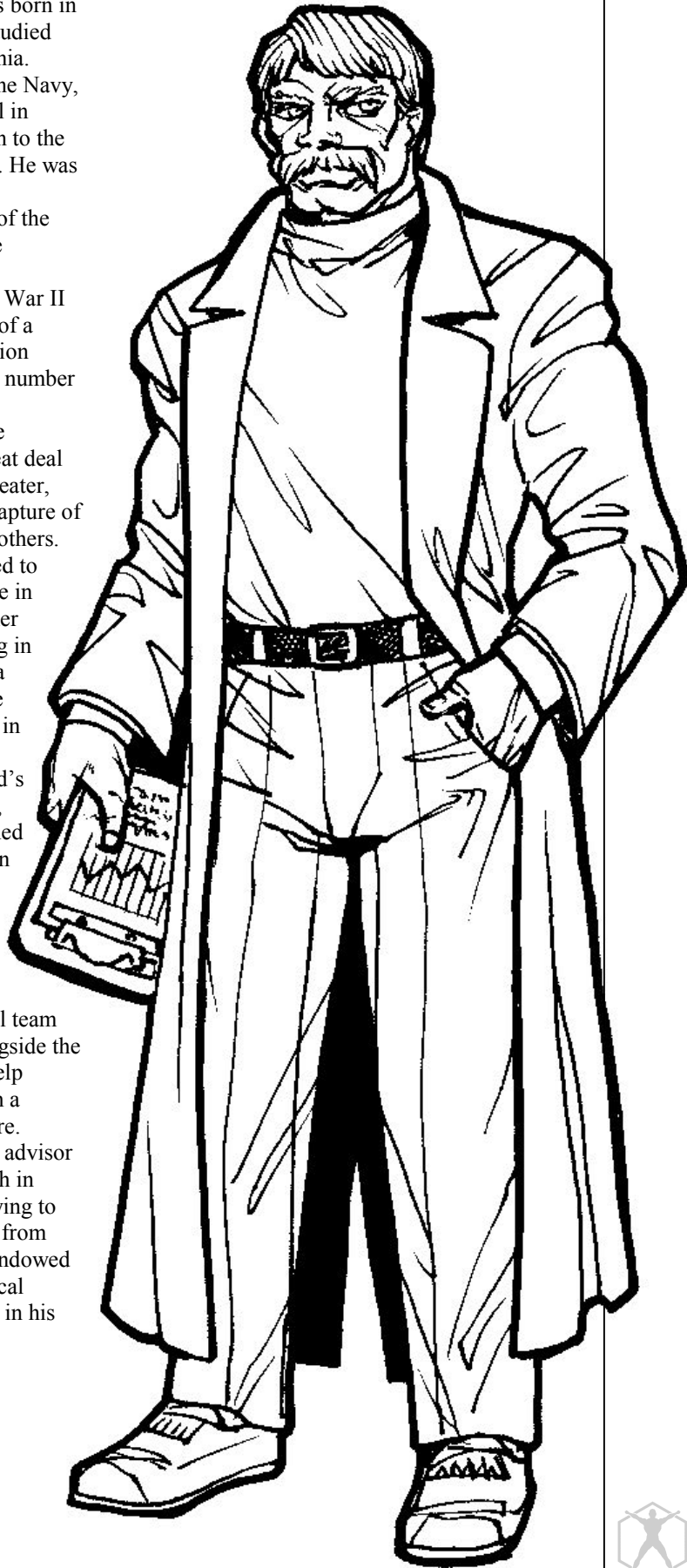
### Dr. Neil Howell

**Background/History:** Neil Howell was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania in 1907, and studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Upon his graduation in 1931 he joined the Navy, and worked at the Naval Medical School in Portsmouth, Virginia, where he had risen to the rank of Lieutenant Commander by 1938. He was then transferred to Fort McLaughlin in Haynesville, Kansas, where he was one of the top-secret team of scientists studying the “superhuman” phenomenon.

When the US finally entered World War II at the end of 1941, Howell became part of a classified intelligence unit called Operation Audible, composed of specialists from a number of fields who studied superhumans and paranormal events during the war. While working for Audible, Howell spent a great deal of time in Asia and the South Pacific Theater, and was personally responsible for the capture of the Japanese superhuman Masashimi Brothers. After the war was over, Howell continued to work at Fort McLaughlin until its closure in 1946. He then worked for a series of other special government projects until retiring in 1957, intending to live a simpler life as a small-town doctor in Berwick, a town he and his friend Michael Maven had lived in briefly during the war.

He remained in touch with his friend’s daughter, Marion (Dr. Phantom) Maven, and not long after the Sentinels established their headquarters in her mansion Marion called on his assistance in bringing MeteorMan out of a coma induced by the villain Plague in 1963. From that point on, despite his occasional gentle protests that he was trying to enjoy his retirement, Howell became the unofficial team physician of the Sentinels, working alongside the heroes to solve medical mysteries and help injured heroes recuperate. He also began a romantic relationship with Ruth Willmore.

Howell continued to act as a valued advisor and doctor to the Sentinels until his death in 1970, when he sacrificed his own life trying to stop the mad Lemurian called Hoarfrost from killing Hex. The Sentinels created and endowed the Neil Howell Medical Center, a medical research facility located on Long Island, in his honor.



**Dr. Neil Howell**

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

**Total Characteristics Cost: 23**

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

**Cost Perks**

- 12 Contact: Department of Defense 11- (Access to Major Institutions, Useful Skills or Resources, Organization)
- 3 Contact: The Maven Family 11- (Useful Skills or Resources)
- 1 Fringe Benefit: License to Practice a Profession (Doctor)
- 5 Money: Well Off
- 2 Reputation: Brilliant Medical Researcher (Medium-Sized Group, 11-) +2/+2d6

**Skills**

- 9 +3 with Forensic Medicine, Paramedics, and Medicine
- 1 Breakfall 8-
- 1 Bureaucratics 8-
- 3 Combat Driving 11-
- 3 Computer Programming 13-
- 3 Concealment 13-
- 3 Forensic Medicine 13-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 6 KS: Unusual Diseases and Paranormal Medicine 16-
- 1 Language: German (Basic)
- 1 Language: Japanese (Basic)
- 3 Navigation (Land, Marine) 13-
- 3 Paramedics 13-
- 3 PS: Country Doctor (PRE-Based) 12-
- 3 SS: Medicine 13-
- 3 SS: Biology 13-
- 3 Survival (Marine Surface, Tropical) 13-
- 2 WF: Small Arms

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 77**

**Total Cost: 100**

**50+ Disadvantages**

- 10 DNPC: Sarah (Daughter) 8- (Normal)
- 10 Hunted: Haynesville Project 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Can't Resist a Medical Mystery (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Wants to Retire Peacefully and Live a Normal Life (Common, Moderate)
- 5 Unluck: 1d6

**Total Disadvantage Points: 100**

**Personality/Motivation:** Dr. Howell maintained a public air of gruffness and complaining, but was at heart the gentlest and most compassionate of souls. He devoted his life both to caring for the sick and uncovering medical mysteries, and was responsible for coming up with cures for half-a-dozen dangerous diseases, viruses, and toxins.

**Quote:** "Don't you people ever knock? Why, I ought to... what's that? People are turning into plants on the streets of New York? Well, get out of my way!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Dr. Howell had no superhuman powers or abilities, though he was one of the foremost medical researchers and experts on paranormal medicine on the planet.

**Appearance:** Howell stood about 5'10", with white hair, a bushy mustache and piercing blue eyes. He generally dressed in ordinary, conservative street clothes, and often wore a white lab coat over them. He was a bit overweight in his later years, largely due to frequent exposure to Mrs. Willmore's cooking.

**Ray Dillon**

**Background/History:** Ray Dillon was born in Florida in 1932, a small-time thug who alternated between legitimate farming jobs and strong-arming shopkeepers when times were slow. By 1961 he had drifted north and found himself in the employ of Tommy London, one of New York City's competing crime bosses. While in London's employ Dillon was part of a gang sent to a downtown museum to steal a new exhibit of Himalayan statues, one of whom had apparently been carved from a strange meteor. Upon touching this statue, Dillon was transformed into the monstrous being called Krogg, and went on a wild rampage that pitted him against the Sentinels and was only ended when Rocketman destroyed the statue itself.

Dillon was so grateful for being returned to his normal self that he reformed, and committed himself to doing good. Dr. Phantom hired him to be the gardener and groundskeeper for the Berwick mansion, a job he performed with aplomb over the next decade (despite twice being transformed back into Krogg against his will). Dillon remained the gardener for the Sentinels through their eventual move to Sentinel Island, and retired in 1983. He is now married, with three kids and owns a small landscaping firm in Albany that is managed by one of his sons.

**Personality/Motivation:** Dillon remained grateful and loyal to the Sentinels for transforming him back to a human for the rest of his life, and took special pride in his duties, "keepin' the place lookin' nice." In the early days, he still was prone to drink a bit too much and occasionally get into the odd bar brawl, but he eventually grew out of that as well and became an upstanding citizen of Berwick. He was particularly close to Mrs. Willmore, as well as Sentinels like Beowulf, Scarlet Archer, and Iron Maiden, all of whom were "tough" and would occasionally join Ray for a beer and/or a cigar occasionally.

**Quote:** "Hey, you better take dat back or I'm gonna have ta pound ya one."

**Powers/Tactics:** In his ordinary human form, Ray had no superhuman powers, though he was fairly adept at hand-to-hand combat and could use a gun when necessary.

**Appearance:** Ray was a large man, standing about 6'3" and weighing over 230 pounds. He had black hair that turned to gray over the years, brown eyes, and a nose that had clearly been broken more than once. He favored white t-shirts and brown slacks, and was usually dirty from his efforts at maintaining the mansion's extensive grounds.

**Krogg**

**Background/History:** See Ray Dillon's story above. No explanation was ever found for the original transformation, or what the Himalayan idol was actually for. Dillon was transformed into Krogg on two other occasions, once when Dillon was exposed to a meteorite, and again when the villain Rictus struck him with a blast of energy.

**Personality/Motivation:** Krogg is temperamental, easily frustrated, and prone to destructive rages. He has the approximate intelligence of a small child, and can clearly understand simple instructions or concepts despite his own inability to communicate. He may be motivated by Dillon's own horror or self-hatred at his transformation; Krogg was once observed flailing wildly at his own reflection in a glassy skyscraper window.

**Quote:** "KROGG!" (Krogg can't speak. His name comes from Rocketman jokingly asking him what his name was when they first fought, and then attempting to transliterate the resulting roar. Lacking anything else to call the beast, the name stuck.)

**Powers/Tactics:** Krogg is tremendously strong, and the horn projecting from his forehead can be used not only as a striking weapon but somehow generates beams of devastating blue energy. Krogg is not very bright, but has a certain native cunning. Primarily the creature simply lashes out at anything that annoys him, but he will use his horn to its best advantage in combat. He also is smart enough to use large objects or pieces of the surrounding environment as weapons.

**Appearance:** Krogg is a monstrous creature, standing over twenty-five feet high and weighing about eight tons. He is covered head-to-foot with a brown furry pelt, longer on his head, arms, and legs below the knees than the rest of his body. Projecting from his forehead is a massive horn over three feet long, which occasionally glows with blue energy and can fire powerful blasts.

## Ray Dillon

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 HTH
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
11	CON	2	11-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
9	INT	-1	11-	PER Roll: 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4 PD				1 Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
3 ED				1 Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
2 SPD				0 Phases: 6, 12
5 REC				0
24 END				1
26 STUN				1

**Total Characteristics Cost: 12**

**Movement:**

Running:	6"/12"
Leaping:	2½"/5"
Swimming:	2"/4"

**Cost Powers**

**Martial Arts: Brawling**

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4 Roundhouse	+0	+2	4½d6 Strike
3 Tackle	+2	+1	2½d6 Strike, Both Fall
4 Choke Hold	-2	+0	One Limb, 2d6 NND

**Perks**

- 4 Contact: Dr. Phantom 8- (Very Useful Skills or Resources, Good Relationship)

**Skills**

- 3 Climbing 11-
- 4 Gambling (Dice Games, Sports Betting) 11-
- 3 KS: Gardening and Landscaping 12-
- 3 Mechanics 11-
- 2 PS: Groundskeeper/Gardener 11-
- 3 Streetwise 11-
- 3 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Agricultural & Construction Vehicles
- 2 WF: Small Arms

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 38**

**Total Cost: 50**

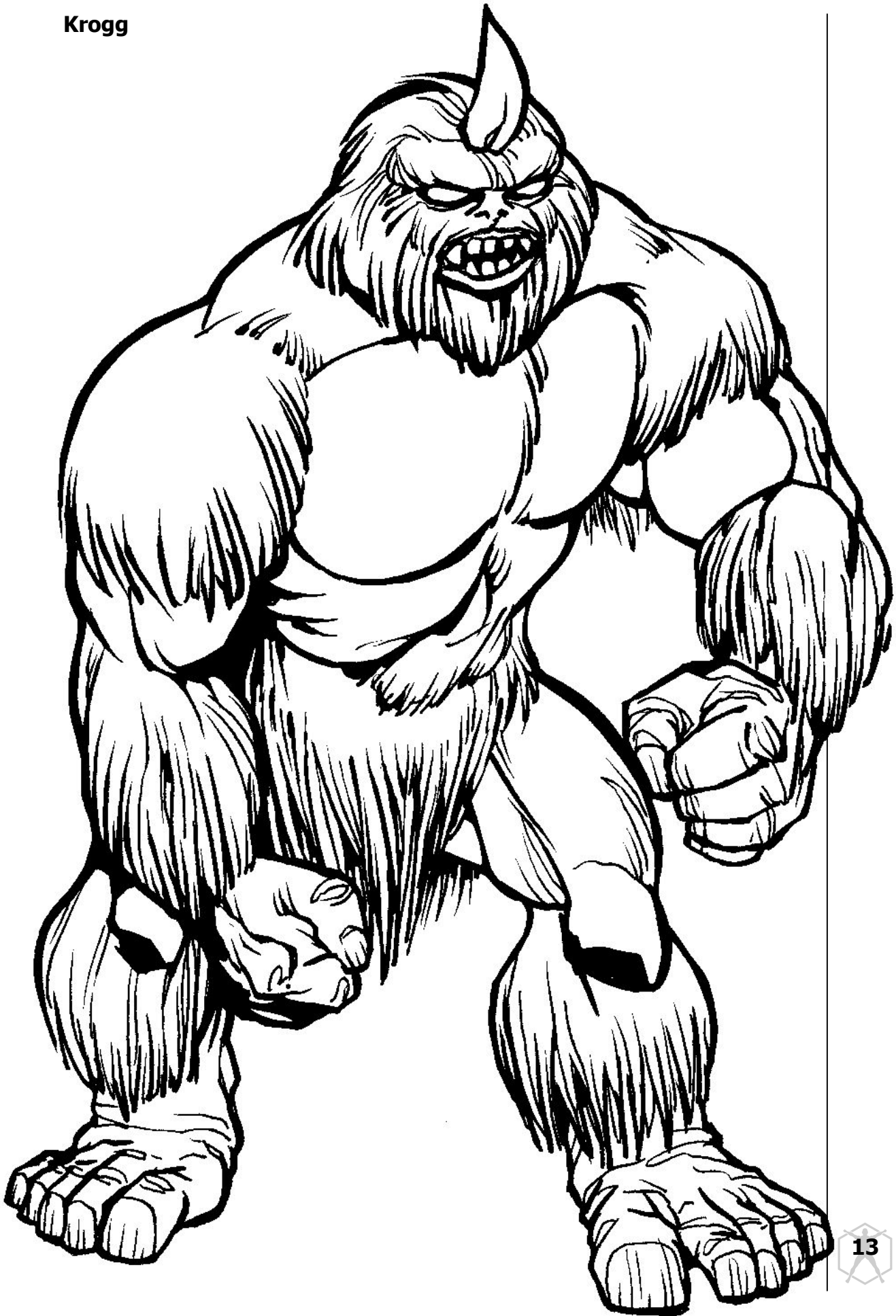
**50+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Accidental Change: To Krogg: Strange Radiation or Chemicals 8- (Uncommon)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Loyal to Dr. Phantom and the Sentinels (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Enjoys a Good Brawl (Common, Moderate)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 50**



Krogg



**Krogg**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
70	STR	60	23-	Lift 400 tons; 14d6 HTH
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
35	CON	50	16-	
23	BODY	26	14-	
6	INT	-4	10-	PER Roll: 10-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
23	PRE	13	14-	PRE Attack: 4½d6
2	COM	-4	9-	
33	PD	19		Total: 33 PD (25 rPD)
25	ED	18		Total: 25 ED (20 rED)
5	SPD	19		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
21	REC	0		
70	END	0		
76	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 250**

**Movement:** Running: 12"/24"  
 Leaping: 14"/28"  
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
60	<i>Energy-Horn</i> : Multipower, 60-point Reserve	
6u	1) <i>Energy-Horn</i> : EB 12d6 (versus ED)	6
6u	2) <i>Energy-Horn</i> : HKA 4d6 (8d6 with STR) (versus PD)	6/12
30	<i>General Toughness</i> : Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%	0
28	<i>General Toughness</i> : Damage Resistance (25 PD/20 ED), Hardened (+¼)	0
39	<i>General Toughness</i> : Life Support (Immunity: All Terrestrial Diseases, Biowarfare Agents, Terrestrial Poisons, and Chemical Warfare Agents; Safe in: High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum; Self-Contained Breathing)	0
12	<i>Heavy</i> : Knockback Resistance -6"	0
8	<i>Longer Reach</i> : Stretching 2"; No Noncombat Stretching (-¼)	1
12	<i>Long Legs</i> : Running +6" (12" Total)	1
15	<i>Enhanced Sense of Smell</i> : Discriminatory Tracking (Smell/Taste Group)	0
<b>Skills</b>		
24	+3 with All Combat	
3	Breakfall 13-	
3	Climbing 13-	
3	Tracking 10-	

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 254**

**Total Cost: 504**

**200+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Accidental Change: To Ray Dillon: Strange Radiation or Chemicals 8- (Uncommon)
- 25 Distinctive Features: Enormous, Shaggy, Horned Monster (Not Concealable, Extreme Reaction)
- 20 Hunted: Sentinels 11- (As Pow, Very Easy to Find)
- 20 Physical Limitation: Inconvenient Size (20' Tall) (All the Time, Greatly Impairing)
- 20 Physical Limitation: Largely Mute, Only Knows a Few Words (All the Time, Greatly Impairing)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Bad Tempered and Violent (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Reputation: Destructive Monster 11- (Extreme)
- 20 Vulnerability: 2x Effect from Gasses (Common)
- 154 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 504**





# You Gotta Have Character

by Jason Walters

“Life is lived forwards, but understood backwards” — Kierkegaard

He was not so much pale as grey, nor so much unhealthy as spectral, nor so much sinister as inhuman. With his sharp, pinched features and arrogant, piercing eyes he couldn't help but appear perpetually displeased; those unfortunate enough to stray into his field of view invariably found themselves pinned, like some unfortunate specimen, by that unflinching gaze. Though the alchemist had tied his long, lank hair back behind his head using a random bit of brightly colored twine plucked away from some experiment or the other, it did little to dispel his ghoulish air. He was covered from head to toe in dog's blood; some dry, some still wet and steaming. His once fashionable clothing had been reduced to near rags from weeks of neglect, spills, tears, and burns inflicted in the hellish depths of his unfathomable laboratory. He glared unhappily at his royal guest, obviously unimpressed and eager to return to his ghastly work.

At least the inhuman screaming had stopped.

“How does this day find you, my lord?” the gaunt man asked in his usual acrid, fearless tone.

“Significantly better than it finds the denizens your kennel, Master Hooke,” replied John Comstock, Earl of Epsom and Lord Chancellor of England. He was also speaking in his usual tone, which (in direct contrast to Hooke's) was both amiable as well as slightly amused. “Now that you've thoroughly exterminated West Wickham's indigent canine population, do you have any plans to march on Oxford? Or should I place an armed guard over my prized fox terriers lest their insides become outsides?”

Hooke fixed his very best vivisectionist's gaze upon Comstock before raising a sinister eyebrow, cocking his head even more to one side (he had a very unusual posture), and began to wipe steaming blood from his hands onto the butcher's apron which he commonly wore over his clothing. While this sight was surely frightening

enough to cover an 18 stone blacksmith or a toothless prize fighter, it had little effect upon the Earl, who had spent the better part of the previous year on The Continent watching young men's legs getting inconveniently blown off by Dutch cannonballs. So Comstock waited patiently while Hooke devoted a considerable period of time working hard at being particularly ghastly, dropping various bits of dog into various jars of preservatives before finally dumping the poor creature's body into a sickly looking box marked “maggot experiment #22.”

“Are you quite done now Robert?” asked the Earl patiently, “There is the pressing matter of hunting, drinking, and mistress mongering for me to attend to...”

Hooke snorted derisively; his whoremongering in Whitechapel was the stuff of urban legend. All of his spare time and money were devoted to a devout pursuit of fallen women. A lifetime given over to dissection and death, when combined with an almost bizarrely shaped physique, had given Hooke a rare appreciation of feminine beauty... preferably in bulk, as it were, and paid for in advance. Comstock, on the other hand, was known for being a rather devoted husband. Oh, he might go hunting or take to the bottle for a while, but philandering was simply not in his nature.

The Earl tapped his chin, as if in deep thought.

“And there is the small matter our mutual friend with his medical ailments,” he said evenly. “You know, the one who put you up in this hideous pile of Elizabethan stone so that you could be free do to go about your daily business of slaughtering every last one of God's poor creatures within a five mile radius – dogs, cats, frogs, sheep, and pigeons alike – in the hopes that you might find a solution to his rather serious problem.”

Hooke nodded solemnly at his friend.

“So,” he muttered, “the King's stones are getting worse, are they?”

“Yes. He can no longer hold his water. Soon he shall have to join his own infant son in the daily ritual of the

## A NOTE ON ROBERT HOOKE

Of all of the varied and fascinating historical personages I have had the distinct privilege of writing about in the pages of *Digital Hero*, none has given me as much trouble as Robert Hooke. I found myself alternately fascinated, repulsed, enamored, and overborne by him.

Eventually, I found myself drowning in him. There is simply *too much* Hooke to fit into a single, skimpy article. For that matter there may be too much Hooke to fit into a good-sized biography: you quickly find yourself asking, “Where did he find the time to do *so many things in his life*?” Did he ever sleep? Was he, emotionally speaking, an unfeeling monster or a person of profound emotion? Who, exactly, was this man? As we will never truly know, gentle reader, please forgive my amateurish fumbling.

**HOOKE, LINE,  
AND STINKER**

“Hooke had barricaded himself behind a miniature apothecary shop of bottles, purses, and flasks, and was mixing up his dinner: a compound of mercury, iron filings, flowers of sulphur, purgative waters from diverse springs, many of which were Lethal to Waterfowl; and extracts of several plants, including the rhubarb and the opium poppy. ‘He is still alive, I see,’ Roger [Comstock] mused. ‘If Hooke spent any more time lingering at Death’s door, Satan himself would have the man ejected for vagrancy.’ Yet just as I am wondering whether I can make time for his funeral, I learn from Sources that he is campaigning like a French regiment through every whorehouse in Whitechapel.”

— Neal Stephenson,  
Quicksilver

diaper change. Not to fear, however, for within six months of that he will no longer be able to make water at all, and will have to contemplate following his beloved father into an early grave. As neither of the possibilities is something our royal majesty is exactly looking forward to, he has bid me come down to your horrible wizard’s lair to see if you have made any progress in your quest to find a cure.

“So, what have you discovered Robert?”

Hooke motioned for his friend to follow him to a long table where a bizarre, segmented copper device lay mounted to a tiny stand. It was surrounded on all sides by a riot of bottles, cans, beakers, boxes, and pouches – like a marble statue in the center of a busy marketplace. He then began searching through his alchemical storage collection, muttering under his breath as he searched.

Comstock picked up a large, leather-bound notebook from a neighboring writing desk and began to flip casually through the pages. Soon a low whistle escaped from his lips.

“What?” snipped Hooke irritably, a tiny pot marked SNAIL’S TEETH clutched in one hand while an envelope marked GOLDENSEAL lay in the other.

“Robert, I had no idea you were such an accomplished artist,” the Earl noted admiringly, “why these fantastic looking creatures seem as though they are about to spring right off of the page!”

“When my father, may the devil roast his soul, passed away I was apprenticed to a portrait-painter. When he was sober he taught me some small portion of his art.”

“It’s magnificent.”

“It’s garbage,” Hooke argued, “anyone can be an artist. You simply stare at an object until you know it intimately, then you draw it onto paper. Any village idiot can do it. The more time I spend at my microscopic device, however, the greater my appreciation for God’s creations. True beauty can only be found in natural forms. All else is clumsy imitation and petty human bungling. Aha! Here it is!”

With something approaching triumph he pulled forth from his menagerie a small vial filled with a

yellow liquid. Comstock stared at it curiously as Hooke began dribbling samples into a tiny circular slide.

“What is it, old man?”

Without answering the alchemist busied himself over his bizarre copper contraption, peering through its narrower end as he made adjustments to a series of tiny screws located upon its body. With a dash of style unusual for such a dour, consumptive man, beautiful scrolling had been etched into the body of the device, giving it the superficial appearance of an enormous oddly shaped gentleman’s watch. Seemingly satisfied by these arcane adjustments, he slipped the tiny piece of glass into its maw before launching into yet another orgy of incremental corrections.

“Say, Robert, is that one of those flea glasses made by that clever Leeuwenhoek fellow?”

Hooke snorted.

“I bought one of his instruments; but I couldn’t do a bedammed thing with it,” Hooke sneered, “so I built my own model by compounding two viewing glasses together. By making adjustments I can enlarge my subject to a far, far greater level of magnification than Leeuwenhoek can with his toys. Here, look.”

The Earl bent over, placing a single eye over the device’s tiny viewing window. After a moment’s confusion he was able to clearly make a field of golden diamonds and crystals, glistening in the soft light which was captured by a light amplifying glass attached to the base of the microscope. It was unearthly and magnificent, like a garden of divine riches; for a moment the great man’s breath was actually taken away.

“I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh’s chariots,” muttered an awed sounding Comstock, “Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.”

“Song of Solomon.” Hooke nodded in agreement, “So thought I the first time I laid eyes upon this Turkish mogul’s horde of riches, glistening so elegant and beaming in the light of my microscope, so real that I felt as though I could almost reach down its tiny throat to pull them forth. Truly God’s works are marvelous far beyond anything that

even King Solomon, the wisest man of ancient times, knew; for all of the wealth, those mountains of plates, rectangles, and squares, you see before you in encompassed by just a single drop of our king's most royal urine."

Comstock's head jerked up as suddenly as if he had been slapped. He quickly recovered himself, though; getting offended by Hooke never got you anywhere. His health was so poor, his nearness to death so total throughout his entire existence that he had developed a soldier's fearless contempt to his own physical well being. Robert Hooke could not be frightened, nor intimidated, nor bought, nor controlled, nor even apparently poisoned (at least not by himself). Only directed by someone as clever as he, or at least nearly so, and the Earl was as close as a mere mortal man came.

"If I were to look at a drop of my own fluid would it be as glorious as his?"

"No, or if it did you would wish it didn't," Hooke chuckled, "our majesty would be far, far better off having the undistinguished urine of a papist Irish beet farmer. Its appearance is indicative of his condition; for these are the infant forms of the far larger stone which dwells in his bowels, clogging up the royal plumbing."

"Have you found anything which could dissolve the stone so that it can pass out of his system?" Comstock asked hopefully. It did seem as though Hooke really had been putting some thought into the problem.

"There are various toxic oils and strong acids which can destroy these growths – but I don't think our Lordship wants any of them squirted into his bowels. No, the only way to cure the King is operate upon his innards."

Comstock swallowed. Hard. Hooke motioned dramatically around his mad butcher's lair at various preserved bits of dog corpse, at assorted anatomical drawings pinned upon its walls, and at the massive tray of sharp surgical instruments soaking in rotgut whisky.

"Perhaps you thought I was murdering my way through the canine kingdom because I was most cruel. Or you may have thought that I was trying to procure some sort of arcane spell component from the bowels of some poor back alley mongrel. Nothing could

be further from the truth; I've simply been practicing my technique. It will be terribly hard for the King, painful far beyond anything which most men ever endure in their lives if they are fortunate. But he is yet young, strong, and has survived the powder and shot of battle, as well as the needle and thread of the barber surgeon in the field."

John nodded. In war the doctors were often more dangerous than the bullets and bayonets men faced. The alchemist grinned his crooked deadman's grin.

"It will take a man without compassion, yeah without charity to perform this operation upon another man. I am that fellow; for I am Robert Hooke and I know no mercy."

Infamous Baroque-era scientist Robert Hooke may have been one of the most brilliant, irritating, prolific, inventive, perverse, and cold-blooded men ever to walk upon the earth. He was certainly one of the greatest experimental scientists of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. An artist, linguist, astronomer, microscopist, alchemist, mechanic, architect, civil engineer, chemist, optician, inventor, physician, philosopher, botanist, and anatomist, he served as the first Curator of Experiments for the now infamous Royal Society of London before being appointed Royal Surveyor after the Great Fire of London in 1666. Later he helped design the Royal Greenwich Observatory as well as the now infamous Bethlehem Hospital and Asylum known simply as Bedlam.

Hooke is remembered as the inventor of, among other things, the iris diaphragm in cameras, the universal joint used in motor vehicles, the respirator, the anchor escapement and balance wheel used in watches (which made accurate timepieces possible), and as the originator of the word "cell" in biology. He is best known for *Hooke's Law of Elasticity*, which states that the extension of an elastic spring is linearly proportional to its tension. He also worked out the first correct theory of combustion. Hooke was an important early surgical pioneer, an argonaut, prolific vivisectionist of infamous, epic proportions, and an architect of prodigious output.

In his spare time, Robert Hooke laid the groundwork for modern paleontology, postulated a theory of evolution two and a half centuries before Darwin was born, hit upon the theory of petrification, invented the compound microscope, kept his underage niece as a mistress, and slept his way through most of London's low quality brothels. His was a life unlike any other.

## PETER LELY (1618-1680)

Peter Lely, the son of an English military officer stationed abroad, was a talented portrait painter who studied at Haarlem in Holland under Van Dyck. In 1643 he moved to London, quickly establishing himself in London as one of the nation's most important artists. His portraits of Charles I, James the Duke of York, and Oliver Cromwell survive to this day. After the Restoration, the new king, Charles II, appointed Lely to the position of official court painter. Like so many other artists before and since, he died from excessive alcoholism at the age of 62.

**HOOKE AND THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON**

On a cheery Sunday morning in 1666 a fire broke out in King Charles II's private bakery on Pudding Lane. Quickly reaching the neighboring inn's haystack, it spread with startling rapidity. Within five short days the city which Shakespeare had known, indeed all of mediaeval London, was forever gone. An area of almost 650 acres lay in unrecognizable ashes; 373 acres inside the city walls and 63 acres outside. Some 87 churches, including St. Paul's Cathedral, had been annihilated along with 13,200 homes. It was a disaster of apocalyptic proportions, destroying both the city's closely packed buildings and its equally closely packed inhabitants with equal abandon.

In the wake of this horrific event, Hooke (ever a devoted Londoner) produced a workable, well-thought-out plan for the reconstruction of the city and presented it to King Charles. Though this plan wasn't adopted due to its high building costs, it did result in his being appointed Lord Surveyor of London. In this capacity he laid out new foundations,



**Robert Hooke**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 HTH
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
8	CON	-4	11-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
27	INT	17	14-	PER Roll: 14-
17	EGO	14	12-	ECV: 6
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
4	PD	1		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
2	ED	0		Total: 2 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	2		Phases: 4, 8, 12
7	REC	4		
25	END	5		
26	STUN	2		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 76**

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"  
Leaping: 2½"/5"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

**Cost Perks**

- 6 Reputation: Famous Savant (medium-sized group; 14-) +3/+3d6
- 3 Well-Connected
- 6 1) Contact: King of England (Access to Major Institutions, Significant Contacts of His Own, Good Relationship) 13-
- 29 2) Contact: The Royal Society of London (Access to Major Institutions, Extremely Useful Skills or Resources, Good Relationship, Organization) 14-

**Talents**

- 5 Eidetic Memory
- 3 Lightning Calculator
- 3 Lightsleep
- 4 Speed Reading (x10)

**Skills**

- 5 Bureaucratics 13-
- 3 CK: London 14-
- 15 Cramming (x3)
- 3 Cryptography 14-
- 3 Forensic Medicine 14-
- 5 High Society 13-
- 5 Inventor 15-
- 5 Mechanics 15-
- 2 Navigation 14-
- 3 Oratory 12-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 4 Weaponsmith (Firearms, Missiles & Rockets, Muscle-Powered Ranged) 14-
- 3 Jack of All Trades
- 2 1) PS: Alchemist 14-
- 3 2) PS: Architect 15-
- 2 3) PS: Artist 13-
- 2 4) PS: Musician 13-
- 2 5) PS: Surgeon 14-

- 3 Linguist
- 1 1) Language: Dutch (Conversation)
- 2 2) Language: French (Fluent)
- 1 3) Language: Greek (Conversation)
- 2 4) Language: Latin (Fluent)

- 3 Scholar
- 2 1) KS: Ancient History 14-
- 2 2) KS: English History 14-
- 3 3) KS: History of Medicine 15-
- 2 4) KS: History of Science 14-
- 2 5) KS: Western Philosophy 14-

- 3 Scientist
- 2 1) SS: Anatomy 14-
- 3 2) SS: Astronomy 15-
- 2 3) SS: Botany 14-
- 2 4) SS: Chemistry 14-
- 2 5) SS: Geology 14-
- 2 6) SS: Geometry 14-
- 2 7) SS: Microbiology 14-
- 2 8) SS: Optometry 14-
- 2 9) SS: Paleontology 14-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 175**

**Total Cost: 250**

**100+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Dependence: Various Substances in Arcane Combinations, Including Opium Poppies, Quicksilver, Metal Shavings, Rare Herbs, and "Curative" Waters (Difficult To Obtain, 2d6 Damage per 6 Hours)
- 15 Distinctive Features: Bizarrely Crooked Back (Not Concealable)
- 15 DNPC: Grace Hooke (His Niece/Wife) 11- (Normal)
- 5 Physical Limitation: Extremely Bad Posture (Infrequently, Slightly)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Cruel (Common, Moderate)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Jealous (Very Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Xenophobic (Uncommon, Strong)
- 10 Reputation: Eccentric, Foul-Tempered Alchemist Most Cruel 11-
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (Christian Huyghens, Rival is As Powerful, Seek to Outdo, Embarrass, or Humiliate Rival, Rival Aware of Rivalry)
- 15 Rivalry: Professional (Sir Isaac Newton, Rival is Significantly More Powerful, Seek to Outdo, Embarrass, or Humiliate Rival, Rival Aware of Rivalry)
- 10 Social Limitation: Definitely Not a Gentleman (Frequently, Minor)
- 25 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 250**



**Background/History:** Robert Hooke was born the younger of two brothers in 1635 in the town of Freshwater on the Isle of Wight. His father, John Hooke, a curate at All Saints Church who also ran a small school to help supplement his income, undoubtedly hoped that his youngest son would enter the clergy of the Anglican Church, as was normal for all Hooke men (John's three brothers were all ministers). Unfortunately, as was all too common for English children of that age, Robert suffered from poor health and was thus not expected to reach adulthood. All the same, his parents began to set up his education with the church in mind; but he continually suffered from headaches which made studying very hard. Lacking confidence that he would ever amount to anything or even reach adulthood, Robert's parents gave up on his education, leaving him largely to his own devices.

Fortunately for history, Robert was born with uncanny observational and mechanical skills. He carefully scrutinized the plants, animals, farms, rocky cliffs, oceans, and the beaches of the isle. He became fascinated by mechanical toys and clocks, making delightful things for his parents from wood, such as a working clock and a model of a fully rigged ship with working guns. Yet not only did young Robert show talents at mechanical science, he also showed considerable skills at drawing. He befriended a portrait painter who was working in

Freshwater at the time; soon he was imitating the way that the painter used pen and chalk. Before very long he was making copies of the man's portraits.

Robert's talent was clear and, after the death of his father in 1648, his family decided that drawing was the best way for the odd, sickly boy to make a living. His father had left him 40 pounds (a sizable amount in those days), as well as his "*best joined chest and all [his] books.*" He was sent off to London to be apprenticed to Peter Lely, a portrait painter of some repute. Hooke soon realized, however, that not only was he more talented than Lely, but he had no desire to become an artist in any case. Unwilling to waste any more of his inheritance, the precocious 13 year-old enrolled himself in the Westminster School, boarding in the house of eccentric headmaster Dr. Richard Busby. Realizing that he had an extraordinary mind on his hands, Busby intuitively understood that Hooke wouldn't thrive under a

restrictive curriculum. Allowed to study by himself in Busby's private library, Robert mastered the first six books of Euclid's *Elements* within one week, then began teaching himself Greek and Latin. Later, Hooke learned to play the pipe organ, "*contrived several ways of flying*" through application of mechanical inventions, and gained a profound understanding of the relatively new science of geometry.

Feeling that he had learned everything he could at Westminster, Hooke entered Christ College in Oxford as a poor scholar in 1653. This was a particularly auspicious time to attend this great historical institute of learning, as Cromwell's seizure of power in England had resulted in its being largely cut off from continental society (and scientists). To help compensate, many of the country's greatest minds had gathered at Oxford in a "philosophical college" or "invisible college" to carry out various experiments and swap results. This group included anatomist Thomas Willis, astronomer Seth Ward, chemist and inventor Robert Boyle, mathematician John Wilkins, the ingenious multi-disciplined scientist Sir Christopher Wren, economist, physician, and surveyor Sir William Petty, and now of course young Robert Hooke, who learned astronomy from Ward, impressed Wilkins with his knowledge of mechanics, and assisted Willis with his vivisection experiments. Now deeply involved with the top English *savants* of his day,

adjudicated property rights, set property boundaries, and supervised the enforcement of building regulations. He was responsible for the construction of sewers, paving, bridges, quays, markets, and public clocks. Thus, in many ways, Robert Hooke became the father (or maybe the midwife) of London, one of the greatest cities of the modern world.

## BAROQUE FASHION DOS AND DON'TS

Throughout the reign of Louis XIV, also known as the Sun King, France became the leading cultural and political power in Europe. With Spain in decline, Italy in chaos, and Germany bankrupt following the 30 Years War, a sort of vacuum appeared in the continent which the French were only too eager to fill.

Correspondingly, their fashions became the standard for that age, known today as the Baroque.

During the Baroque period the gentleman's coat shrank to a tiny, open doublet, its sleeves reaching only to the elbows and its hem ending high above the waist, very similar to that of a modern Spanish Matador's. The breeches, known as rhinegraves became so baggy that they looked like wide skirts. The trouser legs, so extremely baggy that the wearer invariably looked as if he were about to lose his pants (it's back, yo!), were gathered below the knees with lace frills known as canions.

A long, full shirt was worn between these sagging breeches and matador's coat which, when properly decked out, became the most important fashion

he became Robert Boyle's lab assistant. Together they constructed the first modern air pump, then along with Willis used it in a variety of (exceedingly cruel) experiments on dogs from which they gained a profound understanding of breathing and respiration.

Now, Hooke was never a man content to do one thing at a time; indeed, he seemed to prefer hopping from one project to the next. At the same time he and Boyle were working on their air pump, Robert was also pondering how best to use clocks to determine longitude at sea. Understanding the inherent weakness of trying to use a pendulum clock to keep time on a pitching ship, he created an accurate, portable watch by inventing two important devices known as the balance spring and the anchor escapement in 1660 (though he oddly neglected to publish his findings until 1678).

Unfortunately, political circumstances now intruded upon the work of the "invisible college" at Oxford. Cromwell's death in 1658 quickly led to The Restoration, in which Charles II returned from France to assume power. Many of Hooke's associates at Oxford, who had been appointed due to their Puritan sympathies, lost their positions and moved to London. Indefatigable as ever, these *savants* were soon meeting once more at Gresham College and, in November of 1660, the previously "invisible" college reconstituted The Society for the Promoting of Physico-Mathematical Experimental Learning. Hooke quickly joined them in London where, in 1661, he published a pamphlet describing the basic theories behind capillary action.

After some considerable backroom maneuvering between Royalists, radical puritans, nobles, businessmen, Anglicans, and Catholics of various stripes, The Society petitioned the King for recognition along with a royal grant of incorporation. Charles II, by all accounts a rather clever, farseeing man, understood the inherent value of keeping a stable of Europe's greatest scientific minds at the crown's disposal. Thus, in July of 1662, a royal charter created The Royal Society of London. This charter contained a provision for the appointment of an official Curator of Experiments, a position for which The Society already had Hooke in mind. So, with some assistance from Boyle, he became an employee (and later a fellow) of The Royal Society. It was a position which he was to hold for the remainder of his active life.

Although this position may, at first, sound like an enviable one, it was in many respects a nearly impossible job, as the Curator was responsible for researching, preparing, and demonstrating at least three experiments at every weekly meeting of The Society. Though this occupational requirement undoubtedly accounts for much of his prodigious scientific output, it's

extremely doubtful that anyone in London at the time besides Hooke could have actually pulled it off. Also, though The Society had promised him a salary of some 30 pounds a year, it was founded during a period of severe economic strain, so he was required to begin work without any reimbursement until such time as The Society had the capacity to pay him. This precarious financial position was somewhat ameliorated in 1665 by his appointment to Gresham College as a Professor of Geometry, where he had a suite of rooms that he, along with his various "housekeepers" and his niece, would live in for the rest of his life.

In the same year, Hooke published the book for which he is best remembered. Entitled *Micrographia*, it was a book of elaborate sketches of various objects which he had observed under a compound microscope – a device which he had personally helped to invent. Hooke's remarkable freehand drawings were accompanied by accessible prose commentary which, among other things, suggested the use of the word "cell" in a biological context, speculated accurately on the origin of the moon's craters, and suggested the wave theory of light. His friend, colleague, and famed diarist Samuel Pepys commented "[Micrographia is] *the most ingenious booke that I ever read in my life.*" Later that year when the plague struck London, Hooke, along with John Wilkins, retired to the relative safety of a laboratory in Epsom to continue various experiments uninterrupted by the threat of infection. While there he composed his next important work *Cometia*, a series of largely accurate observations about the nature of comets.

When the Great Fire of London struck in 1666 (conveniently putting an end to the plague) Hooke and Wilkins hurried back to the city to assist Charles II in its reconstruction. Appointed Lord Surveyor of London, Hooke worked feverishly alongside his friend Sir Christopher Wren in a desperate bid to plan out and then reconstruct some the 650 acres of the ruined city within a period of only two years. They were largely successful, ensuring not only their financial fortunes but the gratitude of, and a lifelong close relationship with, the King of England. Along the way Hooke either designed or oversaw the construction of over a hundred buildings, including Montague House, the Royal College of Physicians, Bethlehem Hospital (popularly known as Bedlam), and about thirty Anglican churches. During this time he also produced his required three to four weekly experiments for The Royal Society, the surviving members of which had reassembled in the wake of plague and fire.

In 1672 Hooke's ten year old niece Grace came to live with him in London. Although their

relationship was initially quite properly that of a parent and a child, it grew as the years went by into an odd, incestuous pseudo-marriage that was to last for the rest of both of their lives. Robert, who despite his fame and genius was nervous around women because of his deformities, generally only formed sexual relationships with his housekeepers or with prostitutes. According to his personal diary, he fell in love with and seduced his niece around the time of her fifteenth birthday. Unfortunately his brother John, an ambitious small-time politician working his way up towards petty nobility, wanted Hooke to find Grace a suitably wealthy and powerful husband. She was presumably an attractive girl, judging from the quality and quantity of the male attentions that she received. Much to Hooke's concerned jealousy, his diary catalogues a number of male liaisons of varying intimacy during their life together. In this manner Grace made her uncle pay for his sins, so to speak, in a ghastly affair which involved the Governor of the Isle of Wight, a child born out of wedlock, and the suicide of Hooke's brother John. In the end, however, uncle and niece remained together in a caring (if unstable and unfaithful) relationship.

In 1672 the first of many fights between Hooke and famed scientist Sir Isaac Newton broke out on the floor of The Royal Society. Their first confrontation centered on a paper presented by Newton demonstrating his theories of light and color. Hooke claimed that what was right in Newton's theory was stolen from his own work in *Micrographia*... and what wasn't was simply wrong. Their argument (the first of many) became so severe that only some serious toadying on the part of Oldenburg, the heroic and legendary first secretary of The Royal Society, kept Newton from resigning his fellowship. The two would maintain a bitter love/hate relationship for the rest of their lives, alternately corresponding and collaborating on projects until promising results had been reached, then publicly denouncing, attacking, and accusing each other when those same results were made public. Indeed, one of Newton's most famous statements, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants" is a sneering comment on Hooke's deformity.

Despite (or perhaps because of) this and other vicious, long running rivalries with different great scientists of the age, such as Polish astronomer Johannes Hevelius and Dutch inventor and astronomer Christian Huyghens, Hooke's experimental output remained prodigious. In the following decade he explained the scintillation of stars, constructed the first Gregorian telescope, attempted to measure the parallax of a fixed star, designed a deadly airgun, perfected a functional (if insanely dangerous)

surgical procedure for removing gallstones, made the first observations of a star in daylight, and conducted various experiments dealing with gravity, petrification, and geology. On top of this, he took over the position of secretary of The Royal Society upon Oldenburg's death. Indeed, his output was so varied and well known during this period that playwright Thomas Shadwell wrote and performed a wildly successful work entitled *The Virtuoso* which satirized The Royal Society in general and Hooke in particular.

In 1887 Grace Hooke died of smallpox in Robert's arms, sending him into a spiral of escalating depression from which he would never emerge nor his health ever recover. Waller, Hooke's friend and biographer, wrote about the loss he felt: "*In the beginning of the Year 1687, his Brother's Daughter, Mrs. Grace Hooke dy'd, who had liv'd with him several Years, the concern for whose Death he hardly ever wore off, being observ'd from that time to grow less active, more Melancholly and Cynical.*" He began to shut himself away from friends and family for months at a time while conducting his experiments. Even his scientific writing from this last period is filled with bitter comments about life. At the same, he continued to sporadically produce, writing a now-lost "curious discourse" upon the Tower of Babel, a paper which expounded upon Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, worked out largely accurate theories on earthquakes, geology, and paleontology, and created a marine telescope.

Hooke's final years were filled with little but pain and sickness. Waller commented that he was "*often troubled with headaches, giddiness, and fainting, and with a general decay all over.*" He had almost certainly become diabetic; his legs were swollen, his eyes went blind, and he was confined to his bed in the final month of his life. But mainly he had lost his will to live. Finally, on March 3<sup>rd</sup> of 1703, Robert Hooke died where he had lived at Gresham College. He is buried at St. Helen's Cathedral at Bishopgate.

**Personality/Motivation:** Robert Hooke is not an easy man to get along with. He is rude, blunt, arrogant, cold, and seemingly unconcerned with the feelings of others. When this generally unpleasant disposition is grafted to an almost frighteningly unattractive physique, a propensity to cut open living things, and a preference for having sex with one's younger relations, you have what most people would consider, at least at first glance, to be a villain. Indeed, several of his contemporaries, such as Newton, feel that he *is* a villain of sorts and even his friends, such as Waller, agree that he at least *looks* like one.

If you look a bit deeper, however, you find in Hooke a man who is genuinely fascinated by the material world, a world which he desperately

item of the entire outfit. When properly assembled, the entire ensemble was decorated with innumerable ribbons at the doublet, breeches, and shoes with most of this manly ruffling located at the waistband of the breeches, the shoulders, and the bottom hem of the jacket. In a surviving Parisian tailor's list from the 1650s there is a note about the amount of ribbons (known as galants) which are needed for a fashionable outfit: about 500 to 600 ribbon bows.

## DESCRIPTIONS OF HOOKE

“He is but of middling stature, something crooked, pale faced, and his face but little below, but his head is large, his eye full and popping, and not quick; a grey eye. He has a delicate head of hair, brown, and of an excellent moist curl. He is and ever was temperate and moderate in diet, etc.”

— John Aubrey, friend

“As to his person he was but despicable, being very crooked, tho’ I have heard from himself, and others, that he was strait till about 16 Years of Age when he first grew awry, by frequent practicing, with a Turn-Lath . . . He was always very pale and lean, and lately nothing but Skin and Bone, with a meager aspect, his eyes grey and full, with a sharp ingenious Look whilst younger; his nose but thin, of a moderate height and length; his mouth meanly wise, and upper lip thin; his chin sharp, and Forehead large; his Head of a middle size. He wore his own hair of a dark Brown color, very long and hanging neglected over his Face uncut and lank. . . .”

— Richard Waller, contemporary and his biographer



wished to more completely understand. His generation of *savants* moved Western Civilization almost completely out of the Middle Ages into the modern world by inventing entire sciences, almost whole-cloth in some cases. Although Hooke has had frequent bitter disputes with some scientists throughout his life, he is on genuinely excellent terms with others, such as Boyle and Wren. Although history has often described him as a difficult man, this is harsh judgment; Hooke genuinely feels that others were stealing credit for ideas which he had first put forward. Though he doesn’t like it to show, he genuinely cares, both personally and often financially, for his friends, family, colleagues, and the various women with which he has shared his life.

To best understand Hooke’s character, consider this comment about his daily life from the introduction to his biography: *“He was a brisk walker, and enjoyed walking in the fields north of the City... he generally rose early, perhaps to save candles, and to work in daylight to prevent strain to his eyes.... Sometimes Hooke would work all through the night, and then have a nap after dinner. As well as drinking a variety of waters... he drank brandy, port, claret, sack, and birch juice wine which he found to be delicious. He also had a barrel of Flanstead’s ale and Tillotson’s ale. There are a few instances when he recorded that he had been drunk.... He was a gregarious person, who liked to meet people, particularly those who had traveled abroad....”*

**Quote:** “Your experience is merely a hodgepodge of statistics, consisting of those cases that you happen to remember.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Although a lifetime spent medically on death’s door has left him with very little concern for his personal safety, Hooke has no martial skills of any sort. Rather, his abilities lie in the application of his incredible intellect to his not inconsiderable scientific, mechanical, and artistic knowledge. Give him an interesting problem to solve or the funding to embark upon some fascinating research experiment and, given some time, he will bring you back results if they are even conceivably achievable within the framework of 17<sup>th</sup> Century science... and possibly even if they aren’t.

Hooke’s intelligence is so great (a superhuman 27!) that there are few limitations to what he can learn in a fairly brief period of time. To simulate this he has been given three separate Cramming Skills so that, for example, if the characters need some advice on a bizarre, arcane artifact which has tumbled from the sky, Hooke might choose fill his slots with xenobiology, nanotechnology, and nuclear science for the period of the adventure... even though these

sciences have yet to be invented! Additionally, Robert is an expert in nine separate scientific disciplines, five languages, five professional skills, and five knowledge skills in addition to being an inventor, mechanic, skilled orator, cryptographer, weaponsmith, and forensic pathologist. If this weren’t enough, he also has a photographic memory, speed reads, and is exceptionally well connected.

**Campaign Use:** Hooke is the archetypical “man of science” whose entire existence is given over to the cold, clinical dissection of the natural world. Actually, by the standards of the Baroque Era, he is *the* man of science, one of that incredibly small group of enlightened researchers who lead the mighty stag which is modern knowledge out of the wilderness of mediaeval alchemy. Correspondingly, Hooke is intended to be an NPC science expert for either a historical campaign which takes place in the swashbuckling 17<sup>th</sup> Century (a fascinating yet much neglected setting), or an urban “low fantasy” campaign in which the “magic” of alchemy is an important plot device. Either way, Hooke is a very busy man, so getting access to him shouldn’t be an easy matter. Characters may purchase *Contact: Robert Hooke (Access to Major Institutions, Significant Contacts of His Own, Good Relationship)* 13- for 7 points or, failing that, could become members of The Royal Society by purchasing *Contact: The Royal Society of London (Access to Major Institutions, Extremely Useful Skills or Resources, Good Relationship, Organization)* 14- for 30 points. Or the GM could simply make him available to the PCs via some third party, such as the king.

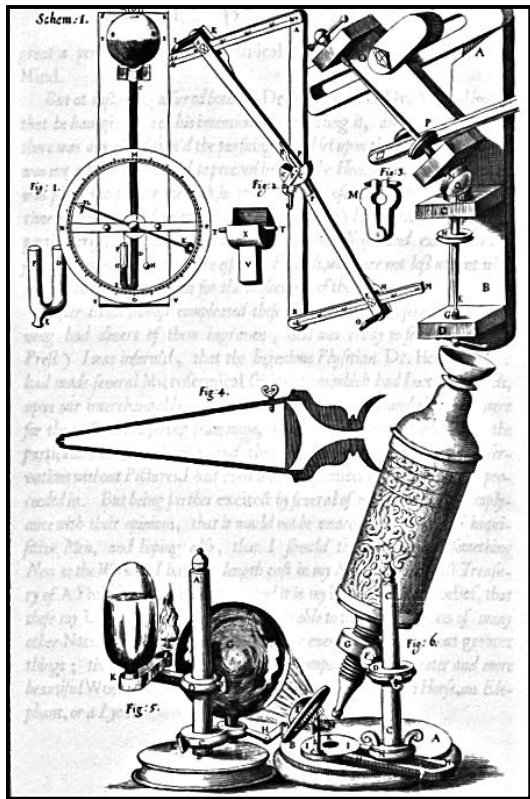
Hooke is fabulously xenophobic; there is no record of his ever having left British soil. In fact, he has spent a great deal of time and energy launching attacks upon perfectly respectable Continental scientists over the alleged theft of his ideas. He is, however, also extremely patriotic, so it is not impossible that Hooke may be willing to leave his native land in the service of his country – say on a scientific expedition of some sort or a spying mission where his various skills might be of some use to king and country.

**Appearance:** Robert Hooke is a pale, thin, ill-kept man of medium height. His large, intelligent grey eyes dominate a face otherwise given over to a generous forehead and small, tight mouth. The overall effect is cold, quizzical, sensual, and a little cruel. He wears his curly brown hair unusually long; it tumbles about his shoulders in an era during which most men shave their heads so that they can wear either powdered or blackened wigs. His posture is unusually bad, reducing him to a stooped and sideways middling height when he might otherwise have been a tall man.



Hooke is far from being a snappy dresser as most of his clothing is quickly ruined by sudden, unsolicited introductions to fire, grease, acid, rare chemicals, and (most commonly) large quantities of blood. He occasionally tries to prevent this by wearing a butcher's apron over his clothing while working in his laboratory – but it never really works. Hooke is a fashion disaster living amongst some of the most fashionable men in the world in one of its most fashion-conscious ages. When one of his women (a housekeeper or his niece) does manage to produce a decent set of fashionable baroque clothing for him to wear, it always comes out looking wrong: his rhinegraves fall halfway down his buttocks, his canions end up at his ankles, and a goodly percentage of the hundred or so galants a fashionable man is expected to wear invariably come untied.

Thus, Robert generally chooses to assume the undistinguished, puritanical clothing of the English working class under most circumstances, even when dealing with the King. This would make him the laughing stock of upper class England... except that he is that much smarter than them and they know it.



artwork by Robert Hooke

## Bibliography

### ARTICLES

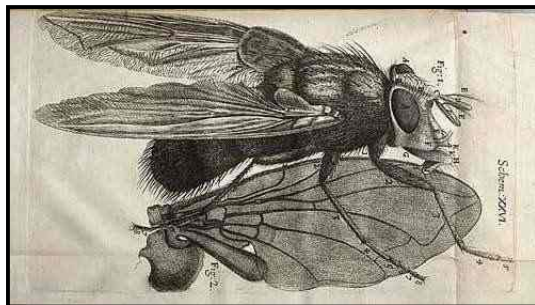
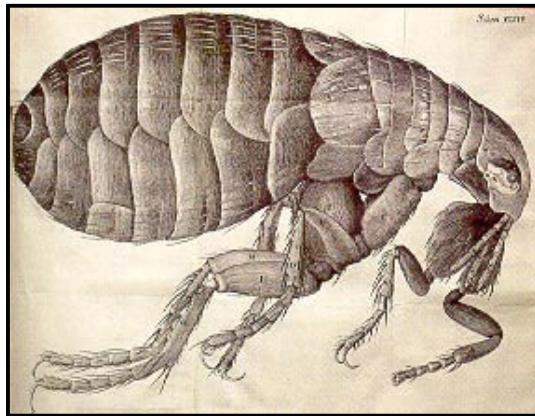
- The Architecture of Dr Robert Hooke FRS*, MI Batten, Walpole Society #25, 1936  
*The Role of Acoustics and Music Theory in the Scientific Work of Robert Hooke*, Penelope Gouk, Annals of Science #37, 1980

### BOOKS

- Dictionary of National Biography Volume 9*, Various, Oxford University Press, 1950  
*Founders of British Science: John Wilkins, Robert Boyle, John Ray, Christopher Wren, Robert Hooke, Isaac Newton*, J G Crowther, London Press, 1960  
*Quicksilver* (The Baroque Cycle, Vol. 1), Neal Stephenson, William Morrow Press, 2003  
*The Diaries of Robert Hooke, The Leonardo of London, 1635-1703*, R Nichols, Lewes Press, 1994

### INTERNET

- [www.angliacampus.com/education/fire/london/history/greatfir.htm](http://www.angliacampus.com/education/fire/london/history/greatfir.htm)  
[www.roberthooke.org.uk](http://www.roberthooke.org.uk)  
[www.rod.beavon.clara.net/robert\\_hooke.html](http://www.rod.beavon.clara.net/robert_hooke.html)  
[www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/hooke.html](http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/hooke.html)  
[www-gap.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/Mathematicians/Hooke.html](http://www-gap.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/Mathematicians/Hooke.html)



“Hooke came in. His spine was all awry: not only stooped, but bent to one side. His long brown hair hung unkempt around his face. He straightened up a bit and tilted his head back so that the hair fell away to either side, like a curtain opening up to reveal a pale face. Stubble on the cheeks made him look even gaunter than he actually was, and made his grey eyes look even more huge.”

— Neal Stephenson, modern novelist and admirer

## Appendix

### **BOOKS AUTHORED BY HOOKE**

- Cometia*, a work on the nature of comets  
*De Potentia Bestitutiva or Of Spring*, the treatise on elasticity from which Hooke's Law is derived  
*Description of Helioscopes*, with a postscript describing the invention of balance springs  
*Micrographia*, a book with elaborate drawings of various objects under the microscope

### **INVENTIONS ATTRIBUTED TO HOOKE**

- Anchor escapement and the balance springs (major contributions to accurate watch design)  
 Compound microscope (with instrument maker Christopher Cook)  
 Depth-sounding machine  
 Effective "arithmetic machine" or dividing machine  
 Effective air gun  
 First Gregorian telescope  
 The micrometer  
 Modern air pump  
 Refractometer (measures the refraction of liquids)  
 The spiral gear (used to adjust settings of telescopes)  
 Surveying instruments with telescopic sights  
 A "way-wiser" (attached to carriages to measure distances traveled)  
 Wheel, marine, and double Barometers  
 Windmill which turned itself to face the wind  
 The universal joint (used in automobiles today)

### **HOOKE'S SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES**

- Considered "Father of Meteorology" for pioneering work in that field  
 Considered major figure in early geology, especially in regard to fossils and crystals  
 Developed early theory of light (almost accurate)  
 Developed theoretical concepts in regards to music and sound (very accurate)  
 Discovered basic concept of evolution 250 years before Darwin  
 Discovered first binary star  
 Discovered Hooke's Law of Elasticity  
 Discovered principle of capillary action  
 Discovered the principles behind combustion  
 Discovered the principles behind respiration  
 First person to comprehensively study earthquakes  
 First person to describe "cells"  
 First person to infer the rotation of the planet Jupiter

### **ARCHITECTURE ATTRIBUTED TO ROBERT HOOKE**

- Architect for Alderman Aske's Hospital, Hoxton  
 Architect for the reconstruction of the Bridewell  
 Architect of house for Lord Oxford in Privy Gardens in Whitehall.  
 Architect of Montague House to Bloomsbury  
 Architect of Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, for Lord Conway  
 Architect of St Mary Magdalene in Buckinghamshire  
 Architect of the Bethlehem Hospital (Bedlam)  
 Architect of the Royal College of Physicians  
 "Canalized" the Fleet River (with Wren. It was previously an open sewer)  
 Considerable involvement in the alterations to Westminster Abbey  
 Constructed Cheapside and Holborn conduits.  
 Designed a church for Sir John Lowther of Lowther in Westmoreland.  
 Designed a house for Sir Richard Edgcumbe, Earl of Mount Edgcumbe in Cornwall.  
 Designed a house for Sir Walter Young in Devon  
 Designed Londesborough House for Lord Burlington  
 Designed Sherwood Place in Brentwood.  
 Designed the Monument to the Great Fire  
 Designed the Pepysian building for Magdalene College in Oxford  
 Designed the screen for Merchant Taylors' Hall  
 Hooke was essentially Wren's junior partner in the building of St Paul's Cathedral.  
 Involved in the rebuilding of the Navy Victualling Office  
 Involved in the repairs to the Barbers Surgeons' Hall  
 Set out the Greenwich Observatory (It is unclear whether Hooke, Wren, or someone else was the architect)  
 Suggested and supervised improvements to the north bank of the Thames.  
 Supervised the construction of more than 30 of Wren's London churches.



# Your Horoscope For: **Libra** by Allen Thomas

Have you been charged with a crime?  
 Do you have superpowers?  
 Has the media labeled you a “supervillain?” A menace to society?  
 An evil mastermind?  
 95% of all citizens with superpowers charged with a felony are convicted.  
 Those convicted are face jail time up to 200% longer than other criminals.  
 Innocent men and women with superpowers face prejudiced juries and unsympathetic judges. With the system stacked against you, you need the very best in legal representation. That’s why you should call the law offices of Irving Probalino for a free consultation.  
 Call now. He’s here to help.

## Irving M. Probalino, Esquire

This installment of *Your Horoscope For:* presents a lawyer named Irving M. Probalino, a man with uncanny knack of swaying juries and getting his clients of the hook in cases where the outcome shouldn’t be in doubt. The sign of the zodiac, Libra, is often associated with a pair of scales... weighing two things in the balance to determine the weight of each, and then judging their worth. But when Probalino enters the courtroom, the scales of justice swing wildly out-of-balance, and when juries deliver innocent verdicts for criminals captured red-handed by the superheroes, what will your PCs do?

**Background/History:** In New Hampshire, there’s a story told about the Devil and Daniel Webster, and about how that great soul and patriot, Mr. Webster, managed out-talk the Devil himself, and even though he faced a judge and jury of damned criminals and murders, he won freedom for the soul of one Jabez Soul. At the end of that story, it states plainly: “And the Devil hasn’t been seen in the state of New Hampshire from that day to this. I’m not talking about Massachusetts or Vermont.” And that old storyteller isn’t talking about your campaign city either!

Though in the story Mr. Webster’s adversary is called the Devil, it was in truth one of the Devil’s many agents, and men and women in old Scratch’s employ still prowl the courtrooms of America (everywhere outside of New Hampshire that is) turning the justice system on its ear. Now one of those agents, Irving M. Probalino, has hung his shingle and started advertising on television offering his services to supervillains.

Probalino has humble beginnings, having attained his law degree from a small and virtually unknown university. Considering his grades in college and his LSAT scores, it’s almost hard to believe any law school at all accepted him. But after nearly flunking out his first year, his performance turned around dramatically – right after he sold his soul to the Devil that is.


**Personality/Motivation:** Irving Probalino embodies every bad lawyer stereotype there ever was. In his arrogant smirk, one can see why there are so many less than flattering jokes about lawyers and the legal profession in general. He’s egotistical, smug, self-centered, condescending, and heartless. His motivation is simple: to make money. He also derives no small pleasure from perverting the legal system, and often can be found outside the courthouse, after the jury has acquitted his latest client, laughing evilly in the faces of aghast reporters.

**Quote:** “Yes, my client may have been in the bank at the time of the robbery. And, yes, he may have been inside the vault. And, yes, he may have even been holding a bag of money in each hand at the time. But as you will soon see, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, that does not mean this poor, innocent man is a bank robber!”

**Powers/Tactics:** All of Probalino’s abilities stem from his remarkable skills at oratory and persuasion. He can convince a person the sky is red or the sun is never coming back given the time and the inclination, and he certainly has little trouble convincing a jury there’s reasonable doubt. To confound matters further, thanks to his Luck, prosecutors and witnesses facing Probalino in the courtroom always seem to say exactly the wrong thing at precisely the wrong time.

In the story of the Devil and Daniel Webster, the Devil loses the case for Jabez Stone’s soul (as well as Daniel Webster’s own!) when Mr. Webster, rather than make hyperbolic statements and grand pronouncements in a display of showmanship, humbly relates to the judge and jury the facts of the case. The same is true of Probalino. When a prosecutor simply presents his case, without resorting to hyperbole or exaggeration – when he simply relates the bare-faced facts of the case, and doesn’t pander to sensationalism – Probalino loses much of his Devil-granted powers and simply becomes another defense attorney.

## LIBRAN INSIGHT

Libra is the second of the Air Signs, which also include Aquarius and Gemini. Its symbol is , and traditionally, the sign is depicted as a pair of scales.

In the Champions Universe, many courtrooms are guarded by mental detection devices and other gadgets to prevent those with powers from subverting the justice system. Sadly Probalino's abilities don't register on those same devices (although PCs with mystic senses might detect his Devilishly compromised existence). Getting Probalino disbarred for using powers in the courtroom is no easy task.

Like the story, once an honest lawyer has defeated Probalino in court, he and any other agent of Devil who might seek to compromise the justice system is powerless in the state.

**Campaign Use:** Probalino makes a good twist or additional subplot to a scenario involving one of your campaign's villains who's facing an upcoming trial. The PCs must discover the nature of Probalino's incredible abilities before the trial begins (obviously the folk tale of the Devil and Daniel Webster is a good source for clues) and then convince the prosecutor to play the case straight. Or maybe Probalino's existence tests their moral fortitude, as the PCs must struggle to not implement a more "final" solution to the problem the lawyer poses.

The Devil's contract that grants Probalino his amazing powers of persuasion ends at midnight on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005. (The Devil is a big fan of short-term investments that turn a quick profit.) As the deadline approaches, Probalino is likely to begin desperately searching for a way to break his contract... and when he does, maybe he'll come to the PCs for help.

Probalino isn't likely to Hunt superheroes, but if a superhero has made himself a pain for Probalino, and finds himself the defendant in a civil suit, Probalino might volunteer his services as a trial lawyer for the plaintiff. Probalino might even go so far as to start a civil law suit against PCs who have been particularly rude or troublesome. And then, the PC had better watch out!

**Appearance:** Tall and thin, Probalino has short black hair and a pale complexion. Even in the courtroom, he wears expensive white suits and black silk ties, and although most lawyers would never get away with such an outfit, no one seems to mind when it's Probalino. In public, he often carries a black attache case. His most prominent – and irritating! – feature is his devilish, arrogant smile that opens wide to show big, pearly white teeth.

## Irving M. Probalino, Esquire

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
8	STR	-2	11-	Lift 75 kg; 1½d6 [1]
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
8	CON	-4	11-	
8	BODY	-4	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
14	COM	2	12-	
4	PD	2		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	2		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	10		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC	0		
20	END	2		
20	STUN	4		

### Total Characteristics Cost: 47

<b>Movement:</b>	Running:	6"/12"
	Leaping:	1½"/3"
	Swimming:	2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
9	<i>Not Easily Swayed:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total); Only Against Mind Control (-¾)	0
30	<i>Luck of the Devil:</i> Luck 6d6	0
<b>Skills</b>		
40	<i>Luck of the Devil:</i> +8 with Interaction Skills	
13	Bureaucratics 18-	
23	Conversation 23-	
13	Intimidation 18-	
11	KS: Law 20-	
9	KS: The Legal World 18-	
23	Oratory 23-	
23	Persuasion 23-	
9	PS: Lawyer 18-	

### Total Powers & Skill Cost: 206

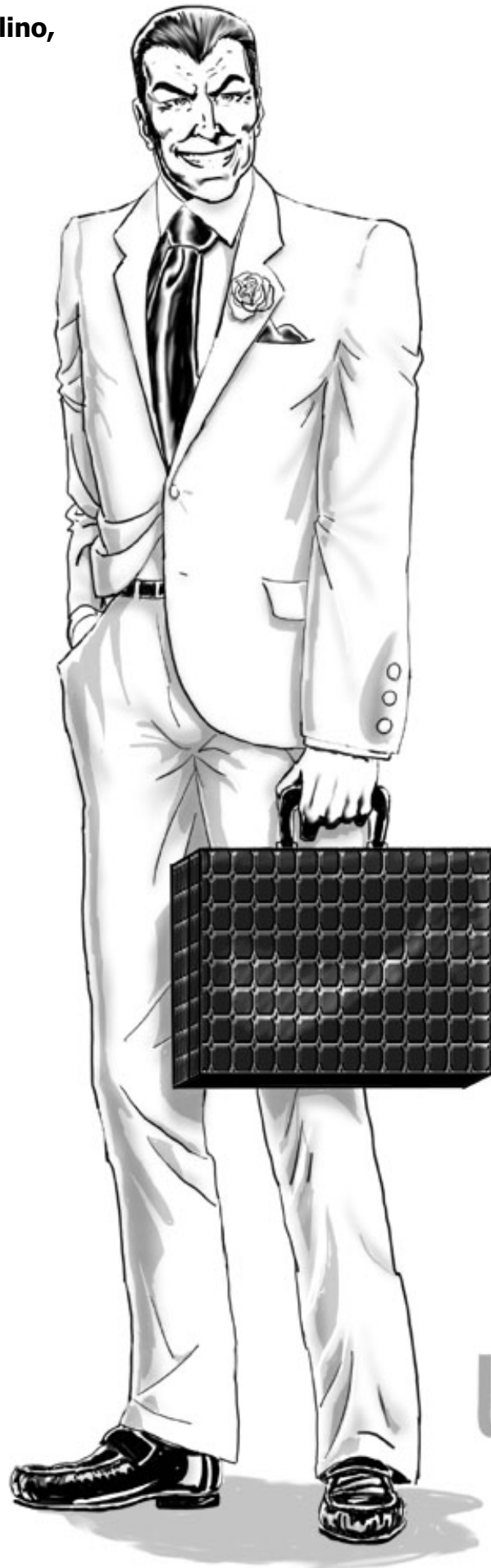
### Total Cost: 250

#### 75+ Disadvantages

5	Physical Limitation: Sold His Soul to the Devil (Slightly, Infrequently)
25	Psychological Limitation: Arrogant Lawyer (Very Common, Total)
15	Susceptibility: Suffer Drain PRE 2d6 and Drain <i>Luck of the Devil</i> Powers 5d6 when Facing an Honest Lawyer (Uncommon)
130	Experience Points

### Total Disadvantage Points: 250

**Irving M. Probalino,  
Esquire**



W



## MODERN WAR ON HORSEBACK

“If ever there was a mismatched blend of the modern and medieval in warfare, it is in Afghanistan, where billion-dollar B-2s bomb old Taliban tanks, and mounted fighters of the northern alliance go at the gallop.

“As vaguely described by Pentagon officials, rebels have been seen ‘riding horseback into combat against tanks and armored personnel carriers,’ their horses fed and watered with U.S. help.

“These folks are aggressive,” said General Peter Pace....

— Associated Press,  
Nov. 8 2001

## CROWDED HIGHWAYS

“I paint (if I may say so) a vivid picture of the Freedom we all Feel, the joy that comes with the eventual mastery of the spirited machine, the sun-soaked run to glory that is Motoring on Two Wheels. Here’s what I say.

“I say: Things are gonna happen that’ll scare you and piss you off. They happen because car people are clueless, careless, angry, impaired, or all of the above. Let those things go. Once they’re over, they’re over.

“See, things don’t always happen one at a time. While you’re

# Biker Hero

by Jason Walters

## The Mounted Warrior

According to Jared Diamond’s monumental work *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, mankind first domesticated the horse around 4000 B.C. This radical new innovation provided man with an ideal animal companion, one able to transport him over long distances, haul his goods, pull his plows, to act as a platform for his military activity in the form of the Mounted Warrior – or, if necessary, to be used as a source of food. Yet, although the horse is undoubtedly useful in all of these respects, it is in the areas of rapid transportation and military conquest that it has had its greatest impact on the course of human history. Indeed, those bands, tribes, and eventually civilizations which possessed and mastered the “technology” of the horse were invariably able to conquer and dominate those around them who did not. So effective was the Mounted Warrior when used against riderless opponents – no matter how brave, cultured, or organized – that history shows us numerous examples of relatively advanced civilizations, who either lacked mounted warriors or a tradition of skilled horsemanship being felled by those who possessed this important innovation. Attila the Hun and his light cavalry sacked the Western Roman Empire in 452 by springs to mind, and a handful of mounted Spanish adventurers destroyed of the impressive and highly militarily competent Incan Empire in 1531.

Incredibly, it was not until the first World War of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that rapid advancement in both automatic weaponry and the internal combustion engine removed the horse from the theater of war – and perhaps then only temporarily. In Afghanistan following the September 11<sup>th</sup> destruction of the World Trade Center buildings, events which are generally considered to be the first significant military conflict of this Century, the then-rebel Northern Alliance successfully used a massed cavalry charge against a small squad of old Soviet-era tanks manned by Taliban soldiers. Thus, whenever and wherever the relatively new technologies of internal combustion and automatic weaponry are not available or not supplied by a modern manufacturing-based society, our companion the horse seems ready, even in this age of smart-weapons and space flight, to step in as if he had never left us... or, more appropriately, as if we had never left him.

In light of all of this history it is not surprising that the image of the proud, independent mounted warrior has remained firmly lodged in the collective conscious of Eurasian man – a sort of cultural animus,

unimpressed by the passage of time. After all, it was the Mounted Warrior who was responsible for the shaping and spreading of what we now think of as Western Culture through his travel and conquest. He has been with us as long as we have built roads, constructed buildings, and recorded our language in written form. Vital, robust, individualistic, and energetic, he calls to us through the haze of our comfortable modern mediocrity. He has little interest in television or computer games or shopping at the mall. He has little use for our complicated laws, customs, and ideas of proper behavior. From across the mists of time he beckons to us, barbaric and alluring, whispering words of wanderlust and freedom.

Frightening to many, irresistible to others, the Mounted Warrior has managed to incarnate himself through a new breed of disciples clad this time not in chain-mail but in leather and kevlar, not on horseback but upon the many and various forms of the vehicle known as the “motorcycle.” It is this disciple, this new incarnation of Mounted Warrior, which we now call The Biker – a maligned archetype who has enjoyed a long, if not terribly distinguished, career in the world of roleplaying games. Unlike his great-grandfather The Knight, The Biker is seldom portrayed in a noble or heroic light. He is often little more than a nameless thug, usually the lackey of some far more qualified and interesting villain, inserted into a game so that the sidekicks and other less powerful characters have someone to kick around while the real heroes are busy saving The World from Evil or The City from Peril or the little old lady from purse snatching... or whatever.

Well, friends and fellow gamers, no longer.

Although many “superhero” roleplaying games have sported motorcycle-riding characters in their long and colorful histories, the vast majority of them are but very minor villains – so many in fact that it seems that no fledgling modern day “superhero” could possibly begin his or her career without taking on a bunch of “bikers” in some sort of street fight scene. By and large, this concept of SpandexMan vs. Evil Biker Hoodlums has been borrowed by game creators and their players from the very comic books which inspire the entire genre of super-heroic roleplaying games. If you think about it, for a long time now it’s been an accepted norm in the world of comic book writing that you simply aren’t a martial-arts-hero-dark-avenger-guy unless you wade your way through at least two “biker gangs” a year – or maybe more if you are feeling particularly peckish. A sidekick just

artwork by Ron Salas

isn't a sidekick unless he or she can karate kick and judo throw at least three leather-vest-and-aviator-glasses-wearing, chain-wielding, Harley-Davidson riding greaseballs a page. Indeed, it seems in some comic book universes that large, hairy men with chain whips and droopy mustaches who like to ride chrome-laden, American made chopper motorcycles with extremely loud pipes crowd the poorer sections of most major population areas, constantly spoiling for a fight with nearly any spandex-clad idiot they run across – hence, to be honest, the first of several reasons for this article. The Biker makes a very fine thug in the eyes of many players and GMs.

Of course, as with most things, if you scratch the surface of this stereotype you find more layers of meaning than there are layers of paint on the tank of an old '52 Indian Scout. For one, think about the archetypes and social psychology involved in the above scenarios. The dark-avenger-martial-artist is almost always a defender of modern society and its values – admittedly, often a maverick and misunderstood defender, but a champion nonetheless of the values which television-shopping-at-the-mall society hold dear. The Biker, on the other hand, represents a modern incarnation of the more ancient and anarchistic values of the Mounted Warrior, values which modern society would like to have brought under control. But modern society just can't quite morally justify the kind of actions necessary to totally destroy the ancient and revered mounted warrior archetype – for, indeed, forcibly controlling the Mounted Warrior is the same as destroying him. So it's left up to the dark-avenger-martial-artist-anti-hero to get around this ethical queasiness and biannually kick the hell out of a bunch of working class guys having a beer together in their favorite bar after a Saturday morning ride. If not, society as we know it would crumble and anarchy would rule the streets of Lincoln, Nebraska and Iowa City, Iowa and boring shopping-in-the-mall places like that.

On the other hand, there is something to be said for giving the disreputable a solid thumping now and again. I mean, it's not like a lot of bikers *aren't* petty criminals and they *do* make mighty fine thugs in any game setting which is modern enough to have motorcycles... and, with a little imagination, possibly those that aren't. They're tough (so they can take a punch or two), they're strong (so they can punch back), they smell funny (motorcycling is a dirty, out-of-doors hobby), they dress differently (wear protective clothing, armor in game terms), they have their own language or slang (motorcycle relevant terms for the most part), and they're generally rude, crude, and socially unacceptable (they don't care what you think). So, of course, time for that karate kick that bat-cape-guy taught you.

Though most biker thugs are generally of the Harley Davidson riding, bandanna wearing variety, a less traditional but equally fun variety of The Biker is the now rather popular youthful, Asian, kung fu using, sports bike riding gangster. He has seen a lot of screen time in action films lately, both in China and the United States, generally dealing drugs, “whacking” reporters, sneering, smoking, and doing impossible martial arts while riding high tech Japanese sports bikes.

Really, the dark-avenger-martial-artist gets more bang for his buck, so to speak, from this archetype, because he gets to potentially fulfill several deeply hidden ugly needs at the same time. Firstly, he gets to beat up on a member of a slightly threatening foreign culture (the various Asian nations *have* been giving The West a run for its money economically lately, haven't they?) who is generally riding an imported motorcycle (dark-avenger-martial-artist is usually secretly patriotic and, aside from the rather slow and expensive Buell, there are no mass produced American sportsbikes). Best of all, it appears from a recent review of my comic book and DVD collections that all Asian teenagers who ride motorcycles also have the ability to “wire-fu” around with the best of 'em, kung fu fighting about like low budget superheros themselves, making them much, much more satisfying opponents than some old, hairy, greasy Harley biker with a lead pipe in his hand saying things like “You're going to get it now, SpandexMan!” Times do change, after all.

In either case, both versions of The Biker make excellent low-level villains and thugs for any modern day campaign setting which needs them. Which, in my opinion, is nearly all of them. The Biker has certainly been a part of the comic book world for a long time. Within that setting, he has unto himself a long, rich, and varied tradition of running exotic drugs no one has ever heard of, taking over towns, wearing stone-washed jeans (still!), behaving rudely towards women and those who appear to be women, slurring words, drinking, smelling bad, behaving disrespectfully towards police officers and soccer moms, using slang which doesn't even exist, wearing aviator glasses even though the '80s are over, flying through the air, sneering, smoking Malaysian cigarettes, riding imported Japanese motorcycles too quickly and domestic motorcycles too loudly, and – perhaps worst of all – getting kicked around by guys dressed in spandex body stockings like Richard Simmons as well as by teenage girls with several months of judo training.

For these crimes and many others, The Biker may well deserve to get beaten up by your roleplaying game character.

fuming, gesturing, or shaking your head at the last guy's stupidity, the next guy nails you....

— noted motorcyclist  
Maynard Hershon

### THE BIKER MENACE

“New Delhi, India -  
— A fifth Indian policeman died Thursday of injuries received when motorcycle-riding gunmen attacked the U.S. cultural center in Calcutta last week, a news report said.

“Four policemen had died during the Jan. 22 attack and 16 were injured, in addition to a passer-by and a contract security guard at the American Center. The fifth policeman died Wednesday, Press Trust of India news agency reported from Calcutta.

“Indian police say they have arrested six people, including three Bangladeshis, and killed two Pakistanis whom they accuse of being part of a plot to carry out the attack.

“The attack happened during a morning police shift change when many officers were milling around, and long before employees of the center were to arrive for work. U.S. officials have suggested the attack appeared to be aimed at Indian police....

— Associated Press,  
Oct. 22, 2001

**“B”IKER MOVIES****Moto-Psycho**

(1965) – Alex Rocco hunts down and kills a gang of depraved and psychopathic moped riding “bikers” in the desert. Russ Meyer should have stuck with making porno.

**The Wild Angels**

(1966) – Bruce Dern dies in a motorcycle wreck so Peter Fonda and some Hells Angels assault a nurse, tie up a priest while they have a drugged out orgy in his church, and then fistfight the entire town of Venice. A classic.

**Hells Angels on Wheels** (1967) – Jack Nicholson is tired of pumping gas so he, Adam Roarke, and the real Hells Angels smash up a bar then go to a carnival and fight some sailors. Pretty cool.

**Run Angel Run**

(1967) – William Smith sells out to The Man, so he gets chased by angry bikers up and down California’s Highway One. He then becomes a rural sheep farmer. Good stunts.

**The Losers** (1970) – A US presidential advisor is caught behind enemy lines in Viet Nam. So the Army hires gets a bunch of booze drinking, pot smoking bikers on specially constructed choppers to ride into the jungle and rescue him from the evil commies. A must see!

**B Movie Scenarios**

The Rebel rides into the isolated desert town with a few close and trusted friends, brothers of the road who have kept the faith with him and one another through good times and bad. You can tell by the expression on his handsome face that he’s haunted by the shadows of things that most ordinary people could never understand. He has the look of a man who’s spent his life on the run from the one thing he cannot possibly escape – himself. Even the most casual observer quickly notices the weight which bears heavily down upon his all-too-young shoulders, The Rebel in his leathers on his wild machine. It’s the exhaustion which comes from bearing that terrible thing that only he knows how to bear; the knowledge that we are all so terribly alone in this world.

The townspeople have a problem they cannot seem to solve. Perhaps it is because they are too few or perhaps because they lack courage, but only the strange, rebellious young man and his small band of hard and desperate friends can save them from The Menace now. After a first desperate, unassisted struggle between the heroic bikers and The Menace, the townspeople rally around their saviors and prove their valor in the second fight with The Menace. Really, they could have handled it all along if they’d only found the inner strength to stand up for themselves.

But this fight is not without a cost. All of the strange, rebellious young man’s friends – each interesting, quirky, and, in the end, heroic in his own way – have fallen to The Menace before it could be destroyed, deepening his sense of loss, woe, and melancholy. To make matters worse, the local misunderstood teenage girl has fallen in love with him. Yet he knows he must leave her for the dusty open loneliness which is the American Highway, for it is the only home he shall ever know. With tears streaming down his hauntingly handsome face, he rides off into the sunset having solved everybody’s problems... except for his own!

Wow – kind of like a Western with motor oil and leather jackets, huh? Which makes sense when you consider that is was the plot of a bunch of “B” films, all made out in the dusty Southern California desert on a shoestring budget with unknown actors. During the ’60s and ’70s dozens of sleazy exploitation biker films were made by independent low-budget directors, such as the always frighteningly prolific Roger Corman and sexually freakish Russ Meyer. These guys were experts at creating art from pure imagination with minimal preparation, sometimes writing their scripts and recruiting actors as they whipped along on strict shooting schedules. Given a set of rulebooks and a bag of polyhedral dice any of them would probably make great GMs. Don’t you wish you, or your GM, could pound out interesting adventures a mile a minute like that? With this sort of on-the-fly inspired thinking, it’s only natural that many of these cheapo biker films are uniquely ripe for conversion into game scenarios by the enterprising (if slightly twisted) GM. Here are some ideas:

First, there’s always your basic “misunderstood young man and his gang out on a road trip attack (or save) a small Californian town” film. This scenario has been done perfectly in Laslo Bendedek’s *The Wild Ones* (1954) where Marlon Brando’s “confused hero” Johnny faces off against Lee Marvin’s “surlly villain” Chico for control of their gang. Set against the backdrop of a small town, the men look cool on their machines while the teenage girls swoon, police gnash their teeth, and everybody drinks, fights, and ponders the meaning of their restless youthful little lives.

This is the most simple of all biker scenarios but there are still a lot of good plot possibilities. The characters, as “good” bikers, could show up just in time to help the townspeople face down the “bad” bikers before they wreck the place. Of course the “bad” bikers will be back with more of their friends, so the townspeople and the “good” bikers will have to learn to work together if they are going to stand up to them. Or the townspeople could be a bunch of heavily armed paranoid nut cases who attack the “good” biker characters as soon as they get into town because their pompadours are too big and their girlfriends wear disreputable shoes, forcing them to join forces with the “bad” biker gang (who don’t even have girlfriends) just to survive long enough to get away.

Now, it stands to reason that if a square ’50s boys’ motorcycle gang can take over a town, then a hip feminist ’60s girls’ motorcycle gang can, too. Or, anyhow, that’s the basic premise behind Herschell Gordon Lewis’ *She Devils On Wheels* (1968). Queenie, Whitey, Honey-Pot, and the girls have taken over a small town and



are having a pretty good time making the local men stand in “The Stud Line” each night so the winner of that day’s bike race can take her pick. It’s sort of like lady’s choice night at a dance hall except it’s not just their dance-card that gets filled. Everything is cool until this new girl Karen shows up. “We treat men like pieces of meat hanging on a rack at a butcher shop!” she complains, so she has sex with the same man several nights in a row. The She Devils aren’t down with her reactionary anti-feminist behavior, so they drag her boyfriend behind a chopper until he looks like raw hamburger. Then the She Devils’ nubile leader Honey-Pot gets kidnapped by the ugly male gang leader Joey Boy, so they have to go and decapitate him with piano wire. Then everyone rides off into the sunset.

Now, the best thing that an enterprising GM could do with this scenario is to let the players simply wander into the middle of it *without explaining anything!* Let them pick sides or, better yet, force them to stand in the dreaded “Stud Line.” You could have them try to save Karen’s unfortunate loser boyfriend from the dreaded feminists in leather cat suits. Have fun and don’t let a lot of plot get in the way of the action. The film’s director Herschell Gordon Lewis sure didn’t!

Another particularly fun, although perhaps painfully inevitable, variation on the chick biker film theme is the “biker babes versus hordes of undead” film. A fine later example of this genre is Dan Hoskin’s *Chopper Chicks in Zombie Town* (1989). Wrapped in luxuriously filthy, butt-hugging leather, Rox (Catherine Carlin) is the leader of a mean, brazen, and blow-dried all-girl motorcycle gang called the Cycle Sluts who pull into the isolated desert town of Zariah for a “meat break.” But instead of finding man candy to munch on they find an army of flesh-eating zombies who want to be the ones doing the snacking. It turns out that the town has been taken over by the mad mortician Ralph William (Don Calfa) and his mild mannered midget sidekick Bob (Ed Gale) who are slowly turning all of townspeople into mindless undead. To make matters worse, a busload of blind orphans has broken down right near the zombies’ lair. It left up to the chopper chicks to save them in a nightmare blur of neo-feminist violence.

This is a classic horror theme. Everyone knows that the characters are tough, but are they tough enough to take on an entire town of middle-class flesh-eating zombies? Can they make it to the busload of blind orphans before the zombies turn them into cane-tapping hors deouvers? Perhaps the GM could cruelly add the Cycle Sluts to the mix as a *competing* group of heroes who are not about to be outdone by a bunch of (yech!) men. After an initial conflict,

the Cycle Sluts and the characters could work together to stop the menace of the mad mortician and his horizontally impaired assistant. No matter what zombie parts will fly.

Another noteworthy B movie jaunt into the world of not-very-likely motorcycle adventures is Michael Nesmith’s (of the Monkees) *Timerider* (1982), in which flaky motocross racer Lyle Swann (Fred Ward) and his bike get zapped back to the 1870s by some very sloppy Regan-era scientists who have somehow wandered onto the racecourse (funding was pretty easy to get back then). He drives across the dessert for a while until he finds an old Mexican who sees the bike and dies of fright. Swann can’t figure it out – where is everybody, and like, what, the old guy had never seen a motorcycle before? Swann then rides around some more, terrifying the heck out of various cowboys and pioneers until he runs into former ’60s activist Peter Coyote, who really, really wants to learn how to ride. Unfortunately, Peter Coyote is an outlaw so he doesn’t want to bother with those darn C.L.A.S.S. riding lessons and decides to shoot Swann, *who still doesn’t get it*. Fortunately, incredibly good-looking girl gunfighter Claire (Belinda Bauer) happens along and gives Peter Coyote and his gang the Altamont-style beating they so richly deserve. Then she *forces* Swann to make love to her at gunpoint, steals his ride, and promptly gets caught by Peter Coyote who isn’t exactly going to take her for a ride on the peace train, if you know what I mean. It’s at about this point that Swann figures out that, wow man, *I must be in the past* and if I want to be held at gunpoint by Belinda Bauer again I had better go rescue her.

Now that’s a plot! There are sooooo many ways to work this into various sorts of settings it makes you feel sort of giddy just thinking about it. Maybe your characters are already in an Old West campaign when suddenly this clueless, mullet-wearing flake from the future on his crazy machine drops in their lap. What do they do with him? How will they get fuel for his... what is it called... mo-tor-cy-cle? Why does he talk so funny? Or, if you prefer, drop the biker characters into the old west *without telling* them to see how long it takes them to figure it out. You might be surprised at just how long that is! When they do figure it out, make them do something very “old west,” like fight it out with the real James Gang or rescue an actual maiden tied up on some actual train tracks. I guarantee that they’ll love you for it.

## OTHER NOTEWORTHY ZOMBIE BIKER FILMS

**Dawn of the Dead** (1978) – Zombies have taken over the world, so five people find a mall full of consumer goods to barricade themselves in. Things are going pretty well until a zombie-battling biker army decides that they would like to get into the mall as well. One of George Romero’s very best.

**Revenge of the Zombies** (1981) – Supernatural tale of violence and vengeance, when a biker gang breaks into a house and kills the father of two children with bizarre powers. Also released as “Kiss Daddy Goodbye.”

**Zombie Bikers from Detroit** (2000) – The touching story of two teenage lovebirds from Grosse Pointe who get chased down by a zombie gang from Detroit. Full of blood, guts, and motorcycles.

**Zombie Cult Massacre** (2001) – A three-way battle to the death between trigger-happy cult members, rifle-toting bikers on their Harleys, and hungry bug-eyed zombies wearing bad pants. George Romero Meets the Branch Davidians in Sturgis, South Dakota

## THE BIKER VIGIL AUNTY

**The Aunty Jack Show** (1972-1973) was one of Australia's earliest and best-loved TV comedy series. Starring a motorcycling transvestite boxer, Australians of the early '70s had little option but to tune in under threat of having their "bloody arms ripped off." The theme song from the series Farewell Aunty Jack reached Number 1 in Australia and stayed in their charts for 22 weeks, proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that Australians are a very strange and scary group of people.

## Bad TV Scenarios

The insanely good-looking woman on a sleek sports bike pulls up to the front door of the abandoned church in the dead of night. Pulling off her designer full-face helmet, she sweeps her luxurious mane of hair towards the camera before swinging her legs off of the bike in a single, slow motion movement. She then casually tosses the un-scratched, thousand dollar Shoei duo-tech helmet to her right so that she can remove her three hundred dollar designer leather gloves one at a time, revealing well-manicured hands.

The front doors of the abandoned church open, spewing forth a dozen undead-looking character actors with large bumpy foreheads. She tosses her gloves disdainfully to the left before clutching her tiny little hands into fists. The undead character actors get closer. She sneers at them through her pouting, surgically modified lips. The undead character actors get even closer still. She squares her rather narrow shoulders so that she can assume the popular "L.A. Fu" martial arts stance. The undead character actors begin running into her fists so that they can fly through the air, hit trees, and explode. She moves through them like George Foreman eating his way through a Las Vegas buffet breakfast, only with less interest.

Suddenly, the insanely good-looking woman is silhouetted in the church's open doorway with the moonlight streaming in behind her. It outlines her surgically perfect figure rather nicely.

In front of her lurks a tall man with a black mullet hairdo that has way too much royal crown gel in it. He has white skin, pointy teeth, and is wearing a hand-tailored double-breasted Brooks Brothers suit with one of those really nice London Fog trench coats that you just can't seem to get here in the States. His yellow eyes move nervously around the room, searching for some means of escape.

"So Mullet Hunter," he says in one of those villain's upper class British accents, "you have found me and destroyed my minions – which, I might add, my took my special effects artists hours to create. But you are too late! In a few moments my infernal pipe organ shall cover Los Angeles in a comforting

sounds of Henry Purcell's Fairy Queen, sending your music industry into a thousand year slumber. There shall never be another glam heavy metal album produced in this city ever again!"

"Not-if-I-can-help-it," she sneers at him through those surgically altered lips with all of the wooden enthusiasm of a high school production of Romeo and Juliet, "Your-day-has-come. You-shall-never-threaten-Columbia-Records-or-anyone-else-again...."

Ah, the comforting and warm beta waves of television. Perhaps the last place you would think to find The Biker in all of his rebellious finery is on nationally syndicated primetime television, but nevertheless there he (or sometimes she) is. Here are a fantastically putrid trio of shows which together contain enough gaming material to keep your players shaking their heads in confusion for months:

For some inexplicable reason in early 1977 executive producer Rick Rosner decided to produce a factual, hard-hitting TV drama about the lives of the only two good looking California Highway Patrol officers ever to serve on the force. This show, known as *CHiPs* (the "I" was never explained) was also about movement and transportation, so each episode featured a high-speed chase of some sort. Usually this involved Eric Estrada and his dopey blond sidekick simply following the bad-guy of the week around downtown L.A. until he got caught in stopped traffic (pretty common even in the '70s). Then they'd take the "half lane highway" up to the side of his K-car so Eric Estrada could smile at him. Since everyone knows that creepy Eric is a practicing Santaria witch, the bad-guy always surrendered at this point. Nobody wants to wake up with a dead chicken at the foot of his bed.

Sometimes Eric and big dummy would get off their bikes for a chase scene, but since nobody in L.A. walks, the producers had to find other ways of getting them around. There were roller skating chase scenes, jet-ski chase scenes, dirt bike chase scenes, and even muscle car chase scenes where the bad guys would find the only empty streets in L.A. to flee down. Yep, *CHiPs* was pretty cool, and making your own *ChiPs*-style scenario is both easy and fun. Start with an amazing crash on the freeway involving a car going through a semi-truck. Of course the car has a screaming baby in it, but that's okay, because the baby's mom is really good looking in spite of being unconscious in a burning car. The characters somehow show up within thirty seconds of this wreck so that they can wiggle into the burning car, rescue the hot mom (and even her baby), the run like heck before the car somehow blows up and knocks everybody down in slow motion. Remember, somebody's seat belt

will be stuck for at least a few seconds somehow. For a little variation, use a bridge and a lake instead of a semi truck and fire. It works just as well, even better if mom is wearing a skimpy white t-shirt.

Then, with no further explanation, have the characters hanging out at the police station (or their base) where there are plenty of hot blondes and brunettes to hit on. After they have done that for a while, cut to a scene where two guys in leisure suits plot a crime which involves a high-speed getaway through insanely slow rush hour traffic. If they know how to use a gun, make sure that they don't bring it along – but if they can't hit the side of a barn with a machine gun then it's ok to bring guns along. Next, show the characters nonchalantly lane-splitting through traffic with reflective aviators' glasses on, periodically grinning at each other. Then their dispatcher (who also sounds like a hot chick) calls them to tell them where a crime is going on so that they can turn on their sirens and drive like bats-out-of-heck down four or five streets that aren't anywhere near each other until they get there. When they arrive, have an NPC run out into the street and yell "they went that way!" before they can get off their bikes. Then they can high-speed chase the guys in leisure suits down five more streets that don't connect until their K-car hits some trash cans. One bad guy will jump out and make a run for it, so have a character throw his night stick twenty feet between the guys legs so that he trips and falls into some more trash cans. Then, suddenly, the characters are back in their base flirting with redheads. One character makes some lame joke, everyone laughs hysterically in a forced sort of way, and then the characters get individually freeze framed with big cheesy smiles on their faces. Make your players act this out. Roll credits – end of game.

Repeat each game with slight variation. Hey, it worked for six seasons back in the 1970s!

Another favorite of the little screen is *Renegade*, where Lorenzo Lamas is the longhaired ex-cop gone biker named Tulsa or Vegas or something who's wanted by The Man for his wife's murder. He's innocent (of course) but he has to use up five seasons and a lot of hair spray trying to prove it. Of course he is constantly hunted by the crooked L.A. cops who framed him, but they can't seem to get it together once they leave Tinsel Town and have to spend five years chasing him around the Southwest rather than selling coke or whatever it is crooked L.A. cops do. Lorenzo and his friends wile away the days bounty hunting while being wanted by the law themselves, which is apparently not a problem for bail bondsmen in that part of the country.

A scenario using this setting would probably go something like this: one character is rolling through the desert in style on his Harley Sportster. Strangely, the fact that his sportster only has a one-gallon pea tank doesn't keep him from going hundreds of miles at a time (this is his special power, so make the player pay for it). The other characters are following behind in one of those mobile homes that's almost as big as Bill Gates' mansion. They are all wanted by the law, but somehow this weird parade is inconspicuous so the local police never bother them. Each game starts with a scene of some rough white trash looking guy robbing a gas station (or bank or pawn shop or doughnut store). The characters in the jumbo inconspicuous mobile home get a call on the CB radio telling them that some guy they were *already* hunting has just committed a crime. They stop so that the character on the Harley can announce that, hey, if we just catch this guy I can prove my innocence! So they go to the nearest biker bar because everybody knows that it's the first place you go after you rob a gas station. Unfortunately, former punk goddess and biker lesbian Wendy O' Williams is the bartender, so the characters have just gotta *know* that this is the wrong bar to be in. They then have to fight everyone in the bar except for the guy they are after so that he can slip out the back door and get away.

Cut to the next scene: the Harley-riding character is getting advice from an old Indian medicine man by a campfire. The old Indian is pretty bored, though, so he keeps giving totally inscrutable answers to the character's questions in hopes that he will go away and leave him alone. No such luck – the players will have to do this every game. In the next scene, the characters are riding down some godforsaken, semi-paved Nevada back road kicking up huge clouds of dust. They pull up to some 1950s airstream trailer where the bad guy's toothless ex-wife is hiding him. He comes out for a high-noon-style showdown with the characters but generally gets lectured for a while instead. Then the characters shoot him in the right shoulder so that he drops his gun. Between clenched teeth he explains to the Harley riding character that he definitely can't help him prove his innocence because he has absolutely no idea what he is talking about. Roll credits. Repeat following game with almost no variation at all for about five seasons.

*Street Hawk* was a short-lived ABC television series that aired back in 1985. The show was about this motorcycle cop (of course) named Jesse Mach (Rex Smith) whose partner gets killed when one of those big delivery vans hit him. The same van also runs into Jesse, shattering his knees so that he can't ride any more. Relegated to a miserable desk job in the

## STONE COLD

*Stone Cold* is a 1991 biker film starring the infamous Seattle Seahawks' linebacker Brian "The Boz" Bosworth. It's sort of like *Easy Rider*, only this time, instead of hippies getting blown away by rednecks, it's outlaw bikers blowing up any Mississippi politicians who get in their way. The Boz is a mean cop who goes undercover to try to bust the bikers' coke-dealing operation. Nine fistfights and three crash-and-burns later, he has his final showdown with veteran drive-in bad guy Lance Henriksen, as cops and bikers rumble through the Mississippi state capitol like Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait.

detective department, Jesse is approached by a mad scientist type cop named Norman Tuttle (*Murphy Brown's* Joe Regalbuto) who has turned a lame 1984 Honda XR500 dirt bike into this really cool bird-of-prey looking café racer. He offers to fix Jessie's knees up with cybernetic parts if he will join a secret government program and become a superhero – an offer which Jesse quickly accepts. Together they fight crime in the streets of Los Angeles.

*Street Hawk* is really a quintessential motorcycle riding superhero. He wears a skin-tight black bulletproof outfit with these big tough looking AXO boots and a black, tinted visor helmet (it makes him look kind of like an evil test pilot). He has this non-lethal rubber bullet gun under his left arm that he shoots people with, generally after giving them fair warning. His buddy is in constant communication with him through a radio inside of his helmet, so he's always finding out background information on people and stuff like that. But it's the bike which is really the star of the show. The thing *really* does look kind of cool, kind of like a KTM Duke2 about 15 years before KTM made one, and it has all sorts of special powers. It goes 300 miles an hour (!!!) when you hit the "hyperthrust" button (kind of like a space ship), lifts itself over objects with compressed air, shoots explosive rockets, fires lasers, and even blasts away with a machine gun! Best of all, you can still constantly pop all sorts of wheelies on it even with all of this garbage tucked under its tiny front ferring!

A *Street Hawk* style scenario would go something like this: you show the first character running on a treadmill with all of this computer stuff hooked up to him. Then you show this outrageous looking motorcycle being carried out of a dry ice room on a conveyor belt. Next, you show the second character looking at a bunch of outdated computers with blinky lights and green screens. The first character gets his cool super clothing on right before jumping on the bike and leaping out of a secret door in a wall in a nameless sleazy alley somewhere along Hollywood Boulevard (where there is a plentiful supply of sleazy alleys). He flies about 30 yards over the heads of startled bums to land on a street shrouded by thick white fog-machine fog. He then begins doing wheelies in slow motion up and down the street, calling the motorcycle "baby" and "sweetheart." Meanwhile, the other character – the pencil-necked inventor who created the bike – is getting pretty upset at all of this dirty talk, so tells the fist character to "initiate sequence two" through the first characters' secret radio helmet. This is so that he can watch all of the action through a camera in the bike's front ferring *without* having to ride the silly death-contraption himself. Then the first

character has to find another bank of fog-machine-smog so he can begin cornering in slow motion.

After the geek in the control booth is satisfied that the bike can turn corners, he tells the first character to get ready for "hyperthrust." He begins counting down dramatically 9!...8!...7!... ..6!...5!...4!...3!...2!... before shouting "Initiate hyperthrust!" Then the camera starts playing its film really quickly while the first character shouts "yeehaw!" and "whoohoo!" a lot so that it looks like he is shooting down the L.A. Freeway at about a zillion miles an hour. After this goes on long enough to give most people in the '80s an acid flashback, the geek in the control booth announces that the bike is overheating and will have to come back into the shop. Unfortunately, the first character has stumbled across the noisiest and most obvious liquor store robbery in California history, so he has to stop and shoot up the robbers' car with a laser that pops out of the front of his bike before telling the robbers, "No charge for the tune up!" and flying over the heads of startled policemen.

Repeat with a surprising amount of variation on the theme of being a biker superhero for around a dozen games before canceling on your players without warning.

## Forgotten Comic Book Characters

The man in ragged leather stands alone atop the high mesa, the wind whipping the black, flame-like mop of his hair into various shapes as it whistles past. For a long time he remains almost motionless save for a slow, almost imperceptible movement of his head as he stares down at the valley below. In the middle of the valley sits an innocuous small town of the sort which periodically dots American Southwest. There is nothing particularly unusual about it.

“Evil,” says the man. “This is where I sensed the Evil to which I have been drawn, this town in the dust.”

Extending a leather-clad hand outwards, the ragged man summons the arcane powers of shadow substance which lives amongst the cells of his blood stream to create his Shadow Cycle, an enormous cruiser of unearthly darkness. Its tires seem to be constructed of black flame, while its exhaust pipes emit an angry roar which could only come from the throats of the doomed souls of another world. Wrapping a dusty, well-used scarf around his face and strapping an ebony “pudding bucket” helmet upon his head, the man climbs upon his midnight machine and begins to descend down the mesa’s nearly vertical surface in a mighty cloud of reddish brown desert dust.

“No matter Evil’s form, No matter Evil’s path,” he cries out in his brooding baritone, “No Evil shall escape the hounds of The Hunteds eternal wrath!”

It’s good to be a comic book biker. There’s no mechanical failures, no periodic maintenance, no speeding tickets, no helmets, and no physical laws of nature to keep you from flying hundred of feet through the air when you want to leap over villains. It’s like being a modern day cowboy except that you wear black leather instead of a white ten-gallon hat. Best of all, your bike doesn’t leave horse “hockey” all over the place or throw you off while you’re giving your soliloquies.

Which brings us to our next topic, namely The Biker as superhero. Many, many superheroes have ridden motorcycles in the lengthy history of comic books, as have many heroes of both the big and small screens. Marvel Comic’s *Captain America* and Ian

Fleming’s *James Bond* are both examples of heroic characters who both occasionally ride motorcycles yet have few or none of the archetypical characteristics of The Biker. This is an unfortunate trend – in fact only a very few fictional characters have adapted the entire life style of The Biker in at least one of his various incarnations. Good examples would include Marvel Comic’s *Ghost Rider* and the above-mentioned *Renegade* television character. Both of these later two heroic characters use the language of The Biker, wear his clothing, and participate in his culture, as well as riding his chosen means of transportation. The particulars of this language, manner of dress, and general culture we shall touch on in a later section of this work. Here are some examples of some of the motorcycle-riding comic book heroes of the past upon which characters could be easily based:

Marvel Comic’s *Ghost Rider* is the quintessential misunderstood biker hero. Things go terribly, terribly wrong when circus stunt rider Johnny Blaze tries to make a deal with The Devil – uh, I mean Mephisto – to save his best friend Crash Simpson from cancer. The end result is that Johnny must share his body with the eternal Spirit of Vengeance, a supernatural entity designed to avenge the guilty and protect the innocent (pretty much in that order). When the Spirit of Vengeance witnesses wrongdoing or senses evil it takes over Johnny’s body, turning him into this cool looking flaming skeleton in black leather with big spikes all over it. Of course, this is a little hard on Johnny’s social life (there’s a *lot* of evil around), so he ends up having to take to the road as a wandering lone biker. Johnny drifts into seemingly quite town after seemingly quite town, only to have his alter ego discover that some sort of supernatural evil is afoot. *Ghost Rider* nearly always manages to save the innocent townspeople from danger, but scares the (dare I say it?) hell out of them while doing it. So after each victory, Johnny Blaze has to take to the road again.

*Ghost Rider* has a bunch of cool powers. He has this flaming chain whip that he wraps around evildoers so that they can see every bad thing they have ever done at once, which generally turns them into jabbering, drooling imbeciles for a while (I guess a *lot* of evil lurks in the hearts of men). He can also summon this crazy looking AMC era chopper with burning wheels by simply extending his hand outwards palm down. He then rides this (dare I say it again?) hellish thing up and down the sides of office buildings, leaving skid marks of flame everywhere he goes. All of this *on top of* having his head turn into a flaming skull. Not bad!

## BLOOD ON THE HIGHWAY

### El Diablo:

“You’re bleeding, old-timer. You ought to get that taken care of.”

### The Vigilante:

“Aw, the heck with it. Does a man good to bleed sometimes. Reminds him that he’s still alive.”

— El Diablo #12

Atomic-age Lazarus or post-modern Frankenstein's monster? That is what Acclaim Comic's *Bloodshot* must discover as he searches for the clues to his past that will reveal who, and what, he is. The men who pursue him, presumably the ones who transformed him into a zombie killing machine, say he is (or was) Raymond Garrison, an agent for the quasi-governmental Domestic Operations Authority (get it?). His memory tells a different story. He was Angelo Mortalli, a mobster whose career went south – permanently. But men do lie and memories can be wrong, especially after you've been dead for a year. Which is the truth and which is the lie?

*Bloodshot* is a really buffed Arnie-looking dead guy who has been re-animated by sentient nanotechnology. He's filled with these millions of tiny robots who all worship him as their god/world. They fix him when gets hurt by turning any organic matter he can find into useful flesh, so he is constantly sticking raw meat from the grocery store into his wounds. He cruises around on this improbably giant muscle bike, looking to get even with those who have doomed him to a tortured half-life. Unfortunately, those who doomed him employ armies of heavily-armed goons who like to blow large holes in zombie killing machines, so *Bloodshot* seems to spend a lot more time in line at the Safeway meat counter than he does out riding his bike.

DC Comics' *Jonah Hex*, he of scarred face and nasty disposition, finds himself yanked through time from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Old West to become part of Reinhold Borsten's "warrior collection." Armed with his Smith & Wesson six-gun, his knife, and his lariat, Hex has to make his way across a post-nuclear America on a futuristic "duster" motorcycle with an attractive 16 year-old girl named Princess Elana on the back (O the burdens of heroism!). Hex is trying to take her to the heavily fortified city of Sisco so that she can plead the case of her oppressed dessert nomad friends with her scary father Lord Alcalá. To do this they have to ride and shoot their way past legions of mutants, attack robots, giant animals, biker gangs, and futuristic-looking guys in flying cars.

When he is crime-fighting, DC Comics' *The Vigilante* disguises his identity as Greg Saunders, the country singer known as the Prairie Troubadour, by wrapping a red scarf over the lower portion of his face and replacing his guitar with a six-shooter. The Vigilante is a Golden Age comic book character (1940s and '50s) who tears around either New York or the American Southwest on his Indian motorcycle while somehow keeping his white ten-gallon hat on his head. A lot of his adventures center around attempts to thwart powerful gangster

Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel, who was then attempting to set the foundations for what would later become Las Vegas. The Vigilante needn't have bothered: Murder, Inc. took care of Bugsy rather messily in 1947, and Vegas is doing pretty well today.

The Vigilante also fell prey to the "sidekick-syndrome" that beset many heroes of the era, ending up with Stuff, the Chinatown Kid, who was the grandson of Lin Chou, leader of the White Lotus tong in New York's Chinatown. He assisted the Vigilante when a Japanese spy known as The Head framed his grandfather for provoking a Tong war. Stuff worked with The Vigilante until his apparent retirement, but typical comic book continuity problems abound with Stuff after this point. He was first shown, as an adult, to have been murdered by The Dummy (a weird Golden Age villain who looked like a ventriloquist's dummy). His own son, Stuff, Jr., helped The Vigilante bring the killer to justice. He has also been shown very much alive and now the president of the "Greg Sanders' Round-Up" restaurant chain. It has also been revealed in a later attack of retroactive continuity that Stuff was murdered in the early 1950s by Bugsy Siegel. Such is the fate of sidekicks.

Marvel Comic's *The Thunderiders* (also known as Team America) were a world-class motorcycle stunt-riding team who met during the annual Daytona Beach bike week. Five of the Thunderiders' six regulars (Honcho, The Wolf, R.U. Reddy, Cowboy, and Wrench) were mutants who possess a special mental link with one another that enabled them to share certain information and feelings as well as project into a host body their combined mental and physical attributes during times of stress. This host body takes on the masked identity of the Marauder, also known as the Black Marauder, the Dark Rider, or the Black Rider (depending upon who was writing the series at the time). When the Thunderiders decided to form Marauder, they chose some lucky stiff within 100 yards of their location and bestowed upon this individual the attributes and skills of Marauder (or Black Rider, etc). The Marauder would then generally save them from peril or confuse the heck out of them or, more often, both at the same time.

The Thunderiders used motorcycles licenced from the Ideal Toy Corporation in one of those crossover comic book/toy company promotions things that used to happen all the time back in the 1970s. A lot of their stories revolved around stopping environmental disasters, which was kind of a sign of the times (superheroes don't do that sort of thing anymore). Probably the most memorable thing about this short-lived and rather unsuccessful series was the caption of its last issue which read, "Because you demanded it... the end of Team America!"

### The Antihero as Hero for HERO

Now none of the above information has to have any bearing on your campaign world, in which you and your players are free to make The Biker as simple or shallow or complex or deep as you please. Yet there *is* potential for real and satisfying depth when roleplaying The Biker in your game if you look past his rough exterior and get down to what he really represents in American society – which is, namely, freedom. You can force your Player Characters, and their players, to examine their real attitudes towards those who step outside the norms of society so that they, as men and women in the physical world, can come to more fully appreciate what the word “hero” really means.

For these reasons as well as a variety of others, The Biker makes a fine roleplaying game character as both a Player Character and a Non-Player Character. For many players, The Biker embodies a large number of traits desirable in a heroic PC – he’s physically sturdy, generally independent, willing to face physical danger, and something of an outsider. Many people are in fact drawn to motorcycles for the same reason they are drawn to roleplaying games: namely, out of a desire for freedom and camaraderie amongst men and women who not only don’t fit into normal society but, in many cases, have little desire to do so. In fact, it is not that terribly unusual for bikers to find their way into roleplaying games as a hobby – or, for that matter, for gamers to get into motorcycling. After all, we’ve got to go outside sometime, and what better reason to set down the dice than to go out for a long ride along a twisty abandoned road on a warm summer afternoon, free and ever so mercifully *alone*....

On a side note, one of the great frustrations of playing the heroic biker character is the fact that the *HERO System* rules, which possess probably the best vehicle creation system in gaming history, were still not designed by people with a great personal interest in motorcycles. There is an infinite capacity for creation for those with the time and energy to engage in it, but a definite lack of pre-written generic types available for the player. In a later section, dozens of generic types of motorcycles as well as a wide variety of specific historical motorcycles will be rendered into the *HERO System 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* rules for easy use.

Aside from being used as a brutish villain or motorcycle-riding hero, The Biker makes a fine supporting character, usable in a wide variety of capacities. He can be the hero’s best pal, busily punching out thugs while the hero goes after the mastermind behind whatever crime, or he can be the guy whose job it is to fix Captain Stackmaster’s super-cycle every time he bends the forks crashing into super-villains. He can be outlaw with a sense of right and wrong who keeps the heroes in touch with what’s going on in America’s streets, or the voice of working class blue-collar wisdom who urges the characters to “keep it real” and think about their actions. She can be the annoying speed crazed niece of one of the characters who just can’t seem to keep it below 130 mph – but shows up on her souped-up Buell White Lightning just in time to rescue one of the characters. The possibilities for supporting roles are really endless.

The Biker is an important part of the culture of our country. He’s out there right now, living his larger-than-life existence, savoring the little adventures which spring from his dedication to an elite form of transportation, sneering in contempt at those who choose to get around in four-wheeled “coffins.” You can see him nearly everywhere if you look long enough; taking his vacations touring the back roads of America’s Deep South during its warm (but not too warm) springs and falls, screaming up and down the California coastline like a man possessed, spending a leisurely Sunday morning riding from greasy spoon to greasy spoon with his pals. His life is a song – an ode to freedom, to danger, to escape from the bonds which tie us down to our daily grind. Do you hear it calling?

## New Skills, Modifiers, Powers, Advantages, and Disadvantages

The Biker has a different set of interests and abilities than other characters in your gaming universe, requiring his own special set of skills and whatnot. Fortunately, *HERO*'s rule system is extremely accommodating and allows us to derive all of the required nifty special things which allow The Biker to become an interesting part of your campaign world. Most of you could do the same if you had the time to sit down, do the research, and figure it all out – but since you probably don't, here goes.

### PERKS

#### Cost Perk

- 2-4 **Member of Outlaw Biker Gang**  
Character is a full member (patch holder) in good standing of an outlaw biker club. He can expect the other club members to help him out when he is in any sort of danger or financial need, without any regard for whether his needs are legal or not. His fellow club members will stand by him regardless of whether they feel his actions are right or wrong, and he is expected to do the same. The character is extremely close to his club "brothers" who are, for all intents and purposes, his family. The club is a commercial criminal enterprise as well as a social group, so the patch holder can expect to be employed by the club's criminal activities. The cost of this perk is determined by the size, power, and wealth of the outlaw club in question.
- 1 **Member of "Mom and Pops" Club**  
Character is a full member of a non-outlaw motorcycle club. This is essentially a group of people who are close friends and ride together regularly, although there are often fairly rough customers who belong to "mom and pops" clubs. Members probably wear patches or colors, but Outlaw Bikers will not be offended or angered by this. The character can expect at least some help and support from fellow club members, although generally they will not help him break the law or do anything they consider immoral. A "mom and pops" club is never a criminal enterprise and members always have outside jobs. A fine example of a "mom and pops" motorcycle club is the San Francisco Motorcycle Club, which has a clubhouse in the Mission district of that city. It has been in continuous existence since 1898!

### SKILLS

#### Cost Skills

- 2/1 **KS: Outlaw Bikers**  
The Character has a working knowledge of the general history, customs, language, and characteristics of North America's outlaw biker culture. He or she is able to blend in when amongst groups of outlaw bikers, although not individual clubs.
- 2/1 **KS: Motorcycle Racing**  
The character has a general knowledge of the current history of both amateur and grand prix motorcycle racing both locally and around the world. This will include a general working knowledge of all bikes currently being raced as well those who ride them. The character will also have a good grasp of track etiquette and will know how to behave while racing on any given track. In addition, the character will have a good grasp of the interpersonal politics within any given racing "scene." Given that racers are a gabby, self-important folk, this may prove invaluable.
- 2/1 **KS: Motorcycle History**  
The Character has a good grasp of the entire history of motorcycles, including all models, makes, and important personalities involved. He will know the approximate values of collectable bikes, understand the slow evolution of carburetors, and be able to explain to those few individuals who are interested the engineering progression of the internal combustion engine. An extremely tiresome knowledge skill as far as the other characters are concerned.
- 2/1 **KS: The Road**  
The character has specific knowledge of the areas which he or she likes to tour, including the location of gas stations, bars, restaurants, available mechanics, road conditions, type and severity of law enforcement, and scenic places to stop.
- 2/1 **KS: Motorcycles**  
The character has a general knowledge of how motorcycles work mechanically. With this basic knowledge it should be possible to pinpoint what has gone wrong when a bike fails to start, or stops running. This skill can be used in a complementary fashion with the Mechanic skill.
- 2/1 **KS: Specific Motorcycle**  
Requires the previous purchasing of KS: Motorcycles. The character knows a great deal about the history, mechanical parts, and overall characteristics of a particular model of motorcycle as well as the history



## DIGITAL HERO #16

of the manufacturer and the gossip and folklore regarding each individual version of the model. Not too surprisingly, this is a fairly common skill amongst real life motorcyclists, who tend to become a bit overly attached to particular models of bike. This is probably due more to the quality of experiences the rider has had while riding a particular bike than the actual quality of the bike itself, although it is rare that anyone admits anything like that about their personal favorite. This skill can also be used in a complementary fashion with the Mechanic skill.

### 1 TF: Motorcycle

The character has the ability to ride a motorcycle under normal conditions on a roll of 8 or less. He or she knows how to properly shift, brake, balance, accelerate, etc. This familiarity must be purchased before Combat Driving can be purchased.

### 1 WF: Motorcycle

The character is familiar with the use of his motorcycle as a cinematic martial arts weapon in the style of Ridley Scott's *Black Rain* or John Woo's *Hard Boiled*, and is thus able to use his or her motorcycle as a weapon element.

### 1 WF: Chain

The character is familiar with the proper use of a length of chain or "cobra link" cable lock as a weapon while riding his bike and is thus able to use it as a weapon element.

### 1 WF: Thrown Chain

The character knows how to use the chain as a thrown weapon element in an entangle attack.

### 3/2 Trick Riding

This Agility Skill, which has the prerequisite TF: Motorcycle, allows the character to perform a wide variety of difficult tricks on his or her motorcycle. The ability to perform each of these tricks should be modified by its relative difficulty. Failed rolls will result in a crash, with damage to both character and vehicle being determined by velocity. It is recommended that the character also get the Combat Driving skill as well. Possible tricks to be considered include:

- 🏍️ *Wheelie*: This is the most basic of tricks, with the rider pulling the front wheel of the bike off the ground while driving forward on the rear wheel. There are no modifiers to this trick because it is the most simple of all stunts; its difficulty is the basis for how other tricks are judged.

A rider may travel no faster than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of his max combat velocity while "popping a wheelie." A wheelie cannot be "popped" from a dead stop. Requires  $\frac{1}{2}$  Phase.

- 🏍️ *Stoppie*: In this trick, the rider slams on his front brake while accelerating hard, causing his rear wheel to rise into the air. He can then change his hex facing by turning the rear of his bike while it is in the air. This trick must be done while moving and cannot be done from a dead stop. There is a -2 modifier to the character's Trick Riding roll to complete this maneuver. Requires 1 Full Phase to stop and turn.
- 🏍️ *Sliding the Wheels*: In this stunt, the rider slides either the rear wheel or the rear and front wheels (at a -2 and -3 to skill roll, respectively) while accelerating into a sharp turn. In this manner the rider is able to "corner" without braking and therefore maintain a constant or nearly constant speed regardless of the sharpness of the turn. For every point by which the character makes his Trick Riding roll (minus the "sliding the wheels" trick riding modifier) he can subtract one from his Turn Mode and thereby turn sharply without slowing down. This is a Zero Phase action.
- 🏍️ *Touching Your Knee*: Another trick which helps a motorcyclist "corner" at high speeds involves the rider achieving sufficient "lean angle" while turning a corner that one of his knees, generally protected by a leather puck, actually makes contact with the pavement. Successful completion of this stunt allows the rider to subtract 1 from his Turn Mode. Warning: if the character is not wearing protective knee armor of some sort he will take  $\frac{1}{2}d6$  of Killing damage from this trick! This is a  $\frac{1}{2}$  phase action with a -1 to the character's Trick Riding roll.
- 🏍️ *Riding without Hands*: In this stunt the rider removes both hands from the handlebars (normally, one would only remove the left, or braking, hand) to accomplish a two-handed action while riding... or maybe just show off. Unless the motorcycle comes equipped with a cruise control (rare, but possible) it will begin to decelerate that Phase! A skill roll must be made with a -5 modifier every turn the character's hands are off the handlebars. This is  $\frac{1}{2}$  Phase action.

- ☛ *Standing on the Seat:* As with the above mentioned *Riding without Hands*, the character's bike will begin to decelerate the Phase he stands up. This roll must be made successfully with a -9 penalty each Phase or the character tumbles off and takes velocity damage. It is possible in a cinematic campaign that the character could attempt a Martial Maneuver while standing on the seat, but an Acrobatics roll in addition to the Trick Riding roll should be made after each attack to determine whether or not the character has fallen off while attempting such a feat. This is a ½ Phase action.
- ☛ *Bunny-Hop:* From a balanced standing stop, the character "hops" one hex to the left or right with a -5 penalty to his Trick Riding roll... or at a -7 penalty straight up into the air one hex! This is actually done using very specialized motorcycles in a sport known as Trails Biking. Due to the very, very extreme nature of this trick the bike cannot weigh more than the character's lift capacity in kilograms (the average bike weighs around 200). This is a ½ Phase trick.
- ☛ *Stunt Jumping:* This stunt represents the rider's ability to make leaps using small ramps (or a reasonable substitute). To determine the distance which the motorcycle travels once it leaves the ground, add its movement to its strength divided by five. Jumped Distance = Movement + STR/5. For example, a Kawasaki ZX-9 in combat moving 33" (about 40 mph) with a strength of 15 could make a jump of roughly 9½" (about 19 meters). This is a Zero Phase action because the rider is already taking an action in that he or she is moving. There is a -1 penalty to the Trick Riding roll to make a stunt jump. Stunt jumps can only be made in a straight line.

## MARTIAL ARTS

### Martial Art: The Chain Whip

While it is technically possible for a motorcyclist to engage in melee combat while riding, it is *at best* very, very difficult. Even if we set aside issues of balance, weight, and momentum, it's really only possible to use the *left* hand, normally engaged in shifting the bike through its gears, while in motorcycle combat because the right hand constantly controls the bike's acceleration and front breaks. Since a vast majority of people are neither left handed nor ambidextrous, the problem of fighting with one's off-hand becomes readily apparent. In addition, it is fairly reasonable to assume that in a combat

situation the rider will be engaged in moving up and down through the bike's lower gears as he circles and engages his foes, thus keeping his left hand engaged as well.

Still, where there's a will there's a way, and if there's one thing that history has taught us it is that if there is any way to combine violence with transportation someone will try it. To the best of my knowledge the only reasonably successful weapon used by real life old school outlaw bikers (on those rare occasions when they actually fought from the back of their rides) is the humble chain. Commonly used as a way to lock up motorcycles (usually to parking meters or lamp posts), the chain has the advantage of being easy to wrap around a wrist or upper arm. Thus, the chain can be worn around the left arm when the left hand is needed for pulling in the bike's clutch, then quickly unwrapped for swinging and striking as needed. The character must have purchased *Weapon Familiarity: Chain* to be able to use his or her chain as a Weapon Element in these combat maneuvers. In a superheroic campaign setting, a basic chain can be purchased as *Hand Attack +1d6; HA Lim (-½), OAF (-1)* for 2 points, while in a heroic level campaign, the character will simply own one.

### Chain Whip

#### Recommended Maneuvers

Chain Disarm (Martial Disarm, 4 pts)  
 Chain Entangle (WE: Thrown Chain, 1 pt)  
 Chain Punch (Passing Strike, 5 pts)  
 Chain Trip (Martial Throw, 3 pts)  
 Chain Whip (Move By with Skill Levels, 4 pts)

#### Special Skills

Combat Driving  
 TF: Motorcycles  
 WF: Chain  
 WF: Thrown Chain

- ☛ *Chain Disarm:* The attacker uses the chain to first entangle, and then remove an opponent's weapon from his grasp. Treat this as a standard Martial Disarm with a +10 STR to the Disarm roll (-1 OCV, +1 DCV, ½ Phase).
- ☛ *Chain Entangle:* The character hurls the chain against an opponent at high speed, causing it to wrap itself around its target. First, the character must purchase *Weapon Familiarity: Thrown Chain* for 1 point before he purchases the chain itself as a Entangle 4d6 OAF with the Limitation No Defense (it's not *that* hard to get off) for a total cost of 11 Active Points. A heroic-level character would simply have a

## DIGITAL HERO #16

chain, but treat its effects as above for the sake of simplicity.

- 🔪 *Chain Punch:* The character simply punches out with the chain wrapped around the left arm, giving it a little more weight. Treat this as a Passing Strike (STR +  $\frac{V}{5}$ ) with a +1d6 for the chain Weapon Element. It is a +1 OCV/+0 DCV Full Phase attack that goes off at end of the character's movement.
- 🔪 *Chain Trip:* The character uses the chain to trip his opponent by treating the trip as a Martial Throw in which the *attacker* is the one with the factored velocity (STR +  $\frac{V}{5}$  +1d6 Weapon Element; Target Falls) in this +0 OCV/+1 DCV  $\frac{1}{2}$  Phase attack.
- 🔪 *Chain Whip:* The character uses the chain as a whip, striking at an opponent from a distance of up to 2". Treat this attack as a Move By with a Weapon Element (STR/2 +  $\frac{V}{5}$  +1d6) where the attacker takes  $\frac{1}{3}$  damage as well. Since you don't have to purchase Move By as a skill, have the character buy at least 2 Combat Skill Levels instead (4 points for 2 levels) for a +0 OCV/-2 DCV with this  $\frac{1}{2}$  Phase maneuver. In a superheroic setting, have the character purchase the attack as *HA +1d6; HA Lim (-1/2), OAF (-1) plus Stretching 2"*; *OAF (-1)* for 7 pts.

These five attacks together can be thought of as a tight group for the purpose of purchasing Combat Skill Levels with the triple prerequisites of TF: Motorcycles, Combat Driving, and WF: Chain. For an interesting twist, the character could exchange his chain for a similar yet more exotic weapon, using it as the weapon element instead. Some interesting choices could include whip, flail, cat-o-nine-tails, and morningstar.

### Martial Art: Motorcycle Foo

While not generally possible in the workaday world of easily injured people and quickly damaged and expensively repaired machines, the idea of the motorcycle itself as a dexterous and versatile weapon in the hands of a skilled rider is certainly not new to the big screen. For example, both the films *Hard Boiled* and *Tomb Raider* feature martial sequences in which special dirt bikes are used to fight opponents on foot. These sorts of maneuvers are generally only usable by characters in a heroic or superheroic campaign setting and can often only be completed after the character makes an appropriate trick riding roll.

### Motorcycle Foo

#### Recommended Maneuvers



- High Flying Motorcycle Kick (Move By with Skill Levels, 4 points)
- Stoppie Body Slam (Passing Strike, 5 points)
- Head Slam (Move By with Skill Levels, 4 points)
- Clothesline (Move By with Skill Levels, 4 points)
- Sidesaddle Strike (Move By with Skill Levels, 4 points)
- Wheelie Strike (Passing Strike, 5 points)



#### Special Skills

- WF: Motorcycles
- Combat Driving
- Trick Riding

- 🔪 *High Flying Motorcycle Kick:* The rider must first make a Stunt Jumping roll to get his motorcycle into the air. Then, while in the air, he must make an Acrobatics roll at -2 to pull both of his legs off of the bike and swing his whole body feet first to one side of the bike while still holding the bike's handlebars firmly. He then kicks his opponent with both legs fully extended in a Move By maneuver for STR/2 +  $\frac{V}{5}$  points of damage. Then, whether or not he hits, he must make another Acrobatics roll at -2 to regain his seat for landing that phase – which he has to make a Combat Driving roll to successfully do! This attack requires 2 whole Phases to accomplish, so the bike will have to remain in the air for at least that long. If any of the above rolls are missed (except the combat roll) the rider has removed his hands from the handlebars – the bike will go one way, he will go the other, and both will take appropriate velocity-based damage. Since you don't have to purchase Move By as a skill, have the character buy at least 2 Combat Skill Levels instead (4 pts for 2 levels) for a +0 OCV/-2 DCV with this  $\frac{1}{2}$  Phase maneuver.
- 🔪 *Stoppie Body Slam:* This attack, used in conjunction with the stoppie Trick Riding maneuver, is considered a Zero Phase action because it simply involves directing the above-mentioned stunt into a target (treat as a Passing Strike for STR +  $\frac{V}{5}$  points of damage). The rider slams on his front brakes while accelerating as fast as he can, allowing the momentum and weight of the bike to carry its rear end sideways into the air. He then guides the rear of the bike in a smooth swinging

motion into the target without losing any of the velocity the bike had before he began the maneuver. Generally succeeds in damaging the bike, target, and rider all at once. Failure to make a successful initial stoppie Trick Riding roll means that the rider has “stacked” and will take full damage himself. This is a +1 OCV/+0 DCV Full Phase attack that goes off at end of the character’s movement.

-  **Head Slam:** There is little reason that any sane person, real or imaginary, would want to try this, but here goes: the rider has achieved the bike’s maximum lean angle, and has successfully made his “touching the knee” trick riding roll while approaching the target as close to parallel to the ground as he can get going as fast as he can manage. He then sticks his head out and allows it to collide with the target (Youch!) in a Move By maneuver for  $STR/2 + \sqrt{V}/5$  points of damage. The rider also takes  $\sqrt{V}/5d6$  to the head, so a helmet is strongly recommended! The rider must then make a strength check to determine whether or not he has been torn from the seat of his bike after every successful head slam. Failure results in his hitting the ground and taking more velocity damage... with possible additional penalties for being dumb enough to even try this attack. Since you don’t have to purchase Move By as a skill, have the character buy at least 2 Skill Levels instead (4 points for 2 levels) for a +0 OCV/-2 DCV with this ½ Phase maneuver.
-  **Clothesline:** Using a long straight object held in the left hand (a telescoping baton or a lead pipe would do nicely), the rider holds his left arm rigidly out at a 90° angle from his body. He then rides as close to his target as possible and attempts to knock the target over – or off his ride. Treat as a Move By with Weapon Element (a 1d6 HA), for  $STR/2 + \sqrt{V}/5 + 1d6$  points of damage, but the target must make a STR Check to stay on his feet or bike. This maneuver is probably realistically possible, except that you would probably break your arm doing it! Since you don’t have to purchase Move By as a skill, have the character buy at least 2 Combat Skill Levels instead for a +0 OCV/-2 DCV with this ½ Phase maneuver.

-  **Sidesaddle Strike:** Leaning as far as is (in)humanly possible to the right, the rider makes a Riding Without Hands trick roll and drops the bike to the left, creating a V shape with himself as the right leg of the V and the bike as the left leg. He then grasps the right handlebar with his left hand, allowing him to accelerate and steer (Combat Driving roll -10; failure indicates that the driver has lost the bike while attempting his maneuver and has hit the ground, taking appropriate velocity damage). The character can then make a Move By for  $STR/2 + \sqrt{V}/5$  points of damage with his right hand as he accelerates past his target. It requires a Combat Driving roll -5 each subsequent phase to maintain this pose, and failure results in all sorts of velocity-based ouchy hurt-hurt. Since you don’t have to purchase Move By as a skill, have the character buy at least 2 skill levels instead for a +0 OCV/-2 DCV with this ½ Phase maneuver.
-  **Wheelie Strike:** In this fairly simple attack, the rider makes his most basic Trick Riding roll to Pop a Wheelie, then turns the front tire to the left or to the right for the purpose of striking a glancing blow (treat as Passing Strike for  $STR + vel/5$  points of damage with the target making a DEX check to stay on his feet or bike). This is a +1 OCV/+0 DCV Full Phase attack that goes off at end of the character’s movement.

There are, in addition to these two (historical and fantastic) mounted and motorized martial arts, several other methods by which an enterprising GM or player could attempt to handle the same problem of creating a biker martial art. For example, if one had a superheroic level martial arts campaign, two characters could conceivably ride into positions parallel to one another, make their Standing while Riding rolls (Trick Riding -9) each round and, as their motorcycles decelerated, fight hand-to-hand while standing on the seats going 70 miles per hour! Or, in a post-apocalyptic heroic level setting, a character could charge into combat wielding an axe in his or her left hand. After making a combat driving roll, he could then swing the axe and compound the base damage by calculating the attack as a Move By. Although in a realistic setting neither of these two maneuvers is possible, in a heroic or superheroic level setting both of them could be possible... and pretty fun, to boot!

### BIKER SPECIFIC DISADVANTAGES

---

**Pts Disadvantage**

- 10 Dependency: Amphetamine Addiction (Uncommon, 2d6 NND)  
If there is a drug of choice amongst bikers, it's amphetamines or speed. Widely and commonly used in almost all biker scenes, speed (commonly called "go-fast") is generally snorted in small lines, or "bumps," although it can be used intravenously. In game turns, an addicted user must consume at least one "bump" per day or begin to suffer 2d6 NND immediately. Note to GMs: amphetamine addicts sometimes go for weeks without sleeping, so any character who buys this dependency is going to suffer from severe sleep deprivation (hallucinations, etc.) before too much time goes by.
- 20 Dependence: Heroin Addiction (Uncommon, 3d6 NND)  
Unfortunately just as common among bikers as any other group in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Because of its unique effects upon the human body, heroin addiction is perhaps the ultimate drug habit. Almost no one ever comes back from heroin addiction, because over time it removes the bodies' ability to create endorphin, making withdrawal remarkably painful (to buy this off, the character should pay twice the points received from its purchase). For game purposes, heroin should be taken twice in a 24-hour period or the character will suffer 3d6 NND per Phase beginning immediately. The most common method for heroin consumption to "shoot up" intravenously, but heroin can also be smoked, turned into a consumable liquid, or mixed with water and sniffed using an eye dropper. Remember, GMs, heroin addiction is the ultimate addiction!

- 5 Distinctive Feature: Biker (Easily Concealable)  
The sport of motorcycle riding, by its very nature, demands that the rider wear certain sorts of protective clothing to ensure his or her personal safety. This clothing is in general significantly different from what the average person wears in his or her daily life, making the biker stick out. Common items of clothing include heavy black leather jackets, chaps, leather pants, large boots, kevlar body armor, single piece leather racing suits, and large gloves with armor built in, to name a few. In addition, many bikers choose to wear tattoos, earrings, nose rings, and other unusual piercings as well as having unusual hair and beard styles ranging from western outlaw to punk rock. This sort of thing has been known to make "normal" people slightly uncomfortable.
- 5-20 Hunted: Hassled by The Man (8 to 11 or less, Mild to Harsh)  
A small but rather noteworthy number of bikers are petty criminals of some sort or the other. For the villainous NPC, being wanted by the law may be normal, but for a heroic PC, it's rather inconvenient. Maybe the hero was in the wrong place at the wrong time, or maybe he just likes speeding a bit too much for the local authorities' taste. Few bikers are serious criminals, so the police are usually pretty casual about harassment... but a seriously bored small town cop will have no problem running in a bunch of funny-looking bikers for disturbing the peace, no-sir-eee.

- 15 Psychological Limitation: Aggressively Competitive (Uncommon, Total)  
Competitiveness and a serious love of motorcycles often go hand in hand. Many motorcyclists are inordinately concerned with just who owns the fastest, most state-of-the-art Japanese death machine and just how badly can they whip up on their ass-dragging friends while riding it, anyhow? Alternately, bikers seem put a lot of stock in seeing just who exactly has the most chromed out, collectable, open-piped American-made cruiser monstrosity that large sums of money can buy (on a payment plan). It is just this sort of competitiveness that gets motorcyclists killed every year while passing one another around blind corners on California's Highway One. A real and genuine disadvantage for a biker character.
- 5-20 Psychological Limitation: Alcoholism (Common, Varies)  
Alcoholism is a constant problem for many of societies' outsiders... and it's all that much worse if your chosen method for getting from bar to home is an already questionably dangerous one. Biker drinking habits tend to center around the consumption of cheap beer and bad whisky, but some folks have tastes which are considerably more highbrow, while others like things which are just plain strange (for example Goldschlager, which is a peppermint schnaps infused with flakes of fool's gold – yech!). There is a theory that conquered or oppressed cultures (and those who feel that they belong to a conquered or oppressed culture, whether they do or not, like “Irish Americans”) tend towards alcoholism more easily than those who do not. African American, American Indian, and lower-class white Southern American cultures all exhibit this frustration-based characteristic. Most bikers drink socially at night (well, every night) but some imbibe to legendary excess.
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Arrogant Rider (Common, Moderate)  
Riding a motorcycle is a totally different experience from driving a car. People who ride a lot sometimes develop a very, very condescending attitude towards those who simply drive automobiles. To a biker, most drivers appear to be continually half-asleep or half-alert, constantly doing dangerous and half-cocked things like drifting into other lanes, making sudden U-turns, and generally being unaware of their immediate environment. On a motorcycle, this sort of behavior will get you killed *fast*, so to many bikers, people who drive cars seem almost dangerously unaware, and therefore stupid! Regardless of circumstances, characters with this Disadvantage will periodically lecture to, snarl at, and pick fights with characters who drive cars.
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Biker Code of Honor (Uncommon, Total)  
Many bikers adhere to an unwritten code of behavior among themselves. Always help your buddies. Your buddies' enemy is your enemy. Never forget an insult. Never back down from a fight. Right or wrong, back up your buddies in a fight. Be stubborn – don't ever give in and don't ever give up. What's mine is mine no matter who I stole it from! Never beg from anyone. Don't ever let yourself be treated disrespectfully.
- 5 Reputation: Bad Reputation (Sometimes, 8 or less)  
Most motorcyclists, whether old school American bikers or sports riders, have a rather pronounced lack of respect for the law. To be honest, this usually means a lack of respect for traffic laws, but most bikers are of that school of thought which takes a rather dim view of authority figures in general. In addition, most “outlawish” motorcycle clubs engage in petty drug dealing, gun running, and low-level drug-related prostitution. A few of the very large, very old school outlaw clubs are fully organized crime operations of the modern variety. They engage in big time drug trafficking and transportation (usually from Mexico), run prostitution rings, work as hit men, work extortion rackets – you name it. In some places this is enough to give all bikers a bad name.

## Uncle Bob

**Background/History:** Uncle Bob (a.k.a. Robert Larson) was born in the small rural California town of Petrolia in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. His father, a World War II veteran, was one of the original outlaw bikers responsible for the now infamously chaotic weekend in 1947 when the town of Hollister was taken over by motorcyclists, inspiring the well-known film *The Wild Ones*. He grew up around motorcycles, stripping and rebuilding old Norton choppers with his father before he was in high school, and making his first cross-country road trip before he was 18. He became a patch-holding member of a motorcycle club before he was 20.

When his father died in a crash in the late '60s, Bob found himself feeling both alone and rootless. He joined the army as an infantryman, serving a tour and a half of duty in Vietnam before taking a round from an AK-47 in his right knee. The experience left him both physically crippled and emotionally exhausted. It was years before he could walk properly again, but decades before he fully came to grips with the entire experience of the war. Like many returning vets, Bob was met with little besides hatred and hostility from the very countrymen he had sacrificed his health to protect. However, his outlaw biker upbringing served him well in this regard. After all, how could society re-reject him?

Returning to his roots, Bob began years of aimless riding around the country, working here and there as a mechanic for spending money and never staying in one place longer than he had to. One hot summer day he got a temporary job working in the garage of Paul "Daredevil" Derkum, an old motorcycle racer. Five years later, Bob still had the same "temporary" job, except that he had married Derkum's granddaughter and become the garage's head mechanic.

A lot of decades have gone by since then, taking Bob's old boss with them. Now he and his wife run Derkum's Garage together as a family business. The garage also serves as an impromptu social club for a very odd group of people from various walks of life who share Bob's love of motorcycles, as well as his odd view of the world. They can be found there on Friday nights, drinking cheap beer, wrenching on bikes, and generally being semi-philosophical.

**Personality/Motivation:** Uncle Bob is still a little scarred by his war experiences. This mainly comes out in his total distrust of authority figures, but sometimes he gets a bit lost in depressing recollections of friends that died during that conflict. Uncle Bob also has a phenomenal mastery of pointed one-liners, which actually comprise the bulk of his

comments which don't directly involve politicians and engine mechanics.

Bob is both a benevolent and sympathetic man – in an abrasive sort of way. Although he's quick to anger he's also very quick to forgive, seldom holding grudges of any sort for very long. The one big exception to this is Bob's long-standing loathing of politicians of any party, but especially of former president Bill Clinton, whom he reviles at least once a day. If he gets started on this topic, he will not stop for at least an hour.

What Uncle Bob mainly does with his time, however, is fix motorcycles. He is willing, even eager, to work on any bike – but the more exotic and strange they are the better. Although he is no mechanical engineer, Bob will be glad to make any modifications to a person's motorcycle he can manage. The stranger that modification is, the more enthusiastic Uncle Bob will be.

**Quote:** "It ain't that power always corrupts a man – it's that a man who's corrupt always wants power."

**Powers/Tactics:** Although he's slowed down a little over the years what with age and his war wound, Uncle Bob can still hold his own in either a bar fight or firefight, although he will try to reason his way out of most violent situations. Although Bob is very handy with a shotgun, he will not kill unless there is an extremely compelling reason to do so, such as a close friend or loved one's life in danger. He would much rather spend his time doing what he does best – fixing exotic bikes

**Campaign Use:** Uncle Bob is a no-nonsense straight-talking old biker who runs a motorcycle repair shop in the downtown area of your campaign city or town. He is wise in the ways of both men and machines, often having insightful observations to make about the nature of both. His primary campaign use, however, is to be bought by a player (or players) as a skilled contact who is willing and able to repair his motorcycle when it is damaged, or upgrade it as the character has more points (or money) to spend.

**Appearance:** Uncle Bob stands around 5'10" and weighs about 200 lbs. He has a full white beard, thinning hair, pink sunburned skin, and a great big beer belly which sticks out from a leather vest covered in rally pins. He generally wears filthy old jeans and combat boots with leather chaps over them, although he has been known to dress a bit better when his wife forces him. Bob also is known for wearing one of those biker wallets with an enormous length of chain running up to his belt.

## OTHER GREAT "UNCLES" WITH CHARACTER

**Uncle Jesse** – Played by Denver Pyle in the now classic television series, *The Dukes of Hazard*, Uncle Jesse was a former moonshiner with a knack for pulling up in his rusty old Ford F-Series pickup truck just in time to save his two nitwit hot-rodding nephews from serious trouble.

**Uncle Buck** – Played by the great comedian John Candy in the film of the same name, Uncle Buck is a messy, disorganized, and excruciatingly clumsy auto mechanic who gets stuck with babysitting his brother's children during a family emergency. He spends most of the time trying to keep his teenage niece's virginity intact by scaring the hell out of her boyfriend.

**Brewster Baker** – Played by country musician Kenny Rogers in the 1982 film *Six Pack*, Baker is a down-on-his-luck racecar driver saddled with a half dozen child car thieves whom he turns into a sort of family. Kenny resists the urge to sing *even once* in this film.

**Uncle Albert** – Played by Ed Wynn in the 1964 version of *Mary Poppins*, Albert is Mary's hysterically insane uncle who has

a slight levitation problem. You see the more he laughs, the more he fills with glee, and the more the glee... well, he certainly wouldn't be the first uncle to get his niece high, but he is definitely the first uncle to get his niece to float up to the ceiling.

### Uncle Bob





## DIGITAL HERO #16

### Uncle Bob

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

**Total Characteristics Cost: 40**

**Movement:** Running: 4"/8"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

#### Cost Perk

- 1 Member of Mom and Pops Club

#### Skills

- 6 +3 with Shotgun
- 3 Combat Driving 12-
- 2 KS: Motorcycle History 11-
- 2 KS: Motorcycles 11-
- 2 KS: The Road 11-
- 11 Mechanics 15-
- 5 Paramedic 13-
- 1 TF: Motorcycles
- 1 TF: Pickup Truck
- 1 WF: Shotgun

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 35**

**Total Cost: 75**

#### 50+ Disadvantages

- 5 Age 40+
- 5 Physical Limitation: Limps (Infrequently, Slight)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Biker Code of Honor (Uncommon, Total)
- 5 Psychological Limitation: Distrusts all Authority (Uncommon, Moderate)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 75**

## OTHER ANNOYING GIRL SIDEKICKS

**Batgirl** – This character, who first debuted in the January 1967 issue of Detective Comics, is basically the original annoying, unwanted girl sidekick as Batman already had a perfectly serviceable effete companion in Robin. But since she was Commissioner Gordon's daughter (or niece, depending on the continuity of the week) there wasn't much he could say about it.

**Dyna Girl** – Played by Judy Strangis, Dyna Girl was Electra Woman's sidekick on the *Krofft Super Show* back in 1976. Together in their leggy spandex costumes they made pre-teenage boys across America feel very, very funny every Saturday morning.

**Gabrielle** – Played by Renee O'Connor on the long running *Xena: Warrior Princess* series, Gabrielle is a short, vulnerable blond who needs to be rescued about once every episode by tall masculine brunette Lucy Lawless.

**"Plato"** – Played by Sal Mineo, Plato is James Dean's homoerotic puppy murdering psycho sidekick in the 1955 film *Rebel Without A Cause*. Not actually a girl, but pretty close.



## Jennine

**Background/History:** In her short life only one thing has really mattered to Jennine Stanton; how would she survive after the nuclear war? Or, if that didn't happen, after the plague turned everyone into albino zombies or the aliens destroyed every city on the planet? Raised as a latchkey kid by wealthy but oblivious parents, Jennine grew up watching movies like *The Road Warrior*, *The Terminator*, and *The Omega Man* every day of her childhood (she had her own credit card by the time she was 8). Early on she decided that their post-apocalyptic view of the future would come to pass in her lifetime, so she began to prepare for the coming end times as best as she could. She learned to ride motorcycles, practiced Aikido, and began dressing like a mutant.

The end result is that Jennine is one of the most disturbing 16-year-old girls to ever walk the face of the earth.

**Personality/Motivation:** Jennine no longer thinks that the end of the world is coming; she's now so happily delusional that she lives in a world where it has already happened. Her teachers are mutant monsters, her fellow students are flesh-eating albino zombies, and each day is a desperate quest to find water... or gasoline... or toothpaste (it varies from day to day). This has made her the terror of her high school, where the other students are actually quite frightened of her. Nevertheless, Jennine seems to be passing her classes so her school's feeling is that there is little that can be done about her.

Jennine is a cheerful, attractive, and enthusiastic young woman who is eager to help "fight the mutants" or "kill the zombies" or "put an end to the plague of radiation vampires." In spite of being physically rather attractive, her bizarre personality has kept away any potential friends or companions of any sort, so Jennine will romantically fixate on anyone, regardless of gender, who is reasonably good-looking and pays the slightest amount of attention to her.

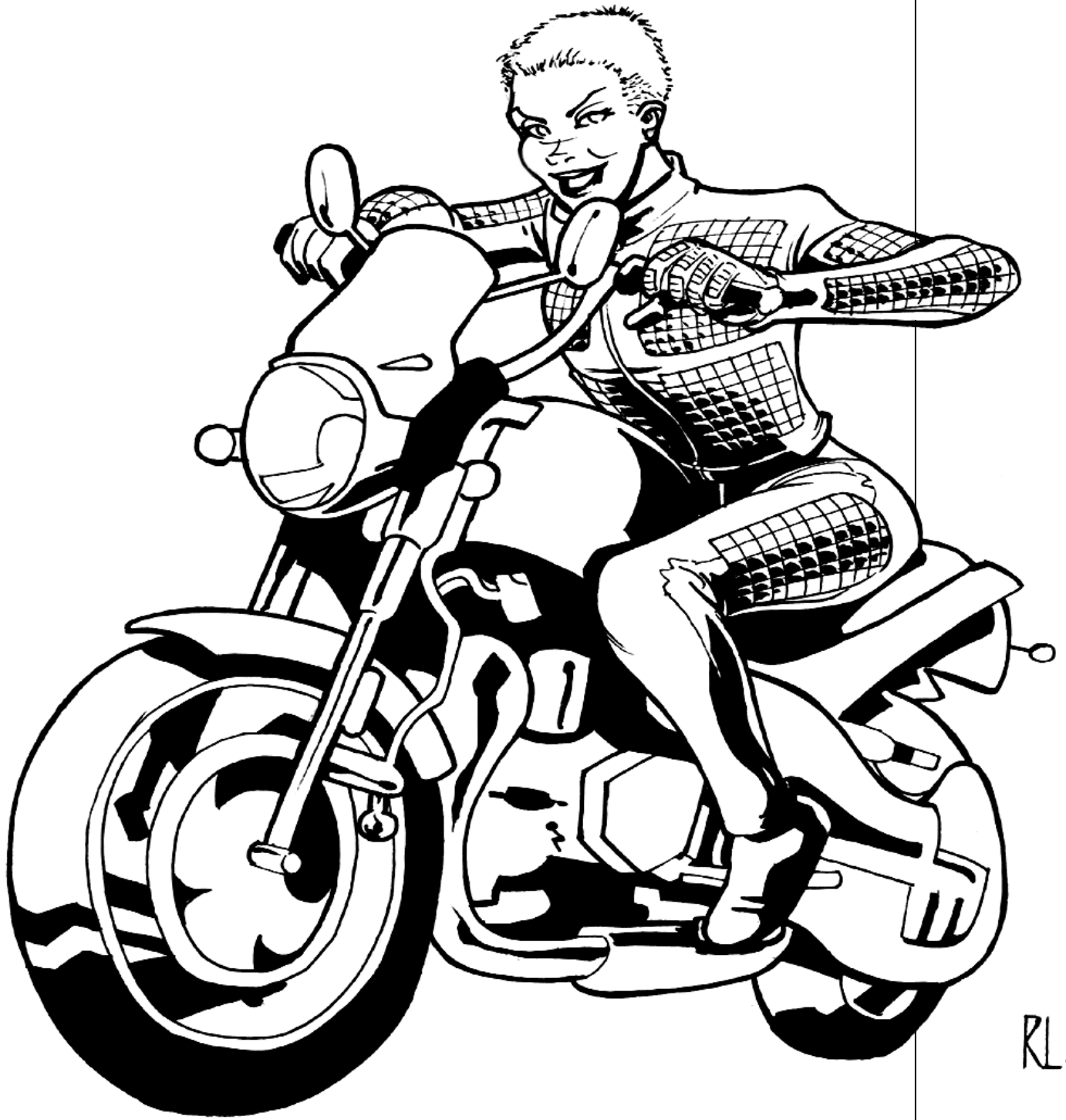
**Quote:** "Don't let them fool you; killer robots are at their most dangerous dressed in the living skins of their human victims."

**Powers/Tactics:** Jennine, a highly competent motorcyclist, is capable of a wide variety of stunts using her 2001 Buell Blast. Although this has no combat value it is pretty impressive, so Jennine will generally approach any violent situation with a series of wheelies, stoppies, and seat stands on her bike (it frightens the viral mutants, you see). When she is off of her bike, Jennine is a pretty competent practitioner of Aikido, with the Throw maneuver generally being her most effective move. Robot time travelers always fall for that one, you know.

**Campaign Use:** Jennine essentially wants to be a sidekick... or girlfriend... or, hey, maybe both (if she is taken as a sidekick the character should pay 20 points). She is designed to get the player characters into trouble, as her behavior can be very erratic. For example, she could be quietly having dinner when she suddenly realizes that the restaurant's other patrons are all face-eating albino mutant cyborgs that *need to be taken down hard!* Since she lives in a post-apocalyptic wasteland where "he who holds the gun is the law," she has little respect for police officers (who are probably mutants disguised as police officers) or property values. Keep in mind that even though Jennine doesn't care about the age of a Player Character she has romantically fixated on, her parents certainly will, so let 30-something costumed Romeos beware!

**Appearance:** Jennine is a healthy, tough, and attractive 16-year-old girl with closely cropped pink hair. She stands around 5'1" and has a tattoo of a nuclear warning symbol on her left arm. Jennine dresses in black racing leathers with kevlar body armor sewn in.

Jennine



RLS

**Jennine**

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

**Total Characteristics Cost: 58**

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

**Cost Powers****Martial Arts: Aikido****Maneuver OCV DCV Notes**

3	Throw	+0	+1	STR+ <sup>v</sup> /5; Target Falls
5	Strike	+1	+3	STR Strike
4	Dodge	--	+5	Dodge; Abort
4	Escape	+0	+0	+15 STR versus Grabs

**Skills**

9	+3 with Aikido
5	Breakfall 12-
5	Combat Driving 12-
1	KS: Aikido
1	TF: Motorcycles
5	Trick Riding 12-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 42****Total Cost: 100****50+ Disadvantages**

15	Psychological Limitation: Overconfident (Very Common, Moderate)
20	Psychological Limitation: The World Has Already Ended (Very Common, Total)
15	Unluck: 3d6

**Total Disadvantage Points: 100**

## Misunderstood

**Background/History:** Patrick Tassell, Jr. has never looked like normal people. Born in a trailer park near Huntsville, Alabama to impoverished Fundamentalist Christian parents, Pat, Jr. was afflicted from birth with *Lamellar Ichthyosis*, commonly referred to as “Alligator Man” Disease. His mother, humiliated and embarrassed by her son’s strange appearance, declared him a “child of the devil” and promptly ran off with a truck driver. Pat was raised by his kind but reclusive father, Patrick Tassell, Sr., who taught him to read and write using the Bible, but never allowed him to go to school.

As Pat, Jr. grew older and entered into puberty, it became apparent that he was going to be an unusually tall and strong man. At age 11 he was big enough to ride his father’s Harley Electra Glide, so Pat, Sr. began building him a bike of his own. By the time Pat, Jr. was 14 he and his father were regularly making tours of the Smokey Mountains, spending weeks visiting those isolated communities which dot the mist-enshrouded vales and valleys of that sparsely populated range. So that those superstitious folks would not be startled by his son’s unusual appearance, Pat, Sr. would generally introduce his son as a cousin who had been “burnt in the war” and was a bit “touched and misunderstood” because of it. Silent, dressed in goggles with a biker’s winter face-mask even in the sweltering heat of a southern summer day, Pat Jr. became known throughout the region as “that poor misunderstood man” or simply “Misunderstood.”

In this manner Pat, Jr. grew into manhood – riding, camping, fishing, and occasionally brawling his way across Alabama at his father’s side. It was the life he had hoped to live forever, yet it was a life that was destined not to last. One sunny spring morning, the two Pats were rounding the bend of a windy mountain road when, without warning, two drunken poachers pulled directly into their path. Pat, Sr. was killed instantly while Misunderstood, thrown over the hood of their truck, was merely bruised and scraped. Enraged, he dragged both men from their vehicle and strangled them to death on the spot.

When he finally calmed down and realized what he had done, Misunderstood buried all three men in unmarked graves near the side of the road, then pushed the truck off of a nearby cliff. After saying a few words over them, Misunderstood got onto his bike and headed west away from the scene of his misfortune.

**Personality/Motivation:** Misunderstood is on the run from his past and himself. He is blindly fleeing west from what he imagines is police pursuit; in reality, nobody has any idea that he has committed any crime or that he even exists.

His father’s death has made him even more reticent; Misunderstood will avoid any unnecessary conversation. He flinches at physical human contact and is, at best, uncertain when dealing with others.

Misunderstood is living off of his father’s credit card and a wad of 20-dollar bills he found in one of the poacher’s pockets. He’s desperately trying to make his way to the infamously tolerant Bay City without using any main highways (where he thinks the police will be looking for him) before he runs out of money or Pat, Sr.’s credit card is canceled. He sees Bay City, with its reputation for freakiness and eccentricity, as the only place where he might fit in.

Pat, Jr. lacks many of the social skills normal people take for granted, as his father generally did most of his talking for him. If questioned, his responses will be polite but minimal. If threatened, his response will be violent and sudden.

**Quote:** “You people just don’t... understand.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Misunderstood is extremely tough, very strong, and unusually agile – although his abilities are in no way outside of the range of what is possible for a normal human being. Although he has no formal martial arts training, Misunderstood is an accomplished barroom brawler. In a fight, he will defend himself with a combination of haymakers and strikes, generally not stopping until he is sure that his opponents are not going to be getting back up any time soon. Misunderstood has been known to get a little crazy during fights, especially when he thinks that someone he likes or cares about it being threatened, and this has led to several unpleasant instances of property damage. So far these incidents have escaped the notice of the authorities.

**Campaign Use:** Misunderstood is a soul who needs rescuing. With a little effort, he will probably befriend any character who takes the time to be nice to him. Conversely, he will probably befriend any villainous NPC who takes the time to be nice to him as well. As Pat, Jr. is fairly naive, he will have trouble distinguishing between “good” and “bad” people – but no trouble distinguishing “friend” from someone threatening that friend.

Misunderstood is basically an embryonic hero, but he has the potential to go either way, depending upon who recruits him first. Thus he might be encountered as a henchman to a more powerful villain, an enforcer for a smalltime crime boss, or a sidekick to another motorcycle-riding hero. Whatever the situation, Misunderstood will be trying to get to Bay City. If he is doing anything other than passing through he has been sidetracked.

## OTHER MISUNDERSTOOD BIKER HEROES

**Motorcycle Boy** – Mickey Rourke is more of a force of nature than a character in Francis Ford Coppola’s 1983 film *Rumble Fish*. He’s so damn mythic that the doesn’t even need a real name.

**Linderman** – Played by Adam Baldwin in the 1980 film *My Bodyguard*, everyone in the highschool thinks Ricky Linderman is a scary murderer. Actually, he’s just a kid trying to restore an old Honda 650 four. Which, frankly, is an activity so frustrating that it’ll make *anyone* want to commit murder.

**“The Principal”** – James Belushi is a baseball-bat wielding psycho biker who becomes the principal of the most violent high school in Berkeley(???) in the 1987 film with the same name. I’m pretty sure you couldn’t away with this much baseball-bat minority beating in Berkeley; maybe the director had never been there.

**James ‘Jimmy’ Cooper** – Played by Phil Daniels in the 1979 film *Quadrophenia*, Jimmy is a mailroom clerk with a Beatles haircut who goes insane, gets kicked out of his house, fights with a bunch of sleazy bikers, and

then steals Sting's silly-looking Vespa scooter so that he can ride it off a cliff.

**Misunderstood**



RLS

## DIGITAL HERO #16

### Misunderstood

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 HTH [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
4	COM	-3	11-	
8	PD	4		Total: 8 PD
8	ED	5		Total: 8 ED
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	REC	4		
30	END	0		
45	STUN	8		

#### Total Characteristics Cost: 104

**Movement:** Running: 10"/20"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

#### Cost Powers

8	Running +4" (10" Total)	2
15	<i>Bare-Knuckles Toughness</i> : Physical Damage Reduction 25%, Resistant	0

#### Skills

8	+4 with Haymaker
6	+3 with Strike
3	Combat Driving 13-
3	KS: Motorcycles 12-
2	KS: The Road 11-
1	TF: Motorcycles

#### Total Powers & Skills Cost: 46

#### Total Cost: 150

#### 75+ Disadvantages

15	Distinctive Feature: Lamellar Ichthyosis – “Alligator Man” Disease (Easily Concealable, Extreme Reaction)
15	Enraged: Loved Ones Threatened (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 8-
20	Psychological Limitation: Believes He is Constantly Hunted (Very Common, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Biker Code of Honor (Uncommon, Total)
15	Social Limitation: Very Naive and Inexperienced (Frequently, Major)

#### Total Disadvantage Points: 150

In a *Horror Hero* campaign, Misunderstood might be mistaken for some sort of monster by the PCs, or by the inhabitants of a small town whom he needs to be rescued from. In a *Pulp Hero* campaign he could be traveling slowly west with a circus sideshow, using it as a cover while he makes his way to Bay City. In a *Champions* campaign, the characters may encounter him in a confrontation with the ignorant and frightened inhabitants of a small Midwestern town. Maybe they will have to save him from of a mob of these people – or maybe the other way around!

**Appearance:** Misunderstood stands around six and a half feet tall and weighs around two hundred and twenty pounds. He is a muscular, well-proportioned looking youth with odd, roughly shaped patterns on his skin that are somewhat reminiscent of an alligator’s skin (although not green). He has short black hair, soulful brown eyes, and a soft, almost girlish voice. He generally wears jeans, a black leather jacket, engineers’ boots, and a biker’s winter facemask with goggles. In this outfit, he can usually pass as a man who has suffered burns over a large portion of his body.

## OTHER REVENGE-BENT UNDEAD AVENGERS

### Pumpkinhead –

When some goofy big city teenagers accidentally kill his son, Lance Henriksen goes to see a creepy old Ozark Mountain witch who turns her scarecrow into a revenant in this 1988 film with the same name. Blood, body parts, and religious symbols fly as the demon “revenge” reaps havoc on Cynthia Bain and her looser friends.

**The Crow** – When rocker Eric Draven (Brandon Lee) and his pretty fiancée get killed by some heavy-metal gangsters, he comes back from the dead to get stylishly even with them in this 1994 film with the same name. Probably the quintessential gothic-zombie-revenge film, it was made all that much more memorable when Brandon Lee (son of the legendary Bruce Lee) was “accidentally” killed at the very end of the film’s production, insuring that it would become an instant cult classic. Kind of makes you wish old Brandon would come back from the dead to get the director, huh?

### The Toxic

**Avenger** – When Andree Maranda gets soaked in radioactive chemicals by evil teenage jock

## The Hunted

**Background/History:** Johnny Blackfire was a PRIMUS/VIPER double agent sent to infiltrate DEMON on behalf of both groups (unbeknownst to VIPER). With a lot of trickery and a bit of good luck, Johnny managed to make it as far as the Demon-Warrior level of that evilly sorcerous organization before being found out. Rather than killing him outright, DEMON’s leader Damon Harrington decided to use the hapless spy in a magical experiment, the goal of which was nothing less than the creation of a new variety of undead; the revenant!

Over a period of months, Johnny’s blood was slowly drained from his living body and replaced with an otherworldly alchemical compound known as The Shadow Substance. Before the procedure could be completed, however, the Demonlair that he was being held in was attacked by a joint PRIMUS/FBI strike force. Accidentally cut loose during the fighting, Johnny Blackfire fought his way to freedom, killing as many DEMON agents as he could on his way out – but not before both PRIMUS and FBI operatives had a good look at him.

Now Johnny wanders the southwest, pursued not only by his former employers and captors but also by several superpowered teams (one heroic and one villainous) who have had the misfortune of crossing his path. Constantly roaming the dusty, nearly abandoned wasteland of America’s desert states in search of supernatural evil, he never stays in any one place for very long to keep his trackers from catching up with him. He is... The Hunted.

**Personality/Motivation:** While not exactly possessed, the months of torture Johnny was forced to endure while in captivity have wiped his memory completely clean, replacing his own personality with the obsessive personality of The Hunted. The Hunted doesn’t even know who Johnny Blackfire is – nor, in all likelihood, does he care. His only goal is that of an undead revenant; namely, revenge! In his case, that means he must continually seek out and eradicate supernatural evil wherever and whenever he finds it. He will neither waver nor bend from this goal; his mind is like a knife completely sharpened around that single point.

Those months of torment have completely warped The Hunted’s view of things. To him, any sort of supernatural magic appears identical to that of his DEMON torturers. He will kill any evil supernatural entity or any person using magic for evil purposes out of revenge for what he has suffered. He is entirely convinced of the righteousness of his cause; no argument can sway him from his path once he senses his prey. Yet The Hunted does possess a code of honor and a sense of right and wrong. He will try not to

kill anyone innocent, even if they are getting in his way, and he *does* attempt to distinguish between deliberate and accidental evils. It’s just that he doesn’t always do a good job.

The Hunted is a revenant, an undead creature created to single-mindedly carry out tasks of revenge and destruction. Because he gained his freedom before the process of fully “programming” him could be completed, The Hunted has simply decided upon his own vengeful mission rather than having an assigned one. But the old Johnny Blackfire personality still seems to be present somewhere in the background, so it is always possible that if The Hunted’s memories were to be restored, the Johnny Blackfire personality might gain control of the body which they share. Given a few months, an inspired paranormal psychologist or a talented wizard of some sort might accomplish this task. Yet at this time, despite the best attempts of PRIMUS (and others), no one has been able to capture or restrain The Hunted long enough to attempt this process.

**Quote:** “No matter Evil’s form, No matter Evil’s path, No Evil shall escape the hounds of The Hunted’s eternal wrath!”

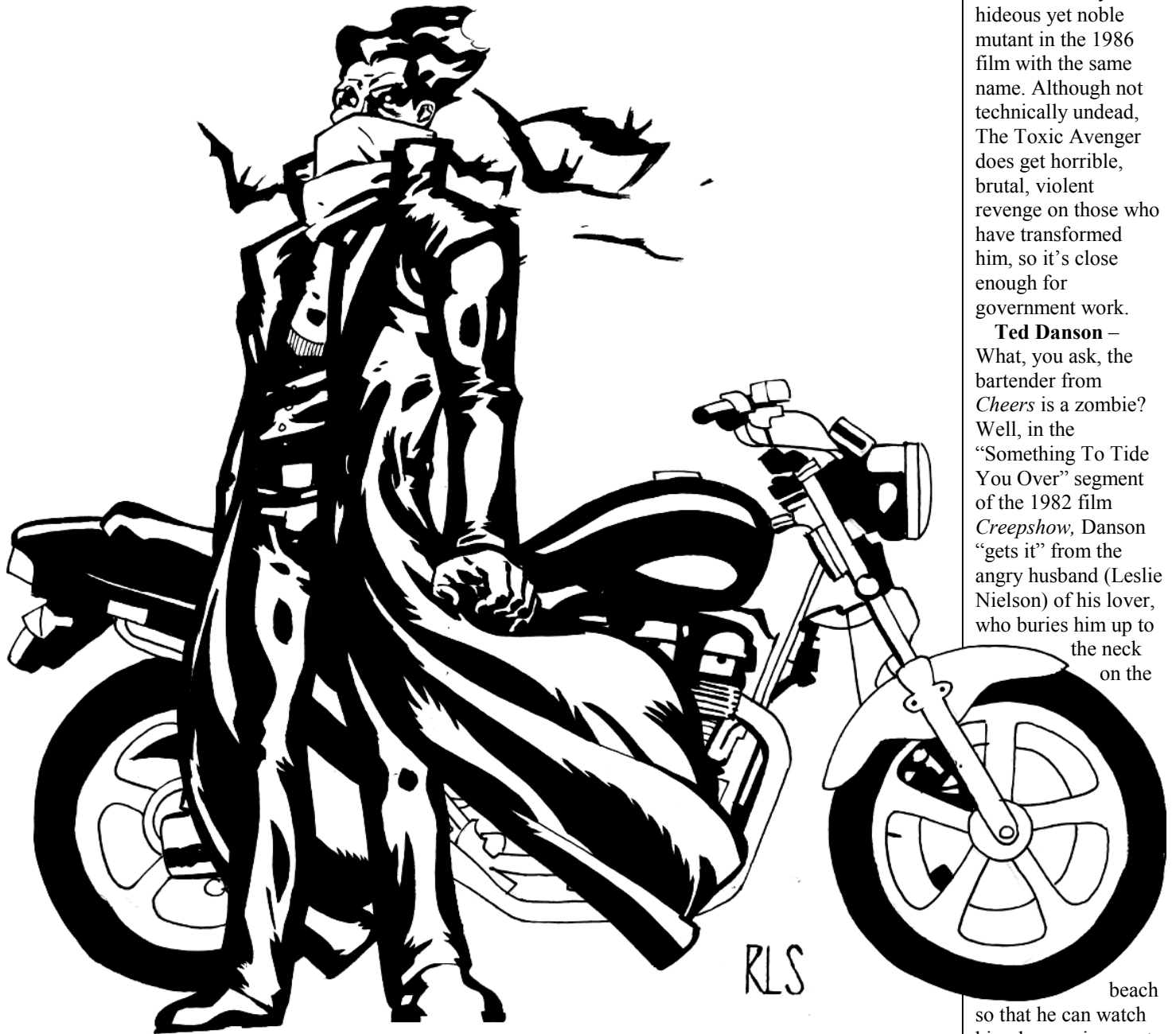
**Powers/Tactics:** The Hunted possesses a varied array of shadow-based attacks. He will generally begin combat by turning on his *Shield of Shadow* (a force field), then follow that up with *Clinging Shadow Bats* – a spray of bat-like shapes which totally cover a single opponent, blocking his ability to hear, touch, or see. This attack stays with the opponent wherever he goes. The Hunted will then follow that up by releasing his *Deep Down Shadow Hounds*, a spray of gnashing wolf’s heads that spring from the outstretched palm to rend and devour their prey. All of these actions are preceded by the same gesture; The Hunted extends his right hand straight outwards, palm down.

As a revenant, The Hunted is amazingly tough. Not only is he extremely resistant to physical damage, if he is “killed” in any manner he will simply rise back up again in a fairly short period of time. In several instances, an intended target has managed to kill The Hunted repeatedly, only to have him return after each attempt even more determined to slay his attacker. Unless his physical body is completely destroyed he will never, ever stop pursuing his intended prey.

The Hunted can also summon his *Shadow Cycle*, an enormous cruiser of unearthly black which gives him tremendous movement both in and out of combat. This too must be created with the same palm downward gesture.



The Hunted



murderers, he turns into an insanely hideous yet noble mutant in the 1986 film with the same name. Although not technically undead, The Toxic Avenger does get horrible, brutal, violent revenge on those who have transformed him, so it's close enough for government work.

**Ted Danson** – What, you ask, the bartender from *Cheers* is a zombie? Well, in the “Something To Tide You Over” segment of the 1982 film *Creepshow*, Danson “gets it” from the angry husband (Leslie Nielson) of his lover, who buries him up to the neck on the

beach so that he can watch him drown via remote camera. Later, an undead, seaweed-covered Danson comes back to return the favor.

**The Hunted**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
16	COM	3	12-	
				Total: 25 PD (15 rPD)
				Total: 20 ED (10 rED)
				Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
10	PD	8		
10	ED	7		
5	SPD	22		
6	REC	0		
60	END	15		
50	STUN	22		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 141**

**Movement:** Running: 36"/144"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
20	<i>The Shadow Substance:</i> Elemental Control, 40-point Powers	0
38	1) <i>Deep Down Shadow Hounds:</i> RKA 3d6 (Energy), Armor Piercing (+1/2); Gestures (-1/4)	5
18	2) <i>Shield of Shadow:</i> Force Field (15 PD/10 ED), Costs END to Start (+1/4), Persistent (+1/2); Gestures (-1/4)	4
20	3) <i>Clinging Shadow Bats:</i> Darkness to Sight, Touch, and Hearing Groups 1", Usable Against Others (+1)	4
20	4) <i>Shadow Cycle:</i> Running +30" (36" Total), 4x Noncombat Multiplier; Gestures (-1/4), Has Turn Mode (-1/4), Visible (-1/4)	4
30	<i>Revenant Regeneration:</i> Healing 3d6 (Regeneration; 3 BODY per Turn), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +1/2), Persistent (+1/2); Self Only (-1/2), Resurrection Only (-1/2)	0
30	<i>Revenant Protection:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, 50%, Resistant	0
11	<i>Revenant Senses:</i> Detect Supernatural Evil 13-, Ranged (+1/2)	0
<b>Skills</b>		
8	+4 with Deep Down Shadow Hounds	
6	+3 with Clinging Shadow Bats	
4	KS: Supernatural Evil 13-	
4	KS: The Road13-	

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 201**

**Total Cost: 350**

**200+ Disadvantages**

- 15 Distinctive Feature: Eyes Bleed Flames of Shadow-Fire, Hair is Pompadour of Shadow-Fire (Easily Concealable, Causes Extreme Reaction)
- 15 Enraged: Locates Supernatural Evil (uncommon), go 14-, recover 8-
- 10 Hunted: VIPER 8- (As Pow, Enslave)
- 10 Hunted: DEMON 8- (As Pow, Kill)
- 15 Hunted: PRIMUS 8- (As Pow, NCI, Imprison)
- 10 Hunted: Superhero Team 8- (Mo Pow, Question)
- 15 Hunted: Supervillain Team 8- (Mo Pow, Kill)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Amnesia (Frequently, Greatly)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Biker Code of Honor (Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Must Destroy Supernatural Evil (Uncommon, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Seeks His Own Past (Common, Strong)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 350**

**Campaign Use:** The Hunted is an essential villainous good guy; his goals aren't really in question, it's his methods which often rub people the wrong way. Those heroes who disapprove of killing in the name of justice will want to stop him, while those who approve may want to help. His incredible single-mindedness has made him a lot of enemies, and those players who take his side may very well end up having to save him from those same enemies.

The best use of The Hunted in your campaign is to have some sorcerous archenemy of the Player Characters show up on the doorstep of their "secret" base, pleading to be saved from the murderous undead biker *who just won't stop coming after him!* Then have The Hunted show up a few moments later, Hell-bent on killing their sorcerous archenemy, and let your players decide whose side they are going to take. With any luck they'll start fighting each other!

**Appearance:** The Hunted is a good looking man of medium build with pale white skin, eyes that burn with shadowy fire, and a pompadour which also seems to be made of that same slowly burning substance. He only has two facial expressions: wrathful and none whatsoever. He dresses all in dusty black leather with a long, tattered grey scarf covering the lower portion of his features. When he doesn't want to be recognized, he wears dark glasses and a grey "pudding bucket" type helmet to cover the unearthly nature of his eyes and hair.

# Crucible

 by W. Jason Allen

**Background/History:** Thanks to natural talent and her father's financial support, it only took Felicity Larkin a couple of years to become known for her fine jewelry. Her attention to detail and exquisite craftsmanship made her pieces highly desirable amongst the wealthy. She worked hard to produce as much as she could, refusing to bow to popular consumerism and allow mass production of her designs. This kept her pieces rare, in demand, and highly valuable. Her financial future seemed secure.

Occasionally, Felicity would accept custom commissions. One of her regular customers, a well-to-do business man from Vibora Bay, brought an old family heirloom to be reworked with new gold, as the original gold workings were tarnished and of poor aesthetic design. The piece appeared to be a large opal, bound with interlocking bands of a dark, almost copper-colored gold. What was unusual about the bands was the engravings on them. They looked like flowing scrollwork, but the lines were broken up at odd intervals, making for a very strange pattern. Felicity could see why her customer wanted the gold removed and redone; the bands were not pretty at all.

As Felicity attempted to heat the gold enough to remove the bands, using a solder so as to not damage the opal, an odd feeling passed over her, like the creepy feeling one gets when standing in a graveyard at night. She shrugged it off and continued working. The gold wasn't melting at the proper temperature, so she increased the heat. The first gold band parted – and exploded.

Felicity was thrown back into the wall, dazed. When she managed to clear her head, she realized her workshop was all but ruined. Surprised to find herself alive, she wondered what had caused such an explosion. Then she saw *it*. Where the opal had been was now a small vortex of energy, swirling silently in mid-air. A dark, shadowy form hovered on the other side of the room, apparently disoriented and confused. Felicity began to flee the room in fear, but it was too late. Two tendrils of energy lashed out from the vortex to strike both Felicity and the shadow. Felicity screamed, and passed out.

When she awoke, the Felicity that had been was no more. She knew now that the opal had not been bound with gold, but with orichalcum, a rare and magical metal. The opal was an ancient device once used to bind humans with creatures from the Netherworld. Of Felicity and the shadow creature, it had made a creature filled with the desire to corrupt and destroy the innocent, with several demonic powers. Their

minds were now one, and completely given to darkness. Calling herself Crucible, she began her nightly reign of terror.

**Personality/Motivation:** Where Felicity was once kind, if vain and aristocratic, she is now cruel and sadistic. She conceals her personality change, but it is becoming more difficult with time. Her mind and body have been merged with a dark spirit from the Netherworld, turning her into a creature similar to a succubus. Crucible thrills in corrupting people, whether by directly controlling them or by manipulating them into doing what she wants. She feeds on their pain and internal conflict. Then when she has tired of them, she feeds on their life force.

Crucible thinks nothing of causing pain to others for her own amusement. She will play practical jokes of the most horrid kind, just to watch people cringe. Why not? Humanity is not worthy of consideration. They are weak, pathetic creatures with no reason to be alive other than to amuse her. But, when someone stands up to defend themselves or others against her, she strikes swiftly and without mercy, draining their life away and tossing them aside like garbage.

Crucible is cold and condescending, certain of her superiority and success. Her ultimate goal is the fulfillment of her every whim and pleasure, both physical and emotional.

**Quote:** “Come here, darling, I have something to show you....”

**Powers/Tactics:** The merging granted Crucible several demonic powers, some of which simulate the powers of a succubus. Bat-like wings allow her to fly. She can become a cloud of mist, slipping into the tightest of secured areas. Her touch drains away life essence and she can throw a lance of flame. Screaming souls from the Netherworld obey her will, flying about a target to prevent movement. With a sword of spectral flame she can severely injure even intangible targets. She can even take control of a person's mind and manipulate them directly.

Crucible prefers to attack from surprise or ambush, but will fight in the open if there is no other choice. She preys on those who think highly of themselves, such as the rich or powerful, but will gladly victimize anyone. Her most favored targets are flashy, well-known superheroes.

Crucible's powers and enhanced characteristics only apply in her demonic form.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I would like to thank Melissa DePlanche for her gracious permission in allowing me to mutilate her heroic character into the villainess presented herein. All mistakes are, naturally, my own.

## CRUCIBLE PLOT SEEDS

Crucible decides one of the PCs (male or female, she doesn't care which) is absolutely fascinating, and pursues her target relentlessly, even obsessively. Rejection will certainly have unfortunate consequences for the PC and the local population....

A lone PC interrupts her weekly 'feeding' and becomes the substitute entrée. Please pass the salt.

The merging between Felicity and the Netherworld entity deepens, eradicating the last remnant of her humanity. Abandoning her identity as Felicity, Crucible enters a feeding frenzy, killing many before the PCs are brought in to stop her. Is this the natural end result of the accident that gave her powers, or is something – or someone – else causing this transformation?

However, as there's no way to prevent her from changing forms shorts of keeping her unconscious, she does not take Only In Heroic Identity for her powers.

There are two serious limitation to Crucible's abilities. First, she must consume at least one life (*i.e.*, drain BODY until death) per week or her own life force will begin to slowly and painfully fade away. Second, any sort of holy aura will repulse her like an impenetrable force wall. The most common holy aura is that of land and buildings consecrated to goodness. This is not restricted to lands consecrated by Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, but includes any religion that consecrates an area with the intentions of protection and peace. She is also repulsed by auras of the faithful. If a good person of strong faith (*i.e.*, the person has a Psychological Limitation to represent their faith) presents an icon of their faith and rebukes her, Crucible and the other person both make an Ego roll, with Crucible's at a -5 penalty (because of the limitation). If Crucible wins, she can act normally against the person. If the person wins, Crucible cannot physically touch the person, with her hands or hand-to-hand attacks. She can still use ranged attacks against the person, but with a -5 OCV penalty.

**Campaign Use:** Crucible is a consummate seductress, frightening yet irresistible. As Felicity, she could easily be known to heroes who are wealthy or to mages who have others make their foci. She maintains a fairly brisk jewelry business. Despite the wealth of the jewelry business, Crucible has been known to rob banks and jewelry stores, either for extra cash or to bait a trap for a gullible hero she wants to torment or seduce.

Crucible is most useful as a random element in an otherwise solid scenario. She might happen to be after the witness the heroes are trying to find, or latches onto a convenient DNPC. One of her favorite pastimes is trolling for victims. There's not a section of town she hasn't wandered, trying to bait someone into assaulting or propositioning her. She usually does this in Crucible form with an overcoat and hat to hide her more obvious demonic features.

DEMON has become aware of Crucible and monitors her activities, hoping to learn the nature and origin of her powers in hopes of duplicating the effect. They do not yet know her Secret Identity, but do know she maintains one. The Police, of course, want her for several counts of assault and murder, amongst other charges.

Crucible is becoming more evil as time goes by, and holds a grudge forever. Anyone who spurns her 'affections' or prevents her from playing her games or feeding on life force

will earn her enmity. She will play vicious pranks and practical jokes to annoy her target, and when that doesn't work or her victim fights back, she'll get brutal. People die horribly when she gets brutal....

To increase her power level, boost her Dexterity and Speed, give her Sight Group Flash Defense, add more points to the Multipower reserve, and put a Major Transform (human into willing slave) in the Multipower. You might also add a Summon Demon ability. To lower her power, drop the Multipower's point reserve, lower her Dexterity and/or Speed, and reduce her Defenses some (Armor, Mental Defense, and Power Defense).

**Appearance:** Felicity's long auburn hair, green eyes, and impressive figure have attracted many would-be boyfriends, and she has gone through several after her merging. She wears designer clothing and maintains her appearance meticulously.

One might think that Crucible's bat wings, short curved horns, and ridged tail would make her decidedly unattractive, but the opposite is true. Her jet black hair, opalescent skin and red eyes also mark her demonic nature, but many still find her unbearably appealing – until they get to know her better. She wears revealing, lingerie-like costumes and has several different designs.

Crucible



**Crucible**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	Lift 1600 kg; 6d6 HTH
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
30	CON	40	15-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
21	EGO	22	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
20	COM	5	13-	
				Total: 18 PD (12 rPD)
				Total: 16 ED (10 rED)
				Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
18	PD	12		
16	ED	10		
6	SPD	24		
12	REC	0		
60	END	0		
45	STUN	0		

**Total Characteristics Cost: 209**

**Movement:**

Running:	6"/12"
Leaping:	6"/12"
Flight:	15"/30"

Cost	Powers	END
60	<i>Demonic Powers:</i> Multipower, 60-point Reserve	0
6u	1) <i>Hellfire Lance:</i> EB 12d6	6
6u	2) <i>Hellfire Sword:</i> HKA 2d6 (3d6 with STR), Affects Desolidified (+1/2), Armor Piercing (+1/2)	6
6u	3) <i>Essence Drain:</i> Drain Characteristic 4d6, Variable Effect (any one Primary Characteristic; +1/4), Reduced Endurance (1/2 END; +1/4)	2
6u	4) <i>Screaming Souls:</i> Entangle 3d6, 5 DEF, Entangle And Character Both Take Damage (+1/4), Cannot Be Escaped With Teleportation (+1/4)	6
6u	5) <i>Seduce:</i> Mind Control 12d6	6
6u	6) <i>Mist Form:</i> Desolidification (affected by magic), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2)	0
20	<i>Steel-Toe Stiletto Boots and Spurs:</i> Multipower, 30-point Reserve, all slots OIF (-1/2)	0
2u	1) <i>Steel-Toe Spikes:</i> HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR), +2 Increased STUN Multiplier (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OIF (-1/2)	0
2u	2) <i>Spurs:</i> HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR), Penetrating (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); OIF (-1/2)	0
15	<i>Spiked Gloves:</i> HA +4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2); Hand-to-Hand Attack (-1/2), OIF (-1/2)	0
11	<i>Deceptively Silky Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (12 PD/10 ED)	0
60	<i>Demonic Toughness:</i> 50% Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant	0
10	<i>Demonic Will:</i> Mental Defense 14	0
10	<i>Demonic Form:</i> Power Defense 10	0

30	<i>Bat Wings:</i> Flight 15", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2), Restrained (-1/2)	1
5	<i>Demonic Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0

**Perks**

5	Money: Well Off
---	-----------------

**Skills**

6	+2 with Demonic Powers Multipower
2	AK: Lower Planes 11-
3	Breakfall 14-
2	CK: Campaign City 11-
3	Concealment 13-
3	Conversation 13-
3	High Society 13-
3	KS: Gemstones and Precious Metals 13-
3	KS: Jewelry 13-
2	KS: Supernatural World 11-
4	Language: Demon Speech (native accent)
3	Persuasion 13-
3	PS: Artist 13-
3	PS: Jeweler 13-
3	Seduction 13-
3	SS: Gemology 13-
3	SS: Metallurgy 13-
3	Stealth 14-
3	Streetwise 13-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 324**

**Total Cost: 533**

**200+ Disadvantages**

0	Dependence: Must Consume One Human Life per Week or Suffer 3d6 STUN Damage (Very Common)
10	Distinctive Feature: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Unusual Senses)
20	Enraged: Advances Spurned (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 11-
15	Hunted: Police 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Imprison)
10	Hunted: DEMON 11- (Mo Pow, Watching)
15	Physical Limitation: Repelled by Holy Auras (Infrequent, Fully)
15	Psychological Limitation: Corrupts the Innocent (Common, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Prankster (Common, Moderate)
15	Psychological Limitation: Regards Humanity as Cattle (Common, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Uncommon, Strong)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major)
10	Vulnerability: 2x Effect from Holy Magic (Uncommon)
188	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 533**

# Monolith

 by W. Ross Watson

**Background/History:** Rachel Runningdeer was born into the Lakota Sioux tribe of Native American Indians twenty years ago. Arrow Falls, a small town near the reservation, quickly began to boom during her childhood. One of the locals, Jesse Whiteriver, had begun a popular and prosperous business. The Arrowhead Casino soon employed nearly every Lakota on the reservation, including Rachel's parents, Richard and Jane.

South Dakota is a good place to grow up, with plenty of wide-open spaces, beautiful countryside, and temperate weather. The winters can be harsh, but snow never bothered Rachel. She loved the land, and her parents indulged her by letting her run unsupervised wherever she wished on the reservation.

While out exploring, she discovered an old cave recently exposed by a landslide. Inside the cave Rachel found many ancient Sioux artifacts, including a mysterious carved wooden staff. When she grasped the staff, intending to bring it to her parents, a deep voice spoke in the Lakota language. "You are the Chosen of this generation. Use the abilities of the Chosen to defend your tribe. The powers of the stone spirits are now yours."

Rachel fell into a deep sleep and awoke late the next day, feeling very strange and different. Upon her return home, she realized she had become much stronger, faster, and more resilient... but there was no sign of the staff or the cave she claimed to have found. Dismissing her story, Rachel's parents grounded her and the incident was not spoken of again.

Eventually, Rachel discovered that by uttering the words "I am the Chosen!" she could transform into a stone version of herself – much bigger, tougher, and stronger than any mortal woman. She experimented with her powers late at night, fearful that someone would find out, and began to assist the local townspeople of Arrow Falls against crime and disaster. Unfortunately, Rachel's adventures were cut short by her father's death from a stroke. Her mother, Jane, barely managed to cope, and soon she contracted a form of cancer that attacked the nervous system.

Jesse Whitewater's casino, The Arrowhead, thrived on deals with organized crime and money laundering for groups such as VIPER. By chance, the corrupt casino owner observed Rachel during her transformation into her stone body and witnessed her strength as the girl diverted a flooding creek away from the town. Jesse realized that having such superhuman muscle on his side would be a large boon for his business, and arranged for Rachel to be brought to him.

In his office, Jesse laid out a very simple agreement: He would pay for Jane Runningdeer's medical bills and ensure that Rachel's mother got the best of care. In return, Rachel herself would work for the casino as an enforcer and bodyguard. Jesse made veiled threats against her mother's health whenever Rachel balked, and she had no choice but to agree. Rachel began calling herself Monolith so that no one other than Jesse Whitewater would know who she really is, for she feels ashamed of the role she is forced to play.

**Personality/Motivation:** Rachel is not a bad person. In fact, she has great ambitions to be a true superheroine someday, daydreaming of single-handedly saving her entire tribe from poverty and disgrace. Unfortunately, Jesse Whiteriver takes advantage of Rachel's good nature and uses her mother's health to control the girl's actions like a puppet master.

Rachel is quite adventurous, and enjoys exploring the wilderness, hiking, and spelunking. She has shocked quite a few people in her hometown by joining the local football team... and excelling as the quarterback!

She's very proud of her Lakota Sioux heritage, and knows quite a bit of her tribe's history stretching back many centuries. Rachel doesn't take well to racial slurs, but she doesn't discriminate either. The past is the past, she believes, and the future is what's most important to her.

**Quote:** "My power is the power of the earth herself!"

"I do not wish to fight you... but I warn you that I won't hold back."

"Sorry about all this trouble. I really have no choice."

**Powers/Tactics:** Rachel believes that ancient Sioux spirits, perhaps shaman ancestors, have granted her the powers of the earth. Whatever the true source, she can transform herself into a towering woman of solid stone, armed with a mystic staff and defended by mighty spells of protection. Even when she is not in her stone form, Rachel is amazingly strong and athletic, and she has to hold back during her football games to ensure that no one gets hurt.

In her stone form, Rachel weighs several tons, and has enough strength to lift tanker trucks like toys. She has no need to breathe or eat in stone form, and can survive in any environment, from outer space to the depths of the ocean.

## PLOT SEEDS

### Heroes

investigating the organized crime or VIPER link to the Arrowhead Casino encounter Monolith, who reluctantly tries to scare them off. If the heroes dig up info on the casino's owner, Jesse Whiteriver, they may discover the plight of Rachel's family. Monolith is really a very tragic villain... all it would take is a persuasive hero and a viable option for taking care of her ailing mother, and Rachel could easily become a valiant heroine on her own. Any hero involved in the federal or local government of South Dakota may find himself approached by Rachel, seeking assistance for her tribe. Although she won't mention herself or her mother directly, Rachel's getting desperate to find a way to escape the hold that Jesse Whiteriver has on her life. In addition, Rachel is sincere about wanting to help her tribe... alcoholism and diabetes are only two of the serious medical afflictions currently threatening the Lakota Sioux.

Any corporate or government agency seeking to exploit the Black Hills region of South Dakota will arouse the ire of all Lakota Sioux. The Sioux, while not the



owners of the Black Hills, consider them to be sacred in many ways. If a supervillain chose that location to build his secret base, for example, he would soon find Monolith as his enemy. A hero who is well-known as a lawyer may be approached by Rachel to become an advocate for the Sioux to reclaim the region as tribal property.

The origin of Monolith's powers is very mysterious. Who gave them to her? The stated purpose of her abilities is to "defend her tribe" but from whom are they to be protected? The White Man, or some greater threat, perhaps a supernatural evil of some kind? Heroes may find themselves helping Rachel answer these questions, especially if they gained her friendship in one of the other campaign uses suggested here.

Monolith's Missile Deflection is fully invisible, so it appears that ranged attacks seem to strike her stone form and inflict no damage. Also, her mystic staff grows in size along with her, so that she can reach any hex within 3" of her to deal damage.

Her martial art is actually a Sioux form of staff fighting, taught to her by older Native Americans on the reservation. The basics of the form are identical to Bojutsu/Jojutsu, so the maneuvers for that style are listed.

The first *Accidental Change* Disadvantage transforms Rachel into Monolith when she gets very angry. Sometimes she will blurt out the command phrase without thinking, but Rachel has to be nearly frothing with rage for this to occur, for she is usually very careful about not exposing her secret identity.

The second *Accidental Change* Disadvantage transforms Monolith back into her normal human form, as the magical energies sustaining her stone body temporarily leak away before they can be replenished.

Monolith's stone form is incredibly hard and sturdy, but she has many fault lines (like the earth itself from which she gains her powers) that can be exploited. Whenever an enemy succeeds with a Find Weakness roll on Monolith, the attack for which the Power *Find Weakness* applies to double its damage against her as well as lowering her defenses.

In battle, Rachel tries to avoid killing anyone, but she relishes the opportunity to engage other bricks and let loose with full-power blows. She'll usually begin with her *atemi* strike, escalating up to the harder blows if she feels like she is in trouble. She often puts her levels into OCV to ensure a hit, relying upon her defenses to keep her from being seriously hurt. She's very fond of the leg sweep maneuver, putting a foe on the ground where she has an easier time striking him. Most of the time she will use the jab maneuver, spinning her staff in complex patterns to score hits on her foes while keeping her DCV high.

Unlike many "supervillains" Rachel prefers to remain silent in combat in her identity as Monolith. Only occasionally will she speak out around other superhumans, but she normally makes a Presence Attack at the beginning of an encounter as a warning.

**Campaign Use:** It is very unlikely that Monolith would ever find herself Hunting anyone... at least, voluntarily. Of course, if her "sponsor" finds an enemy that he needs dealt with, he may force Monolith to pursue that person. As a Hunter, Monolith is direct and, to be frank, lazy. She has no real desire to tangle with anyone unless they threaten the lives of her family, in which case she would descend like the

wrath of God. It's possible that any corporate developer interested in industrializing the Black Hills region would draw her attention, for she would want to discourage any such plans.

To increase Monolith's power, raise her STR in her Hero ID to 75, increase her Armor to 25 Resistant PD and ED, and give her a few more hand-to-hand combat levels. To scale her down, lower her STR in Hero ID to 40, remove her hand-to-hand combat levels, and reduce her Armor to 10 Resistant PD and ED.

**Appearance:** In her human form, Rachel is a tall, pretty, Native American woman with an Amazonian build. She has light brown eyes, and her hair is dark and straight, often kept in a ponytail. She often wears casual clothing, with a Native American bead wristband and necklace. She occasionally braids eagle feathers into her hair like a "typical Indian."

When she calls upon her mystical stone form, Rachel grows to nearly twelve feet in height, and her body changes to resemble a woman carved from solid gray stone. Monolith's features appear blank, nearly faceless except for a pair of blazing green eyes, and her Lakota fighting staff magically appears in her hands.





# DIGITAL HERO #16

## Monolith

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25+30*	STR	15	14-/20-	Lift 800kg (50 ton); 5d6(11d6) [2(5)]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/
18+10#	CON	25	13-/15-	DCV: 6(4)
15+3*	BODY	10	12-/13-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20+10*	PRE	18	13-/15-	PRE Attack: 4d6
14	COM	2	12-	
8+2*	PD	0		Total: 30 PD (20)
8+2*	ED	0		Total: 30 ED (20)
5	SPD	22		Phases: 3,5,8,10,12
12	REC	6		
40	END	2		* OIHID (-¼)
47+3*	STUN	10		# OIHID (-¼) and No Figured Characteristics

**Total Characteristics Cost: 127**

**Movement:** Running: 9"/18"  
Leaping: 5"/10"  
Swimming: 2"/4"

**Cost Powers** **END**

12	<i>Mystic Stone Form:</i>	Elemental Control, 30-point Powers; OIHID (-¼)	
12	1) <i>Stone Size:</i>	Growth (+15 STR, +3 BODY, +3 STUN, -2" KB, 1600 kg, -1 DCV, +2 PER, 2m Tall, 1m Wide), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); OIHID (-¼)	0
12	2) <i>Body of Stone:</i>	Density Increase (1600 kg mass, +15 STR, +3 PD, +3 ED, -3" KB), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); OIHID (-¼)	0
-1	<i>Body of Stone II:</i>	-2" Swimming, OIHID (-¼)	0
40	<i>Stone-Hard Skin I:</i>	Armor (20 PD/20 ED); OIHID (-¼), Visible (her body transforms into stone; -¼)	0
35	<i>Stone-Hard Skin II:</i>	Missile Deflection (All Attacks), Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible, +1); OIHID (-¼)	0
36	<i>Stone's Durability:</i>	LS: Total; OIHID (-¼)	0
6	<i>Earth Connection:</i>	Clinging (normal STR); Only When In Contact With The Ground (-¼), OIHID (-¼)	0
15	<i>Mystic Staff I:</i>	Armor Piercing for 55 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); OAF (-1), OIHID (-¼)	0
1	<i>Mystic Staff II:</i>	Stretching 2", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Always Direct (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), Only To Cause Damage (-½), OAF (-1), OIHID (-¼)	0
6	<i>Improved Athletics:</i>	+3" Running (9" Total)	2

## Martial Arts: Bojutsu/Jojutsu

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4 Bind	+1	+0	+10 STR Bind
4 Disarm	-1	+1	+10 STR Disarm
5 Jab	+1	+3	Strike
3 LegswEEP	+2	-1	+1d6 Strike, Target Falls
4 Shove	+0	+0	+15 STR Shove
4 Strike	+0	+2	+2d6 Strike
5 Smash	-2	+1	+4d6 Strike

## Skills

12	+4 with Bojutsu/Jojutsu
15	+3 with Hand-to-Hand Combat
3	Breakfall 13-
3	Climbing 13-
10	Defense Maneuver IV
5	Gambling 12-
4	Language: Lakota (Native)
3	Stealth 13-
3	Streetwise 13-
3	Survival (Plains, Temperate/Subtropical) 11-
5	Tactics 12-
5	Tracking 12-
1	WF: Staves
3	Scholar
1	1) KS: Bojutsu/Jojutsu 11-
1	2) KS: The Criminal World 11-
1	3) KS: Football 11-
1	4) KS: Myths and Legends 11-
1	5) KS: Native American Culture 11-

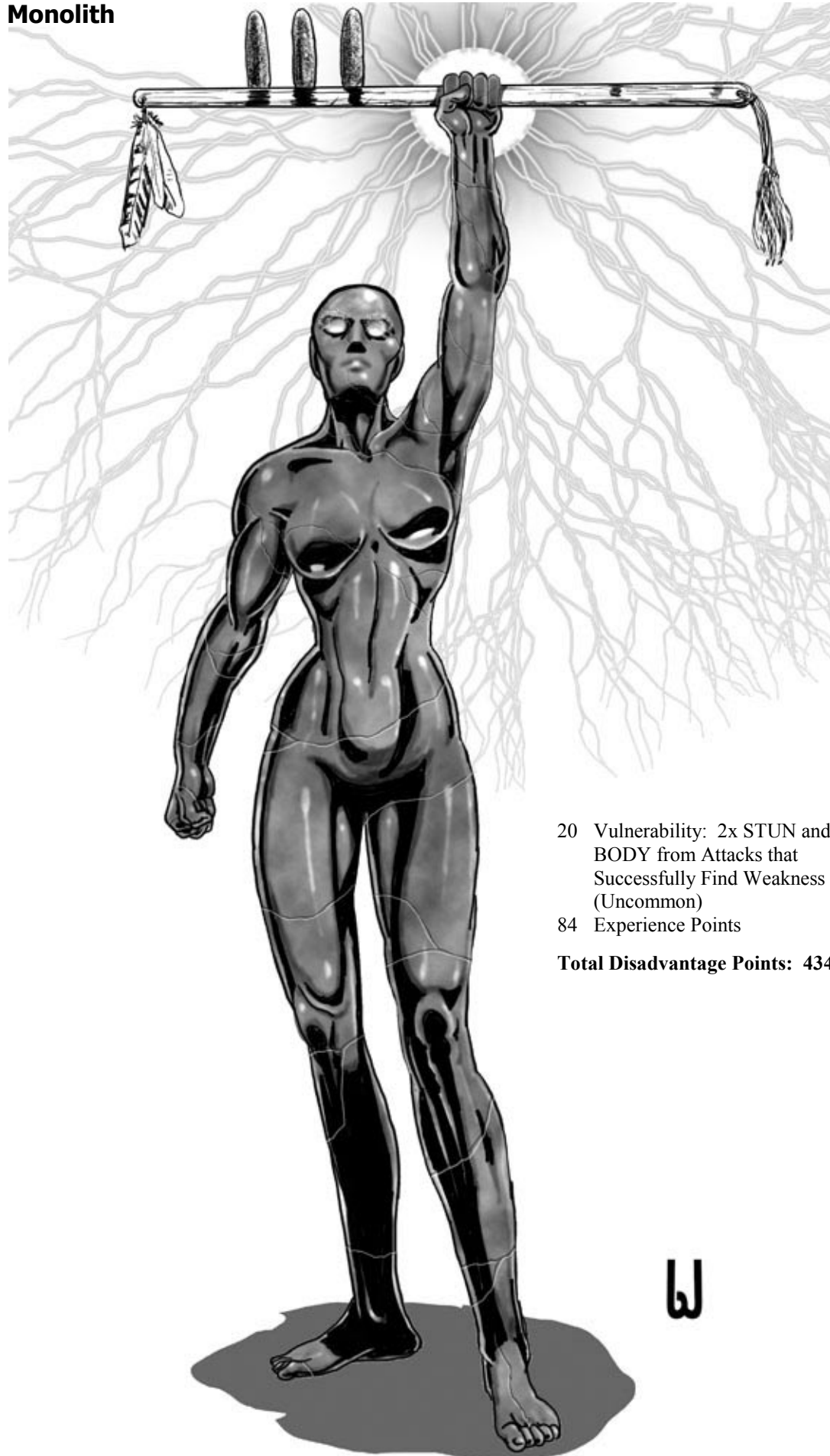
**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 307**

**Total Character Cost: 434**

## 200+ Disadvantages

10	Accidental Change: Angered 8- (Common)
10	Accidental Change: Magically Drained or Transferred 11- (Uncommon)
10	Distinctive Features: American Indian Woman with Amazonian Physique (Concealable; Noticed And Recognizable)
10	Distinctive Features: Magical Aura (Not Concealable, Always Noticed, Unusual Senses)
10	DNPC: Sickly Mother 11- (Incompetent, Unaware of Monolith's Secret Identity)
10	Hunted: Jesse Whiteriver 14- (Less Pow, NCI, Geographical Area, Watching)
15	Psychological Limitation: Must Protect Her Mother (Uncommon, Total)
10	Psychological Limitation: Enjoys Using Her Powers (Uncommon, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Dreams of Accomplishing Something Great (Common, Moderate)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major) (Rachel Runningdeer)
20	Vulnerability: 2x STUN and BODY from Vibration Attacks (Uncommon)

**Monolith**



20 Vulnerability: 2x STUN and BODY from Attacks that Successfully Find Weakness (Uncommon)

84 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 434**



**W**