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MUTANT UNDERGROUND™

By Kevin Siembieda

Based on concepts by Mike Wilson



An epic sourcebook for the *Heroes Unlimited™* RPG, Second Edition

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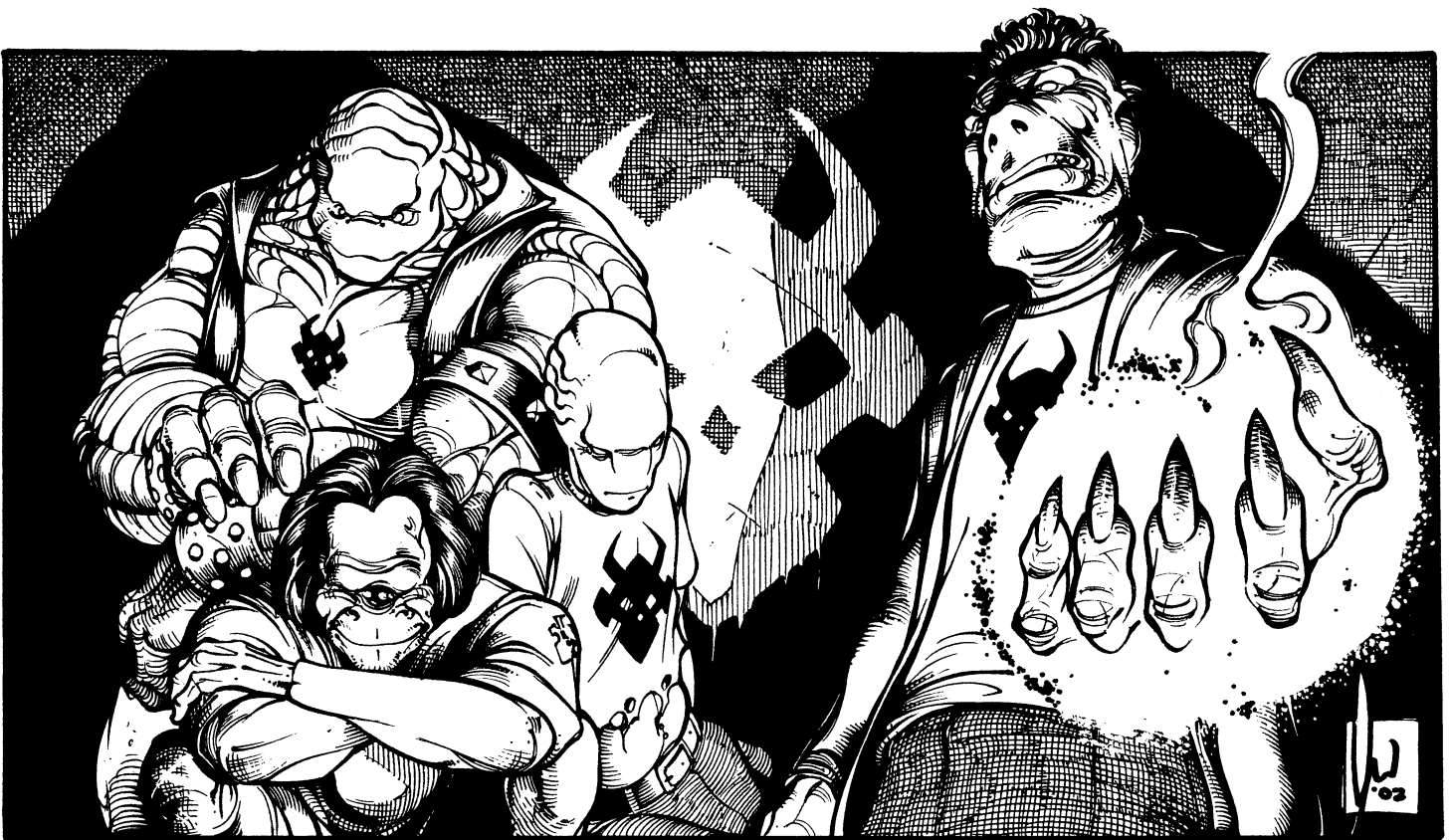
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An epic sourcebook for the **Heroes Unlimited™ RPG, 2nd Edition.**

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the entire **Palladium Books® Megaverse®!**

Dedication

To Paul Deckert, a super-guy who helped save the day more than once now, as only he could. Thanks Paul, this one's for you.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2003

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Palladium Books® Presents:

Mutant Underground™

A Sourcebook for Heroes Unlimited™

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– *Kevin Siembieda, 2003*

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Mutant Underground™

The Origin of Mutants & Superhumans

Evolutionary Missteps (or Advancement)

As strange or unbelievable as it may seem, at least 20% of all super abilities resulting from mutation are a *natural* occurrence. One must remember that mutation is common in nature. It is a natural part of the evolutionary process and constantly occurring, even in our modern world.

Changes in the environment often spark the mutation, and a traumatic change can actually spark a substantial and rather quick evolutionary modification in a matter of several generations; say over an 80-200 year period. Proof of this are humans from England and France who have a special gene sequence that makes them *impervious* – absolutely impervious – to the Bubonic Plague! That's right, as the "Black Death" swept across Europe killing millions of people over a 900 year period, some folks developed a natural immunity to the plague.

Those with the full genetic mutation are absolutely immune and cannot catch the killer disease no matter how long they are exposed to it. Those with half the mutant genetic sequence are *highly resistant*, so while they might contract the disease and get sick, there is a 90+% likelihood of survival and full recovery! Moreover, those with this mutant gene (whose ancestors have been traced back to a particular village in England from about 700 years ago) appear to be impervious (full mutant genes) or resistant (half the genes) to AIDS, a virus that attacks the body in a very similar way to the Bubonic Plague. This life saving mutation is both impressive and invisible. Those with the gene look no different than you or I, but when it comes to the Black Plague, with its 95+% kill ratio, these rare "mutants" are superhuman: invulnerable to the plague and AIDS germs. And the mutation happened in what scientists believe were 4-10 generations (approximately an 80 to 200 year period). Super quick by evolutionary standards. Of course, science cannot explain why that particular group of people developed a defensive mutation to fend off the disease when 95-99% of all *other* humans who contracted the Black Plague had no prayer of survival. Getting the Black Death for most people, even today, is a guaranteed death, except for the mutants. This, by the way, is a true story, and a recent scientific discovery.

Human history is probably filled with one evolutionary changing mutation after another, each working to shape

us into the ever evolving beings we are today. In fact, the very genes that made our ancient lemur or ape ancestors drop out of the trees, stand upright and begin to walk, could very well have been a *mutant* variation. A change that made the little furry fellows something more than a mere beast of the jungle, and gave them an edge over their cousins and rivals in the arena of the jungle. After that, evolution took care of the rest, causing other changes and improvements over a period of millions of years as the improved mutants took over the gene pool, growing in number and evolving into a better, smarter animal for its environment. In our case, that meant a larger brain and taller physical body, as well as an opposable thumb, closely set eyes, color vision, less body hair, legs and feet made for travel on the ground, etc. The rest, as they say, is history.

Actually, the theory of evolution opens up a philosophical can of worms in the modern world of **Heroes Unlimited**, because if mutation is a natural part of evolution, then super-powered mutants could, arguably, represent the next step in *human* evolution.

Paranoid individuals and bigots immediately feel threatened on a life and death scale. They see the status quo or "natural order of things" headed for a major change. A world where "ordinary" humans become second-class citizens dominated by smarter, stronger, faster, and/or superhumanly powerful mutants. This scares the living daylights out of many people who fear they are watching the appearance of a new species of supermen that will, within 4-10 generations, replace what we currently think of as *human*. Perhaps enslaving ordinary people who are not as powerful.

It is a far fetched hypothesis and a fairly baseless fear. Much fewer than half of one percent (something more like one ten millionth of a percent) exhibit noticeable physiological changes/evolution/mutation in the superhuman or paranormal range. On the other hand, that could all change with scientists monkeying around with genetic manipulation and engineering. Already talk about "improving" humans on a genetic level is common dinner talk. Improved humans who can live longer, healthier lives and the idea of being able to eliminate many diseases, to retard or stop the aging process, and to be able to reverse senility are all things worth striving toward. However, science looks to go way beyond such basic concerns. Far beyond. Already there are discussions on the capability and morality of genetically modifying human beings for their maximum physical and mental potential. To, in effect,

create a race of superhumans, tall, smart, and gorgeous . . . perhaps till the day they die at age four or five hundred. One can go even beyond this with bodies genetically manipulated to perform certain types of work or to look exotic, or to have aspects and abilities of animals, as well as multiple bodies through cloning, etc. The possibilities are nearly endless.

The appearance of the "super-gene" is just another unknown piece in the genetic puzzle.

The Genesis of Superhumans

If super abilities are a natural evolutionary step for humans, what triggered them to manifest and how long have superhumans been in existence? Those are questions for which nobody seems to have an answer.

Some scientists believe super humans have walked among us throughout history and that humans have exhibited the capacity for *superhuman powers* since day one. In fact, there are some abilities we see in everyday life that one could consider to be strange and unusual. They are not anything earth shattering, just small things that are fun. Abilities like being ambidextrous (the ability to use both hands at an equal level of dexterity and proficiency, such as write and operate equipment with the right or left hand at equal skill), or being double jointed, or able to wiggle the ears, touch one's nose with their own tongue, having an exceptional range of hearing (typically only two or three decibels greater than usual for most normal humans), better than 20/20 vision, exceptional good looks, high intelligence, and so on. All of these *abilities* are generally found in less than 10% of the population, and, in a small way, can be looked upon as *special powers*, some of which give the individual a decided advantage. Are these mutants or just gifted people? Or is it, as always, simply a matter of perspective and degree? These little things don't make a huge impact, so they are ignored or considered lucky to have. Nothing to be excited about. It is only when the ability or attribute is way beyond the range of normalcy that it cannot be ignored or joked about, like super powers. And true to human nature, those who possess such undeniable and strange abilities are often feared, hated and shunned.

Ironically, there is at least circumstantial evidence that supermen have walked among us throughout history. Tales of people with extraordinary or *superhuman* abilities, such as phenomenal strength, speed, endurance and intelligence, are all recorded in the pages of history, myth and legend. Many are the ancient stories that tell of giants, misshapen monsters, warriors with the strength of 20, people who could create fire or lightning, move objects with their thoughts, make objects appear or disappear, cure disease with a touch, commune with animals, see the future, sense danger, speak to the dead, levitate and even hover and fly. Ancient humans attributed such abilities to magic and the gods. Some of these superhumans were even said to be the product of the union between a god and a female, for how else could these uneducated and superstitious people explain it away unless the individual was a *demigod, demon or magically empowered?*

Okay, that was long ago, what about more recent times? What about people said to have incredible constitu-

tions making them resistant or imperious to poison and disease? **Rasputin**, the mad monk of Russia, is one such historical figure. Could Rasputin have had the super abilities of *Extraordinary Physical Endurance* and/or *Healing Factor*, or even *Invulnerability*, as well as psionic powers (he was said to see the future, after all)? Famed astrologist and seer, **Nostradamus**, appears to have possessed any number of psychic abilities enabling him to see into the future. Famed artist, sculptor, engineer, weapons de-



signer and visionary, **Leonardo Da Vinci**, was such a genius that the term, “universal man” was coined for him. Most certainly he was a genius, perhaps falling into the *Hardware: Mechanical or Analytical Genius Power Category*, but he could just as well have been a mutant of incredible intelligence with the powers of *Extraordinary Mental Endurance* and *Extraordinary Physical Endurance* as well as *Extraordinary Physical Prowess* and *Strength*. NO? Think about it. Da Vinci was legendary for needing no more than three hours of sleep per day, he was strong as an ox and worked nonstop long into his 80s, dying at the age of 89, ancient by the harsh standards of the period. Moreover, it is possible that he saw glimpses of (or visited) the future. Da Vinci created prototype machines to enable man to fly, including glider-style wings and a helicopter-like device, as well as a submarine and tank, among other modern weapons and devices. All were concepts that would not be rediscovered and made into reality until 500 years after his death. Super-Genius or Mutant? Certainly, he was head and shoulders above his peers, making him out of place . . . and, perhaps, more than human.

The thing is, most exceptional or unusual people tend to avoid the limelight, so their *abilities* go unnoticed except by those closest to them. Unless they have horns and a tail, or show off their abilities, nobody cares. Furthermore, those who possess super-powers or psionics may be afraid to develop or use them, keeping their “gift” a secret known only to themselves. This could include the co-worker who never gets sick (not even the common cold), or the exceptional athlete, or the executive who has an uncanny sense of the market or incredible leadership capabilities. All *could* have one or two Minor or Major Super Abilities, but choose not to use them, or do so very discreetly and in comparatively ordinary ways. Not everybody is cut out to be a super-hero, you know. Half of these folks may not even realize they have a special power at all, they just see themselves as healthy, fast healers, smart or lucky.

Super “Hero” or “Freak”

What makes an individual a super “human” or a “mutant freak?” Three things, 1) the magnitude and nature of their powers, 2) how they use them, and 3) the individual’s physical appearance. As with so much in life for humans, much depends on *appearance*. Abilities that can’t go undetected or ignored (by the superhuman himself or those around him), like the abilities to fly, turn into a walking wall of fire or stone, shoot laser beams from the eyes, super-natural strength, invulnerability, intangibility, super speed, etc., will inevitably brand even the most attractive human as a *super being*. What he or she looks like, and how one behaves, is likely to brand the super being as a *hero, villain, mutant freak or monster*.

Sadly, appearance means a great deal to human beings. We are attracted to beauty, repulsed by ugliness, and frightened by oddity. As a result, a humanoid with animal, brutish or alien features is instantly branded as a freak, mutant or monster. Those with the features of an insect, spider, snake or rodent are just as likely to be seen

as horrific, disgusting and revolting. No matter how good, kind or heroic these individuals may be, there will always be an undercurrent of revulsion and/or fear.

Similarly, it is human nature to assume anyone who looks ugly, monstrous, alien, or animal- or insect-like, to be a dangerous villain or monster. Aren’t *monsters* and *bad guys* always ugly, inhuman and weird? The answer is no, not always, but often, yes. This is due, in part, to stereotypes that have been used by humans since the beginning of time. Bad guys are often presented as dark and brutish with subhuman, animal-like qualities. Think about it, even modern day media and literature regularly use animal comparisons to describe the appearance and nature of bad guys. Villains often live and *lurk* in the shadows waiting to *pounce*, and after they attack (as *bloodthirsty* fiends like a *hungry tiger* or *venomous viper*) they retreat to their *lair* like some wild animal. Consequently, it is a knee-jerk reaction for people to assume mutants with animal or insect features are monsters and villains simply stepping through the door. People have been taught to react this way since childhood. Bizarre and alien-looking beings get the same treatment. It doesn’t matter that the “creature” is, in effect, human. That he was born of ordinary looking parents, just like them, and probably raised in human society – at least until the powers and the physical change happened at puberty or after some freak accident or trauma that triggered the “change.” Inhuman mutants born as freaks have it worse, for they might be shunned, discarded, or an attempt made on their lives by their own horrified parents. Or they may be snatched out of the hospital by government agents or some institution specializing in “gifted children.” Their parents may be told that they died, while the poor things are raised away from family and human society by a government, military or covert organization for some specific, usually covert, purpose. Such things have been happening for decades, more often than the average citizen could ever imagine. But more on government super-agents later.

Modern sources of mutation & new life forms

The entire process of natural mutation and evolution has been yanked out of the hands of slow moving evolution and thrown forward at a reckless pace by science. Thanks to advances in bio-technologies, humankind is in the process of jumping millions of years on the evolutionary scale, and going in directions nature would never have taken. Genetic engineering, molecular biology, embryo engineering, cloning, cross-species fertilization and a host of other areas under the mantle of medical and scientific research are creating new life forms that blur the line between human and *other*. This is true in the real world, but on the Earth-like parallel world of **Heroes Unlimited™** that line has been crossed so many times it has been completely obliterated by the foot traffic. Mutants, clones, chimeras and a range of unclassified life forms are spilling out of the laboratories and into the streets and lives of ordinary people.

So plentiful are these new life forms, that a subculture – a *mutant underground* – has begun to form. The following are the primary sources of their creation. The troubling matter is that while the first are born from a test tube in a sterile laboratory, many genetic mutants can mate and reproduce, continuing to breed new life forms that may, indeed, threaten modern society, if not humankind itself. Only now are people starting to realize that science, in its lust for power, money and fame in the biotech industries, quietly opened Pandora's Box years ago, when nobody was looking. The damage is done, and it is much too late to slam the lid shut.



Biotech & Genetic Engineering

This is the starting point for most of it. Naturally occurring mutations aside, it is the biotech industry that has spearheaded the rush into genetic manipulation, cloning, mutation and the creation of new, viable and intelligent life forms before society, the world governments and people knew what to do with them.

There are a dozen major areas of genetic engineering involved in creating new life forms. Some of the most notable include the following:

Chimera Genetics, an advanced and frightening aspect of genetic engineering that takes and merges the genetic structure of two or more (usually 4-8), completely different animals. Named after the mythical Greek monster with the head of a lion, the body and legs of a goat and the tail of a crocodile, this area of genetics, can, in theory, create an animal or human chimera – i.e., a humanoid with the basic body of a human and, say, the head and retractable claws of a lion, and the tail and swimming abilities of a crocodile. In short, a composite creature (supposedly) with the best traits of two, three or more dif-

ferent species of animals. All combinations that are impossible in nature.

Cloning, the replication of an animal or human body for the purpose of creating an independent, living life form, usually starting from infancy (though techniques for fast growing and the creation of fully mature, adult clone experiments are under way).

Cross-Species Fertilization, a more sophisticated version of breeding techniques similar to those used in breeding specific traits in livestock and plants. In theory, this process could be done on a genetic level to enable an animal (cow, pig, chimpanzee, etc.) to give birth to a human and vice versa, as well as breed in completely alien traits to an unrelated species, i.e. a mouse (or human) with gills, or a half man-half tiger, and so on.

Embryonics, the manipulation of the fetus to instill specific, desired physical and mental traits, talents and abilities, as well as the elimination of hereditary genetic diseases before birth. Similar to aspects of molecular biology but specializing in the manipulation of the unborn fetus and the use of fetal tissue/stem cells to grow, change and manipulate the fetus.

Genetic Engineering, typically involves genetic manipulation and augmentation. The goal is to discover the genes that control appearance, beauty, physical aspects of the body and even genetic based talents, inclinations and personality in order to create the perfect (or at least improved) human specimen. May also involve aspects of cloning, genetic medicine and molecular biology.

Genetic Medicine, the use of clones, stem cell technology and other forms of genetic engineering to create and grow skins, internal organs, and body parts such as the ear, nose, etc. It may also involve cloning for the purpose of harvesting body parts or using the entire body. Emphasis is on the medicinal application of genetic engineering and the curing of diseases and human frailty (replacing diseased genes with healthy ones or triggering select genes to produce natural antibodies or resistance to disease, pain, etc.).

Micro-Genetic Biology, typically genetic engineering involving microbes, bacteria and other simple organisms, but applies to humans in the battle against certain diseases, including genetically inherited diseases, deformity and weaknesses.

Molecular Biology, or techno-eugenics is an area of genetic engineering that specializes in the manipulation of the genetic structure on a molecular level. Altering, tweaking and implanting genes to create "designer" bodies with specific talents and physical, intellectual, and emotional traits "built" or "installed" as per order, just as one might customize a car or order a tailor-made suit.

Super-Eugenics, also known as ultra-eugenics, is a little publicized area of genetic engineering that is entirely devoted to human augmentation through genetic enhancement. The focus is to create *super beings*. The science draws on many areas of genetic research as outlined above, but much of the research is spent on trying to discover and replicate genes and protein sequences that instill psionic and superhuman abilities. However, even identifying the so-called "super genes" has been an im-

possible task with disappointing results. Only a few super abilities have been identified and so far, no Major Abilities have been successfully replicated in the lab.

On the other hand, there has been considerable success in mimicking/duplicating some Minor Super Abilities, such as Extraordinary and Superhuman Strength, and other *enhanced* physical attributes and senses, usually by combining animal genes with humans. This even includes animal senses, instincts and physical features such as retractable claws, fangs, horns, scaly skin (for natural body armor), prehensile tail or feet, and so on, with varying levels of success. Working wings that provide flight, for example, rarely work. (*Super Soldier* augmentation programs are starting to take this approach to make faster, stronger, and more savage warriors and spies.) Likewise, some psychic abilities have been replicated in the lab as well as some success in boosting psionic abilities in humans, animals and mutant animals that have inherent psychic ability or aptitude to begin with.

The Spawn of Aliens?

On the lunatic fringe, but gaining popular support by a growing portion of the mainstream population, is the belief that *aliens*, the government, or some mysterious outside force, is secretly responsible for "spontaneous mutation," particularly those that imbue people with super abilities or give animals human-level intelligence and/or a humanoid appearance.

This crazy belief is quickly becoming an urban legend on par with UFOs and alien abductions. This theory might be relegated to the category of *nutball conspiracy theory* if not for the fact that prominent super-heroes and super-villains from distant planets *are* known to visit and live on the Earth. Consequently, since *aliens* are known to exist, the idea seems imminently plausible and is gaining support among the people on the street. Those who harbor anti-alien sentiments, and think all aliens should be captured and imprisoned or driven from the planet, pounce on this idea to demand greater control and restriction of alien visitors. Some go so far as to suggest mutant animals and super beings are deliberately being manufactured as an invasion force. Why bring spaceships full of soldiers across the void when the aliens can *make* a combat force out of unsuspecting humans and dumb animals already living on the planet by mutating them and giving them super abilities, or so the thinking of these conspiracy theorists goes.

Starry-eyed theories aside, as far as any government agency (or alien visitors, for that matter) can tell, the spawn of aliens theory is boloney and completely untrue.

The new morality; a world they never made

The worst offenders in the creation and dumping of mutants are amoral, greedy maniacs who flush their mistakes into the back alleys and unleash their ill-conceived successes onto an unsuspecting society. These people of sci-

ence are so caught up in the technology and the promise of fame and fortune, that they have thrown caution, morality and safety to the wind. They bend, ignore and break the law to achieve their goals, and worry about getting caught later. (And then only because of the negative impact it may have on their reputations, careers and bankroll, not because of how it may hurt society or the poor suffering creatures they have concocted.) They ignore questions of morality in the name of science and advancement, when all they really hope to advance are their careers and bank accounts. They don't worry about the consequences of their actions or the ramifications of creating parentless, man-made, humanoid life forms from a petri dish or surrogate womb. They don't care about the creature given birth from a sterile vat of chemicals or the womb of an unrelated species into the custody of science where it is poked, prodded and observed under a microscope, rather than born into a loving home and given the nurturing love of a parent. They don't grieve over the hundreds (or thousands) of failed experiments that end in death or, worse, produce bizarre hybrid life forms or deformed monstrosities.

Even the successes are new species of life with no place in the world at large. Whether they are clones, genetically built super beings, unnatural half-breeds from cross species fertilization or a host of weird syntheses of human and animal, insect and animal, or a combination of all of the above (chimeras), they're created, born and live outside the realm of human experience. Whether beautiful or ugly, they are inhuman *freaks of science*.

Okay. So you created a living, breathing, thinking, and viable life form unlike anything seen before. Now what? What does one do with "it." Keep it in the lab for the next 40 to 100 years and study it under a microscope? Cage it like some beast or hide it away like a freak in the attic? Destroy it? Put it on exhibition in a zoo or traveling (freak) show? Put it to work? Let it go? Try to integrate it into human society? What?

Then there is the issue of whether or not intelligent and humanoid life forms have any human rights, or is "it" property – the patented creation of a faceless corporation? A new age "slave" or "lab rat" created and grown by its master into a life of servitude. Again the question is raised, is it a living being with rights or is it a *biological product* that belongs to its owner/manufacturer? And if it is a *product*, does the manufacturer have the right to mass produce and sell it? After all, it was conceived in a laboratory, is asexual in origin and manufactured by science, not born of parents – and though it may be a living, thinking being, is it human?

In its rush to achieve the impossible, and get rich and famous in the process, science failed to ask and answer these questions first. Now society and the respective world governments must address the legal, ethical and moral dilemmas heaped upon them by the biotech industry. They are left to deal with the growing consequences. It is an overwhelming task that many governments find easier to dodge or pretend to ignore, than to address.

Meanwhile, the very institutions that created these problems (and life forms) continue, unfettered, to make



Mutants as Property Bio-tech slaves and products

Morality and the law have failed miserably in keeping up with the rapid advancements in genetic sciences and bioengineering (at least in the world of **Heroes Unlimited™**). It has resulted in a free-for-all, anything goes mentality. Bio-tech industries are running unchecked and creating more problems than cures for what ails society. The world governments hesitate at making “laws on morality” and are bombarded by an endless wave after wave of lobbyists and wealthy business leaders insisting the government needs to stay out of “free enterprise” and give science a free hand in developing “medicine and new technologies” – even if that new technology is creating new life forms and shaking up the world view and ethical standards faster than anyone could have ever imagined. The corporations scream for scientific freedom while they simultaneously throw legal monkey wrenches into the wheels of the law to make them grind as slowly as possible. Governmental bureaucracy, already a lumbering behemoth, becomes further mired in new technology and issues they barely understand. Meanwhile, breakthrough technology and weird science continue to give birth to new advancements seemingly every week. It is a race the plodding governments and lawmakers cannot keep pace with, giving private industry the de facto green light to do just about anything they dream. This is why the whole mutant/super being issue is unchecked and getting worse.

Furthermore, without the proper laws and watchdogs in place, too many corporations are taking sloppy shortcuts and engaging in questionable (often despicable) conduct. Without any laws or rulings as to whether or not genetic lab creations have *human rights*, intelligent mutant animals, genetic misfits and even human volunteers are caged, chained, studied and tested around the clock (some would say tormented and tortured) like laboratory rats. Some are even killed and dissected for further study or used in new experiments.

These genetic creations have no rights.

They are lost in a limbo where, despite their mental capabilities, personalities, or level of awareness, they are nothing more than “expendable research animals” and “private property” – a living, patented “formula” *conceived* by science and *built* by laboratory technicians.

When the living being is born, there are no loving parents, only a cage and endless tests. If the design is flawed, incomplete or deformed, it is “trashed” – put to sleep, cremated and put out in tomorrow’s garbage – or worse, put through tests, experimented upon and studied before being mercifully put to sleep, so science can learn from its mistakes or make improvements. As bad as the former may sound, the latter is living hell.

Even the *successes* are doomed to a life of captivity involving poking, prodding, test studies, video cameras, side show-like exhibitions and loneliness. The most successful and cooperative are trained and put to work as tech assistants, scientists, security personnel (mutant watchdogs assigned to keep the company’s secrets), re-acquisitionists (mutant-hunters), super-soldiers, spies (industrial and mili-

new life and new problems in the name of scientific research, advancement and the betterment of humanity.

The government of the United States of America, and other countries, have made half-hearted attempts to stall or prevent research in these areas by banning Federal moneys and grants for research in cloning and other areas of genetic engineering, but have NOT made them illegal, allowing private industry to do anything they want, so long as no Federal funding is involved.

The unchecked explosion in genetic research has only served to exacerbate the problem and has placed a pall over the super-hero community. For one, their attempts to create and instill super abilities have turned the fantastic into the mundane. Second, they have caused ordinary people to wonder whether so-called “super-heroes” are spectacular, gifted humans or freaks of science. Menaces who should never have been *manufactured* in the first place. Third, this makes the average Joe wonder about the integrity and motives of heroes. Are they noble, selfless champions of truth, justice and freedom, or are they corporate lackeys working for a paycheck and public celebrity? And if they are on a payroll, where do their loyalties truly lie? Can they be trusted, or is this all an elaborate publicity stunt or good will program by some mega-corp or government agency? Do they serve the people or answer to a “boss” pulling their strings? And what about the villains they fight? Aren’t a lot of these bad guys *created* by the very same corporations and government agencies as the heroes?! What’s really going on? Who’s in control? Where are the mutant rejects coming from? Why isn’t the law or government doing something?

All good questions, though some are rather unfair to the dedicated heroes.

tary) and special government operatives, as well as “breeding stock” for future experiments in cross-fertilization and genetic research.

In the final analysis, however, it is all perfectly legal. Reckless, perhaps. Cruel and heartless, sometimes, shortsighted almost certainly, but perfectly legal.

Refugees from Science

It is no surprise then, that some of these “creations” try to make a break for it.

The better laboratories have top security and containment systems that make escape difficult, but the low-end labs and research facilities have security that is, at best, adequate and at worst, pathetic or downright sloppy. Even the tightest containment systems have their weaknesses, and for an intelligent mutant animal or genetic experiment locked in a cage day in and day out with nothing to do but watch, listen and plot its escape, it is only a matter of time before those weaknesses are found and exploited. Add super abilities to the equation, and genetically engineered creations *are* going to escape and get out into the world. Add the intense levels of hatred, revenge, desperation and disassociation many genetic creations (mutants and otherwise) feel, and one has his share of antisocial misanthropes and monsters on the loose. While some lab-spawn can be taught, trained and controlled, others are, indeed, evil and murderous, with a hatred for humans as big as the moon.

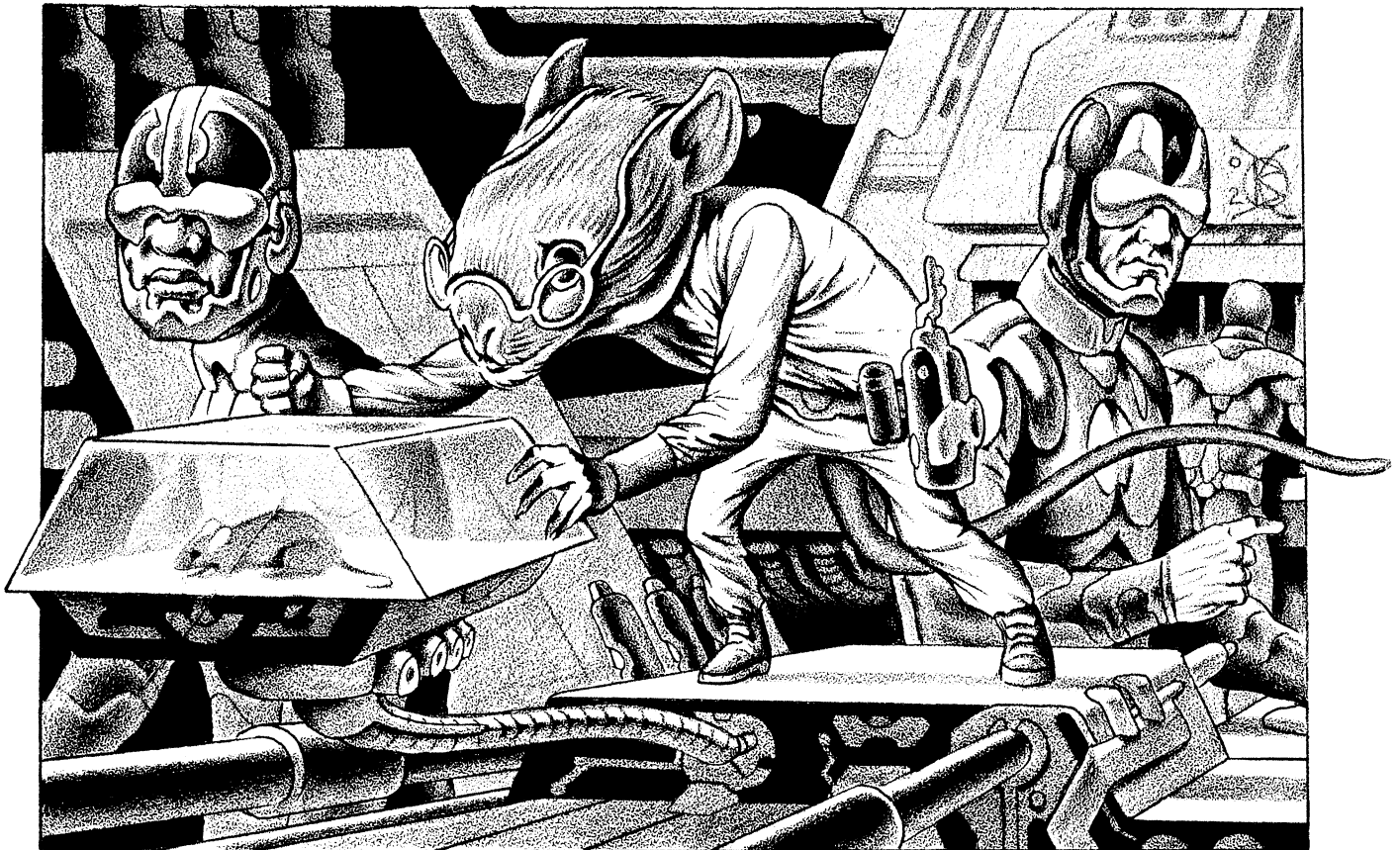
On the other hand, there are those who are either bred to have a low aggression threshold or who remain good, kind and noble beings despite (or because of) the travails

they have endured. These mutants are likely to go on to become heroes, vigilantes or protectors of fellow mutants or *all people* of the world. Meanwhile, the embittered, tortured and evil ones embrace the dark side of the underworld, frequently join gangs, and become criminals and evil henchmen for existing organizations or even evil, criminal masterminds themselves.

What happens to mutant refugees?

It's sad, really. Many of those who escape expect to find a sort of paradise where they can find love, happiness and live free. It is a dream that is shattered within hours after escape.

Most lab-spawned experiments and mutant runaways are ill-prepared for the outside world. Those generated from a test tube or reconstructed from a lab animal have no idea what the world or human society is like. Many may not realize how alien or frightening they, as mutants, are to humans. Lab technicians and assistants, after all, are prepared to deal with them and are much more tolerant and accepting of their strange appearance and powers than people on the street. Remember too, the only life and people these genetic creations have ever known are those of the lab and what they may have gleaned from conversations, books, magazines and the television or radio, and half of all lab mutants don't have access to TV or radio. That means they have never seen, let alone ridden in, an automobile, walked under city lights, felt the sun or rain on their cheeks, or eaten a hot dog. They don't know the bite of a winter wind or the sting of fear. They are as inexperi-



enced as they come, and unprepared for the real world. Some are as innocent as a toddler, others inexperienced but hardly innocent, taught life's hard lessons through brutality or callousness in the lab, or driven by animal instincts, violent emotions or a deranged mind.

Creations made from an existing animal that once lived in the outside world before being *redesigned* and mutated through genetic manipulation, *may* remember something of the world and their place in it. However, most subjects forget their previous life as an animal, with only bits and pieces, or strange sensations, remembered like the fractured memories of a fading dream. Most recall nothing of their animal existence, remembering only their life in the lab reborn as a humanoid gene experiment. Anything prior is lost in the recesses of their mind as some primordial instinct or vague "feeling." For example, a humanoid feline may look at a particular cat and feel as if she should know the animal, or get a feeling of love or warmth or loss when around it, but never realize the cat is her birth mother or sibling.

Only those mutants who began life as a human and volunteered for genetic experimentation in their teens or as adults, and those genetic lab-spawned creations deemed a success and earmarked for special training or education have a good grasp of what life is like in human society. And even among these two groups, only humans have a complete understanding. The lab creations only know what they have been told, allowed to read in books, see on television, and selectively allowed to experience under strict supervision of (probably) an entire staff of educators and trainers. Even humans mutated to look different or who now possess super abilities may be surprised at how other people react to them.

Out in the cold, cruel world

Out in the cold, cruel world, a lab-spawned mutant is likely to be horrified at the indifference, cruelty, fear, hate and violence that abounds. Especially the amount of hate, fear and violence directed at mutants and super beings. Ugly, animal-like and freakish looking mutants have it the worst. People will often scream and run after just having seen one. Approach or try to help a human, and the mutant is likely to get a pop bottle or brick thrown at its head, a knife in its belly or run over by a car! Most people's knee-jerk response to these obviously inhuman, monstrous mutants is to scream and run or to lash out and capture or kill it. Humans tend to kill what they fear or don't understand, and genetic mutants are no exception. It doesn't help when most bio-tech corporations and governments present runaway mutants as "dangerous aliens to be avoided, call the police (or a special *recovery team* number) immediately should you see one." This creates an instant air of "them or us" and an "armed and dangerous" mentality. Thus, when a cute little mutant lab mouse who wouldn't hurt a fly pops out of the shadows, people run and scream instead of trying to talk and reason with it. It doesn't help that the media focuses on the most dangerous and deranged mutant escapees who go on killing

sprees or turn into underworld figures and super-villains, lending credence to the misnomer that all genetic mutants are either homicidal monsters or evildoers.

Mutants, even those of a good alignment, often find themselves working "under the table" and doing things that are outright illegal or morally questionable. Why? Because in human society, a green skinned mutant with spines sticking out from the back of his neck can't just waltz into the Ford Motor Company and ask for a job. Mutants are feared and shunned (and quite possibly, claimed as property). They can't get a job at an auto factory, flipping hamburgers at a fast food joint or even digging ditches without people pointing fingers, running in terror, spitting on them or shooting at them. Add to this the fact that most mutants are hunted, in hiding and on the run, and there are very few *legal* or *honest* ways to earn money. That leaves the dishonorable and illegal work. This does not automatically mean a life of crime as a super-villain, though it probably means doing a lot of nasty, borderline illegal and downright dirty criminal activities.

Desperation can make most anyone consider and do things they never thought they were capable of doing. Sadly, there always seems to be somebody willing to exploit the desperate and innocent for their own gains. Foolish and trusting mutants are just as vulnerable.

The types of exploitation are countless, but always prey on the mutants' inexperience, gullibility, hopelessness or the desperateness of their situation. For example, many an unscrupulous business person uses mutant fugitives the same way as they do illegal immigrants, paying them substandard wages in cash, under the table for the most backbreaking, difficult, dangerous or illegal work (for



cheap). Ignoring proper safety measures and sanitary working conditions is a great way to keep costs down and profits up. It is not like these runaway mutants and freaks can go to the law, and who cares if a stupid mutant gets hurt or even dies? Likewise, these self-serving scum *rent* them hovels and hiding places to live in that are unfit for human habitation. But what can the mutants do? They have no money, just the clothes on their backs, and no laws to protect them. If they don't want to be turned over to the authorities or sent back in a cage to their *owners* (where they may be punished, tortured, experimented upon, or euthenized) they'll comply with the demands put upon them and accept the unsatisfactory working and living conditions.

Other types of exploitive and degrading work include hard labor, handling dangerous chemicals, industrial espionage, industrial sabotage, prostitution, pornography, selling and running drugs, running numbers, robbery, murder, and a host of other illicit, dangerous and illegal work. Work options are extremely limited for the disenfranchised, monstrous and hunted, even if they do possess super abilities.

Confused, angry and even well-intentioned lab-spawned mutants are easily *tricked* into committing crimes, working for cheap, losing their hard earned money or being set up as a diversion or scapegoat. In fact, the nicest, most kindly mutants are likely to believe the most obvious lies and fall for the oldest con games in the book, just because they are so nice, naive and trusting. Thus, they can be tricked into attacking police, engineering a jail break, pulling a robbery or kidnaping, destroying or looting a genetics laboratory, attacking a gangster or robbing a mob operation, and even committing murder, or just made to look like fools for the enjoyment of cold-hearted pranksters.

Those who refuse to get involved with organized crime or questionably immoral work, survive as street scavengers, picking through garbage for clothes and food, pan-handling, and doing odd jobs when they can find them.

Making Money the Crooked Way

The range of possibilities are endless, especially for a mutant with super abilities.

Super-powered mutants are quickly becoming the secret weapon of unscrupulous business operations and the favorite enforcers and lieutenants in the criminal underworld. Organized crime lords understand what desperation, loneliness and the lack of options can do to a person. It compels one to *consider* doing *anything* to survive or to help a loved one. ANYTHING. They also know that most genetic mutants and lab-spawn are on the run and hunted like animals by those who claim to "own" them, and hated and feared by the population at large. More importantly, runaway (or thrown away) genetic mutants are made to feel isolated and alone with no place to hide and no one to turn to. They can't go to the police or any authorities, because there are no laws to protect them, and few lawmen or heroes dare to stand up for them. Likewise, mutants can't appeal to the media because the media plasters

them as menaces, wild monsters and gene freaks. Even the clergy and other benevolent organizations shun and report them to the authorities.

Enter the criminal underworld.

Always ready to exploit a situation, the underworld has embraced mutant fugitives with open arms. They offer them acceptance, a place in the organization, work, and the chance to earn respect, money, power and, perhaps, a little payback. They also offer them the camaraderie and protection of the organization – a place where they are part of something bigger and protected from those who hunt them, even if it is the law. That sense of belonging and security is a huge incentive for many mutants with no place to go, and so is the opportunity for revenge or respect/fear. Evil and angry mutants are quick to accept this offer, knowing full well that their criminal benefactors are giving them the worst and most dangerous jobs for half the pay of a powerless human. However, it does satisfy a number of needs and presents them with genuine opportunity for advancement. A gene freak who proves himself capable and loyal *can* rise to a position of wealth and power within the criminal organization, perhaps even usurping its leadership some day. Respect may come from fear, but fear is something mutant castoffs and escapees understand, for it is something they have lived with all their lives. For many, a life of crime is a natural progression.

On a smaller scale, other embittered or evil mutants form their own gangs (as small as 3-6 members or as large as 20+) and leap into a life of crime without any invitation from an existing organization. Their logic is simple and straightforward: "You hate us, so we hate you right back. We are more powerful than you puny humans, so we'll beat you and rob you, and do as we please, because we have the power and the will to do so. Get in our way, try to stop us, and you will bleed for it." These are often angry, vengeful youths and predators who have come to hate the world and human beings in general. In an act of rage and defiance, they turn to crime and violence. The type of crime varies with the age, cunning, number of members in the gang, and the raw power of the individuals. Thus, super powered mutants may engage in mugging, purse snatching, boosting cars, breaking and entering, selling drugs, and knocking over convenience stores, to robbing banks, industrial espionage, murder for hire, arson, smuggling (and selling) drugs, running protection rackets (on other mutants or humans), and buying and selling information, as well as high-end crimes like jewelry heists, cat-burglary, kidnaping, extortion and organized crime.

Mutants with an axe to grind against the bio-tech industry or the government may engage in crimes specifically directed at those institutions. The mutants' ire may be at the industry as a whole, or one particular corporation, though usually any organization that supports, sponsors or encourages the creation of genetic mutants and human augmentation is a viable target. Vendettas against the bio-tech companies (and often government agencies that sponsor, promote or use genetic manipulation for their own ends) can be terrible. Acts of revenge may include



the theft of valuable equipment, money, patents and raw materials, the release of mutants and test subjects still held in captivity, as well as targeting employees, especially the top brass, for harassment, mugging, kidnaping, and extortion. These types of crimes are usually for profit or designed to embarrass the company, or both. However, vandalism and robbery are the least of their problems, for there are those mutants who want payment in *blood*. Accidents, bomb threats, explosions, fires and outright murder all come part and parcel with blood vendettas, as do all sorts of terrorism and sabotage that cause extensive destruction of property, work stoppages, wide scale injury to personnel, and wholesale murder. Revenge driven evildoers may stop at nothing to discredit and destroy the corporation, and even sacrifice themselves or other mutants to achieve their goals.

Then there are those who are brutes, wicked or deranged from the onset. Madmen, killers, instinctive predators and evildoers who simply like to intimidate, hurt and kill others. These misanthropes live by the law of the jungle – the concrete jungle – preying on those weaker than they, both human and superhuman, defying the law and taking whatever they want. For them, a life of crime and murder is the only way of life. The way things are. Violence, ruthlessness and death simply come with the territory, and they love it that way. Such malevolent beings may hunt alone or work in pairs or small packs. Such groups are typically led by the most powerful, intelligent or savage member of the team, with the rest, even though they may have formidable super abilities of their own, willingly subservient henchmen. In fact, many of these mutant gangs or packs are amazingly close knit and loyal to their leader and one another – a vicious surrogate family or brotherhood. Going along with their way of thinking, if someone hurts one of them the offending party has hurt

them all, and has won the lasting enmity of the entire group. And that means payback to the offender is coming. It's only a matter of when and where. These rogues live by their own self-serving code, ignore the law, raid rival gangs, mess with criminal organizations, and take on all challengers whether they be the authorities, super-heroes, fellow mutants or the criminal underworld. Perhaps needless to say, the reign of terror by these gang bangers and lone wolves is usually pretty short (1-6 years), typically ending with death or prison, and inciting gang wars as new young mutants, super beings and toughs duke it out for the vacant slot in the street hierarchy.

On the mean streets, lone wolves and rogue gangs have no sympathy nor empathy for their fellow mutants, freaks and misfits. They feel no compunction to help or protect these lost souls in any way, and are the first to try to exploit them. New gene freaks are regarded as easy *prey* to plunder, bully, extort and recruit. Those who put up too strong of a fight, or dare to challenge or stand up against them, are slaughtered where they stand, and should a new arrival win a fight, he had better kill the rogues, because the old guard will not tolerate being embarrassed or knocked out of their position of power. The rogues will strike back, and when they do, their retribution will fill the streets with blood – the blood of the defiant one and all who support or stand with him. It's not surprising then, that rogues regard the humans, mutants and heroes of the *Mutant Underground* as "bleeding hearts," weaklings and chumps or fools. Helping others and trying to make a difference is not the way of the jungle – survival of the fittest and the meanest is the only way – and anything else, especially compassion and kindness, makes them puke. Consequently, they openly mock, cajole and threaten the self-appointed protectors, heroes, and vigilantes who struggle to help mutants and other street people

to whom the law and society frequently turn their backs and a blind eye. However, while the rogues dis and put-down these champions, they rarely call them out or attack without good cause. This is not out of any sense of respect, but only because the rogues' grudgingly accept these "heroes" as a rival power better left alone unless they threaten the rogues power base. Which, of course, happens regularly and leads to some fierce rivalries, street wars, and conflicts.

Sources of Mutants, Trouble & Villainy

We've talked extensively about the bio-tech industry as a source of mutant life forms, genetic chimeras, freaks and super beings, but there are others.

Government Agencies

Government agencies, world wide, are attracted to and quietly sponsoring or actively engaging in their own experiments in genetic augmentation. For most governments, the idea of creating a legion of super-soldiers or the ultimate spy or just keeping up with the governments of other countries is just too much to ignore. In fact, the next "cold war" may be waged in the genetics laboratory.

In the United States of America, there are a number of Super Soldier programs in operation. All are top secret and extremely covert. Most are new, having existed for less than eight years, with many field testing or using superhuman operatives in the real world for only the last 1-3 years. The most notorious, though known only to a small handful as anything more than rumor and urban myths, are **The Sector**, **Sector 10**, **The Nursery** and **MTF (Mutant Task Force)**, however, other current programs also exist or are in the planning stages. All of these "projects" and secret groups are involved in *creating* superhumans, either from scratch using genetic engineering or through genetic enhancement of an existing human or animal. Most of the research and development involves creating and instilling super abilities.

Some organizations like the FBI, CIA and other government law enforcement agencies are beginning to *recruit* super beings into their organizations as an effective countermeasure to super-villains and terrorist organizations that have already been employing superhumans for several years now. Even some local state and city authorities are studying the idea of establishing elite squads of "super-cops" to address the superhuman threat, deploying them for special operations much like the bomb squad or S.W.A.T. However, only a few police forces currently have such a super-squad or even a lone super-cop.

Adventure Hooks: What if one or all of the player characters are recruited by a Federal agency or the local authorities? Do they join? Is there pressure for them to reconsider? Are there repercussions if they don't? (Ha-

rassed, shunned, framed, hunted, treated like turncoats, vilified, etc.) What happens if they do join? What kind of missions are they sent on? Can they help the Mutant Underground or are they asked to spy on it or shut it down?

Foreign Governments

Foreign countries, especially poor ones, sometimes "dump" their mutants and monsters on the border of, or inside, other countries to get rid of their genetic mistakes and superhuman criminals. It's cheap and easy. Let somebody else worry about the consequences of their actions, just cover the tracks so the rogue nation doing the "dumping" can't be accused of wrongdoing. Likewise, mutagenic chemicals and materials may also be dumped in a neighbor's or enemy's backyard. The countries that do this may use the rationale that their rich neighbor can better afford to handle the problem, or that an enemy nation deserves what trouble they get. Surprisingly, it is rare for an enemy nation to deliberately create and unleash some rampaging super-freak on an unsuspecting neighbor or enemy.

Adventure Hooks: Find the source of the mutant or monster or chemical dumping and stop it. Capture or destroy true menacing monsters.

Criminals

Very few criminal organizations are involved in *creating* superhumans or mutants. Let's face it, most criminals don't understand or give a hoot about science and technology except how to make a buck from it. Start up costs for genetic research are prohibitively expensive, especially for long-term operations with marginal profits. Consequently, criminal outfits don't have much interest in the genetic sciences as a business venture. However, as noted elsewhere, organized crime syndicates are busy recruiting and employing super beings of every stripe. In the current atmosphere of hate and denial, it is much easier and infinitely cheaper to recruit the castoffs, freaks and runaways than to create their own. Furthermore, the hostile climate toward mutants by the general public, lack of laws and the flagrant abuse of mutants in private industry create an underground of misfits that are ripe for exploitation. Organized crime to small-time crooks welcome mutants into their fold. It's terrible, but crime is a growth industry for mutants, and often the only kind of good paying work they can find.

Adventure Hooks: What if one or all of the player characters are recruited by a powerful criminal organization? Do they join willingly or are they blackmailed into it? Or is this all a campaign to infiltrate and destroy it from within or to find and get a specific super-villain, leader or individual? Or is the organization infiltrated to find someone snatched off the streets or otherwise being held against their will? Or are they trying to stop a slave operation or other criminal activity? If the heroes are secretly working against the organization, do the bad guys seek retribution for what they did to them? If so, what and to whom?

If they join the crime family, what kind of "jobs" are they sent on? Can they help the Mutant Underground or are

they asked to spy on it, use it for the organization's purposes or undermine it? What happens if they refuse to join or do as they are told?

There are all types of undercover/spy/infiltration scenarios that could come into play, as well as all kinds of clashes with criminals. The heroes could stop a murder or robbery. Or challenge a street gang, or try to push a drug dealer out of their neighborhood, or fight mutant slavery, or against any variety of crimes perpetrated against humans and mutants alike. As vigilantes and super-heroes, the characters fight crime and injustice, while the criminal element lives by breaking the law, exploiting the innocent, taking what they want and eliminating those who get in their way. It is a clash of ideals and morality as much as a clash of power. Oh yeah, and what super-villains are called upon to deal with goodie-two-shoe super-heroes?

Super-Villains

There is another genetics engineering front that nobody wants to talk about. It is completely unpredictable and the most troublesome of them all, super-villains. Maniacs like the notorious Doctor Feral and others see genetic engineering as cutting edge technology and a means to make trillions legally and illegally. Many pose as ruthless but legitimate businesses with a dark side to them, while others are secret, underworld facilities concealed from the outside world and working in total secrecy. There are perhaps a half dozen such organizations in the entire world, but they are heavily funded and offer to make mutant henchmen or instill enhanced abilities or super abilities into human agents – a for price – and a hefty one at that. Some offer deals to spur sales, and most either kill or release their *mistakes* into the world. A few, such as Doctor Feral, have their own, misguided agenda or cause, and work to that end, whatever it may be.

Adventure Hooks: One is the creation of genetic mutants. Super-villains making mutants might unleash them into the world for fun or to study them. They are also likely to throw away their mistakes, unleashing them into the streets and forgetting about them. Super-villains (generally arch-villains and criminal masterminds) are also likely to engage in slave operations and deal with other criminal organizations and foreign powers, or sell mutant captives and creations to the highest bidder.

Another hook is revenge and vindictiveness. Nobody is more vicious and unrelenting in *reacquiring* their lost "property" than professional super-villains. They will hire thugs, mercenaries and fellow superhumans to find and capture or kill (to make an example of them) any runaways or escapees as well as anybody who tries to protect the runaways. Additionally, if the villain finds out that a particular individual, hero, group (the player characters?)



or an organization (like the Mutant Underground?) is responsible for setting their slaves free or undermining any of their criminal operations, super-villains *will* seek revenge! It may be open warfare with the villain looking to seek out and destroy those who annoy, challenge or threaten him (them) or their business, to hired guns to do their dirty work to them, or something cruel, long-lasting and insidious (frame job, harassment, torture, striking at friends and family, ruining their reputation, etc.).

Super-villains may also attack or challenge super-heroes and members of the Mutant Underground to test their mettle or that of their creations, or because the villain wants something or someone the Underground has, or because they see the Underground as a threat or impediment to their goals. Or simply because they are easy prey with nobody to stand up for them (except the player group?).

One or more super-villains may also choose the role of leader, general or messiah and try to galvanize and lead the mutants on some blood crusade or quest for revenge via a life of crime or murder and terrorism. Again, the possibilities go on and on.

Mutants, Freaks & Misfits

Who or What is on the Street?

A little bit of everything baby, a little bit of everything. Mutant animals, chimeras, hybrids, superhumans (or at least they look human), and genetically engineered psychics, along with genetic missteps, freaks, and accidents that survived being flushed down the proverbial toilet, managed to escape their cages, or were let loose deliberately. All walk the streets, and half don't belong there because they are either aggressive, evil, antisocial monsters or too emotionally or physically messed up, damaged or defective to make it in the human world.

Mutants are generally humans or animals that have, through a fluke of nature or genetic manipulation, become something more than normal for their species. Something different, usually more powerful or intelligent, and/or bestowed with Minor or Major Super Abilities. Mutants may look alien or odd and sometimes ugly, but most are fairly attractive and have human level attributes and no significant defects.

Freaks

a.k.a. Gene-Freaks, Rejects & Accidents

Freaks, Rejects and Accidents are usually inhuman or deformed creations spawned in some genetics laboratory or the result of some terrible accident that corrupted and mutated the genetic structure of a normal human or animal. As Freaks, some of these mutants are hideous monstrosities, and all are obviously *deformed*. Note that "deformed" is different than having blue skin, pointy ears and a fuzzy tail – that's being "different." Deformed means being ugly or monstrous in one or more ways. It could mean having a hunchback, twisted hands and/or arms, misshapen body, hamburger for a face or skin, a body covered in warts or open sores, or lumps or spines, or having an animal-like muzzle and teeth, a brutish or monstrous appearance, and so on. The point is the mutant looks ugly and twisted.

In addition, many wield powers and abilities that just don't work right, either. Some powers are weird variations of recognized abilities, some fly out of control when activated, others are half powered, and still others are something completely unexpected.

Random Freak Powers, Looks & Defect Table

Note: The following table can be used to generate a quick mutant NPC or villain. Powers, looks and defects are presented, along with some other information when appropriate. Attributes, skills, Hit Points and other aspects of the character will have to be fleshed out for player characters and major villains as normal, using this information as a base to start with. These categories are just some of the more commonly repeated among gene freaks.

01-06% Beast Man. A humanoid with distinct animal traits and features (the character can be rolled up using the **After the Bomb®** animal creation rules or the A2. *Animal Trait Defect Table* also in this section). In addition to the animal traits, the character has some ugly or monstrous aspect to him or a deformity (shriveled claw hand or leg, twisted mouth, terrible scar, hunched back, etc.). The mutant has the Major Super Abilities of *Alter Metabolism* and *Animal Abilities* or *Animal Metamorphosis*, plus one or two Minor abilities (or roll twice on the Animal Powers Table under Eugenic Animal Mutants). The problem is the creature really is more beast than man, living by instinct, and probably an aggressive predator. I.Q. attribute is low to average (1D4+5), though the beast shows cunning when stalking prey (like a lion) and self preservation skills. Speaking of skills, the only ones this mutant may know are Wilderness, basic Physical and Espionage ones that are not too technical, and only a total of ten at that. The mutant can speak and count (at least basic addition and subtraction), but its voice is guttural and words are usually small, simple ones.

07-12% Big Brain. Has an I.Q. attribute of 2D6+18 and an M.E. of 2D6+16. Has either the following set of Major or Minor Super Abilities: Major: Control Others or Control Kinetic Energy and Holographic Memory Projection or Transferal/Possession; or Minor: *Manipulate Kinetic Energy, Power Channeling, Mental Stun, and Horror Factor* or *X-Ray Vision*. The character's deformity has to do with his skull and/or brain, which means the cranium (skull casing) is oversized by two or three times and may be shaped to look like a brain, have big, obvious, pulsating veins running through it, or the skin and skull may actually be completely or semi-transparent so the giant brain can be seen through it. In extreme cases, the character may be tiny, thin and frail with a head/skull as large as his body, possibly making it difficult for the mutant to move without having the big head supported by a special neck brace, motorized (or hover craft) wheelchair or mechanical exoskeleton.

13-18% Copycat. Despite the name, this mutant can have any range of appearances from gnome or goblin to humanoid feline, to a human-looking individual with a minor or major deformity. Tends to also have an odd skin tone or texture and strange eyes. Possesses the Major Super Abilities of *Copy Physical Structure* and *Mimic*.

19-23% Doctor Jekyll and Pretty Boy Death. Half of this mutant's face and/or body looks human or attractive, and the other half looks twisted, eaten by acid, or otherwise deformed. Has one or two Minor Super Abilities of choice and the Major abilities of Multiple Lives and Multiple Beings, the latter with a weird twist. The Multiple Beings power can only be used to create *two* selves. One is an entirely ugly and brutish savage with the Major ability of *Animal Metamorphosis* or *Disruptive Touch* (plus whatever



usual powers the character has). The other is a cold, attractive human or humanoid with the powers of *Divine Aura* or *Shapechange* (plus whatever usual powers the character has). Both have the same attributes and alignment, though their approach and dispositions are different, the ugly one crude and savage, the pretty one refine, but cold and calculating.

24-29% Firestarter. The character can look like anything with either a minor or major deformity or oddity of some kind. In addition, the character's eyes have a red tint and glow or actually smolder when angry and when using one of his powers. 10% are attractive and/or look completely human except for the eyes. This character has a number of problems. 1. The mutant is fascinated by fire and could spend hours watching fires large and small. 2. There is a 01-50% chance of being a pyromaniac, starting fires to extract revenge and when angry or sad. 3. Causes combustibles to ignite into flame when angry or terrified (same as the Magic Spell: Spontaneous Combustion, only as an uncontrolled side effect power). 4. Has a low threshold for cold. Temperatures below 60 degrees Fahrenheit feel like freezing. Has the Major Super Ability of *Alter Physical Structure: Fire* or *Control Elemental Force: Fire*, and the Minor powers of *Impervious to Fire and Heat*, *Energy Expulsion: Fire* and *Super-Vision: Infrared & Ultraviolet*.

30-35% Hulking Man-Beast. A giant brute of a mutant, 7-9 feet (2.1 to 2.7 m) tall, barrel-chested, covered in thick hair or animal fur, brutish face with thick eyebrow ridges, and an apish or muzzle-like mouth. The arms and hands may also be unusually long and/or the body bent forward, giving the character something of a bear or gorilla-like appearance. In addition, the character may have one or two other animal-like features (roll on the A2. Animal Trait Defect Table). Powers are one of the following, pick one or roll a 1D4 for a random determination.

1. Dumb Animal: I.Q. attribute is 1D4+1, and possesses the Major Super Abilities of *Animal Abilities* or *Animal Metamorphosis* (pick one) and the Minor abilities of *Superhuman Strength* and *Heightened Sense of Smell*.

2. Dumb Brute: I.Q. attribute is 1D4+2, and possesses the Major Super Abilities of *Supernatural Strength* and *Invulnerability* or the Minor abilities of *Superhuman Strength* and *Heightened Sense of Smell*.

3. The Beastly Brain: Has an average to high intelligence, +1D4 I.Q. bonus, and possesses the Major Super Abilities of any two "Control" powers plus *Mechano-link* or *Negate Super Abilities*.

4. The Good Beast: Has an average to high M.A., gets a +1D4 bonus, and possesses the Major Super Abilities of *Lycanthropy* and *Karmic Power* or *Mimic* or *Natural Com-*

bat Ability (two abilities total). In the alternative, the character has the Minor abilities of *Superhuman Strength*, *Healing Factor*, and the *Heightened Senses of Smell*, *Taste* and *Touch* or *Extraordinary Speed* instead of the Heightened Senses.

36-41% Iron Juggernaut. A big bruiser of a mutant, is muscular, solid as a brick and at least six or seven feet (1.8 or 2.1 m) tall. Moreover, he has the Major Super Abilities of *Supernatural Strength* and *Bio-Armor* or *Alter Physical Structure: Metal* and either one other straightforward Major Ability (like Growth, Energy Absorption, Disruptive Touch, Item Reduction, etc.) or two Minor ones. Problem is, the character suffers from one of the following deficiencies or defects. Pick one or roll 1D6 to make a random selection.

1. Has the brain of a flea. The I.Q. attribute is 1D4+1, making the mutant as smart as a sack of hammers. Without a leader or friend to guide him, the character becomes easily tricked, confused, distracted and even frightened (though he's likely to lash out with one of his powers). The maximum number of skills the flea brain can learn is 1D4+6 and then only simple skills like driving a car or truck, shooting a gun, swimming, climbing, domestic skills and similar, without benefit of any bonus. Counting past 20 and reading anything more than a street sign or children's storybook is considered a difficult task.

2. Suffers from uncontrolled anger. Hyper aggressive, this mutant tries to solve all of his problems with his fists and intimidation. He is quick to answer any insult or accept any challenge, and is easily drawn into fights. When locked in combat the character tends not to notice anything going on around him, and when really mad, the brute fights like a demon to the point of collapse and even to the death.

3. Has the mind (and innocence) of a child. I.Q. is 1D4+4, so the character is not really stupid as much as he is childlike: playful, friendly, trusting, naive, easily distracted or duped, doesn't always understand what's going on, forgets things and has trouble learning skills. May know as many as six skills, but all are without any bonus and advance at only +2% per level of experience. The character almost certainly needs a "big brother" or "best friend" to guide him and tell him what to do. ("That's right Skullsmasher, smash the door down and knockout anybody who threatens us. What? Yes, you can play with the puppy when we get back to our hideout.")

4. Has the speed of a snail. This hulk may be big and strong and have other powers, but he is as slow as they come, with a Speed attribute of 1D4+1. Speed based powers are not available to this character, nor should any that significantly boost Physical Prowess.

5. Has a fear of fire, heights, mice (and rodent mutants), or whatever. The player or G.M. can pick something or the Phobia Table in the Insanity section of the **Heroes Unlimited™ RPG** can be used to make a random determination.

6. Erratic Power Levels. Super Abilities other than the Iron transforming one function erratically. Roll percentile to see which is the case for that day (24 hour period). **01-50%** Half power (reduce damage, range, duration, etc.,

by half). **51-80%** Out of control! No combat bonuses apply, range is increased by 50%, duration is half and all other stats are unchanged. **81-100%** Overpowered, damage is increased by 50% and duration doubled; all other stats and aspects are unchanged.

42-47% Living Ghost. Has some deformity or frightening countenance but all and all, isn't so too bad to look at as freaks go. The character has the Major Super Ability of *Alter Physical Structure: Mist* or *Invisibility* or *Intangibility* (pick one) and one or two Minor abilities of choice. The problem is the super ability cannot be turned off, it is always on! Only with great effort and concentration (1D6x10 seconds) can the mutant turn it off for 2D4+2 minutes at a time (no more than four times a day), about long enough to eat or briefly touch another living being. This is living hell as the character feels isolated from the world and tends to suffer from feelings of melancholy, loneliness, frustration and detachment from humanity.

48-53% Living Juggernaut. This powerhouse has the Major Super Abilities of *Growth* and *Supernatural Strength* or *Super-Energy Expulsion* and the Minor Abilities of *Healing Factor* and *Energy Resistance* or *Superhuman Strength*. In the alternative, the character can have any one *Alter Physical Structure* ability plus *Invulnerability* or *Supernatural Strength* or *Energy Absorption* and one Minor Ability of choice. The problem is, the character suffers from one of the deficiencies or defects presented under the *Iron Juggernaut*. Pick one or roll 1D6 to make a random selection.

54-59% Lurker. May be puny and scrawny looking, sometimes with elongated fingers and limbs, or monkey-like or relatively human-like in general physique and may even be muscular, but the face is horribly disfigured, misshapen or weird (P.B. attribute is only 1D4+1). The character's unfortunate appearance and super abilities cause him to be a lurker or hidden one – an individual who tends to like to stay out of the limelight and hide in and act from the shadows. Often wears a full facial mask or hood if active as a costumed hero or villain. Has one set of the following abilities: Major Super Abilities: *Cloaking* and *Invisibility*, or *Chameleon* and *Shrink*, or *Darkness Control* and *Teleport*. Or, the Minor Abilities of: *Adhesion*, *Extraordinary Physical Prowess* and *Nightstalking* or *Advanced Sight* and *Nightvision*.

60-66% Machine Freak. Rather resembles an Edward Scissorhands, complete with a pale or grey (even silvery) complexion, bits of metal, nuts, bolts and nails stuck to his face and body, and hands that can turn into machine parts. Has the Major Super Abilities of *Alter Limbs*, *Mag-netism* and *Mechano-Link* plus one Minor ability of choice.

67-71% Nocturne. Has the Minor Super Abilities of *Nightvision*, *Heightened Sense of Hearing*, *Nightstalking* or *Radar*, and one Minor power of choice. Or the Major abilities of *Darkness Control* and *Cloaking* (and, if the G.M. allows it, one Minor ability of choice). Problem is, the character is as pale as a ghost, has large eyes, and is light sensitive in the extreme. That means that sunlight and bright artificial light blinds the mutant (-10 to strike, parry and dodge), requiring protective goggles (not just sunglasses) and clothing that covers the body. Why? Be-

cause sunlight actually hurts this character, doing 1D4 points of damage for every 10 minutes of exposure.

72-77% Protoplasmic being with the Major Super Abilities of *Alter Facial Features & Physical Stature* and either *Alter Limbs or Shapechange* or *Stretching*. The only problem is the character has no face of his own, a P.B. attribute of 1D4 (no bonuses apply), and a face and body that looks like a melted candle or walking goop with a slit for a mouth, a tiny lump with two pinholes for a nose (or a flat, ape nose with large nostrils), a pair of dark eyes and a pair of bumps on the side of the head for ears. No body hair or distinguishing features for this mutant in its natural form, but can appear normal and look like anybody, even a movie star, thanks to the mutant's super abilities, however, the character turns back into a humanoid shape of protoplasmic ooze when sleeping, rendered unconscious, or killed. The character may also find it difficult to keep an altered form when sick or seriously injured (under 10 Hit Points).

78-83% Skeleton Man. Actually the character may be human, animal or an animal-like humanoid in shape (if the latter, the character can be rolled up using the **After the Bomb®** animal creation rules of the A2. Animal Trait Defect Table also in this section). Whatever the general shape may be, it is obscured by the fact that the outer physical body is barely visible as anything more than a slightly visible outline/shell encasing a glowing skeleton during the day or in bright light. The outer body is not visible at all in the dark, only the skeleton. Thus, the individual appears as an eerily glowing walking skeleton! Has the Major Super Abilities of *Control Radiation or Disruptive Touch* and *Negative Matter or Super Energy Expulsion*. A third choice would be the following set of Minor abilities: *Nightstalking*, *Impervious to Fire and Heat*, *Horror Factor* and *Energy Expulsion: Energy or X-Ray Vision*. **Note:** This character is likely to consider himself to be a hideous freak or monster, a sentiment that is reinforced by all who see him and run screaming. Likely to become reclusive, antisocial or disassociated with people. If evil, the character may become so envious of beautiful people that he becomes a homicidal maniac who loves to enslave, belittle, hurt, torment and destroy beautiful beings.

84-89% Speedster. Another freak or monster that may look relatively normal, deceptively slow or built like a jack rabbit or cheetah. Their most distinguishing characteristic is the ability to move like lightning. Half use speed as a defense mechanism (i.e. run away from danger) and tend to be shy or heroic despite themselves, the other half revel in their power and may even overestimate their ability and mortality, taking unnecessary risks and acting as if they are indestructible. Pick one of the following Major Super Abilities of *Sonic Speed* or *Spin at High Velocity* or *Sonic Flight* and one (or two if the G.M. feels generous) Minor ability of choice. In the alternative, the character can select the following set of Minor abilities: *Extraordinary Speed or Wingless Flight* plus *Extraordinary Physical Prowess*, *Heightened Sense of Touch* and *Extraordinary Physical Endurance or Radar*.

90-94% Ugly and Uglier. P.B. attribute is 1D4+4. Has the Minor ability of *Multiple Limbs* (any type) and the Major abilities of *Tentacles* and *Multiple Being/Selves*, only each

additional self is more misshapen and uglier than the previous one by -1 P.B. point (bottoms out at a P.B. of 2).

95-00% Untouchable. Appearance can be almost anything. Has the Major Super Abilities of *Force Aura* and *Create Force Field or Gravity Manipulation or Control Static Electricity*. These mutants have an aversion to, and fear of, being touched and usually avoid it. Even a handshake or pat on the back is unpleasant and dodged whenever possible. Not surprisingly, these characters tend to be cool and aloof, standoffish and/or arrogant. However, when they allow themselves to be touched, or reach out to touch someone, it should be seen as a great honor and show of trust. Many (01-70%) also suffer from the Neurosis: Personal Cleanliness or similar obsession with staying clean, covered and/or untouched. Other phobias and obsessions (hate) involve torture and being caged/chained/strapped down. Presumably all these phobias stem from traumas, experiments and torture endured while in captivity.

Misfits & Missteps

Mutant Missteps and Misfits are lab spawned losers who don't make the grade. Many are strange looking while others look fine, but all are terribly deficient in some important area.

The creation process can be done the same as usual, with the characters falling into the *Experiment* and *Mutant Power Categories*.

After the character has been rolled up and super abilities selected, roll on the following Misfit table of modifiers and defects for the character. Typically roll only once, but if the poor little genetic mishap is really a mess, roll two or three times for multiple and cumulative penalties and odd problems.

01-10% Low Intelligence & Scattered Mind. Re-roll I.Q. attribute at a miserable 1D4+4. The old I.Q. number reflects the character's intelligence before his genes were tweaked, or it was the ability before something went wrong, and remains as a painful memory of what once was. **Other Penalties:** Tends to forget appointments, can't remember number sequences (i.e., telephone numbers, combinations to locks, addresses, etc.), mathematics is extremely difficult (-20% on any math skills, Navigation and Chemistry), loses track of time and has a poor sense of direction (gets confused and lost easily).

11-20% Undesirable. Re-roll M.A. attribute at a miserable 1D6. People instantly look upon the character as a second-class citizen, geek, low-life, unsavory or undesirable. Or simply as invisible, not bad, just unimportant and beneath their notice.

21-30% Unfocused and Unnerved. Re-roll M.E. attribute at a miserable 1D6+1. The mutant has trouble staying calm and focused (-5% skill penalty, -20% when under stress), as well as able to work on the same thing for more than an hour at a time (attention deficit disorder). That means the character's mind tends to wander, lead him to work on several things but rarely finish any of them. The mutant is also frightened easily (-2 to save vs Horror Fac-

tor) and more susceptible to intimidation, interrogation and screaming when startled. The more stressful or dangerous the situation, the more nervous and unfocused the character (-1 on initiative). Some respond to stress by becoming chatty, talking quickly about anything, which may distract and annoy their comrades or alert a hidden enemy to their presence.

31-40% All Thumbs. Re-roll P.P. attribute at a miserable 1D4+4. The old P.P. number reflects the character's Physical Prowess before having his genes tweaked, or it was the ability before something went terribly wrong, and remains as a painful memory of what it once was. Other Penalties: Tends to be clumsy, -10% on all skills that require any level of manual dexterity, including piloting, computer and prowl; -1 to strike with gun or thrown weapon, even on an aimed or called shot.

41-50% Undue stress on the body. *Every time* the character uses a super ability, the head throbs, a trickle of blood runs down from the nose and he suffers 1D6 points of damage (subtract from S.D.C. first). Depending on the circumstance, using his super abilities could *kill* the character!

51-60% Power Deficiency. Reduce damage, range, duration, etc., of all super abilities by half!

61-70% Hyper-Powered. Can not minimize or moderate abilities, thus they are always unleashed at maximum power – full damage, full duration, and 30% greater range. All other stats and aspects of the ability are unchanged.

71-80% Powers are out of control. Roll percentile dice *every time* a power is used. 01-50% means no combat bonuses apply, range is increased by 50%, duration is half and all other stats are unchanged. 51-00% means the power is in overdrive, damage is increased by 50% and duration doubled. All other stats and aspects are unchanged. Beings with this problem can kill somebody or cause more destruction than they intend to.

81-90% Weird Energy Side Effect. *Every time* the super being uses one of his powers,

it has one of two effects (roll percentile). 01-30% Spontaneous combustion occurs with a tiny fire appearing within 10 feet (3 m) of the mutant. Initially, it is small enough to be stomped out, but if left untended, there is a fifty percent chance it will set other combustibles on fire. 31-60% The character levitates a foot (0.3 m) off the ground, drawing attention to himself and is -2 to dodge while so suspended. 61-90% The mutant crackles with energy. Anybody who touches him takes 2D6 points of damage and has a 01-50% chance of being knocked off their feet. If so, they lose initiative and one melee action/attack. 91-00% Drains the super being, causing him to feel weak and lose one melee attack/action for that melee round.

91-00% Power Backlash. *Every time* the super being uses one of his powers, there is a power surge or whip-lash that inflicts 1D6 damage to anybody within a 10 foot (3 m) radius of him; 2D6 damage if they are touching him at the time.

Monsters

To create a genetic monster, one can use any of the previous or following tables, or their own imagination. Ultimately what makes a mutant a "monster" is not his or her appearance, but the character's alignment and mental state. Feel free to use the following table to make that determination.

01-05% Hates the world and everybody in it! Diabolic alignment. This evil misanthrope lives to cause mayhem and destruction. He or she may arrange things to make a fortune along the way, but the villain's ultimate goal is to reap chaos, suffering and death. Insanities include: Sadism (loves to inflict pain on others and watch suffering; is a big admirer of his own work and others like him), Narcissism (he is the best there is, and everything revolves around what he wants, needs, desires, enjoys; nobody and nothing else matters, cannot empathize with others), and one of the following from the Psychosis Table: Superman Syndrome, God Syndrome or Hysterical Aggressive Reaction (only he reacts this way when others belittle, mock or treat him as if he is not as important or powerful as the Narcissist sees himself). May also have one or two obsessions. See the Insanity section, pages 28-33, in HU2 for details.

06-15% Hates the organization that created him. Any evil alignment. Obsessed with ruining and destroying the organization that created him or turned him into a monster. Should he succeed, the villain will either kill himself, or find a new organization or group (the super player characters, perhaps) to destroy. May have one additional Random Insanity or Phobia. See HU2 pages 28-32.

16-25% Hates Humans. Any evil alignment, but likely to help and/or defend, protect and avenge fellow mutants from human persecution and exploitation (especially if the villain is Aberrant). That may make the evildoer loved and respected (if a little feared) among the mutant population, but he is still an evil extremist who despises humans. In fact, he hates humans so much that the villain frequently raids human businesses, mugs innocent bystanders (often maiming or killing them), and engages in large and small terrorist acts, wholesale slaughter and other brutal acts of retribution to punish humans. In this monster's mind, all humans, including women and children, are demons or vermin to be hurt, used and stomped out (killed) for their crimes against mutantkind. Any mutants and nonhumans who stand on the side of humans (like super-heroes) are traitors to be despised and either turned to see things his way, or destroyed. Ironically, this character may stop short of being a mutant super-patriot, and doesn't fight so much for a cause, as for pure and simple bloody retribution.

26-35% Hates Beauty. This Diabolic or Miscreant evil being enjoys tormenting and disfiguring others who look normal, attractive and beautiful. This may include acts of torture and mutilation performed by the monster himself, and/or orchestrating events (explosions, accidents, etc.,) that cause shrapnel, fire and other reactions that are likely to disfigure and maim its victims rather than kill. The mu-



tant, himself, is either ugly or deformed, or sees himself as being ugly and horribly disfigured even if he is not (the latter being all in his head and the fiend's most consuming insanity). Also roll once on the Psychosis Insanity Table on page 29 of HU2.

36-40% Hates Mutants! Especially weak and deformed ones, and those who suck up to humans, like so-called "super-heroes." Hates what he is and subconsciously seeks to ultimately destroy himself by destroying those whom he sees as ugly reflections of himself. That makes this fiend a homicidal maniac and mass murderer obsessed with stalking and killing fellow mutants and heroic super beings. Any evil alignment works, but probably Miscreant or Diabolic works best.

In the alternative, the villain may believe fellow mutants, especially misfit and rejects, are incapable of leading useful, productive lives on their own, and need a leader or master to guide them. Thus, he seeks to subjugate/enslave them under his iron fist rule, and force them to do as he decrees and, in truth, fulfill his dreams, goals and desires.

41-45% Obsessed Perfectionist. Wants Beauty, Power and Love. Strangely enough, this narcissistic villain is obsessed with modifying himself to make himself beautiful and/or supremely powerful, and therefore (at least in his own mind), something to be revered and loved by all who see him. Miscreant evil alignment, and willing to do anything – lie, steal, cheat, blackmail and kill – without regret or hesitation, to get what he wants. The character will also subject himself to cruel and unusual genetic experiments, but will destroy those involved if the results are not absolutely perfect (which they never are). The obses-

sion always drives this villain to want more and to lash out, hurt and kill those who oppose him or refuse to give him the love and adoration he knows he deserves.

In the alternative, this lunatic may become a scientist himself (or sponsor of such experiments) and engage in countless genetic experiments in the hopes of developing the ultimate human or super being (beautiful and powerful), but only succeeds in cranking out a succession of freaks, misfits, rejects and monsters. A sort of criminal mastermind and a monster (human or mutant himself) in the background, responsible for creating mutant villains and horrors that lead to conflicts and adventures. Any evil alignment.

46-55% The Master of the Human Race. A trauma and/or revenge based psychosis in which the villain has decided all humans are lesser beings to be enslaved, dominated and punished (belittled, hurt and killed) by mutantkind, ideally, with himself in a high, or the highest, position of power. Any evil or Anarchist alignment is appropriate, but probably Miscreant. May roll on the Random Insanity Table, page 28 of HU2.

56-65% Megalomaniac/World Conqueror. Aberrant evil with his own unique world,view and code of ethics and honor. Ultimately this power crazed maniac wants to rule the world, or as much of it as possible. All people, including fellow mutants, are inferiors to be conquered and ruled. The character may be a nobody character at the start of his career as a super-villain, or an already infamous and feared madman. This character should be a big thinker and mastermind type guy with a high I.Q. and M.A., and a network of henchmen, spies, informers, and freelancers (super beings and ordinary humans) as he

works to build his own global criminal organization. Those with an established power base and years of success may already have an organization in place (see the **Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG** for organization creation rules) or rule a (third world) nation. May have 1-3 additional obsessions, phobias or quirks. He is almost certain to command at least one group of 4-6 super-villains whom he regards as his elite enforcers.

66-75% Predatory Hunter. Anarchist or evil alignment (any). Sees most weaker beings as prey to be hunted, killed and eaten! This man-eater may be a cannibal (eats other mutants) or prey on other life forms, like humans, or animal-like mutants. As a predator, this character does not hesitate to use force on anybody who threatens or bothers it. The worst of the lot (Diabolic) kill for both food and pleasure and may offer his services as a tracker, bounty hunter or assassin.

76-85% Predatory Instinct. This monster is not automatically a murderer or man-eater, but is driven by predatory instincts that make him aggressive, bossy, threatening, violent and not afraid to kill. Often a lone wolf or freelance assassin, enforcer, leg-breaker or other criminal known for his ruthlessness. Self-preservation is also a powerful instinct that may compel this villain to sacrifice friends and allies, or do whatever it takes to win or survive. Anarchist or any evil alignment.

86-95% Psychotic Game Player. Typically a brilliant but twisted mind (I.Q. 18 or higher) and Anarchist or evil (any) alignment who loves to orchestrate sweeping plans, schemes and games that torment, terrify, and challenge the authorities, military/government and super beings. The bottom line is this nut loves the challenge of the game almost as much as winning. ("Oops, you failed to find the bomb in time and now 30,000 people are dead and a half a million are injured. Better luck next time.") Not every plot is on a large scale or puts thousands of lives in danger, but at least a third to half do, and others will be insidious and may target specific super-heroes and teams, or organizations.

96-00% Serial Killer. Diabolic or Miscreant evil monster that likes to kill just for the fun of it. A particular "type" may be the killer's primary target (i.e., someone who looks like mom, or the genetic doctors who created or augmented him, or criminals, or blondes, or blacks, or shapechangers, or energy expulsers, or smart people, or mutants who are animal-like in appearance, or just about anyone), but this killing machine is not afraid to use force or kill anybody who gets in his way or even annoys him. May be a quiet, cold, calculated killer who stalks his victims and plans carefully, or a wild spree-killer who strikes when the mood hits him, or an aggressive, predator type who acts superior or is a bully.

Eugenic Animal Mutants

A Giant Sourcebook of Mutants

The *After the Bomb®* Role-Playing Game is a ready-made giant sourcebook of mutant animals ideal for use in *Heroes Unlimited™*. It contains complete stats for over 100 mutant animals, plus chimeras and hybrids, as well as rules for creating your own mutant animals, plus special mutant Animal Powers, Animal Abilities and Animal Psionics, along with other good stuff. Understand that *After the Bomb®* is designed to function as both a stand-alone game and as a mutant animal sourcebook for *Heroes Unlimited™, Second Edition*. If you have not taken a look at this RPG, you should.

Genetic Mutation Tables

The following tables and information present random abilities and defects resulting from experiments in genetic engineering to create super beings (human and inhuman). Most subjects either start out human or as animals. The latter is often manipulated to have humanoid traits, i.e., a human-like shape with two arms, hands with an opposable thumb (though not always), and two bipedal legs and the ability to stand and walk upright.

Considering *many* of the mutants in this book are the result of genetic "experiments," *random* determination of traits, powers and abilities are probably the most appropriate and fun; roll percentile dice (two different colored 10-sided dice; one color indicates tens, the other ones).

A1. Animal Traits, Features & Powers

Roll on this table if the character started out as an animal or if animal genes were spliced into a human being in an attempt to give him greater physical abilities and/or animal powers.

Randomly roll 1D4+2 times on this table or select 4-6 features as desired. Then, due to the experimental nature of genetic manipulation, roll 1D4+1 times on the accompanying *A2. Animal Trait Defect Table* that follows. If the same trait or defect is rolled (with the exception of *Multiple Animal Traits* and a couple others) ignore the repeated result and roll again. The results, while impressive, can be monstrous and have their share of tragic flaws, penalties and deformity.

01-03% Adhesion. Same as the Minor Super Ability, see page 228 of HU2.

04-05% Ambidextrous: Character can use the right and left (and multiple?) hands with equal skill. Adds one melee action/attack, +1 to parry, +5% to the following skills: Climbing, Pick Locks, Palming, Concealment and other sleight of hand, as well as mechanical and electrical repair skills. Ambidextrous is not applicable to tentacles or tails.



06-08% Animal Metamorphosis. The Major Super Ability, see page 253 of HU2.

09-10% Antlers or Horns: These are natural weapons used in ramming or ripping with the head and should reflect the type of animal from which that gene was taken (i.e., rhino, bull, ram, deer, etc.). Single horn does 2D4 damage for small to medium-sized, 4D4 large. Bull or steer horns do 3D6 damage, antlers 2D6. Limited to one or two horns or a pair of antlers.

11-12% Chameleon. The Major Super Ability, see page 255 of HU2.

13-14% Claws: Characters can select only one type of claw. Claws are usually on *both* the *hands* and *feet*, however, as genetic mutations, the claws on the hands may be different than those on the feet or have claws only on the hands or feet. Claws are usually *noticeable* whether or not the character has full human looks. **Note:** In all cases, add any P.S. attribute damage bonus to the claw damage. Pick one or roll percentile for random determination.

01-20% Bird Talons: 1D6 damage.

21-40% Bird of Prey Talons: Small to Medium-Size: 2D6 damage or 3D6 for large.

41-50% Razor-Sharp Nails: While the claws look like ordinary fingernails, they are actually honed to a fine edge, and can be used to slice, rip and tear. While they are the most easily disguised of the different types of claws, they are also the most delicate and can be easily damaged in combat, especially when wielded against armor or hard surfaces. Typically inflict 1D6 damage.

51-70% Retractable Cat Claws. Ordinarily pulled back into the creature's digits, and concealed in the fingers of the character. Fingers will be thicker than normal and the character's fingertips will either seem to be without nails (blunt flesh), or will have a noticeable pit, or will end in a small, unusual, pointed nail. While deadly, retractable claws are also vulnerable and can be damaged if used carelessly. Another advantage of retractable claws is being able to use the hands or feet quietly, without the clattering of the claws. Damage is 2D6 +P.S. damage bonus if any.

71-90% Climbing Claws. In addition to being useful as weapons (2D4 damage), the claws are also hooked properly for climbing. Since they must be strong enough to support the character's weight, they are among the most damage resistant claws. If the character has the *Climbing skill*, climbing Claws add +20% to the base skill (no bonus to rappelling/rope climbing). -5% to Prowl due to clawed feet.

91-00% Heavy Claws: Massive, usually curved or hooked, these "bear claws" are the heavy artillery of the animal arsenal. Damage is 2D6 plus P.S. bonus, and the claws are designed for use on anything from flesh to rock without taking damage. -15% to Prowl due to clawed feet.

15-17% Control Insects & Arachnids. The Major Super Ability, see page 261 of HU2.

18-19% Digging & Tunneling. Digging is the ability to dig through dirt, mud or sand. The character's Physical Strength determines the speed of the digging. Only the character's body moves through the earth, no tunnel is left

behind. Characters with a P.S. of less than 13 move 3 feet (0.9 m) per melee, a P.S. of 13 through 18 means 4 feet (1.2 m) per melee, P.S. of 19 through 24 digs 5 feet (1.5 m) per melee, and P.S. 25 or better digs at 6 feet (1.8 m) per melee. Remember, this process of digging does not leave a passable tunnel.

Tunneling is a digging process that leaves a passable tunnel. Tunnels near the surface can be used as pit traps. Tunneling can be done at half the speed of Digging. Characters with Tunneling can also do digging. Tunnels that are made quickly are not permanent, and can be collapsed by gunfire, earthquakes, traffic vibrations, etc. However, characters can put in more time to *pack* the walls and ceilings, or they can use building materials to make their underground structures more secure, or even permanent.

20-22% Energy Expulsion: Electricity. Same as the Minor Super Ability, see page 230 of HU2.

23-25% Energy Expulsion: Light. Same as the Minor Super Ability, see page 231 of HU2.

26-28% Extra Intelligence: (I.Q.). +1D4 to I.Q. and the character with this *animal* based intelligence is +5% on the following skills: Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, Tracking (humanoids), Track Animals, Land Navigation and Wilderness Survival. If these skills are not known to the character, he automatically gets them at a base skill of 35%, but the skill is instinctive and does not go up with level.

29-30% Extraordinary Mental Affinity (M.A.). Same as the Minor Super Ability, see page 231 of HU2.

31-33% Extraordinary Physical Endurance (P.E.). Same as the Minor Super Ability, see page 232 of HU2.

34-36% Extraordinary Physical Prowess (P.P.). Same as the Minor Super Ability, see page 232 of HU2.

37-40% Extraordinary Physical Beauty (P.B.). Same as the Minor Super Ability, see page 232 of HU2.

41-43% Gills: In addition to having a pair of lungs, the mutant also has gills. These organs are just like the gills of fish and allow the mutant to breathe water for an unlimited period of time. The gills are located behind or under the jaw bone, behind the ears or spaced between the ribs. The gills must be exposed to function.

44-48% Great Physical Strength (P.S.). Strength is not just a matter of putting on more muscles, since how the muscles are connected, and the density of the muscle mass are also of critical importance. Only *ONE* type of Brute, Bestly or Crushing P.S. can be acquired.

01-33% Brute Strength. +1D6+5 to P.S. It is still in the range of human beings, but any character with a P.S. of 17 or greater is considered to have *Brute* strength and can carry 20 times their P.S., as well as lift 50 times their P.S. in pounds. Their maximum P.S. is 40.

34-75% Bestly Strength. +2D6+12 to P.S. Characters with *Bestly Strength* are roughly the same as *Extraordinary P.S.* and can carry 100 times their P.S. and lift 200 times their P.S. Their maximum P.S. is 50.

76-00% Crushing or Supernatural Strength. +3D6+20 to P.S. A character whose strength is *Crushing* is the same as *Supernatural*, and can carry 300 times their P.S.

and lift 500 times their P.S. Note: Add the usual P.S. attribute damage bonus to the damage noted below. The damage bonus can be left off if the character is trying to *pull his punch* or the attack is only a slap. Also, unless stated otherwise, a bite or head butt will inflict half the normal punch damage (with no P.S. damage bonus).

P.S. 15 or less: Inflicts 1D4 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 2D4 on a full strength punch, or 3D6 S.D.C. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).

P.S. 16 to 20: Inflicts 1D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 2D6 on a full strength punch, or 4D6 on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).

P.S. 21 to 25: Inflicts 2D4 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 3D6 on a full strength punch, and 6D6 with a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).

P.S. 26 to 30: Inflicts 2D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 4D6 on a full strength punch, or 1D4x10 on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).

P.S. 31 to 35: Inflicts 2D6+2 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 5D6 on a full strength punch, or 1D6x10 on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).

P.S. 36 to 40: Inflicts 3D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 6D6 on a full strength punch, or 2D4x10 on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).

P.S. 41 to 50: Inflicts 4D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 1D6x10 on a full strength punch, or 2D6x10 on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).

P.S. 51 to 70: Inflicts 5D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 2D4x10 on a full strength punch, or 3D6x10 on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks).

(Rifts@ Mega-Damage Note: Characters with Crushing/Supernatural P.S. automatically inflict *Mega-Damage*.)

49-51% Heightened Senses. Most mutant animal characters have the full range of normal human senses, including color vision, stereoscopic vision (depth perception), keen hearing, smell, touch, and taste. Pick one or make a random roll determination.

01-15% Advanced Vision means that the character can see double the usual distance and detail of normal human vision.

16-30% Nightvision is the ability to see at night. There must be starlight or some other light source available to the character; 1000 foot (305 m) range/distance. If the character is in a completely blacked out area, a cave, for example, then nothing will be visible; is as blind as anyone else.

31-40% See Electromagnetic Waves means the character can see man-made and natural electromagnetic energy. Natural magnetic energy radiates from the earth above the ground and underwater. Some scientists believe that dolphins and whales can see electromagnetic signatures and use them like beacons, signposts and trails by which to navigate and travel. In addition to the advantage there may be of seeing this energy (i.e., locating a particular device radiating it), the mutant can use the energy the same as a dolphin to mark and remember trails and locations and find his way back. Adds +10% bonus to Land Navigation skill and +5% to Surveillance and Tailing.

41-50% Ultraviolet Vision is an extension of normal vision beyond purple and violet into the (normally invisible) ultraviolet.

51-60% Advanced Hearing gives the character the ability to hear very faint sounds (light footsteps, small animals breathing). The character can also overhear conversations at a much greater distance than is normally possible. +1 on initiative.

61-70% Advanced Smell allows the character to detect very faint scent traces. Tracking by smell (as a bloodhound) is possible at 50% +5% per level. Characters can also recognize the distinct smells of individuals and can detect when people experience extremes of emotions (60% +2% per level of experience). This is occasionally used as a lie-detector, but is rather unreliable.

71-80% Advanced Taste lets a character analyze the contents of any food or beverage, with a 75% +2% per level chance of detecting poison, and a 50% +3% per level chance of identifying even the most subtle of trace elements.

81-90% Advanced Touch gives the character an increased chance (+10% skill bonus) to perform delicate actions and skills like picking locks and sleight of hand (palming, etc.). Characters can also recognize very slight differences in texture.

91-00% Sonar is used by bouncing high-pitched sound waves off of objects which enables the character to "see" the locations, shapes, and sizes of objects. This power can be used in any light conditions, including complete darkness.

52-53% Hold Breath: Many animals can stay underwater for extended periods of time. The amount of time provided by this ability is 2D6+6 minutes. This is the amount of time that a character can manage to Hold Breath comfortably. **Note:** Just because a character can Hold Breath does not mean they can swim. The Swimming skill is still needed.

54-56% Horror Factor. Same as the Minor Super Ability, see page 234 of HU2.

57-59% Internal Compass: The character always knows magnetic north even if lost, and has a very good sense of direction; +30% to the Land Navigation skill and +15% to the Navigation and Astronomy skills. Extreme magnetic fields (say, right next to a huge electrical generator) can sometime screw up an Internal Compass, but the character will be well aware of the disturbance.

60-62% Legs & Feet Made for Running: Powerful, muscular legs and limber spine, add 3D6+12 to the character's speed and +1 to dodge. Roll or pick one for the type/look of the legs.

01-33% Canine or Feline: Has animal haunches, legs and feet resembling a dog walking on its hind legs. Runs in a loping manner on all fours and can leap an additional +6 feet (1.8 m) high or lengthwise with a running start (half that if standing still).

34-66% Hoofed: Horse-like haunches, legs and hoofed feet. Add an additional 2D6+8 to speed, one foot (0.3 m) to the mutant's height, and a kick does an extra 1D6 damage. Runs on two legs.

67-00% Human: Muscular human legs capable of good speed.

63-65% Leaping. A typical human can leap about four feet (1.2 m) across, and three feet (0.9 m) high without using a pole or other object for leverage. Increase by 50% with a *full speed* running start.

01-33% Standard Animal Leaping Ability: Includes canines, horses, goats, sheep and bovine. Can leap the equal to their body height or length, across and high. Half that for mutants larger than 8 feet (2.4 m) tall (Size Level 15+). Needs a running start, half the height and distance without one.

34-66% Rodent Animal Leaping Ability: Can leap twice their height or length both lengthwise and height-wise, and four times leaping down from a height (no injury, lands on feet or all fours). Not available to mutant animals larger than Size Level 14 nor birds. Common to rodents, and mustelids (weasels, ferrets, etc.). Needs a running start; *half* the distance or height without one.

67-00% Feline Leaping Ability: Twice their height or length lengthwise and three times their height or length leaping straight up from a *standing still* position! Increase the leaping range/distance by 50% with a running start. Can leap down from a height that is five times their size and land without injury. This ability is typically exclusive to felines, with only a few exceptions.

66-68% Multiple Limbs. Same as the Minor Super Ability, see page 235 of HU2.

69-71% Natural Body Armor. Animals with *natural armor* like alligators, armadillos, rhinoceros and turtles, can transfer that toughness to their human form, though the body is likely to be bulkier and the skin firmer, harder and tougher than normal. Those with Heavy and Extra-Heavy armor *may* have an obvious shell, tough thick hide, or scales for armor. This gives them an Armor Rating (A.R.) and additional S.D.C. Each type of body armor is a separate power, so a character can have only **one** Natural Body Armor. Pick or roll percentile.

01-30% Light: A.R. 9, S.D.C. +25.

31-60% Medium: A.R. 11, S.D.C. +40.

61-90% Heavy: A.R. 14, S.D.C. +60.

91-00% Extra-Heavy: A.R. 16, S.D.C. +80.

72-74% Nightstalking. Same as the Minor Super Ability, see page 236 of HU2.

75-77% Running: Extraordinary Speed. Same as the Minor Super Ability found on page 232 of HU2. May be combined with Legs Made for Running and Predator Burst.

78-79% Running: Predator Burst. Natural predators are capable of an amazing burst of energy when they *first* enter close combat with their prey. **Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, only in the *first melee round*, and +2 extra attacks for the *first melee round* of combat, reduces to +1 extra attack on the second melee round of an attack. All that follow are normal (no extra attacks) even if a different opponent is engaged. Can *not* pull punch during a Predator Burst. **Limitations:** The Predator Burst must take place when the character first enters combat. If the character made any attacks anytime in the previous four melee rounds (one

minute), then Predator Burst can *not* be used. Once a Predator Burst has been used, the character cannot use it again without resting (outside of combat) for 2D6 minutes.

80-81% Prehensile Limb. This is an appendage (tail, feet, tongue) that is nearly as flexible and articulated as a human hand. It can pickup, hold and carry objects by wrapping around them, operate simple machines (i.e. flick switches, press buttons, turn a knob, steer a wheel, use a keyboard) and even use a tool, hand-held weapon or gun. However, the prehensile limb is never as good as a real hand with a thumb, so skills performed by a prehensile limb are done at -20% (and take twice as long to do), the character's combat bonuses (strike, parry, dodge, etc.) are half for the limb, and the firing of a gun has no bonuses and is, in fact, -3 to strike. **Note:** A *prehensile tail* gives the character one additional attack/action per melee round. It is rare and must be approved by the Game Master.

82-84% Righting Reflex. When falling, the character automatically orients himself, relaxes, and lands in a way to minimize any damage, and usually lands on his feet or all fours (hands and feet). In cats, this is a unique "vestibular apparatus" that allows them to orient themselves in midair and land safely on all fours, spreading and absorbing damage that would be otherwise fatal. **Bonus:** +4 to roll with fall or knockdown impact (not punches and kicks), and takes no damage from any fall less than two stories high (automatically rights himself before impact and lands on feet from short drops like that).

85-87% Sonic Power. The Major Super Ability, see page 288 of HU2.

88-90% Sonic Absorption & Reflection. The Major Super Ability, see page 288 of HU2.

91-93% Teeth Weapons. Sharp teeth and strong jaws are common natural weapons for animals. Characters with Teeth Weapons have prominent fangs or canines and a powerful jaw. This is noticeable even if the character has Full Human Looks. Tusks are teeth that stick out of the mouth and inflict damage by ripping and gashing rather than biting. **Note:** P.S. bonuses are *NOT* added to biting attacks. Some *mutant animals* may have special, additional biting, gnawing or damage abilities. "Typical" Damage from Teeth/Bites (may vary in specific animal descriptions in **After the Bomb® RPG**):

Herbivores: Equivalent to humans and do only one or two points of damage.

Carnivores: Rodents: 1D6 damage. Scavengers: 1D6. Small Predators like weasels, badgers, etc.: 2D4. Medium Predators & Dogs: 2D6 damage. Large Predators & Cats: 3D6.

94-95% Underwater Abilities. The Minor Super Ability, see page 237 of HU2.

96-97% Winged Flight. The mutant has fully formed wings (feathered for birds, leathery for bats, clear chitin for insects), and can take off and fly. Roll percentile dice again to determine what type of flight the character has. (*Flyby Attacks:* Flying faster than 20 mph (32 km) means the character can only attack one particular target with a "flyby" once per melee round. Swooping, high speed "flyby" attacks inflict +1 damage for every 30 mph (48 km) of speed. So at maximum speed, the character does +4

damage. A "flyby" attack means the winged mutant animal zooms in to strike, zips past after striking its prey/target/opponent, and quickly loops up and around to strike again at the same or greater speed. Consequently, each flyby attack counts as *two melee actions/attacks*.) **Note:** Players who don't want to have a "winged" character can ignore this result and roll again. If flight comes up a second time in a row, the player might want to reconsider his first decision.

01-50% Basic Flight. Taking off from the ground and hovering takes a full melee round. It takes another full melee round (15 seconds) to build an additional 40 mph (64 km) of speed. That's four full melee rounds to reach the *maximum flight speed* of 120 mph (192 km).

While hovering or flying up to 20 mph (32 km), characters are +2 to dodge. When flying at high speed the character has a basic +1 to dodge for every 30 mph (48 km) of speed, to a maximum flying bonus of +4 to dodge (other bonuses to dodge from P.P. and combat skills can also be added in). Characters with Basic Flight can fly at a "cruising speed" of 10-40 mph (16 to 64 km) for their P.E. times *fifteen minutes*, but only their P.E. times *four minutes* at faster or slower speeds. Maximum altitude is 8,000 feet (2438 m).

51-70% Soaring Flight. The wings of the character are designed for nearly effortless long-distance flight and high flying. The same as Basic Flight, except the character can fly at any constant speed up to 120 mph (192 km) above hovering, even in just a wide circle, for as many *hours* as their P.E., and maximum altitude is 15,000 feet (4572 m).

71-80% Silent Flight. A specialty of the owl family, their wings have a fringed leading edge and a downy upper surface designed to muffle the sound of the wings and allow for totally silent flight, even during take-offs and power dives. Fundamentally the same as "Basic Flight" plus these bonuses. **Bonus:** +2 on initiative and +1 to flying damage bonus for every 20 mph (32 km) of speed, so at 120 mph (192 km) the mutant does +6 damage (this is in addition to any other damage bonuses from P.S. and skills). Maximum altitude is 8,000 feet (2438 m).

81-90% Raptor Flight. Airborne predators are faster and more maneuverable than their flying prey. **Bonuses:** +2 on initiative, +2 to disarm, +2 to pull punch, +1 to strike in flying attacks even when hovering, +60 mph (96 km) for a total speed of 180 mph (288 km), and +1 to damage in "flyby" attacks for every 20 mph (32 km) of speed so at a maximum speed of 180 mph (288 km) the character does +9 to damage. This natural predator is also +1 to dodge for every 30 mph (48 km) of speed, to a maximum flying bonus of +6 to dodge, and can gain 60 mph (96 km) per melee round (15 seconds) to a *maximum speed* of 180 mph (288 km). Maximum altitude is 10,000 feet (3048 m), but becomes 25,000 feet (7620 m) if "Soaring Flight" is also taken.

91-00% Acrobatic Flight. Swifts, swallows and some bats are the equivalent of aerial acrobats, able to turn and twist effortlessly in midair, a trait evolved for catching flying insects, but making them extraordinarily nimble in flying combat. **Bonuses:** +1 to strike in all flying combat, "flyby" attacks count as one melee action/attack, +2 to dis-

arm, +1 to entangle, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, and +1 to dodge for every 20 mph (32 km) per melee round to a maximum flying bonus of +6 to dodge. Maximum speed is 120 mph (192 km). Maximum altitude is 6,000 feet (1829 m).

98% Winged Gliding. Another winged character who can use this power to “ride” the air currents. Take-off requires a strong wind or jumping off from a height. Maximum speed (dependent on wind speed) is 90 mph (144 km). Gliding characters get +1 to dodge in the air for every 30 mph (48 km) of gliding speed for a maximum speed bonus of +3 to dodge, and the character does an additional +1 to damage on “flyby” attacks for every 30 mph (48 km) for a maximum of +3 damage. **Note:** Players who don’t want to have a “winged” character can ignore this result and roll again. If flight or gliding comes up a second time in a row, the player might want to reconsider his first decision.

99-00% Major Super Ability of Choice! Roll on the random table in *Heroes Unlimited*, 2nd Edition, or *Powers Unlimited One*, or pick two (make sure it is acceptable to the Game Master).

A.2 Animal Trait Defect Table

01-10% Animal Brain. Whether the mutant started out an animal or human, it has an animal brain now. Pick one or roll percentile again for a random selection.

01-25% Prey Brain (Mammal). Herd animals and many small mammals are prey for predatory animals. Those evolved from prey animals (mice and rabbits to cattle) tend to carry themselves with an air of uncertainty or vulnerability. Penalties: -10% on Interrogation, Impersonation and Tailing (Surveillance) skills, is -2 to save vs Horror Factor, and has trouble intimidating others or seeming tough. Bonuses: +1D4 to M.A. and typically have a gentleness or likeability to them.

26-50% Predator Brain (Mammal). There is a hungry look in the character’s eyes indicating he or she tends to be aggressive and forceful – and probably something of a lone wolf or a dominant pack leader. A hunter and an individual who doesn’t take garbage. Penalties: The character is short tempered, easily aggravated and provoked, and is likely to resolve problems with threats and violence. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to pull punch, and +1 to save vs Horror Factor.

51-75% Reptile Brain: Predator. A primitive part of the character’s brain interferes with the character’s rational thoughts and decisions. This character usually seems cold, aloof and hostile, even sinister. During tense situations the character must *roll vs aggressive panic response*, requiring a roll of 13 or better on a D20, to resist being taken over by the “Reptile Brain.”

Predator Loss of Control: If the character is a mutant “predator” such as an alligator, shark, canine, feline or bird of prey, then the character has to resist lashing out and attacking, full force, an opponent or threatening individual. Triggering events include fear of death (for self or a close friend or someone he is supposed to protect), being cornered, extreme hunger, extreme frustration, confinement

for an hour or more in a small space or cage, or any kind of real torture or mental anguish. The character must also roll vs aggressive panic response when he is annoyed, angered, antagonized or frustrated by smaller or weaker characters. The reptilian knee-jerk response to “prey” that annoys or crosses it, is to attack, kill and . . . um, eat them.

76-00% Reptile Brain: Prey. A primitive part of the character’s brain interferes with the character’s rational thoughts and decisions. This character usually seems at least a bit nervous, jumpy and unsure of himself. (“Let’s not go in there. Okay, I’ll wait here for you. No, wait, don’t leave me alone out here.”) During tense situations the character must *roll vs flight response*, requiring a roll of 13 or better to resist being taken over by the “Reptile Brain.”

Prey Loss of Control: If the character is a non-predatory mutant animal, such as an iguana, deer, chicken, or rodent, then the character has to resist mindlessly *fleeing* from threats. Triggering events include danger where the character or others experience serious injury, threats, torture and outright attacks from obvious predators, as well as fear of death (self), fear of being captured or tortured, the threat of being confined in a small area, or just being frightened. When lost to the flight/fear response, the character is pretty much oblivious to everything around him, and doesn’t notice details, people or events. However, the calls of a friend, loved one or someone in trouble *may* give the character a moment’s pause and even get him to nervously come (or come back) to help. These characters are not cowards, but creatures with strong instincts of self-preservation via flight.

11-20% Animal Posture: Stands hunched over or in a position that seems as if he is crouched, ready to run or pounce. Runs in a loping manner on all fours, and walks



hunched over or on his knuckles like a gorilla or chimpanzee. The mutant can stand and walk erect for brief periods but tends to take on an animal posture most of the time.

21-30% Diet Restrictions: Humans are omnivores, which means they can eat just about anything that doesn't eat them first. Most sentient mutant animals either start out as omnivores, or become omnivores, but some have the vestigial digestive system of their animal ancestors. Pick one or roll again for random determination.

01-25% Diet: Carnivore. The bulk of the character's diet must always be meat, preferably raw or cooked rare to medium rare. Eating even a small amount of vegetables, fruits or grains is likely to make the character ill with stomach cramps, nausea and diarrhea (-2 on initiative, -2 on all other combat moves, and reduce Spd. by 30%). In order to stay healthy the character must eat a quantity of *meat* equal to one third the character's weight, at least once every four days. On the other hand, carnivores can go 2D4 days without eating at all, with no serious side effects.

26-50% Diet: Herbivore. These characters eat plants exclusively, usually vegetables and fruits. Attempts to eat meat make the character violently ill (-3 on initiative, -2 on all other combat moves, and reduce Spd. by 40%).

51-75% Diet: Insectivore. Some animals specialize in eating insects. In fact, there are even creatures who eat only ants. Other foods provide no nutritional value and the character will slowly starve to death without eating at least 1D4+2 pounds (1.35 to 2.7 kg) worth of insects every couple of days. Any kind of insects, cockroaches, other beetles, flies, wasps, worms, meal worms, crickets, grasshoppers, etc. Fortunately, today, many pet shops sell nice juicy crickets.

76-00% Diet: Ruminant. The character is a *grass eater* with a specially designed series of stomachs. On the one hand, food is usually plentiful. On the other, the character has to eat a lot of grass and leaves, and will constantly be chewing his or her cud (-1D4 to M.A. and P.B. attributes).

31-40% Eyes: Color Blind: Most animals are color blind. From the character's point of view, everything is seen in black, white and shades of gray. The character is unable to see colors of any kind which has its obvious problems. ("Quick! What color was the getaway car?") On the other hand, color blindness is actually an advantage to seeing things hidden by colored, spotted or striped camouflage, so the character has a +10% to Detect Camouflage and +5% to the Detect Concealment skill.

41-50% Eyes: Nearsighted. The character can only see clearly when things are very close up (one foot/0.3 m), and the character cannot see anything but blurred shapes, color and movement of anything beyond his range of vision. Requires eyeglasses or contact lenses (or expensive corrective laser surgery). **Range of Clarity:** Roll 2D4 for the number of feet (0.6 to 2.4 m) of distance the character can see clearly. Anything beyond that point is a blur. Can read close up, however, without difficulty. **Maximum Range:** Roll 3D6+10 for the number of feet beyond which the character can not see at all; an indistinguishable blur. **Example:** After choosing "Nearsighted," Tom first rolls a 7, so his character's range of clarity is seven feet (2.1 m). Next, Tom rolls 3D6 and gets an 8, to which he then adds

10, for a total of 18. That means that Tom can see clearly for 7 feet (2.1 m), can see in a blurry, indistinct way from 7 to 18 feet (2.1 to 5.5 m), and can not see anything at all that is more than 18 feet (5.5 m) away.

51-60% Eyes: Prey Eyes. These are eyes that sit on the sides of the head, like rabbits and sheep. Any character with Prey Eyes has difficulty looking straight ahead, and has terrible depth perception and must turn his head to see clearly with one eye at a time. This results in a penalty of -2 to parry, and -2 to strike with any *projectile weapons*, from thrown knives and rocks to bows and guns. On the other hand, the character doesn't have any blind spots and will usually see anyone sneaking up from behind (+1 to dodge and those sneaking up from behind or off to the side don't get any bonus to do so).

61-70% Increased Metabolic Rate: This high metabolic rate must be supported with frequent naps and constant eating. The character has to consume half their own weight in concentrated carbohydrates (sugar, candy, chocolate bars, noodles, potatoes, etc.) every day. **Penalties:** The character will also be extremely hyper, in constant motion. Light sleeper, easily disturbed and awakened, thus typically is suffering from sleep deprivation (i.e., is always tired and not as sharp as he should be), -20% on skill performance (an additional -10% for every three hours without a 20-30 minute nap), reduce M.A. attribute number 20% (fidgety and annoying), -1 on initiative, -3 to pull punch, and none of the following bonuses for the first 2D6 minutes after waking up or after having been awake and active for more than 4 hours. **Bonuses:** The heightened metabolic rate adds +3 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to disarm, +2 to damage, and +1 attack per melee round. The character can also leap 10 feet (3 m) up or 20 feet (6.1 m) across from a standing still position, 50% greater height or distance from a running start.

71-80% Multiple Animal Traits. These are not worthwhile attributes or features like claws, horns or leaping ability, but cosmetic or physical traits that do not provide any enhanced abilities. Instead, they mark the character as a mutant, freak or genetic chimera – an obvious amalgamation of three or more different animals (human can be one of them). Exactly what these are can be left to the selection of the player or G.M., or randomly rolled on the following table.

01-10% Animal Feet:

01-20% Dog or cat-like feet; small, round, padded and with narrow black toenails.

21-40% Hoofed feet, like a horse or bull, replace the character's normal feet. Cannot wear shoes. In the alternative, the mutant may have elephant feet with thick ankles and legs.

41-60% Bird feet. Three or four widely spaced, long, thin, scaly toes with a black nail extending from the small heel of the foot and a fourth or fifth toe sticking out from the back; a chicken foot.

61-80% Webbed feet. Wide, flat, and webbed like a duck or platypus. +5% to swimming skill, but reduce running speed by 10% and leaping distance by 50%.

81-00% Reptilian. Wide feet with five long, slender toes, twice as long as the foot itself. Needs special shoes

or must go barefoot. Tough, leathery or scaly bottoms of the feet make walking over most surfaces the same as wearing sandals.

11-20% Animal Ears:

01-20% Dog, large and floppy like a beagle or tall and pointed like a German Shepard.

21-40% Feline, small and pointed.

41-60% Rodent, small and round, and a bit fuzzier than normal.

61-80% Bird, a small bump and a hole.

81-00% Reptilian: no obvious ears, but there are a pair of circular markings flush to the head and a barely noticeable hole (these are the ears).

21-40% Animal Eyes:

01-20% Dog, round and brown or dark.

21-40% Cat, almond shaped, and yellow or green.

41-60% Rodent, small and dark (half the size of normal), or dark, round and bulging.

61-80% Bird, large, round and has a large pupil and thin yellow, red or blue iris.

81-00% Reptilian, seems almost entirely black; large black pupil, dark iris.

41-60% Animal Nose:

01-20% Dog snout, like a German Shepard.

21-40% Feline, small and delicate.

41-60% Pug-nose, pushed in and up with large, wide nostrils like a pig or ape.

61-80% Bird-like, large and hooked like a hawk's beak.

81-00% Reptilian, barely a bump with two tiny pinholes.

61-80% Animal Skin:

01-20% Dog, mottled or spotted; one color light, the other dark.

21-40% Feline, striped with one color light, the other dark, or calico mottling (3 colors).

41-50% Covered in a thin, coarse fur, like a Fox Terrier; light or dark color.

51-60% Bird, covered in fine, tiny or small feathers instead of hair.

61-70% Elephant skin, soft, grey, wrinkled and sagging.

71-80% Alligator skin, tough, leathery and lumpy. Ick.

81-90% Bright pink or snow white, like a laboratory mouse.

91-00% Reptilian or fish, scaly (though not enough to provide A.R.) and cool to the touch even in a hot environment.

Note: This nonhuman skin may be limited to one particular part of the body, such as the head and face, neck and back, neck and chest or the arms and hands.

81-90% Animal Tail: All are vestigial (don't work).

01-20% Dog, long with bushy fur that matches the head.

21-40% Cat, long and thin with short fur or light fuzz that matches the head.

41-60% Rodent, long, thin, and bald, like an opossum or rat.

61-80% Bird, wide and flat like a bird or beaver. May be bald and pink, leathery and grey or covered in fuzz or feathers.

81-00% Reptilian, long and tapers at the end.

91-00% Animal Head: General shape and appearance. May use the **After the Bomb® RPG** designations of Full (looks almost completely human), Partial (humanoid but with animal features that indicates it is not human) and None (looks exactly like the animal; i.e. has the head of a lion, horse, rat, duck, etc.).

01-10% Horse or Bovine (cattle, bull, deer).

11-20% Cat/Feline (any breed).

21-30% Dog/Canine (any breed).

31-40% Rodent (rat, mouse, squirrel).

41-50% Great Ape (any; chimp, gorilla, etc.)

51-60% Reptilian (lizard).

61-70% Bird (any).

71-80% Amphibian (any; frog, toad, newt, etc.)

81-00% Human! How about that?

81-90% Musk Glands. Special glands in the character's body continually produce "musk," a pungent scent recognizable by others of its own animal species and noticeable to anybody with a good to keen sense of smell. Unfortunately, the musk is a really, really strong smell (although not necessarily unpleasant, roll percentile below). To avoid exuding the smell, the character must take a long, hot bath (a shower just isn't enough), but the smell always returns within 3D6 hours.

Type of scent: Roll percentile dice.

01-15% Sweet Smelling Musk.

16-35% Odd Smelling Musk.

36-65% Strong & Stinky Musk.

66-85% Bad Smelling Musk.

86-00% Heavy musk scent that is choking after 2D6+20 minutes.

Penalties: Bloodhounds, ordinary predatory animals and mutant animals using their "sense of smell" to track are +10% to track this character for 1D6 hours after a bath, and +20% after the musk returns to full strength.

91-95% Nocturnal. Some characters can not shake their ancestors' nighttime sleep cycle. Which means the character's internal clock is backward, being awake and alert at night, and sleepy and dull during the day. No matter what, the character is just not as sharp during the day as he is at night even if he tries to force himself to sleep during the night and function during the day: -2 on initiative, -1 to strike and dodge, and -5% on skill performance during the daytime. Eyes are also larger than normal (-1 on P.B.) and sensitive to bright light (needs sunglasses or tinted goggles), but automatically has Nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m).

96-00% Wings, Vestigial. The wings of the character are the full size of functional wings, but incapable of flying. They are still sensitive to damage and pain and are often tattered from attacks and wear and tear. The wings are *useless* for flying, or even gliding, and are often in the way, making it uncomfortable for the character to lean

back against a wall, sit in a chair with a back, fit inside a car, etc. Characters with the power of Glide or Flight can NOT take Vestigial Wings. **Penalties:** -10% to Prowl, Acrobatics, and Gymnastics, -20% to Swim, and can not pass for human even at a distance.

BAD GUYS

Bioforms Genetics Laboratories

Just one example of corporate evil

This company promises “custom body modifications for enlightened humans.” And for those who can afford it, a trip to BGL’s private island off the coast of Brazil can turn fantasy into reality. At present, Extraordinary Physical Beauty and (vestigial and working) wings for humans are the most popular modifications. Others seek gills for swimming or enhanced healing. The company’s charismatic owner, **William Monant**, is often accused of running a cult, since his company sells a philosophy along with its products: “Anyone can go beyond the limitations of their physical body.” Others criticize him as being nothing more than a con-man who only wants to make a buck selling rich people physical modifications that are unnecessary, and which may carry long-term health risks. “Nonsense!” Is Monant’s consistent reply. Soon, he claims, new eyes for the blind, new auditory systems for the deaf and voice boxes for those who have lost the power of speech. And people believe him. It takes just a year for his current modifications to grow into place and only the richest of the rich (and bravest or most foolish) have decided to try his exotic services.

However, there is a dark side to Monant’s operation. He is a Diabolic opportunist who has created and enslaved numerous mutants in what some might consider a modern day Island of Doctor Moreau. His current market is foreign governments willing to pay for mutants to serve in their armies or as elite spies, assassins and super soldiers to give them an edge over their enemies. A quick fix while they work on their own genetics projects, or an easy acquisition without having to grow or create their own super beings. He also supplies some of the underworld powers with mutants and has secretly hired lobbyists to petition



governments to keep mutants as products and property without any human rights. It is also rumored that he has team of loyal (brainwashed?) mutants out in the world recruiting mutant runaways. They are told to come to his island where they can live free from exploitation and hate, away from evildoers. Those who fall for this deception find themselves enslaved and sold to the highest bidder where they may be experimented upon or made to serve as a secret slave labor force, servant, killer, or to be tortured or brainwashed into serving some evil human master.

Note: William Monant is himself a product of his own human enhancement process and has the powers of Superhuman Strength, Advanced Sight, Extraordinary Physical Beauty and Alter Physical Structure: Liquid. His island is more of a resort where he entertains rich clients. There is a private airfield, dock area for both pleasure cruisers and supply boats, and a walled laboratory compound that is more like a fortress. However, all of this is above board. His illegal operations and serious bio-genetic engineering labs and slave pens are located in a subterranean complex.

This is exactly the kind of hellish operation and madman the Mutant Underground is out to reveal and put an end to. Being on a privately owned foreign island, however, makes BGL difficult to get to, especially since its

owner has local Brazilian officials and a rogue element of the army in his pocket.

Adventure Hooks: William Monant's island operation could be the source of many different adventures, as can his political campaigns to keep mutants barefoot and enslaved as property. He could use his fortune to secretly support or sponsor any number of criminal operations from kidnaping and slave rings, to illegal mutant dumping, to blackmail of the rich and famous, to mutant prostitution, to drug dealing in the mutant (and/or human) community, to playing games with super-heroes, to testing his creations against other mutants and super beings (i.e., at some point our heroes), to involvement in other criminal activities, and all sorts of things.

Personally, I see *Bioforms Genetics Laboratories* as the source or impetus for numerous adventures and campaigns because Mr. Monant should be the mover and shaker behind the scenes of all sort of criminal, immoral and scandalous activities. With each encounter or situation our heroes learn more about Mr. Monant's involvement and sick desires, and more about BGL and its criminal and immoral mutant operations. Eventually, the heroes should clash with some of Monant's agents and lesser superhuman henchmen. They may even try to make a case against him to get the law after him, or launch a private campaign to undermine his many operations. That will anger and annoy Monant to the point that he will send his best superhuman agents or hire some super-villains to destroy the heroes. Finally, when our heroes are about to confront Monant himself – perhaps having drawn him away from his island refuge (he is a wealthy world traveler after all) or preparing to raid his island – they find out he is protected their own country's government! How? Why? Because the snake anticipated their move and cut a deal with the Feds to either help in their super soldier program or mutant problem, or some other matter, and has diplomatic immunity! Or worse, has been cleared of all charges in exchange for his help (perhaps by turning on one of his criminal cohorts, making himself look honest and clean). Yeah, this sleaze-bag could make a great reoccurring villain and sponsor of all kinds of crimes and trouble. Think about it and have fun.

The Mutant Slave Trade

Snatch and Grab Operations

It seems like open hunting season on *mutant animals*. Nobody wants them. Everybody seems to think they are dangerous, and most people are glad to see them go. Consequently, local police and fearful human residents tend to turn a blind eye to struggles between mutant animals and *any* force that is out to capture or destroy them. Most people (80%) *assume* that anybody, especially anybody who looks "official" or military, is a government agent corraling renegade monsters and genetic mistakes, and consequently, turn away and ignore the conflicts. After all, ignorance is bliss, and the less one sees and knows, the

less they have to answer for to the real authorities. ("Sorry. All I saw was a bunch of guys in a black van root out two or three of them muties from the sewers. One of the good guys . . . you know the guys from the van . . . looked like a super-dude. His hands were, like, glowing. The rest looked like a SWAT team or something. That's it. I didn't see no badges, or marking or faces or nothin'. As soon as it hit the fan I closed my window and drew the blinds. Ain't none of my business, you know? I'm just glad them muties is gone. Scary ta think they could be livin' under our streets. Probably stealing from us and hurting people. Molesting our kids. Good riddance. What do I care who got 'em. I'm just glad they're gone. What? No I didn't call 911! Look, aren't you listening, man? I thought them guys in uniforms were the cops. Why would I call if you cops were already there?")



This makes it extremely easy for foreign powers, terrorists, criminal groups, super-villains and foreign powers to recruit mutant animals into their fold. "Recruit" is a convenient word that belies what really goes on. In many cases the mutant is kidnaped, torn right off the street and sold in a matter of days by his/her captors. Once in captivity, most mutants are forced to do as their captors or new "owners" say, or else. "Or else" can mean beatings, torture, starvation, electric shocks, or the threat that a loved one will suffer or die if the slave doesn't comply. While the majority of mutants recruited by organized crime (75%) join *willingly* to get a safe place to live, fair to outstanding pay, respect, power and an opportunity for some payback against those who created, tormented, or hounded them, even a quarter of them are "unwilling" participants enslaved against their will. Meanwhile, most (90%) of those snatched off the street are *kidnap* victims forced into

bondage and slavery. This is especially true of mutant animals.

Slave collars with electrical control mechanisms along with cattle prods, whips, cages, chains, leashes and just plain violence and intimidation are the tools of the slave trade. Well financed and high-tech operations may use fancy electric shock or explosive collars (obey or die), as well as drugs, electronic tracking devices and monitoring systems (perhaps even imbedded under the skin) to control their slave stock.

The buyers are often unscrupulous bio-tech labs, some criminal organizations, but the biggest market is among foreign governments who find it inexpensive and easy to "buy" mutant kidnap victims, and cheaper still to have their own agents do the kidnaping themselves. The mutant slave market is a rapidly growing underground trade with a demand that far outreaches supply. It is also one of the prime areas where the Mutant Underground is waging an invisible war. Invisible, because most nations and lawmakers refuse to even admit the mutant slave trade exists, and do nothing to prevent it. Thus, shutting down underground slave rings is left to the heroes of the Mutant Underground and occasionally, super-heroes and vigilantes who accidentally stumble across it.

Indentured servitude is a gentler form of slavery employed by the wealthy, treacherous and cunning. Among businesses it may take the form of a sweat shop. Among the wealthy the mutant is likely to be a "man" – er, "mutant" servant, butler, maid, bodyguard, watchdog or plaything. In either case, the deal usually goes something like this. The mutant is given shelter, a warm bed, food, clothes and at least his or her basic needs in exchange for any number of services rendered (hard labor, cleaning, protection, sex, etc.). However, this is not the fair deal that it may sound like on the surface. Frequently, the mutant is given a tab and charged fees that his "pay" (the money accounted on his tab/line of credit) cannot possibly cover. Before the mutant knows it, he is so in debt to his benefactor/employer that it will take years for him to catch up and make good on his debt, if ever. Thus, the employer gets slave labor. If the mutant complains or tries to leave, the employer threatens to call the authorities or threatens a loved one, or simply points out the mutant is penniless and at least has food, a bed and a safe place to live under his roof. Leave and . . . who knows what terrible fate awaits him? This is an especially strong deterrent for people with families, small children or sick loved ones. Sadly, "safe" is also a subjective term. Many of those who take advantage of indentured servitude treat their mutant workers like dogs, or worse. Many are beaten, tortured, half-starved, and abused emotionally, physically and sexually. Yet another injustice and invisible crime the Mutant Underground tries to fight. Unfortunately, many mutants are too afraid to join the Underground or leave their cruel masters or employers, figuring that this woeful life is not as bad as things could be on the street. Lack of information on and confidence in the Mutant Underground and the fear of constant repercussions and reprisal on the street make many mutants stay in to slavery or indentured service. The uncertainty of living free in an underground subculture is just too much risk for some mutants to take.

Adventure Hooks: The obvious one is "little Sara," the mutant child who is kidnaped. The heroes have 48 hours (maybe 72) to find her before she is sold and shipped off to God only knows where, or experimented upon or worse. A variation on that theme is some eyewitness, crook or good guy with critical information, item or such is snatched by slavers (or by criminals and sold to slavers) and must be rescued to a) save him, and b) prevent the case against a bad guy from being dismissed or to get his knowledge or key or device or whatever that is necessary to save lives or stop some terrible event. A third variation is that one of the player characters is the victim of a snatch and grab off the street, probably when he was injured, sick or confused. This latter idea can be a simple, "we must save our friend," adventure or spiral into something much bigger. Maybe the captured hero and his buddies end up facing the entire slave ring and/or the slavers' hired super-powered protectors, a group of evil super beings (fellow mutants?). Or there is a shipment of slaves they must stop from getting shipped out or tortured or experimented upon. Maybe something happens in the middle of combat and the lives of the caged slaves are now in jeopardy, plus the heroes still face the enemy. Or the hero kidnap victim finds out about one (or more) of the slavers' "buyers" or a conspiracy or secret project as a result of his being among the slaves and slavers. Maybe he keeps up the charade to be sold in order to bring this notorious buyer down or to see what he is up to, and that could be anything (sex trade, slave labor, genetic experimentation, forced into serving as super soldiers or to test out new weapons or test the mettle of genetically engineered super soldiers, or made to fight in a gladiatorial arena for the amusement of the rich, or rocketed into space for . . . the possibilities are endless).

Don't forget, many of the heroes and warrior types in the Mutant Underground search to identify slave rings and those who keep slaves to raid and destroy the perpetrators and/or to liberate the slaves.

Government Agents

Government agencies charged with national security, peacekeeping and combating crime often *clash* with mutants and other super beings in their day to day routine. Subsets within these organizations may be specifically charged with investigating or trying to "contain and manage" the mutant problem, but these are small groups and quite rare. Most law enforcement agencies ignore the problem unless they are directly faced with a superhuman that needs to be brought to justice. (Though we have talked about secret operations to create genetically enhanced humans or super-powered mutants for the government, they are isolated and rare, covert, and sometimes rogue splinter operations.) Hunting down or regulating mutants is not a typical part of the agenda for most world



government law enforcement agencies. That leaves the problem unaddressed or in the hands of *local authorities*.

On the streets, even the most well intentioned police officer tends to see mutants as dangerous freaks and sociopaths who represent a deadly threat to the public. Thus, mutants, especially inhuman ones, are often *presumed* to be guilty or evil killers, and attacked with lethal force. This quick, often inappropriate, conclusion is fueled by media hype and sensationalism, apathy on the part of the national government, and propaganda campaigns orchestrated by the powerful bio-tech industry to paint mutants as lab animals, monsters and property. Stories about cops getting blasted or torn apart by mutants, as well as frightening and weird firsthand experiences, all make their way through the police grapevine to make officers of the law all the more jumpy and convinced that mutants are savage monsters to be shot down like dogs. All of this, plus the human predisposition to assume anything not human is scary and a threat, only propagates the misconceptions, lies, and atmosphere of terror. It also means that local law officers are quick to pass the buck to other agencies and believe whatever outside agents, corporate Recovery Teams and mercenaries tell them, and regularly take a step back and let them take over to "handle" the mutant situation, few questions asked. (And usually no concern for the mutants, even if they are women and children.)

Adventure Hooks: This apathy, fear and confusion can play nicely as a part of an adventure and ongoing storyline. For example, mutant characters taken captive by the police might be turned over to just about *anybody* who

comes to claim them as long as they look half-way official. Much like citizens on the street who assume anybody who looks like a cop or a Fed is one, local police are notoriously lackadaisical and informal when it comes to handing over the unwanted mutant problem to somebody else. As a result, mutant prisoners could get turned over to just about anybody: The MTF, CIA, FBI, NSA, the military, agents of a foreign government, super-heroes known to have government ties, corporations claiming the mutant is their (escaped) property, Recovery Teams and so on. Similarly, a corrupt cop might *sell* mutants to bio-tech corporations, slavers, foreign agents, super-villains and just about anybody if the price is right (and it usually doesn't take much cash), and then claim an unidentified Federal Agent collected the prisoner. "Losing" a mutant prisoner will get the officer a verbal reprimand, but seldom anything more, not even a permanent mark on his record.

Because mutants are seen as lower than worms, corrupt or angry cops (perhaps someone who recently lost a partner or loved one to a mutant villain) may beat, taunt and harass mutants. Or shake them down, or beat and rob them, or abuse or exploit them in some way. Likewise, local cops might have informers and stool pigeons within the mutant community or the Mutant Underground itself, offering their stool pigeon their protection, favors, food or money in exchange for information. Corrupt cops might hire super-powered mutant punks to pull or cover up crimes, or to lean on people for them, and other criminal activities, figuring the use of mutants as their liaisons or henchmen has a better "scare" factor or is less likely to be connected to them. Plus, they can probably pay mutants less and mutants are much less likely to go to the authorities when they get angry or discontented. Corrupt officers may frame mutants for their own crimes, or hunt and kill mutants in an act of blatant vigilantism (killing evil and good mutants alike without a care), or beat, rob or kill mutants whenever they are encountered "on the job." Killing a mutant, by the way, is easily dismissed as self-defense or putting down a wild animal.

Remember, most authorities, even good lawmen, assume a mutant is, a) the bad guy, b) lying, c) dangerous, d) somebody's property, and e) better off under someone else's jurisdiction – or f) dead. Clashes and awkward situations between good mutants and super-heroes, vigilantes and good, honest police officers should be a regular problem and a classic comic book clash. If a super-hero or super-team becomes involved it could be the clash of titans. A common situation may include good, honest police officers or Federal agents (or super-heroes) jumping to the wrong conclusion that mutant characters (and those associating with them) are automatically bad guys, killers and madmen. Thus, if a cop stumbles across mutants in any situation, he will draw his weapon and assume the worst. This could allow the real bad guy to escape and force the good mutants to fight the police to get away, and even if they are successful, they are likely to be accused of a crime and hunted as fugitives. Which leads to the classic, "we have to prove our innocence" usually by capturing the real culprit and having plenty of hard evidence to nail him to the wall and clear their name. And don't forget that criminals, bad cops and the MTF frequently try to frame mutant fugitives for their crimes.

There are other possibilities too, such as a particular good or sympathetic officer (or bad cop) willing to secretly work with or help mutants and vigilantes. This "contact" might point them in the right direction, provide valuable information, cover for them, etc., as well as use them as informers or unofficial helpers.



The MTF

CIA: Mutant Task Force (MTF)

By Alex Marciniszyn & Kevin Siembieda

Although the CIA has a legitimate role to play in keeping tabs on mutants, especially members of the so-called "Mutant Underground," one field commander has decided to form his own little group of *specialists*. This cell consists of two-man teams who are handpicked by and report directly to an agent identified only as "Fletcher" (not his real name). The teams do not know who the other members of the MTF are or how many other teams may exist, though they know there are at least a few others, including assassination squads assigned to take out some of the *more dangerous* criminal mutants and to level the playing field for all CIA agents.

One team, Cobb and Luvon, have seen too many of their fellow agents die at the hands of crazed gene-freaks and super-powered mutants to care about mutant rights, ownership and patent issues (i.e., destruction of property), or any other issues concerning mutants. As far as they are concerned, only the *MTF*, *S.H.O.C.K.* and maybe (just maybe) *The Sector*, *Sector 10* and a few other ultra-covet government agencies are doing anything about "the mutant problem," so bleeding heart liberals and mutant-lovers

can kiss their (expletives deleted) if they don't like their methods. Besides, *S.H.O.C.K.* (Super-Human Observation and Control Knights; see the *Aliens Unlimited* and/or *Century Station* sourcebooks for more info) isn't even a real government agency, but a political group of human supremacist yahoos with money and powerful connections to members of congress and the senate. Enough influence to get themselves loosely sanctioned by the government to target and suppress *aliens*. Yeah, aliens, not mutants. Mutants only get caught in *S.H.O.C.K.*'s cross-hairs when they are misidentified as aliens, or are so weird or monstrous that *S.H.O.C.K.* steps in anyway. For Cobb and Luvon, the jury is still out on the mysterious Sector 10 and its parent company, The Sector (see *HU2* sourcebook, *Century Station* for some incite). Hushed rumors about the United States' own ultra-secret mutant/super being recruitment, development and containment program, code name: The Nursery, may be as much a problem as an asset, and Cobb and Luvon suspect that sooner or later the MTF will be called in to "clean up" that mess for somebody.

Officially, the MTF, Fletcher and even Cobb and Luvon do not exist. Elaborate cover stories blaming private citizens, bio-corporations, rogue super beings, the Mutant Underground and other extremists for the handiwork of the MTF have worked like a charm. One reason is that Fletcher and his agents are skilled at setting up (framing)

a fall guy for their activities – innocent dupes who are, themselves, either mutants or criminals, and occasionally rival agents and others who are trying to learn more about, or interfere with, the MTF. Even within the CIA there are only a handful of people who know about the Mutant Task Force, making the group invisible and insanely powerful. Agents answer only to their field commanders who answer only to Fletcher (and never in person). They ignore the law, do whatever it takes to “pacify” a problem, and are licensed to kill. Who Fletcher answers to is anyone’s guess.

The MTF’s motto is “Never tell the truth,” requiring its agents to be skilled con artists who can weave a convincing tale to the authorities and media, assume false identities that fit as naturally as their own skin and vanish with a trace. In fact, an MTF agent has done his job to perfection when he can vanish like a ghost leaving incriminating evidence through a third party (typically the manipulation of the media, local authorities, or a chump they have framed) to implicate a criminal or evil mutant, or some entirely innocent individual or group to take the fall (even if they had absolutely nothing to do with the incident whatsoever). Should things get sticky, an unidentified government source may step in to offer evidence of guilt or to bail an agent out of a jam. However, both of these scenarios are a rarity, because MTF teams seldom need outside intervention to do their jobs. If an agent dies on the job, the corpse either vanishes or the deceased is presented as something completely different than he really was; perhaps even a terrorist or mutant masquerading as a government agent (but not the CIA).

Missions. The typical Mutant Task Force missions are as follows.

1. Deep Insertion Intelligence. Surveillance and/or undercover operations in which a two man team goes solo deep within “enemy territory” (the streets, the Mutant Underground, a super-team, or a mutant, criminal or civilian organization) to observe and gather vital strategic information: strengths, weaknesses, resources, places of operation, leaders, other key personnel, and purpose and goals of the enemy. Usually leads to a “pacification” order.

2. Pacification of a situation. Bring peace or resolve by any means necessary; extreme prejudice (deadly force) is always a mission parameter.

3. Pacification of an individual. Assassination/termination of one specific individual, typically a leader or an influential or troublemaking individual. The target could be a group leader or a lone operative (human, mutant or super being). The death may be an obvious “hit” (contract killing) or made to look like an accident or a murder that implicates a rival individual, group of mutants or troublesome organization or super beings.

4. Pacification of a group. Seek and destroy a mutant organization that seems to be a threat to national security, the government or government operations.

5. Creative elimination. That’s getting rid of a mutant menace, troublemaker or those who interfere with MTF business (i.e., help or protect mutants) by *indirect* means (something other than killing). This can include ruining their reputation or business, therefore taking them out of the picture or hindering their efforts, framing them for

crimes they did not commit (better yet, finding real evidence on crimes they did commit), as well as using blackmail, intimidation and other tactics to incapacitate or remove an individual, group or organization from the situation.

6. Homeland security. This one is a broad designation that includes surveillance, capturing mutant suspects alive, interrogation, dealing with hostage and terrorist situations, anti-mutant/terrorist operations, bringing mutant criminals to justice (e.g., turning them over to the authorities for trial and punishment rather than serving as judge, jury and executioner), and working with other government agencies to protect the nation’s people. In this case, that’s protection from beings who possess super abilities and may fall into the notorious classification of “super-villain.”

7. Liaison with other agencies (FBI, NSA, ATF, etc.). This means working together, pooling information and using combined resources. However, the MTF tends to use other agencies as tools and stepping stones for their own agenda, like using the FBI, for example, to do surveillance to locate an enemy target or to help build a case, etc., before the Mutant Task Force “steps in” to takeover or to whisk the subject away (or kill him) right under the FBI’s nose to do with as they please (end of working together). Similarly, the FBI’s Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) might be called in (or manipulated) to deal with a terrorist or hostage situation while the MTF takes independent action behind the scenes or uses the HRT as a diversion to make certain the terrorist leader or a specific mutant individual (among the terrorists or the hostages) is pacified/killed or taken into MTF captivity. Whenever the MTF makes an appearance, even if they seem cooperative or *volunteer* their assistance, the agents inevitably have their own agenda (make contact with a mutant or mutant supporter, target a mutant for pacification, target corruption within the affiliated agency, test their loyalty or effectiveness to see if they can be *trusted* or *used* at a later time, and so on).

Note: All operations of the MTF involve dealing with *mutants*. Humans, aliens and others are generally ignored by the MTF unless they are aiding and abetting mutants, or they accidentally get in the way, or they earn the MTF’s ire by interfering in their business (i.e., work to protect mutants or try to stop or question MTF operations, and similar). It is also important to note that the Mutant Task Force generally considers most super beings to be *mutants* and have little respect for vigilantes or so-called super-heroes, even government sanctioned ones. That means then, MTF agents with super abilities or psionics do NOT consider themselves to be mutants: Super-Soldiers, Experiments (excluding gene augmentation), and “natural born” super beings, maybe, but not genetically augmented freaks of nature. They find any justification and strange logic to convince themselves that they are not mutants and nothing like mutants.

The more obvious the mutant, the greater the MTF agents’ revulsion, distrust and callous disregard of human rights and the law. Mutant animals are obvious lab-created abominations at the top of their hate list. Since most agents regard mutants to be freakish monsters and laboratory rats, they see nothing cruel, immoral or wrong with dealing with them like *rabid dogs* and putting them down

like the animals they are. Agents have an equal disdain for the bio-corporations that explore these unnatural areas of science, and regard them as the ones who are immoral and evil. Consequently, the MTF find the bio-tech companies' claim that their mutant creations are their "property" disgusting and preposterous to the point that they completely ignore them and deliberately destroy bio-tech property (living and not), and enjoy rattling their cage and interfering with private industry "recovery" operations, even if it means the mutant gets away (for the moment).

Mutant Man-Hunters. When it comes to knowledge about the Mutant Underground, identifying mutants and tracking them down (usually for extermination), no agency is better trained, more efficient or experienced than the MTF. However, MTF agents are called upon to perform non-mutant oriented assignments and to support their comrades and the CIA organization. Most MTF agents are fiercely loyal and dedicated to the CIA, gladly pulling whatever assignment is given to them. They just happen to think they are better than most of their peers.

Dress Code & Appearance. Unlike The Sector and other agencies that may allow super-agents to don costumes and public personas, the MTF are the men in black – black pants and suit coat, black shoes, black tie, white shirt, sunglasses and communications earpiece. They never wear costumes nor assume heroic identities (though they often take fake identities), nor do they affiliate with super-hero teams. Furthermore, all MTF agents appear to be human, or easily pass for human, regardless of their own psionic or super abilities, or whether they can change their shape/appearance. (A useful tool, the ability to shapechange. Rumors suggest that half the MTF agents can Alter Facial Features, or Shapechange, Mimic, Alter Physical Structure or have the power of Cloaking, Invisibility or Intangibility. Whether there is any truth to these rumors is yet to be proven.)

Standard Weapons & Equipment. Come on, is there really such a thing for the CIA, let alone the members of a cutting edge secret super-group within the organization? Pretty much whatever they need, they get, including energy weapons (laser pistols, etc.), experimental and heavy weapons, including military ordnance, the latest in surveillance equipment, and anything else the government has on hand to fight superhumans.

Traditional weapons include a blackjack, sap gloves, survival knife (1D6+1 damage), 10 mm or .45 automatic pistol (5D6+6 damage per bullet because they are Teflon coated armor piercing or explosive slugs) with a 15 shot clip, four additional clips (more when they know they are going into a combat situation), shoulder holster, ankle holster with a .32 automatic (3D6 damage) and grenades. That's right, hand grenades: Two tear gas, two nerve gas, one smoke and one or two explosive grenades doing 2D4x10 damage are standard for an agent (see HU2, pages 341 & 342 for stats on explosives). State-of-the-art, lightweight, concealed body armor (FA-70 full body, ultra-lite, flexi-steel armor, A.R. 15, S.D.C. 200, 16 lbs/7.2 kg, energy resistant, deflecting all energy attacks and reducing damage by half, no helmet) is usually worn under the shirt and jacket of most field agents. But all types of low and high-tech weapons and equipment are generally available to agents of the MTF on an as needed basis.

Word on the street (rumors). Though most average citizens have never heard of the MTF, word on the street among mutants and in the Mutant Underground is that there is a super-secret government group that is involved with capturing and assassinating mutants. Long time mutant survivors and Underground operatives have even gotten their name, the Mutant Task Force or MTF. However, proof of their existence is akin to proving the Men In Black are real. Hmm, they sort of are, they're MTF.

Adventure Hooks. The MTF and its agents can make for a great reoccurring villain, both as a direct antagonist to lock horns with, and as a force acting behind the scenes to manipulate and mess with the player characters (individually and as a group). For example, MTF agents might manipulate the player group to flush out a mutant villain or leader in the Mutant Underground or some other mutant target. Or the MTF might use them as a diversion or frame one character or the entire player group for a crime they didn't commit, or even try to tear the group apart. Perhaps the heroes' escapades and heroics draw the MTF's attention or compel the agents to destroy them as mutant menaces before they gain too much celebrity or power. Or because they are inadvertently interfering with their plans or operation. Or their notoriety grabs the MTF's attention which leads the agents to peg one or more group members as mutants (and all mutants are bad) or as fugitives wanted by the Federal Government.

Ironically, since there is rivalry between the MTF and other anti-mutant groups, a pair of MTF agents might actually *help* the group (probably secretly) against rival government agencies, freelance mutant hunters and even mutant super-villains, especially if the agents see the characters as the lesser of two evils. However, the players should never forget that the MTF always has its own agenda and will *use* the player group to its own ends, every time.

Human MTF Agents

Note: Only 25% of all MTF agents are entirely human (no powers, but sharp and capable). The rest are psionic (40%) or possess Super Abilities (35%).

Alignment: Typically, Anarchist (50%), Aberrant (35%), Miscreant (10%), and Diabolic (5%).

Minimum Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 14, M.E. 12, M.A. 12, P.S. 12, P.E. 12, P.P. 14, P.B. n/a, Spd. 12; most agents are in the 12-20 range per each attribute.

Average Hit Points: 30-50.

S.D.C. Bonus from MTF Training: 30 (1D6x10+40 if rolled as a Special Training: Secret Operative), plus skills and other bonuses provide an average S.D.C. of 40-60.

Average Age: 26-38.

Disposition: All are highly professional, but tend to see themselves as an elite force better than anyone else.

Average Experience Level: 1D4+2

Super Power Category: Basically a Secret Agent/Spy. In Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition (HU2), the character would be considered *Special Training: Secret Operative*, and rolled up accordingly (see HU2, page 216) with the following changes to *Step Two: Education & Skills*.

Common & General Skills:

Pilot Automobile (+10%)

Pilot: Two of choice (+10%; any).

Mathematics: Basic (+15%)

Speak Native Language (English, +25%)

Read and Write Native Language (+20%)

Speak two other languages of choice (+20%; one is typically Spanish).

Military Program (Modified MTF):

Hand to Hand: Assassin or Martial Arts

Running

Boxing or Wrestling (often not applicable to super-powered agents)

Climbing

Military Etiquette

Radio: Basic

W.P. Pistol

W.P. Rifle

W.P. of choice.

Espionage Program (Special MTF Standard Skills):

Disguise (+10%)

Impersonation (+20%)

Escape Artist (+10%)

Intelligence (+20%)

Interrogation (+15%)

Tracking (+20%)

Surveillance Systems (+20%)

Two of choice (+15%).

Note: May select a Military, Piloting or Physical Program instead of Espionage. About 25% do.

Special Area of Training (MTF humans only), pick one of the following:

Communications: Radio: Scrambler and three of choice (all are +10%).

Law Enforcement: Standard, see page 46 of HU2.

Military Demolitions Program: Standard, see page 46 of HU2.

Military Specialist: Four of choice (all are +15%).

Piloting: Read Sensory Equipment, Advanced: Helicopter (+15%), and three Piloting skills of choice (any; +10%).

Rogue: Streetwise (+10%) and three of choice (+5%).

Technical: Research and three of choice (all are +10%).

Sponsoring Organization: CIA, special division Mutant Task Force. Good relationship. Loyal and dedicated.

Super Abilities: None.

Psionic Powers: None.

Average Attacks Per Melee: 4-7.

Bonuses from MTF training (in addition to attributes & skills): +1 on initiative, +1 to disarm, +1 to roll with punch, fall, impact, and +2 to save vs Horror Factor. May not apply to agents with super abilities or psionics due to their reliance on their powers.

Education Level: Effectively a Military Specialist.

Scholastic Bonus: See Super Power Category and skills by MTF programs.

Secondary Skills: Six of choice.

Appearance: Human; 80% male, 20% female.

Occupation: CIA special field agent.

Body Armor: FA-70 full body, ultra-lite, flexi-steel armor (A.R. 15, S.D.C. 200, 16 lbs/7.2 kg, energy resistant, deflecting all energy attacks and reducing damage by half) is worn under his street clothes. No helmet.

Weapons, Vehicles & Equipment: Almost anything is available depending on the target's perceived threat level. Agents have access to luxury cars and more modest types in order to blend in and not draw attention.

Available Money: Varies with assignment and need, \$50,000 in cash, minimum.



Dale Cobb & Trevor Luvon

Mutant MTF Agents

Dale Cobb and Trevor Luvon stand at the forefront of a new type of government operative, one with psionics or super abilities. The proliferation of super beings and genetically enhanced assassins, terrorists, mutants and super-villains is forcing the government to create its own super-powered agents – anti-super being operatives to fight fire with fire. These two guys are among the first to head up the Mutant Task Force (MTF), and are among the

very best agents. If there is a downside to their experience and record of success, it's that they are impossibly smug, cocky and overconfident; considered elitist snobs and glory hounds by many of their human peers in the CIA.

How they ended up working for the super-secret Mutant Task Force is a story known only to Fletcher, head of the MTF. Their files tell how they escaped death when a mutant scientist's secret lab blew up, killing two other agents with them. The pair's "possible exposure to an unknown agent (ironically a "mutagenic agent") didn't raise any alarms among their regular CIA superiors, but when their psychic powers that had laid dormant in them were activated by the incident, they were recruited for the MTF. CIA medical technicians believe their improved performance levels and psychic abilities may be related to their near death experience, causing them to be sharper, more alert, and unleashing their "psychic potential." (Talk about any chemical or mutagenic agents has been purged from their records, and Cobb and Luvon are convinced of the near-death theory.) When offered a position in the MTF and the opportunity to take a more deadly approach against the most dangerous mutants, they agreed. So now, MTF operations consume most (80%) of their time and effort. When not on special assignment with the MTF, they do investigative work with other CIA agents, which also allows them to recommend possible new recruits (and street targets) to the leader of the MTF, a man known only as Fletcher.

By using their powers in unobtrusive ways, they have convinced their fellow agents that skill, experience and luck are the reasons for their exceptional work and success rate. Outside of work, they are shunned by most of their peers out of jealousy and disgust for their smugness and mutual admiration for each other. Their superiors just know they have what it takes to get the job done and don't appear to suspect (or care) that they are psychics or possibly, mutants.

Agent Trevor Luvon

Code Name: T-Luv.

Aliases: Many. Never uses his real name when in the field.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 18, M.E. 21, M.A. 17, P.S. 14, P.E. 18, P.P. 19, P.B. 10, Spd. 30

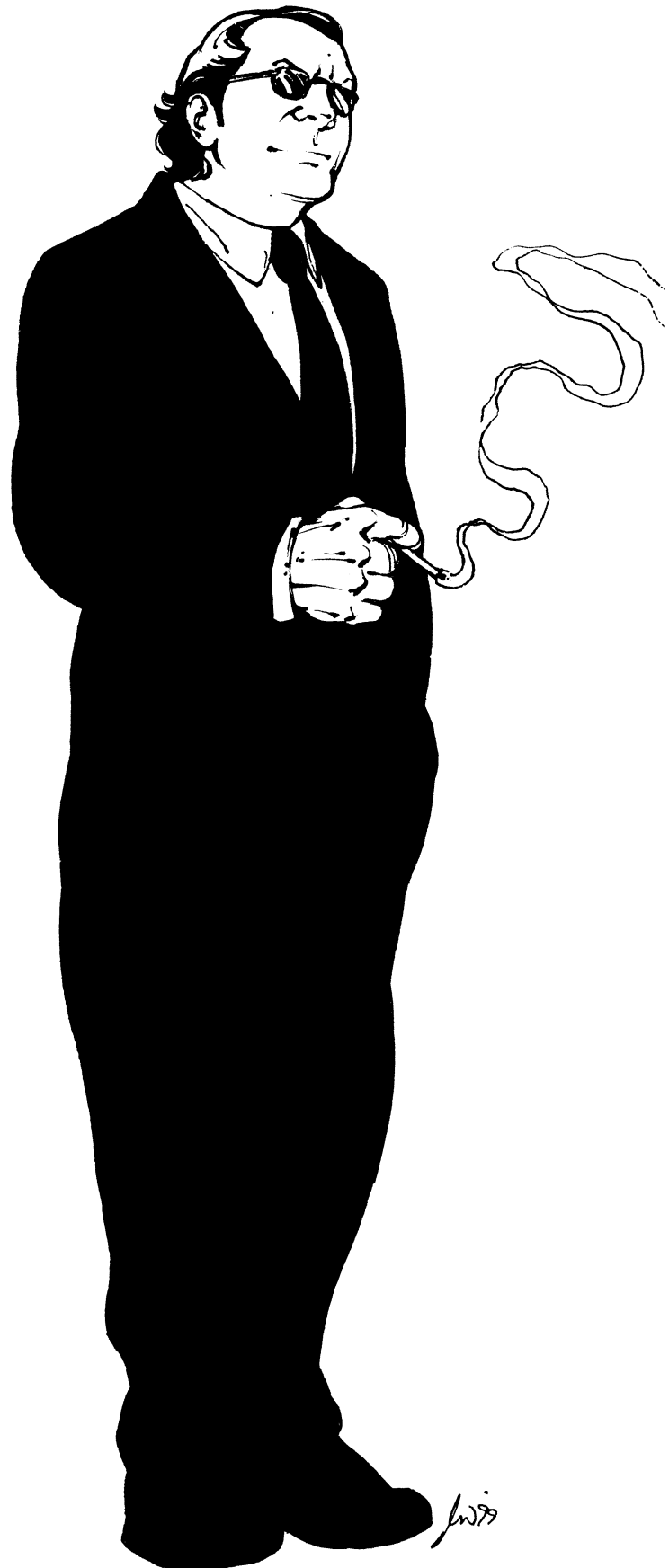
Hit Points: 49. **S.D.C.:** 45.

Weight: 280 lbs (126 kg), **Height:** 6 feet, 2 inches (1.84 m), **Age:** 38.

Disposition: Professional but does not conceal his sense of superiority over others or his supreme self-confidence and confidence in his partner. Hates mutants and believes he is doing the nation a great service by exterminating the most dangerous of these misanthropes. Loves his job and sees himself and his partner, Agent DC, as the best of the best. Cool, calm, calculating and professional even under fire. He really is one of the best and dedicated to the CIA, national security and eliminating the mutant threat.

Experience Level: Seventh.

Super Power Category: Latent Physical Psychic.



Psionic Powers: I.S.P.: 116, and the powers of Alter Aura, Death Trance, Mind Block, Nightvision, Telekinetic Punch, Telekinetic Push, Teleport Object, Insert Memory, Object Read, See the Invisible, Sense Evil, Detect Psionics, Pyrokinesis and Telemechanics.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: Five hand to hand, or via psionics.

Bonuses (including Attribute, Skill & Special Mutagen bonuses): +2 on initiative, +6 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +5 to disarm, +3 to roll with punch, fall, impact, +5 to pull punch, Karate style kick doing 2D4 damage, all jump kicks, critical strike on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20.

Other Bonuses: +3 to save vs psionic attack, +6 to save vs insanity, 45% to trust/intimidate, +6% to save vs coma/death, and +3 to save vs magic and poison.

Education Level: Military Specialist – Standard CIA MTF agent training (same as Human Agent minus Boxing).

Skills of Note: Running, Climbing 93%, Military Etiquette 88%, Radio: Basic 98%, Basic Electronics 83%, Basic Mechanics 83%, Demolitions 98%, Demolitions: Disposal 98%, Underwater Demolition 98%, Locksmith 68%, Prowl 68%, Surveillance Systems 89%, Detect Ambush 78%, Intelligence 74%, Escape Artist 78%, Tracking 73%, Wilderness Survival 78%, Streetwise 47%, Pick Pockets 68%, Computer Operation 73%, Computer Programming 63%, and W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Automatic Pistol, W.P. Submachine-gun and W.P. Rifle.

Secondary Skills: Concealment 47%, First Aid 78%, Law 58%, W.P. Blunt, and W.P. Knives.

Appearance: A heavysset man with dark hair, receding hairline, and a smug, confident (some would say arrogant) look on his face. Often smiles even in tough situations and smokes cigarettes.

Body Armor: FA-70 full body, ultra-lite, flexi-steel armor (A.R. 15, S.D.C. 200, 16 lbs/7.2 kg, energy resistant, deflecting all energy attacks and reducing damage by half). Worn under his street clothes. No helmet.

Weapons, Vehicles & Equipment: Almost anything is available depending on the target's perceived threat level. He always carries two small close-combat knives hidden in his belt. Trevor also has access to luxury cars to more modest types in order to blend in and not draw attention.

Available Money: Half a million in the bank. Not a big spender. The agency can provide him with extra money above and beyond his salary if needed to play an undercover role.

Agent Dale Cobb

Code Name: DC.

Aliases: Many. Never uses his real name when in the field.

Alignment: Anarchist.

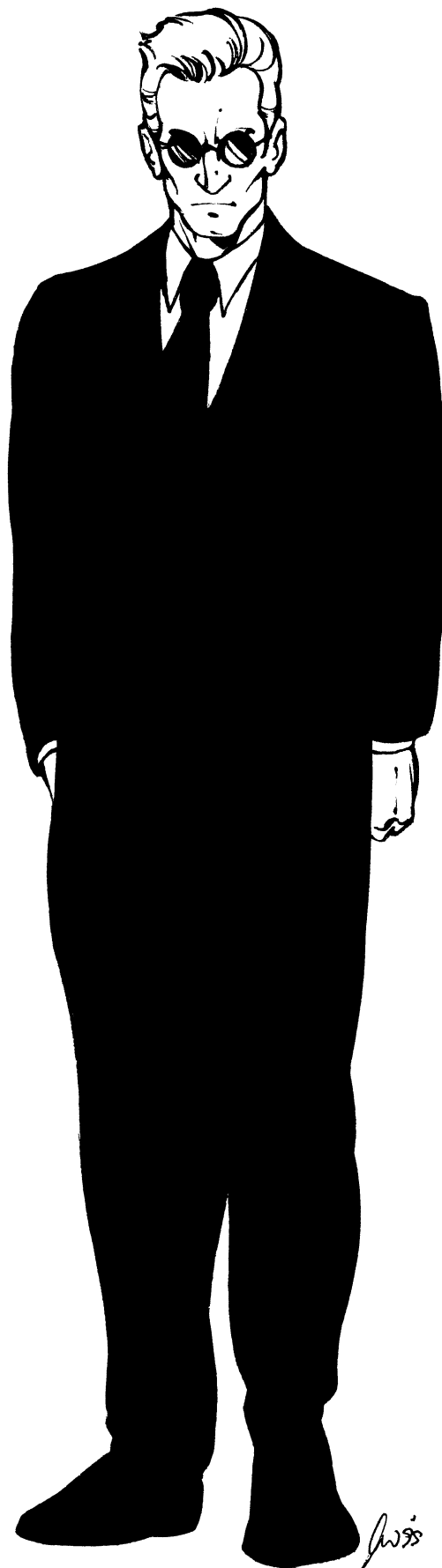
Attributes: I.Q. 18, M.E. 20, M.A. 17, P.S. 18, P.E. 17, P.P. 17, P.B. 11, Spd. 28

Hit Points: 55, **S.D.C.:** 49.

Weight: 180 lbs (81 kg), **Height:** 6 feet, one inch (1.85 m), **Age:** 30.

Disposition: Professional, but quiet, cold and stern. A brass tacks, down to business sort of guy. Hates mutants and believes he is doing the nation a great service by exterminating the most dangerous of these misanthropes. Loves his job and sees himself and his part-

ner, Agent T-Luv, as the best of the best. Cool, calm, calculating, with a good head for strategies and tactics. He really is one of the best and dedicated to the CIA, national security and eliminating the mutant threat.



Experience Level: Seventh.

Super Power Category: Mutant, Latent Psychic Sensitive.

Psonian Powers: I.S.P.: 120 and the powers of Mind Block, Object Read, Presence Sense, See the Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Insert Memory, Teleport Object, Levitation, Bio-Regeneration (self) and Telepathy.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Assassin.

Attacks Per Melee: Six physical or six psionic attacks.

Bonuses (including Attribute, Skill & Special Mutagen bonuses): +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +7 to damage, +4 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +5 to pull punch, karate style kick doing 2D4 and critical strike on a natural 19 or 20.

Other Bonuses: +3 to save vs psionic attack and insanity, 45% to trust/intimidate, +5% to save vs coma/death, and +1 to save vs magic/poison.

Education Level: Military Specialist/Secret Agent.

Skills of Note: Running, Climbing 94%, Military Etiquette 89%, Radio: Basic 98%, Basic Electronics 84%, Surveillance Systems 89%, Basic Mechanics 84%, Prowl 69%, Detect Ambush 79%, Intelligence 75%, Escape

Artist 79%, Tracking 84%, Disguise 74%, Impersonation 68%, Interrogation 94%, Streetwise 58%, Pick Pockets 69%, Pick Locks 74%, Computer Operation 74%, Computer Programming 64%, W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Automatic Pistol, and W.P. Rifle.

Secondary Skills: Concealment 47%, First Aid 78%, Law 58%, W.P. Blunt and W.P. Knives,

Appearance: Tall, thin, but muscular gent, with sharp facial features and wavy blonde hair.

Body Armor: FA-70 full body, ultra-lite, flexi-steel armor (A.R. 15, S.D.C. 200, 16 lbs/7.2 kg, energy resistant, deflecting all energy attacks and reducing damaged by half), worn under his street clothes. No helmet.

Weapons, Vehicles & Equipment: Almost anything is available depending on the target's perceived threat level. Carries two knockout darts sheathed in his belt. He has access to luxury cars to more modest types in order to blend in.

Available Money: About a quarter million in the bank. Not a big spender. Sometimes provided with more and/or fancy living arrangements when playing an undercover role.

Exterminators & Hunters

Bad Max was an ex-con with a colorful history, but this job was legit. In fact it, was the first legitimate gig he'd ever had that let him use his "expertise" and "powers" for the "good of society." Yeah, it was great. Hunting down and killing people with the government's blessing and a big paycheck was the best gig he ever had. "People." Did he think people? He had to stop that. These weren't people. They were dangerous animals that had to be tracked down and either captured and returned to captivity or put down. That was the job of the government had hired him for. Mutant hunting. Track down wanted, mutant criminals and . . . well, end their trouble. Hell, most of them were more like "monsters" anyway, which meant he and his teammates were actually "helping people." He couldn't help chuckling to himself – helping society by hunting down and killing innocent people . . . um, dangerous "mutant monsters." Didn't matter that he was a mutant himself, or that most of these "monsters" were smarter and more compassionate than he or his teammates. The government had labeled them as "animals," put a bounty on their heads and sanctioned their captivity for scientific research and/or destruction. Besides, all the questions about slavery, morality and playing god gave Bad Max a headache.

Keep it simple, his papa always said. And that's what he planned to do. They were just big, runaway lab rats that had to be put back into their cages or put down like a mad dog. And that was his job. Yeah, that was simple enough for Bad Max and a thousand miscreants just like him.

Mutant Recovery Teams

The problems with ruthless and unscrupulous bio-tech companies continue long after they create mutants or new life forms. When their "property goes missing" (a euphemism for "escape"), they hire Recovery Teams – mercenaries, hunters, psychics and super beings (including other mutants) – to find and recover their "missing property." Corporate giants may have their own in-house team(s) of investigators and superhumans specially trained (and perhaps genetically enhanced or grown in their own labs) to locate, capture and return creations that manage to escape or are let loose by mutant liberation groups, misguided employees, super-heroes or by accident. These Recovery Teams may also function as corporate *enforcers* – agents charged with keeping disgruntled employees and nosy investigative reporters, heroes and outsiders quiet or make them toe the company line. In short, they keep the corporation's secrets and skeletons locked in the closet where they belong. And in the case of many bio-tech corporations, those *skeletons* are the genuine article, dead mutants (and sometimes employees and outsiders) who proved to be a tragic mistake or too much of a liability to live.

Consequently, Recovery Teams may do more than retrieve dangerous, escaped monsters and mutant misfits. They "recover" damaging documents, computer files, videos, and other *evidence* of inhumanity and crimes, as well as recover stolen research, property and test subjects, and pay off or silence (through intimidation, blackmail or murder) witnesses, reporters, snoops, and employees whose testimony might damage the company. The most well paid and despicable agents can arrange accidents,



fires, and unexplained disappearances with minimal suspicion of wrongdoing, and no connection to them or their employer. Most think nothing about breaking and entry, illegal surveillance, strong arm tactics and using every dirty trick in the book.

Hired guns – freelance Recovery Teams, mercenaries and bounty hunters – range from well intentioned man-hunters, adventurers and would-be heroes (especially those super beings trying to make a name for themselves) to criminals, assassins, and murdering butchers. A good third are human supremacists who think they are doing the world a favor by capturing or killing mutants. The rest are profiteers out to make a buck using dirty skills.

Mutant hunting can mean big bucks, with a typical bounty or reward of \$50,000 to \$500,000 dollars (sometimes \$1-5 million) per individual mutant, plus reasonable expenses and the corporation usually covers legal costs for representation from charges resulting directly from their team's work in the successful "recovery of the property." The most infamous teams with outstanding records for success get the best legal representation money can buy.

Of course, small, poor and criminal operations can't offer all these perks and often turn to criminals, cutthroats and evil super beings to do their dirty work for half the money, no expenses and no legal entanglements (i.e. their agent is on his own and if he gets caught by the law the company disavows any connection to him); some big corporations go this route too. Meanwhile, some small outfits don't make any recovery attempts, figuring any escaped mutants are just the liability of doing business, and go about destroying any evidence that might link their creation to them so they can't be liable for anything it may do.

When hunting down mutants, most Recovery Team operatives lie, cheat, steal, and do whatever it takes to locate and capture (or silence) their quarry. They almost certainly use false identities (sometimes posing as police, FBI and MTF) if not an actual disguise. Human witnesses to serious crimes they might commit are hushed up with cash, threats or worse. Mutant witnesses who are not their quarry are likely to be beaten severely, threatened, blackmailed or killed outright – after all, there are no laws to protect mutants, few super-powered champions and in most cases, killing a mutant is *not* an act of murder, but

simply destruction of property (a \$10,000-\$30,000 fine or 6-28 months in jail, half that time with good behavior). Besides, mutants are a public menace and health threat. In many cases, any mutant they have a run in with has a bounty on its head, so capturing it and turning it over to the authorities earns the Recovery Team an extra bit of cash if they bring in the mutant in alive, and about 20% of all mutant bounties are for "dead or alive." In other cases, the mutant is a known and wanted criminal who can be turned in to authorities or killed without fear of repercussion because the Recovery Team agents can *claim* "self-defense" with each member of the team acting as an eyewitness to the unfortunate event. In the case of *mutant animals*, the Recovery Team can usually claim being attacked by a "wild animal" and forced to kill it in self-defense or to protect the public, for which there is no crime or wrongdoing. This wild animal defense only works, however, on mutant animals who are obviously predators or hideous monsters and/or known to be wild beasts or man killers.

Adventure Hooks: Corporate Recovery Teams, bounty hunters, mercenaries, freelance government hirelings and superhuman "mutant hunters" are an automatic and instant villain when it comes to the Mutant Underground and mutant characters. Most of these thugs and opportunists don't care about justice, morality or compassion – only a paycheck. Many are ex-cons, mercenaries and super beings themselves looking to make some fast money doing what they do best, fighting and using their super abilities. And when it comes to mutant hunting, the end justifies the means, so they can usually bend and even break the law without anybody calling them on the carpet for it. Consequently, this line of work is extremely attractive to super-powered roughnecks, thugs and criminals. Which, in turn, means even though they may be working for a legitimate business, local police or the federal government, they are villains and scum. Cretins who will intimidate, threaten, hurt and kill innocent people (especially mutants) who get in their way, lie to them or try to hide or protect their "targets."

Adventures can be a basic run, hide and fight these hunters and exterminators or something more elaborate, like tricking and having (dangerous) fun with them by leading them on wild goose chases and making them look bad to the public, the media and their employers. These characters can also be reoccurring villains, major threats or subplots (secondary threats who appear at the worst possible times). Or they can lead into other adventures and other villains. For example, they may capture mutants who don't have bounties on their heads and sell them to slave rings, evil genetic engineering companies, crooks or foreign powers. Or they might work for more than one employer, serving the authorities on one hand and also for a crime lord or bio-tech company. Or they may work for the authorities while being out for themselves, hunting mutants part of the time and victimizing other mutants and/or ordinary human beings the rest of the time. This could involve selling drugs, robbing, extorting money or favors, running some sort of criminal racket (gambling, numbers running, prostitution, slave ring, etc.) or just harassing mutants fugitives who don't have a bounty on their heads for

the fun of it. A lot of these mutant hunters are misanthropes who want to be big shots, important or powerful, but are really low life punks with delusions of grandeur. The most powerful (or crazy) could be waging their own private war on mutants for any number of reasons or be out to destroy the Mutant Underground.

The Lost Company

By Julius Rosenstein

The Lost Company is a loose-knit group of super-beings dedicated to hunting down other super-beings. Although first formed as a society of bounty hunters tracking down super-villains, the Lost Company has moved away from their original objective and is now more concerned with the hunt itself than with the justness of their assignments. The Lost Company thrives on the challenges of hunting super beings and is as likely to pursue super-heroes and vigilantes who have gone rogue or have been unjustly accused of wrongdoing as they are of chasing down known villains and high-powered criminals. With the advent of mutants and recovery operations, the Lost Company regularly hire themselves out as a top-paid, elite Recovery Team. Actually, they'll hire themselves out to anybody who can afford them and have worked for foreign governments, the US government, private corporations, criminal organizations and even super-villains who they can stomach.

Legal Status: Tenuous at best. Some members of the Lost Company are considered to be anti-heroes (at best) or are themselves regarded as villains, so many in the law enforcement community are not at all fond of them and refuse to hire them. However, since more often than not the fugitives hunted by the Lost Company are crooks and villains (as opposed to misunderstood heroes), some police departments and government agencies bite the bullet and hire these "experts" as well as cut them considerable slack on how they conduct themselves and look the other way on members of the Company who are currently wanted for questioning or suspicion of a crime. Also, since the Lost Company is known to fight "mutants and monsters" and (on occasion) to donate a portion of their bounties to charity (a clever PR move), the general public considers the Lost Company as rough, no nonsense urban heroes.

Although they sometimes seem obsessed with tracking down and apprehending their prey, the Lost Company, for the most part, does make an effort to avoid getting innocent bystanders in a crossfire, and have helped to rescue "civilians" from fires and danger (usually caused by the Lost Company's pursuit of a super being in the first place). Company members with callous attitudes about protecting civilians (such as Lone Shark) are generally expelled in short order or reined in to keep the peace.

Membership: The Lost Company is pretty much open to any category of super-hero interested in man-hunting. Thus far, most of the members have been either mutants, Special Training Hunter/Vigilantes, or Hardware Weapons Experts. However, aliens, psychics, physical trained characters and those with robotic, bionic, or magic-based powers are welcomed to its roster.

Currently, the core members of the Lost Company are *Savage*, *Hunt*, and *Amador*. Other heroes (and villains) have come and gone, sometimes seemingly at random. Likewise, specialists and those who happen to be available or looking for work, may be offered an opportunity to join the three and share in the reward. In general, the Lost Company tries to tailor their forces for the specific hunt, sending just one or two hunters for lesser quarries and recruiting more members for more formidable or more numerous adversaries.

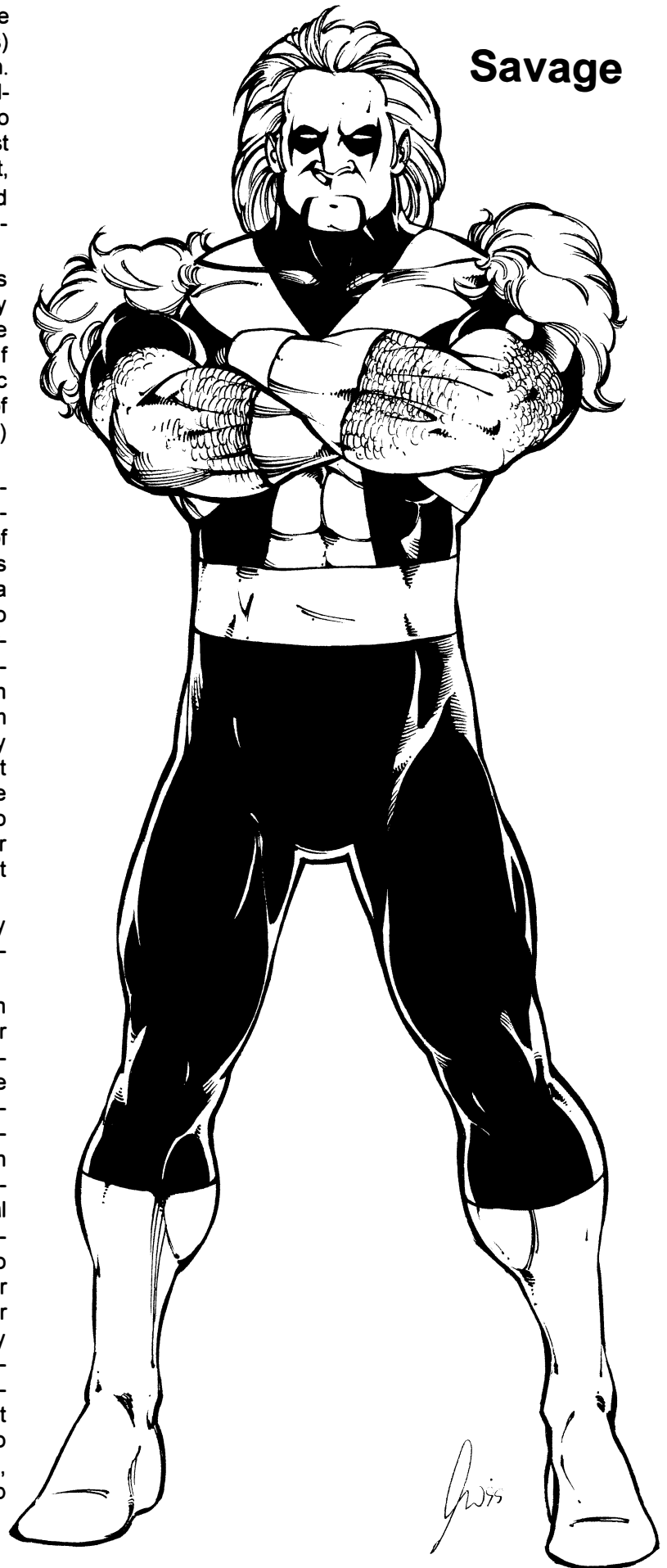
At the present time, *Savage* is the leader with *Hunt* as his second-in-command. Although *Amador* is technically the next in line, he much prefers to maintain a low profile and will often defer to newer members and part-timers. If none of the core members are present during a specific hunt, the hunters involved are free to work out the chain of command (if any) and the division of the bounties (if any) among themselves.

Relationship to Mutant Underground: The Lost Company has an interesting love/hate relationship with the Mutant Underground. On one hand, most of the members of the Company support the idea of protecting fellow mutants (especially those who have committed no crime) from a hostile society and have, on occasion, allowed a quarry to slip out of their clutches to take refuge with the Underground. On the other hand, the Lost Company have themselves been one of the groups that have most often tracked down and apprehended mutants seeking asylum with the selfsame Underground, a callousness and policy which has not endeared the Lost Company to the covert organization or mutants in general. Many militants in the Mutant Underground think these guys are traitors to mutantkind and should be done away with once and for all, adding to the heat of any situation involving the Lost Company.

Note: When these mutant hunters are motivated by money, anger or revenge, there is no room for compassion, loyalty to others, or friendship.

Adventure Hooks: Running from or facing a 3-8 man Lost Company team man-hunting/bounty hunting or out for revenge that leads to raids, strong-arming people, intimidation, infiltration, kidnaping, combat and murder. The Lost Company is not particularly gentle and will use whatever dirty tricks they need to accomplish their goals. Likewise, the Company will challenge and take down (though probably not kill) any "heroes" who try to stop them or protect their target. Player characters may also have casual and friendly run-ins with these guys as they regularly frequent mutant hangouts and Mutant Underground turf to keep a keen sense of the lay of the land and to keep their eyes open for any juicy bounties that might fall into their lap. Thus, one or more members of the Lost Company (and their current running partners or buddies) may be encountered at nightclubs, blind pigs, bars, gambling establishments, mutant gathering places and on the street (maybe on a stakeout). Cocky and arrogant, they like to taunt and tease heroes and vigilantes, and when bored, one of the Lost Company may instigate a fight to break up the monotony.

Savage



Leader of Lost Company

William Foxworthy was a natural athlete of tremendous potential. Will's father (who was the local high school football coach) tried to instill a "win at all costs" attitude in young Will. With his natural gifts (and burgeoning mutant abilities), Will seemed to be a shoo-in for High School All-American and a notable college (and possibly professional) football career.

Unfortunately, Will's father was ultimately caught providing his players with the answers to their exams. In the resulting scandal, Will's father lost his job and was banned from ever coaching again. The players involved (including Will) were expelled from school. Will's dreams of a career in football were shattered.

Will joined the Marine Corps in an attempt to put the disgrace behind him. Starting well in the Marines, he ultimately attained the rank of Staff Sergeant in a Reconnaissance company. During this time, Will was able to pit himself in maneuvers against some of the best recon and combat specialists the Marine Corps had to offer. Thanks to his competitive nature and mutant abilities, he thrived on the challenges and overcame every obstacle, no matter what. His tenacity and ruthless, win at all costs attitude earned him the tag of "Savage" by his men.

Unfortunately, Will's military career was cut short after a dispute with a snotty lieutenant resulted in an altercation which left the lieutenant with a broken jaw and Will Foxworthy slated for a court martial. Not wanting to spend time in a military prison, Will ran for it, leaving his old life behind him.

In order to earn enough money to survive (while still keeping out of sight of the military authorities who were hunting him), Will created the persona of Savage, a bounty hunter and mercenary. During this period, Will discovered that hunting down super-beings provided far greater challenge than any he had previously faced, and he liked it. The thrill was intoxicating and the financial reward made it eminently worth doing.

Savage gathered together other similar minded man-hunters and formed the Lost Company. Currently, Savage is leading the Lost Company and is relishing the multiple challenges of tracking down his quarries and staving off attempts by upstarts to undermine his leadership while avoiding arrest by the authorities.

Real Name: William Foxworthy.

Alias: Savage.

Legal Status: Wanted by various authorities.

Alignment: Aberrant.

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 15, M.A. 15, P.S. 20, P.P. 19, P.E. 22, P.B. 12, Spd. 15

Hit Points: 68, **S.D.C.:** 100/150 (at night).

Weight: 220 lbs (99 kg). **Height:** 6 feet, 4 inches (1.93 m).

Age: 27.

Horror Factor: 13 (night only).

Disposition: Savage is a man who thrives on challenges.

The more difficult, the more enjoyable. He doesn't discriminate between the good guys and the bad. Let someone else worry about the moral judgments, just give him a target worthy of his talents and he's happy to

bring him in. Though he is quick to accept most challenges, he rarely makes the mistake of underestimating an enemy or rushing in without a well thought out plan. Despite his evil alignment, Savage lives by a twisted code of honor, his word is his bond and he never kills for pleasure or sport. He is a strong, charismatic leader respected and feared by those under his command.

Experience Level: Eighth.

Super Power Category: Mutant.

Major Super Abilities: Natural Combat Ability.

Minor Super Abilities: Danger Sense, Healing Factor and Nightstalking.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts (formally trained while in the Marines, but uses Natural Combat Ability).

Attacks per Melee: Nine.

Combat Bonuses (includes all bonuses): +5 (+7*) on initiative, +4 to strike, +2 (+3*) to parry, +2(+8*) to automatic dodge, +4 to disarm or entangle, +5 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +6 to pull punch, back flip 86%, exceptional balance 84%, cannot be attacked by surprise.

Note: The asterisk (*) applies to his first action only thanks to *Danger Sense* (power description follows at the end of Savage's description).

Damage from Hand to Hand Combat: Punch: 1D6+7, Power Punch (counts as 2 actions): 2D6+21, Kick (ordinary): 1D4+5, Karate Kick: 2D6+7, Jump Kick (counts as 2 attacks) inflicting automatic Critical Strike (4D6+14), Jump 10 feet (3 m) high by 15 feet (4.6 m) long; increase the latter by 50% if Savage has a running start. Leap Attack: Critical Strike. Head Butt: 1D6+5. Knockout/Stun on a roll of 19-20 and Judo-Style Throw/Flip: Victim takes 2D4 damage and loses initiative and one melee attack. Damage Note: Add +5 to damage at night.

Other Bonuses: +7 to save vs magic/poison, +5 to save vs Horror Factor, +3 to save vs psionics, +2 to save vs possession and mind control, +34% to save vs coma/death, extra bonuses for Healing (see **Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition**, page 233 for more details on *Healing Factor*) and *Nightstalking* (see **Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition**, page 236 for more details).

Educational Level: Street Schooled.

Skills of Note: Speak, Read, & Write English 98%, Basic Mathematics 85%, Camouflage 60%, Detect Ambush 70%, Hunting, Identify Plants and Fruits 65%, Land Navigation 79%, Military Etiquette 75%, Pilot Automobile 79%, Pilot Truck 73%, Preserve Food 65%, Radio: Basic 85%, Streetwise 53%, Tracking 75%, Wilderness Survival 75%, W.P. Knife, W.P. Sword, W.P. Pistol, and W.P. Rifle.

Appearance: A large, brawny man with a mane of long blond hair. Wears a yellow and dark red costume with a white mask covering his entire face.

Occupation: Professional Bounty Hunter specializing in super beings.

Weapons: Although Savage is proficient at a number of weapons (both melee and firearms), he will generally not carry or use them. However, if his quarry is known to favor a certain weapon(s), Savage may bring one of his own to battle the quarry on even terms. The ultimate

sportsman, if the fight is one on one, Savage will NEVER start the battle with a superior weapon (i.e. if Savage has a sword and dagger and faces an unarmed foe, he will either offer his opponent the sword and use the dagger himself or just toss both weapons aside). Note that if the fight begins on even terms (such as sword vs sword) and Savage disarms his foe, he is under no obligation to disarm himself as well (unless he's in the mood to continue the fighting).

Vehicles: Savage likes tough, rugged vehicles, preferably military issue. He would much rather drive a jeep, a truck, or a Hummer than a fast sports car. If his quarry has the faster vehicle, that's okay too. Consider it a head start, Savage will eventually catch up to them. Savage currently has an ATV that he bought through a roundabout route.

Equipment: Although Savage carries a small arsenal with him, he seldom uses it (see Weapons above). Mostly he keeps a supply of equipment from various sports (baseball, football, basketball, roller hockey, etc.) so that during down times (such as when the trail goes cold or when waiting to talk to an informant), he can get in pickup games with the locals.

Body Armor: Savage does not wear armor.

Money: Although money has not been his primary concern, bounty hunting has proven to be fairly lucrative. Savage usually carries several thousand dollars with him and has several thousand more stashed away in various lockers (such as at athletic clubs and airport terminals).

Relationship to Mutant Underground: Along with the rest of the Lost Company, Savage has had a checkered relationship with the Mutant Underground. However, having been on the run himself, he is generally more inclined to give the underground the benefit of the doubt. Unless he is fairly certain the asylum seeker is prime threat, a vile fiend or worth big money, Savage may forgo the hunt.

Notes: 1. Most of the time, Savage "plays" with his prey, first testing for weaknesses and strengths before attacking outright. Likewise, he may feign an easy defeat just to obtain information on his subject or to lure him into a trap or to underestimate him (Savage). Then, when he's ready, or the moment is right, Savage will go in for the final victory.

2. Although Savage can kill (and has), he generally prefers not to. Since he himself (as Foxworthy) is wanted unfairly by the military for breaking the law, Savage is willing to give the benefit of the doubt to many of his quarry, especially those who fight him honorably and/or give him a run for his money. However, opponents who fight dirty and those with a reputation for being scam artists or vile scum (such as sociopaths, serial killers, and child molesters) are shown no mercy.

Danger Sense (New ability)

Note: This super ability was created by *Nick Luna* and first appeared in **The Rifter #11** as an optional power. It is reprinted here in its entirety.

The hero has the ability to sense immediate personal danger. This power does not inform him of the nature, source, or direction of the danger, just that he is in imminent danger. The warning time is 3 seconds in advance per level of the super being and makes him hyper alert and ready to act or react (dodge, parry, roll, etc.) at a moment's notice.

Bonuses: +1D4 M.E., +2 to initiative, +1 to parry, +6 to dodge, and cannot be attacked by surprise.

Hunt

John Blacktree grew up in Nevada living with his fellow Shoshones. When John was in his teens, his great-uncle (who was one of the tribal elders) insisted that John take the spirit walk as had his ancestors. Although the spirit walk usually resulted merely in a young brave meeting the animal totem which would be his spirit guide and companion through life, John Blacktree underwent far more. The spirit that John encountered was that of a tiger. It entered and possessed the body of the youth, causing a strange merging of the two souls. The spirit conferred its powers on John Blacktree at a cost to his humanity.

With his newfound abilities, John was no longer content to remain as a poor but honest member of his community. Against the wishes of his uncle (who sensed the changes and attempted to keep society safe from his now-predatory nephew), John Blacktree left for the city to seek his fortune.

Despite his formidable abilities, Hunt (as John now called himself) was thwarted from his early criminal attempts due to his lack of experience. It was only after Hunt ultimately decided to utilize his strengths and become a bounty hunter that things started to look up. Unfortunately, Hunt's good luck was not to last.

Although the tiger-spirit stays dormant most of the time, there are times when it emerges and takes over John's body, turning him into a hybrid creature, part man and part tiger, a true lycanthrope. It was during one of these occasions that the Hunt-creature killed its prey, in front of two dozen witnesses, no less!

With the authorities after him, Hunt fled the scene and became a fugitive. With his instincts still driving him to the hunt, the man eventually fell in with the Lost Company, and has been with them ever since. Hunt is currently the second-in-command of the Lost Company. On several occasions, he has tried to usurp the position of leader from Savage but has been outsmarted or outmaneuvered every time. It is an ongoing contest Savage enjoys, and one Hunt plans to someday win.

Real Name: John Blacktree.

Aliases: Hunt.

Legal Status: Wanted by various authorities on numerous counts, including assault with a deadly weapon, extortion and murder.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 13, M.A. 13, P.S. 25 (Supernatural), P.P. 18, P.E. 19, P.B. 11, Spd. 12 (24 in were-form)

Hit Points: 46. **S.D.C.:** 42 (72 in were-form).

Weight: 190 lbs (86 kg), were-form: 315 lbs (142 kg).

Age: 23.

Height: 6 feet, 1 inch (1.85 m); were-form: 6 feet, 8 inches (2.03 m).

Horror Factor: 13 (were-form only).

I.S.P.: 39



Disposition: Hunt is ambitious, aggressive and arrogant. Like a hungry tiger he feels that his powers make him superior to everyone else and has a great appetite for life. This sometimes leads him to take reckless chances. Thus far, his precognition (albeit limited) has kept him from disaster. However, his jealousy of Savage and his frustration of not being in charge continue to grow and it may be only a matter of time before Hunt does something drastic.

Experience Level: Seventh.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: Six.

Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +4 to strike, +5 to parry/dodge, +10 to damage, +2 to roll with punch/fall, +2 to pull punch, various kicks (3), and critical strike on 18-20.

Other Bonuses: +2 to save vs magic/poison, +8% to save vs coma/death.

Super Power Category: Mutant.

Super Abilities: Lycanthropy (Major ability).

Other Powers (limited Psionics): Precognition (Psionic Power, see new power below) and See the Invisible (psionic power). I.S.P. 39.

Animal/Lycanthrope Abilities: Heightened Senses: Nightvision 60 feet (18.3 m), Advanced Hearing and Advanced Smell; Supernatural P.S., leap 20 feet (6 m) high and 30 feet (9 m) long, heals two times faster than a normal human and can regrow lost limbs, fingers, ears or nose in 48 hours!

Skills of Note: Speak Shoshone 98%, Speak English 85%, Read & Write English 65%, Basic Mathematics 80%, Climb 75%, Dance 65%, Fishing 75%, Hunting, Land Navigation 60%, Prowl 65%, Swim 85%, Tracking 55%, Wilderness Survival 70%, W.P. Archery & Targeting, and W.P. Rifle.

Appearance: A Native American with dark hair tied back in a ponytail. Hunt's face has small tiger stripes pointing inward to his broad, flat nose. When not in costume, Hunt uses body paint to conceal these stripes. Hunt's costume is a red and green body suit with black striping. In his were-form, Hunt looks like a cross between a human and a tiger, and may be mistaken for a mutant animal.

Occupation: Professional Criminal.

Weapons: Hunt scorns the use of weapons and relies on his own animal teeth and claws. His teeth inflict 2D6 damage and his claws (which are retractable) inflict 2D4 damage on a restrained punch, 5D6 +P.S. bonus for a full strength punch, 1D6x10 +P.S. damage bonus from a power punch (counts as two melee attacks). Damage includes Supernatural P.S. and the slashing claws themselves. Punches or kicks only do 3D6 +P.S. damage bonus.

Vehicle: Hunt normally does not use vehicles. When he does require transportation, then he will either (depending on his mood) sneak aboard or commandeer a vehicle and force the driver to take him wherever he wants to go.

Money: Although Hunt has some of the money from his days as a bounty hunter (a large portion was sent back to his tribe) as well as his ill-gotten gains as a criminal,

he is no longer concerned about wealth. As long as Hunt has enough to cover his short-term needs, he is content. To him, the act of hunting and the thrill of the kill has taken on a higher priority. So has invoking fear and respect through raw power and ruthlessness.

Relationship to Mutant Underground: Along with the rest of the Lost Company, Hunt has had a checkered relationship with the Mutant Underground. On one hand he can understand the dream of living free. On the other he sees most super beings as rivals and mutant animals as either prey or natural enemies. Hunt will pursue a bounty who is hiding in the Underground without hesitation or concern about ruffling anybody's feathers.

Notes: During the full moon and solar eclipse periods, Hunt involuntarily transforms from human to were-beast at random every 1D6x10 minutes. However, with a successful effort of will (roll vs M.E.), he can change back. This requires 1D6 minutes of concentration (no other actions are possible for him at this time).

Hunt is vulnerable to silver. Weapons made of, or coated with, silver will inflict double damage.

Precognition (NEW Psionic Sensitive Power)

Range: Self.

Duration: 2 melee rounds.

I.S.P.: 8

Note: Rare and unusual even among psychics, most common among supernatural beings (like the tiger spirit that shares Hunt's body).

The ability to pick up psychic emanations and glimpse a few moments of the future. This future insight may be a few moments or a couple of hours; time is a very tenuous element caught up in continual change. This means the potential future can be altered and avoided.

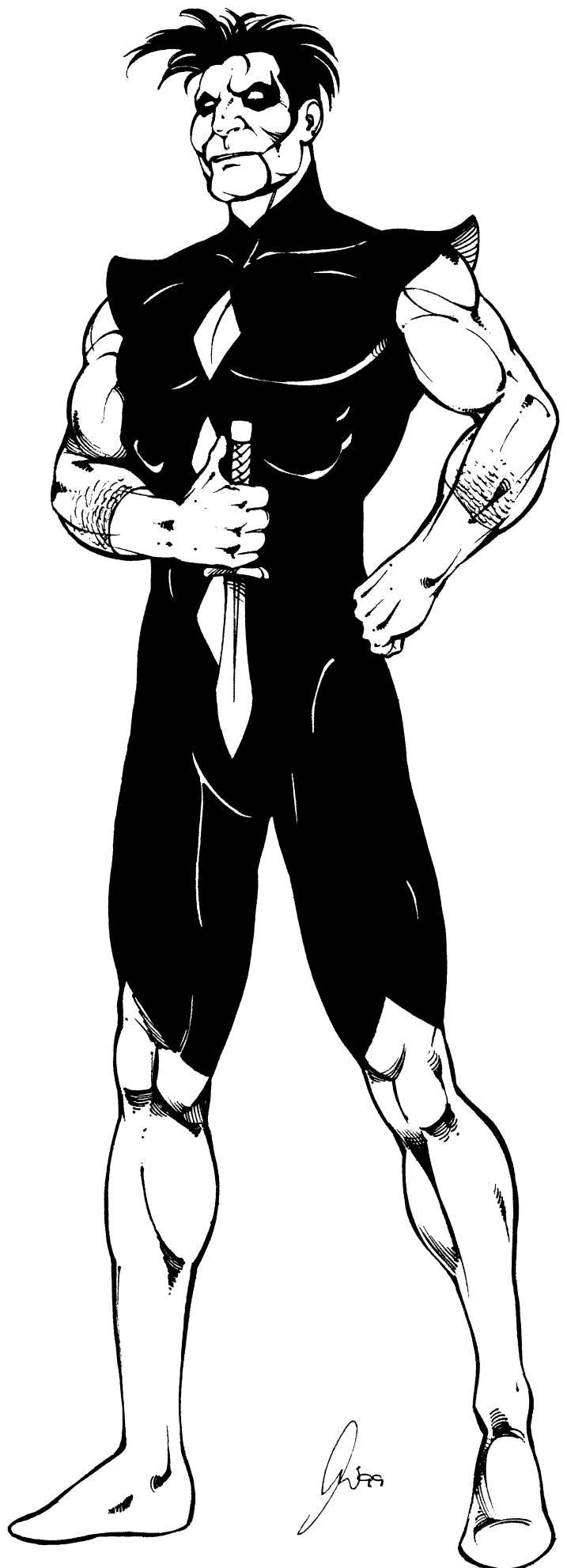
Using precognition on an unopened door may reveal what lays beyond. The psychic may actually see himself engaged in battle or working on something. **G.M.'s Note:** Try not to reveal the actual outcome of an incident or event, just the nature of the danger and the identity of the opponent. Perhaps describe the inception of a battle or the elements that may lead to danger, combat or success. The fewer hard facts the better; after all, the future is open to speculation.

Amador

A key member of Lost Company

Amador is from Udynnlef, a planet many light-years away. Years ago, this Earth-like planet saw its ecosystem devastated by nuclear war which wreaked havoc on the planet. The leaders of Udynnlef decided to find a new planet where the survivors can relocate. The Udynnlefians pooled their dwindling resources to build a fleet of spaceships capable of carrying them to this new world. First, however, a planet would have to be found that would serve as their final destination.

A number of scout ships were built and sent out with the orders to find a new world to colonize. Ideally, this



should be a world with enough resources to support the Udynnlefiens. Also, though an unpopulated planet would suffice, a planet with a native population that could be enslaved might be even better. The scout ships were sent out in many directions, and the one piloted by Amador crash-landed on Earth.

Although not capable of travel at this time, the spaceship is not damaged beyond the point of repair. Amador salvaged a few portable items, camouflaged his ship, and went out to explore this inviting new world. He soon found some dwellings nearby (an old farm) and remained hidden observing the locals. Armed with his translator, Amador learned enough to get a general idea about his surroundings. When he found out that there were strange beings on this planet with powers greater than the common run of humanity, he felt that he should observe more before attempting to repair his ship and returning for the invasion fleet. To that purpose, Amador has been passing himself off as a mutant (instead of an alien) and hooked up with the Lost Company. Though he still intends to someday rejoin his people and continue the search for a suitable world, he has become enamored with Earth and enjoys its many vices and challenges. He has decided Earth is probably unsuitable for conquest because of the sprawling human population and the presence of super beings, but ultimately that decision will be made by his people's leaders. Truth be told, Earth might do just fine, though for now, Amador enjoys keeping it all to himself.

Real Name: Amador is as close as the Udynnlef language can be translated.

Aliases: Amador is his Earth alias, pretends to be a mutant. **Note:** He tells comrades that he was created by a foreign bio-tech corporation, a secret Russian group who weren't happy with their results so they sold him to a slaver. That's how he says he got to the United States. It also explains his odd look (pale skin, blank eyes, dark circles around the eyes, etc.), accent, lack of understanding of American slang and customs, and experimental devices like his image inducer and laser pen.

Legal Status: Wanted by various authorities for an array of crimes including assault and murder.

Alignment: Diabolic evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 10, M.A. 9, P.S. 14, P.P. 22, P.E. 19, P.B. 5, Spd. 18

Hit Points: 38. **S.D.C.:** 33.

Height: 5 feet, 9 inches (1.75 m) tall. **Weight:** 170 lbs (77 kg). **Age:** Unknown. Looks thirty-ish.

Disposition: Amador is typical of his people, an arrogant, self-centered opportunist who feels that he's superior to all who are around him. Amador has managed to hide these feelings around his teammates in the Lost Company (most of the time anyway) but would not hesitate to betray or destroy them once they have outlived their usefulness. Amador is looking forward to the rewards he expects to reap on this planet and ruthlessly eliminates anyone or anything that he considers to be an obstacle or a threat to him. Should he get really angry, he is likely to finish repairs on his ship and blast off to tell his people about Earth and encourage its invasion.

Experience Level: Fifth.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Assassin.

Attacks per Melee: Six.

Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +6 to strike, +4 to parry, +4 to dodge, +3 to damage, +5 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to disarm, +5 to save vs magic and poison, +23% to save vs coma/death, and is semi-impervious to toxic gases.

Super Power Category: Alien with Super Abilities.

Major Super Abilities: Control Kinetic Energy and Adapt to Environment.

Minor Super Abilities: Bend Light.

Skills of Note: Speak English 70%, Read & Write English 50%, Basic & Advanced Mathematics 75%, Computer Operation 75%, Pilot Military Spacecraft: Small 72%, Navigation: Space 60%, FTL 45%, Spacecraft Mechanics 50%, General Athletics, Running, W.P. Archery & Targeting, W.P. Knife, W.P. Automatic Pistol, W.P. Energy Pistol, and W.P. Energy Rifle.

Appearance: Amador looks basically humanoid albeit with stark white skin and a somewhat skeletal face. He actually looks closer to a normal human than some other (actual) mutants so although his appearance may raise some eyebrows, he is able to maintain his cover story of being a mutant. Amador's costume (actually his flight uniform) is a black body suit with three white diamonds running down the front and blue boots and gloves.

Weapons (Special): Amador primarily uses his force knife but is also proficient with all types of knives as well as ranged weapons, and is quick to grab and use them if the opportunity warrants it.

Force Knife (favorite): This knife has a small generator in the hilt. Once activated, it creates a glowing energy field surrounding the blade. The knife may be used either with or without the energy field (although Amador is the only one thus far who knows how to turn the knife on). With the energy on, the knife can slice through an armored car, effectively *reducing the A.R.* by 10 points (i.e. an A.R. of 16 is effectively 6 to Amador's blade and it's likely to penetrate and inflict damage). **Damage:** With power off: 1D6, power on: 4D6. **Length:** 12 inch (30 cm) blade, 9 inch (23 cm) handle. **Weight:** 1 pound (0.45 kg).

Laser Pen: Well, it rather looks like a pen or a pen flashlight. **Damage:** 2D6 points. **Payload:** 12 shots, but recharges on its own at a rate of one shot per 30 minutes. **Range:** 120 feet (36.6 m). He usually keeps this as a concealed back up weapon and for soldering, welding and cutting metal (on the setting for this use the laser can be used for up to two hours before needing to re-charge; uses up six blasts per hour). **Note:** He tells comrades that he stole it from the bio-tech corporation that created him.

Laser Pistol: Amador has never used this weapon for fear it will tip off that he is really an alien. He keeps this small, exotic looking handgun hidden away for an emergency, like making good his escape from this planet. **Damage:** 6D6 points. **Payload:** 20 shots, but recharges on its own at a rate of one shot per 30 minutes. **Range:** 2000 feet (610 m).

Image Inducer: There is a small image inducer integrated into the circuitry of Amador's costume. Once activated, the inducer generates 1D4 holographic duplicates of Amador. These images are incapable of independent action and will only move exactly as Amador does. Since the duplicates are made of light, they cannot touch or physically affect their surroundings. They are simply there to confuse his enemies and draw fire away from the real Amador. However, since objects (and energy) will pass right through these images, opponents that keep track of these duplicates may not be fooled for long. The images last for five minutes or until canceled by Amador. Since this device is powered by Amador's own energy, he prefers not to use it except in dire need. The inducer may be used three times per day (24 period) at most.

Armor: Amador wears no armor other than his flight suit. However, the flight suit is a self-healing alien material (2D6+10 S.D.C. is restored per hour) and provides an A.R. 13 and 70 S.D.C.

Money: Amador has only a few hundred dollars left over from the bounties he has collected. He is still a bit unclear on the concept of money and he lost much of it to his extravagant, self-gratifying lifestyle and gambling.

Relationship to Mutant Underground: Amador is distrusted by most members of the Mutant Underground for the simple facts that he is a member of the Lost Company and he just comes off as a seedy, untrustworthy and self-serving individual. However, Amador has gone out of his way to help and defend the Mutant Underground, except when he or the Lost Company are hunting for a new bounty. He clearly tries to stay on good terms with them and believes he has won their trust (or close to it). This is strictly a ploy on his part to help establish his cover as a mutant instead of being a hostile alien and to give him access to places to hide and, with any luck, get the Mutant Underground to help him if SHOCK or some other group comes after him.

Note: Despite their problems with the authorities and rivalry and conflict between each other, if Savage and Hunt ever find out that Amador is a *hostile alien* intent on conquering the Earth, they will set aside their differences and make killing Amador their top priority.

Lone Shark

A former member of Lost Company

By Julius Rosenstein & Kevin Siembieda

Lone Shark's earliest memories are of being tested in some sort of laboratory that was in a city on the Eastern Seaboard. His life prior to this, even his very identity, remains a mystery. Unfortunately (depending upon one's point of view), before he could find out from his experimenters (captors?) who and what he was, the lab was attacked by some super-heroes, and, during the confusion, Lone Shark fought his way out and escaped into the nearby ocean.



Lone Shark survived for awhile living like a normal shark: swimming, hunting and surviving on wild prey. However, during this period, he also learned how to use his special abilities. Eventually, the Shark came back to the land where his true predatory nature was revealed.

Lone Shark first managed to hook up with some gangsters who were running an extortion and protection racket. The Shark went to work as a one-man enforcer and became so good at it that they tagged him with the name of "Lone" Shark. He liked it and the name has stuck with him ever since.

Despite an impressive start with the gang, Lone Shark became too violent and brutal even for them. When his bloodlust was aroused, Lone Shark would go beyond reasonable force and beat, maim or kill his targets. After killing a couple of welters (when he was only supposed to rough them up a little to get them to pay), the gang decided that Lone Shark had to go. The mutant objected to this and attacked the gangsters in a berserker rage, leaving five dead (and partially devoured) and six others badly wounded. Lone Shark attempted to carry on the racket by himself, but had neither the temperament or the time. An atrocity of that magnitude was enough to mobilize the authorities and the entire super-hero community on a man-hunt (not to mention gangsters associated with the deceased). With these odds against him, Lone Shark fled the city for better pickings elsewhere.

For awhile, the villain joined the Lost Company where it allowed him to put his hunting skills and powers to good use. Unfortunately, his bloodlust, cannibalism and berserker rages alienated his fellow members who ultimately expelled him from the group. A battle ensued, but Lone Shark was beaten soundly and tossed out on the street with the warning of stay away or die.

Since then, Lone Shark has gone into business selling his services as a hit man specializing in murder and mass murder, and a bounty hunter and recovery operative, particularly to those who don't care how much blood is spilt or are looking for a lot of bloodshed to send a message. His main clients are super-villains, corrupt bio-tech corporations, terrorists, foreign governments (who don't know his reputation) and members of the criminal underworld willing to take the risk of employing him for acts of extreme retribution. Lone Shark has wised up, however, selling himself as the ultimate assassin and ideal for jobs requiring slaughter and murder. This way, he doesn't have to hold back. He also works alone. He is best suited for jobs that allow him to stay near the water to best utilize his powers and to make a quick getaway. Lone Shark remains at large as a murdering fiend and a member of the "Most Wanted Lists" for the FBI, MTF, Interpol and various other organizations.

Real Name: Real name is unknown.

Aliases: Lone Shark.

Legal Status: Wanted by a number of law enforcement agencies in North America and Europe for extortion, assault with intent to kill, murder, mass murder and a score of other offenses. Considered a major threat to the public at large.

Alignment: Diabolic

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 13, M.A. 7, P.S. 15, P.P. 16/28*, P.E. 27, P.B. 8, Spd. 14 on land, 27 (18.5 mph/29.6 km) swimming. The asterisk (*) refers to bonuses and attributes while underwater.

Hit Points: 54, **S.D.C.:** 103 (143 in were-form, and 183 underwater and in were-form).

Height: 5 feet, 9 inches (1.75 m) tall; were-form: 6 feet, 6 inches (1.98 m).

Weight: 190 lbs (86 kg); were-form: 380 lbs (171 kg).

Age: Unknown. Looks to be in his 20s.

Horror Factor: In human form: 10 (if reputation is known), but in were-form: 14.

Disposition: Lone Shark is a born shark-like predator. A killing machine who lives to kill and eat and terrorize. Due to his dual nature (human and animal), the villain is bipolar, given to extreme mood swings and a sudden eruption of murderous rage for the slightest infraction. Additionally, he is extremely aggressive and violent, and cannot relate to people or modern society. He also has trouble sleeping, making him all the more irritable and, at times, careless. He is ferocious and always hungry, eating his weight in raw meat (usually humanoid) every day. However, like a real shark, he can easily go a week without food and not feel any negative effect. Likewise, he can gorge himself, eating two times his weight, and go without eating for 1-2 weeks. Because he appears to be human, he is also considered a *cannibal* because he regularly feeds on humans, mutants and anybody who crosses him. The fiend could (and sometimes does) eat large fish and sea mammals, but he has developed a taste for humanoids. Mutants and the homeless are his favorite targets because nobody cares about them (or not much) and they can be attacked and eaten with little fear that the authorities will do much about it. Besides, he uses hit and run tactics, always retreating back into the water where few can follow. When he has the time, he also enjoys eating a portion to half the bodies of his victims and fallen opponents!

Experience Level: Fifth.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks per Melee: Five/Six.*

Combat Bonuses: +8 to initiative, +2/+3* to strike, +3/+5* to parry, +5/+9* to dodge, +9* to melee damage, +2 to roll with punch/fall, +2 to pull punch, does not fatigue, plus karate kick does 2D4 damage, and a snap kick does 1D6 damage. Asterisks denote his abilities in were-form.

Other Bonuses: +9 to save vs magic and poison, +3 to save vs psionic attack, +34% to save vs coma/death, resistant to fire and cold (half damage), and resistant to poisons/toxins (one third the damage, penalties and duration). Recovers lost Hit Points at a rate of *one* every 15 minutes and *three* S.D.C. every 10, but can also instantly regenerate 4D6 H.P. two times a day. In fact, Lone Shark was thought to have been killed on three different occasions now, but he always collapsed in a body of water and disappeared, only to reappear, days, weeks or months later.

Damage (in were-form): Nip: 1D4 damage, full strength bite (counts as two melee attacks) does 3D6+9, while a

punch does 2D6+9, a head butt inflicts 1D4+9, and a body ram 2D4+9 damage.

Super Power Category: Mutant (or so it would seem).

Major Super Abilities: Lycanthropy: Shark.

Minor Super Abilities: Underwater Abilities and Healing Factor.

Animal/Lycanthrope Abilities: Heightened Senses: Nightvision 300 feet (91.4 m), Advanced Hearing and Advanced Smell, Supernatural P.S., heals two times faster than a normal human and can regrow lost limbs, fingers, ears or nose in 48 hours!

Skills of Note: Speak English 80%, Read & Write English 65%, Find Contraband 42%, Pilot Boat: Motor & Hydrofoil 75%, Sail Boat 80%, Water Scooter 70%, Prowl 45%, Streetwise 36%.

Appearance: In human form, Lone Shark is a man of medium height and stocky, muscular build. He has pale skin and medium-length light red hair. When the Shark smiles (usually at the thought of hurting or killing someone), he reveals long, sharp, pointed teeth. Lone Shark wears a full body suit which is turquoise with ultramarine trim on the extremities (the legs, hands, and upper torso). He also wears metal bracelets and anklets on his four limbs. In his were-form, Lone Shark looks like a hybrid between a human and a tiger shark.

Insanities: If Lone Shark was strictly human, he would be diagnosed as a psychopath suffering from mindless aggression. Although this is actually due to his shark nature as opposed to an insanity, per se, the net result is still the same. Lone Shark is a homicidal maniac prone to going berserk at the slightest provocation. He also is a cannibal, is cruel and lacks empathy with others.

Occupation: Professional Criminal: Hit man, bounty hunter, and smuggler.

Weapons: Lone Shark usually does not carry any weapons (preferring to rely on his own powers). However, if the fight goes against him, he will grab whatever is handy to use as a weapon, be it a gun, knife or a length of pipe or a chair. These weapons are usually discarded once they have served their purpose.

Vehicle: Lone Shark will steal whatever vehicle (usually motorboats) he may require at the moment. However, he will generally hang on to these vehicles even after his need for them has lapsed. Curiously, even if the Shark plans on ditching the vehicle immediately afterwards, he will often defend the vehicle to the death and kill anyone who tries to take it away before he is through with it.

Armor: Lone Shark wears no armor in his human form. In his were-form, his rough skin provides an A.R. of 8 and 40 S.D.C.

Money: Killing and smuggling have proven to be very profitable for Lone Shark. Although he usually only carries a few thousand dollars with him (just for emergencies), he has various goods (gems, art objects, precious metals, etc.) worth over half a million dollars and another quarter of a million in cash stashed away. Unfortunately, because Lone Shark keeps these stashes in inaccessible places on the ocean floor (to keep them from being discovered by anyone else), he sometimes himself forgets where they are.

Relationship to Mutant Underground: Lone Shark likes the Mutant Underground only as a source of food. This miscreant cannot relate to or empathize with anybody. He just sees them as food and freaks. As long as protectors in the Underground stay out of his way and do not involve themselves in his business, he will do the same for them. However, Lone Shark regularly hunts and feeds on mutants living on the street, including members of the Underground and other street people. Those living along the ocean, the St. Lawrence, Great Lakes and bodies of water connected or near them are in the greatest danger in the United States. This also makes the city and states along these bodies of water and the Atlantic coast his primary stomping grounds.

Notes: 1. Lone Shark considers himself to be the ultimate predator and a step above humanity whom he considers as prey. Unlike his former comrades in the Lost Company, who regarded their quarries simply as challenges (at best) or as menaces to be slain (at worst), Lone Shark also considered his prey as victims and food. This is one of the reasons why the Shark is so feared and was expelled from the Lost Company.

2. Although it is possible that he was a normal human before being experimented on, Lone Shark prefers to believe that he was already a superior being to begin with. Anyone who suggests otherwise will trigger a violent reaction from the monster (as will so many other things).

3. Lone Shark hates the Lost Company for what they did to him and seeks revenge on them and anybody who even knows them in passing. In fact, he hates super beings in general. Meanwhile, the Lost Company wishes they had killed Lone Shark when they had a chance and will take any good paying bounty to track him down and make it so. If any of them hear of the Lone Shark re-surfacing (no pun intended), they may consider trying to hunt him down and kill him even without a bounty.

4. During the full moon and solar eclipse periods, Lone Shark loses control (what little he has) of his humanity, becoming more animal than human and reacts on instinct and emotion rather than rational thought (even more than usual).

5. Lone Shark is vulnerable to silver. Weapons made of, or coated with, silver inflict double damage.

Ballista

By Alex Marciniszyn & Kevin Siembieda

One of many orphans transferred to a secret genetics laboratory in the Ural Mountains of the former U.S.S.R., the boy was just subject 308-A, and was fortunate to survive. In fact, the secret facility known as *Radar Station 5* would have been shut down without the successful manipulation of his genes. Somehow an extra organ grew in his body. An organ able to create and eject a combustible chemical that ignites shortly after leaving his mouth. The excited scientists decided to name their subject Alexei Dragonov.



What the scientists did not know was that dormant gravity manipulation and flight powers had also been activated or instilled in the youth (nobody is certain how super abilities work). Powers that helped Dragonov escape and make it to Canada. Four years he lived in relative isolation to make himself difficult to find by any pursuers from his homeland. During this time he developed his abilities and trained his body. When he felt he was ready, Alexei moved to the United States where the "action is."

This lost soul trusts no one and only understands violence as a means for solving his problems and expressing his feelings. Taking the cover name Ballista, after an ancient weapon, he expresses his anger and desire to be special against all challengers. In the States he has earned a reputation for usually working within the framework of the law and cooperating with the authorities. Over the last few years, "Ballista" has become a premier player in the business of "Corporate Recovery." Ballista may work alone or be hired to lead a Recovery Team of 2-5 other operatives. Sometimes these teammates have super abilities, other times they are mercs or investigators or thugs. Ballista is known for his efficiency and not being afraid of busting some chops or bending the law to get the job done. Word about his successes in the private sector has even earned him a few jobs for US government agencies. This has made Ballista feel safer about Russian agents trying to get him after all these years, but he still finds himself unable to trust others and is always looking over his shoulder. (Unknown to Dragonov, the current Russian Federation denies there was ever an experimental genetics facility in the Ural Mountains. Alexei has been disavowed and is no longer sought by any government agency.)

Real Name: Alexei Dragonov is the only one he knows.

Legal Status: Identification papers show Alexei as a Ukranian immigrant who became a Canadian citizen and works throughout North America as a corporate troubleshooter and bio-tech Recovery agent. Over the years he has been charged with a few misdemeanors and accused of violence, strong-arm tactics and threats, but nothing more. Compared to most Recovery agents, Ballista is squeaky clean.

Alignment: Anarchist with leanings toward Unprincipled or Aberrant evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 15, M.A. 16, P.S. 20, P.P. 21, P.E. 19, P.B. 15, Spd. 22 running, or 200 mph/320 km flying.

Hit Points: 51, **S.D.C.:** 76.

Weight: 200 lbs (90 kg), **Height:** 6 foot, one inch (1.8 m), **Age:** 28.

Disposition: He is a tough, calculating and resourceful loner, who tries to suppress his insecurities and anger. And Alexei is very angry. Though he seems tough as nails, he sometimes wonders if he is not a freak and monster himself. Of course he fancies himself as a hero, but still has something to prove and does so through force and intimidation. He craves respect and power and feels he is getting them through his services as a man-hunter in the recovery of runaway mutants and the suppression of evidence against the companies he works for. Sympathetic only to the poor and forgot-

ten, including normal folks and members of the Mutant Underground, he sees most people as only temporary allies and forms no lasting friendships. Alexei respects those more powerful than he is, but does not trust people with such power. Yep, he is a walking bag of contradiction and seething emotions.

Experience Level: Seventh.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert and Gymnastics.

Attacks Per Melee: Five (+1 in flight).

Bonuses (includes all): +2 to initiative, +7 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +5 to damage, +4 to roll with punch, fall, impact, +2 to pull punch, karate style kick doing 2D4 damage, critical strike on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20, and paired weapons.

In flight (add to those above): +2 to strike and parry, +4 to dodge when hovering or flying under 80 mph (128 km), +6 to dodge when flying 90 mph (144 km) or faster, +4 to damage for every 20 mph (32 km) of flight speed. See page 274 of HU2 for details about Gravity Manipulation powers.

Other Bonuses: 40% to trust/intimidate, +8% to save vs coma/death, and +2 to save vs magic/poison.

Super Power Category: Mutant Experiment.

Major Super Ability: Gravity Manipulation.

Minor Super Abilities: Energy Expulsion: Fire and Flight: Wingless.

Education Level: Street-schooled.

Skills of Note: Language: English 80%, Language: Russian 90%, Reads and Writes English 80%, Basic Math 85%, Streetwise 58%, Tracking 70%, Interrogation 75%, Prowl 60%, Pick Locks 60%, Pick Pockets 55%, Palming 50%, General Repair/Maintenance 65%, and W.P. Knife.

Secondary Skills: Radio: Basic, Basic Electronics, Computer Operation 75%, First Aid, W.P. Semi-Automatic Pistol, W.P. Submachine-gun, and W.P. Heavy.

Appearance: Dark Slavic features, and muscular.

Occupation: Recovery Team/bounty hunter (anti-hero at best; in it for the money and glory).

Body Armor: Usually doesn't wear any, but does have one suit of FA-70 Ultra-Lite Flexi-Steel body armor (A.R.: 16, S.D.C.: 200).

Weapons, Vehicles & Equipment: Owns a pair of 9 mm pistols, and a submachine-gun, plus a pair of knives. He can get heavier weapons when needed through illegal sources. Alexei has a luxury sedan and a sports car, but expects his employer to provide whatever transportation he needs and a nice vehicle to use for day to day work. Whatever equipment he needs or wants for personal use he buys through his contacts in the black market or criminal underworld. Or takes it from his victims/captives (after all, they won't be needing any more).

Available Money: Has socked away a cool million in a foreign off-shore account, and has another half million invested in the stock market. Hiring Ballista requires paying all expenses, all legal fees and a salary of 30,000 a week. Though Alexei enjoys the good life, he is frugal with his money and planning for the future.

Relationship with Mutant Underground: Ironically, Alexei sympathizes closely to the Mutant Underground,

thinks its members are heroes and feels the most for mutants forced to go into hiding, particularly those created by heartless corporations or secret government agencies. However, he makes a point of distancing himself from the Underground and its members because his work requires him to invade the Underground's turf and raid its hiding places to hunt down the people he is required to "recover" or bring in to the authorities for a bounty. That having been said, Ballista always tries to avoid civilian casualties or hurting innocent bystanders, both mutant and human. Not only that, but he has, on more than one occasion, plunged into a dangerous situation to rescue the innocent. He dislikes anybody else in positions of authority, particularly the police and government agents. Ballista knows about the MTF and even did a job for them once, but doesn't like or trust them one bit. Under the right influence, Ballista could turn into a pretty good guy (Unprincipled), but then again, under the right circumstance he could just as easily slide into evil (Aberrant).

The Bard

The Mutant Messiah

By Alex Marciniszyn & Kevin Siembieda

Ed Matthews entered college looking forward to a degree in poetry and getting published. At the end of his first year, a fire in his dormitory building revealed his mutant abilities. Trapped, he ran through the flames but somehow the fire did not hurt him. As he ran out of the building Ed saw that most of his clothes were gone but he was unhurt! Frightened, he wanted to hide, and immediately his skin changed color to blend in with his surroundings. "Oh no," he thought, "I'm one of them!" Confused about what to do, Ed hid and thought about the horrible transformation that made him a freak. With time, however, he grew to embrace his new powers, deciding they didn't make him a freak. They made him better. Someone to be respected, revered, worshiped even. A true superman several rungs up the evolutionary ladder above ordinary men.

Ed believed that if he was going to use his abilities, he needed to look the part, so he began to work out. He stole the things he needed and sought to be a super-hero. However, he soon realized that the laws were not meant for him. That he was much too enlightened for them, and to expect him to live by them was like apes expecting an intelligent human to run about naked, eating fruit and living by the rules of the jungle. It was preposterous. Who would expect him to live by the same rules as ordinary humans? Moreover, *the Bard*, as Ed had dubbed himself (because he still writes poetry and loves to tell stories about himself), who had once sought to be a protector of the weak, realized that the weak were like sheep and needed more than a protector. They needed a god-like being to lead them and be their master. They needed him.

Perhaps needless to say, most people weren't too thrilled with an upstart . . . god . . . trying to lord over them. Nor did the authorities appreciate being dismissed like bossy children and their laws ignored. The rejection of the

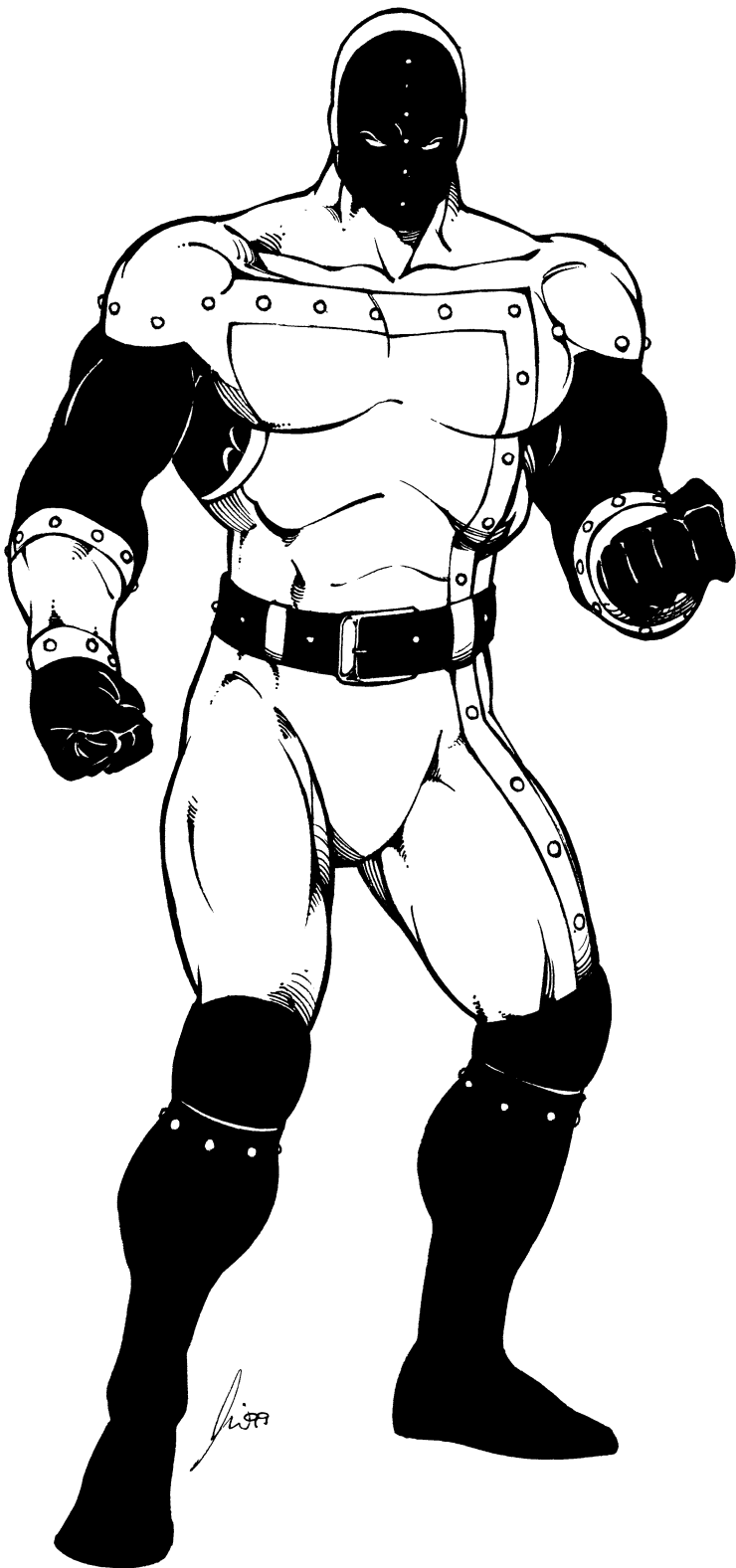
Bard by the public was almost immediate, quickly followed by clashes with the authorities and other super-beings who tried to put the young hero in his place and help temper his outlook of the world. It was not to be so, for the Bard is quite insane. He suffers from what is commonly diagnosed as the "superman syndrome," a form of megalomania that convinces the individual that he is superior to all other creatures. The consuming delusion makes the Bard *know* he is smarter, more powerful and destined to rule over those inferior to him, which is everybody. He also

believes he is indestructible, making him act out in a fearless way and challenge beings who are equally as strong or more powerful. Thus, defeat is utter humiliation for it should be impossible, and his deranged mind rationalizes it as having been defeated by treachery, trickery, magic and some yet undiscovered (by him) weakness that his enemies were somehow able to exploit.

The Bard's meteoric rise was met with three resounding defeats within one month's time at the hands of various super-heroes who stepped in to stop his madness. It was more than his fragile mind could handle and scarred his psyche for life. Humiliated, rejected, and his divinity denied, he has vowed revenge on the little people who mocked and rebuked him, and the villains (all heroes, really) who must have used treachery to bring him down. Thus, the Bard is now a homicidal maniac bent on tearing down human society, eradicating all super-heroes, subjugating all humans under his rule (starting with the US) and bringing up the lowest of the low – mutants – to take their rightful place at his side as the inheritors of the Earth and masters of humans. Or so he plans.

Certainly, the Bard is trouble ready to explode on a large scale. Worse, many dull-witted, revenge filled and evil mutants have accepted him as their superman to lead them. A demigod to lead them out of Hell and into the light where they will turn the tables on humans and rule over them with an iron fist. This is trouble for the Mutant Underground because it is on their turf that the god-mutant is recruiting his army. Moreover, the Bard has begun to seek out and strike down those mutants and heroes who speak out against him and his plan for mutant domination of the world (with him at the top of the heap, of course). Mutant gangs, predators, killers, madmen and other factions outside and within, but especially outside of the Mutant Underground, are flocking to the Bard, causing others to begin to question the Underground's secretive ways and passive resistance. Frustration and hardships draw them to favor the Bard's plan to strike out and tear down the current power structure, replacing it with mutants in control. Of course the plan is madness, but many mutants lack intelligence or clear minds themselves, or are so consumed with hate that they have bought into it without thinking things through or happy to extract some revenge whether they have a real chance at winning or not.

To supply his troops, the Bard has launched a campaign of crime to acquire money, weapons, and equipment. Along the way, he and his growing army of henchmen extract a little revenge, beating and killing anybody who gets in their way, and targeting vigilantes and heroes who think they are better than the Liberator (the new name many call the Bard). As for the Bard, he spearheads many of the most daring ventures himself, backed up by the more powerful and crazy of his disciples. So far the authorities and most super-heroes have no idea what is going on, because the Bard's troops are scattered across the country and most of their crimes seem to be unrelated. However, the Mutant Underground who is tapped into the grapevine of mutant society are becoming keenly aware of this madman and his plans. They are also starting to see their champions, heroes and leaders struck down for talking against the Bard or daring to challenge his minions.



The Bard tends to get more than a little upset with people who don't appreciate his genius and ideas for world domination, and as he rebuilds his confidence, he is becoming more outspoken, aggressive and vindictive.

Real Name: Ed Matthews, but he never uses his real name anymore.

Aliases: The Bard, the Liberator and the Mutant Messiah.

Alignment: Miscreant quickly on his way to Diabolic.

Hit Points: 154. **S.D.C.:** 286.

Weight: 180 lbs (81 kg). **Height:** 5 feet, 11 inches (1.8 m).

Age: 21.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 8, M.A. 18, P.S. 56 (Supernatural), P.P. 14, P.E. 20, P.B. 15, Spd. 18 running, but up to 340 mph (544 km) when flying.

Disposition: Very high and mighty towards average folks. He thinks only other mutants deserve his respect.

Experience Level: 7th

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks Per Melee: Five (+1 in flight).

Bonuses (includes all): +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +5 to damage, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +2 to pull punch, karate style kick that does 2D4, and critical strike on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20 and paired weapons.

In flight (add to those above): +2 to strike and parry, +4 to dodge when hovering or flying under 80 mph (128 km), +6 to dodge when flying 90 mph (144 km) or faster, +4 to damage for every 20 mph (32 km) of flight speed.

Other Bonuses: +50% to invoke trust or intimidation, +3 to save vs magic. **Note:** See page 255 of HU2 for Chameleon powers, page 278 for Invulnerability, page 293 for Supernatural Strength and page 231 for Laser powers.

Damage: Physical Attacks: 5D6 points for a restrained punch, 2D4x10 damage on a full strength punch or kick, 3D6x10 on a power punch (counts as two attacks). Laser blasts inflict 1D6x10 (600 ft/183 range) and damage can be reduced by increments of 1D6 for warning shots.

Super Power Category: Mutant.

Major Powers: Invulnerability, Supernatural Strength and Chameleon.

Minor Powers: Wingless Flight and Energy Expulsion: Light

Education Level: One Year of College. **Scholastic Bonus:** +10%.

Skills of Note: Language: English 90%, Literacy: English: 85%, Basic Math 85%, Computer Operation 82%, Computer Programming 72%, Radio: Basic 87%, Basic Electronics 72%, Pick Locks 72%, Pick Pockets 67%, Prowl 67%, Safecracking 56%, Streetwise 56%, and Pilot automobile 90%.

Secondary Skills: First Aid 77%, Wilderness Survival 62%, Swimming 75%, Body Building and weightlifting, W.P. Knife, and W.P. Pistol.

Appearance: A muscular male with the physique of a body builder.

Occupation: Criminal and would-be god and ruler of the planet.

Body Armor: None.

Weapons, Vehicles & Equipment: Even though he finds it relatively easy to get out of most situations with his super abilities, the Bard keeps a pistol and a knife or two on hand, and owns five expensive sports cars (three of them stolen and two bought with stolen money). His growing army of mutants take whatever he wants.

Available Money: Currently has 1.2 million in (stolen) cash, and close to two million in cars and other luxury items, but needs much more to conquer the world. If his next string of bold robberies work, he should net between 90 and 140 million dollars. He will lead the way on three of the robberies (representing 70% of the expected take) while six different groups of henchmen will get the rest, each striking at the same time to spread the authorities and any super-heroes thin. Note that no matter how much the Bard gets, however, he is very extravagant and wastes money by the bushel full. He is no dope, but definitely crazy, and that works against him.

Rampage, The Berserker

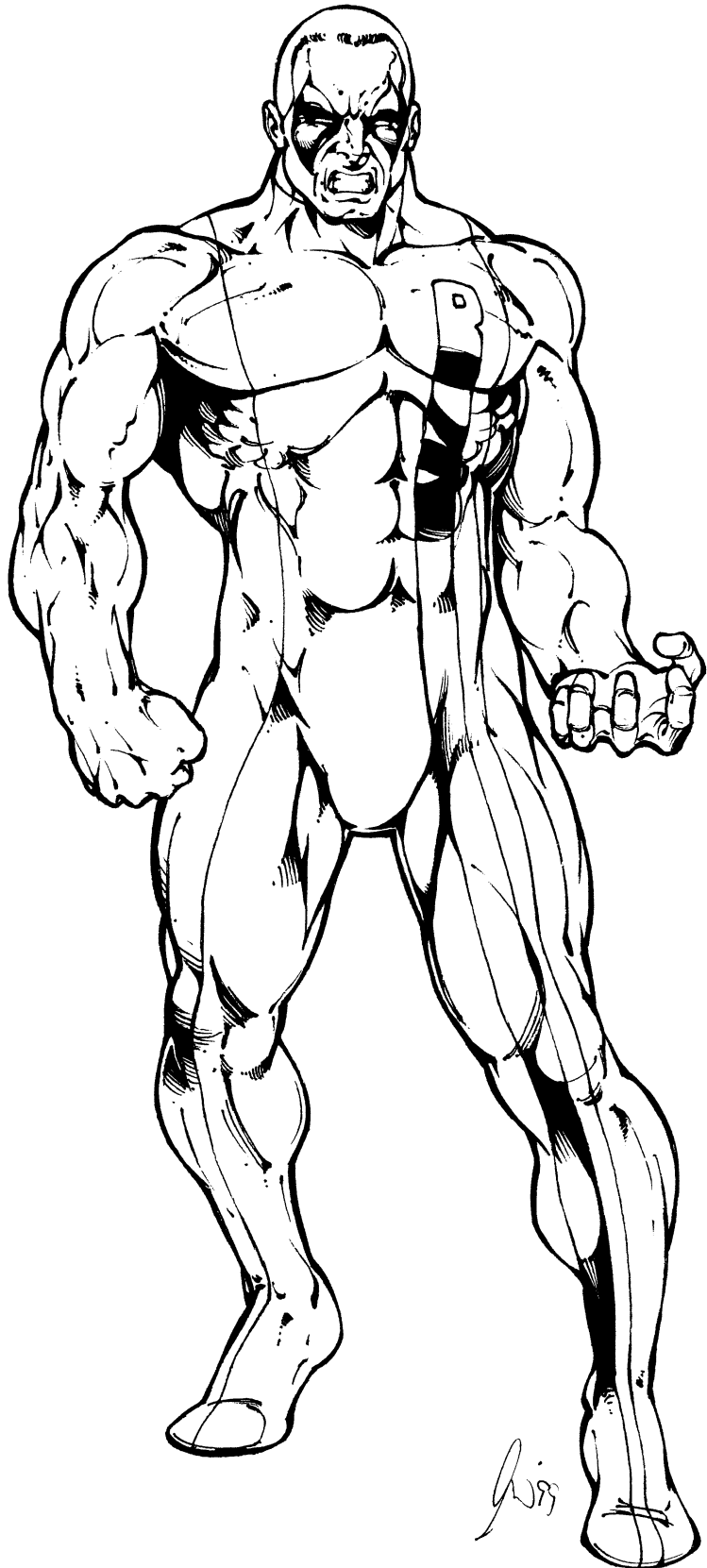
By Alex Marciniszyn & Kevin Siembieda

Russ Stone was always the athletic type, but by the time he was out of high school, he really got serious. For some unknown reason, his body began developing more muscle mass and increased strength. All Russ had to do was keep adding food. And he worked out more in the hope that no one would pay attention to him. But a mutant hating gang noticed and ambushed him. Russ was soon overwhelmed and was on his way to being beaten to death when a frenzy overtook him. He suddenly felt stronger and faster, quickly knocking down some of his opponents. Frightened, the others tried to flee, but, instinctively, Russ raised his hands and fired energy beams that took out the rest. Most of them were dead. Russ had no choice but to run off and join the Mutant Underground where he was sheltered, embraced and taught to find his self-esteem.

The mutants he hung out with encouraged him to beat on "normals," as regular folks were called. After a particularly bloody evening of giving back some pain to the normals, his fellow Mutants named him Rampage, The Berserker. Later on, Rampage joined a gang called the Rejects, and they became a kind of family to him. However, as he got older, he began to tire of just beating humans up over and over again. As fate would have it, he was approached by members of the criminal underworld who offered him a lot of money to help them out from time to time. Confused, at first, about whether to leave his gang buddies to work in the real world, he chose to explore the opportunities of the criminal underground. As time passed, Rampage realized that the people he was working for had hired him to protect them or associates *from* mutants.

Now Rampage is a freelancer who has worked for various criminal outfits, private corporations and wealthy indi-

viduals as a bodyguard. Almost always they are people with some reason to fear mutants and/or the Mutant Underground. He does his job so well that he has earned a reputation as a top-notch bodyguard and master at warding off mutant attackers. This has also earned him the loyalty of several influential groups, both legitimate and



criminal, people who have helped get him off the hook for one crime or another (usually committed on their behalf), and, on occasion, hid and protected him from the law and those seeking revenge. Yes, Rampage is in tight with his employers and people of power.

What they don't know is Rampage secretly supports the Mutant Underground. Though he made a flashy deal out of quitting the organization several years ago and has actually taken on and trashed some of its heroes, he independently and anonymously sends the Underground information, warnings and money through unwitting third parties. Furthermore, he regularly provides data that promotes raids on his employers' establishments or businesses, particularly assaults to free mutant slaves and caged mutant animals. While Rampage does everything in his power to protect those he has been hired to guard (no matter how despicable he finds them to be), he does little to stop the carnage around him, often whisking his charge to safety while the place is ravaged. This keeps his employers thrilled with him ("Rampage saved my life! You should have seen him take on those three superhuman mutants while I made good my escape. Wow, the guy is incredible. Almost got himself killed for me. I love him"). It also keeps his cover iron-clad while secretly helping the Underground. He is so good at this ruse that most (99%) of the members of the Mutant Underground hate his guts as a traitor working for the enemy, and go all out to get him when they see him. It's the way Rampage wants it, because it gives him access to human scum in and insider information on the mutant slave trade and corrupt bio-tech industries that *nobody* else can get near. It's just his way of giving back to the mutant community that saved his life and made him feel like he had a future. Sadly, such is Rampage's sacrifice that he is without any true friends or confidantes. His path is one that must be traveled alone.

Real Name: Russ Stone.

Alias: Rampage, The Berserker.

Legal Status: Suspected of conspiracy and racketeering, and has been charged with a number of lesser crimes including assault, destruction of property and aiding and abetting criminal activity, but has never done time due to influential friends in high (or low) places. Known to have ties to the criminal underworld.

Alignment: Appears to be a Miscreant hardcase, but really Anarchist with a heart of gold.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 12, M.A. 11, P.S. 33, P.P. 17, P.E. 11, P.B. 14, Spd. 23 (doubles when berserk).

Hit Points: 37. **S.D.C.:** 51 (doubles when on a rampage; 102).

Weight: 250 lbs (112.5 kg). **Height:** 6 feet (1.83 m). **Age:** 26.

Disposition: He's full of himself, and is obnoxious and rude. He views most people with disdain, both mutants and normals.

Experience Level: 7th

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts; karate style attack doing 2D4 damage, critical strike on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20. Can also fire beams of energy from his hands that do 8D6 damage (+3 to strike aimed, +1 to strike if wild). See page 230 of HU2 for details.

Attacks Per Melee: Four (+6 when he goes berserk; 10 total).

Modified Bonuses (includes all): These are the bonuses available when he is calm and in control, and also the ones that triple when he goes berserk. +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 to disarm, +1 to entangle, +9 to damage, +2 to roll with punch, fall, impact, and +2 to pull punch. **Note:** *Triple* when he goes berserk. Becomes berserk when angry, frustrated, facing defeat or a life and death situation (his or someone he's charged to protect or cares about). Basic damage numbers from punches and kicks are not increased but the P.S. damage bonus goes from +9 to damage to +27!

Other Bonuses: +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to save vs possession and mind control. Takes no physical damage from the first 20 points of energy attacks in a melee round and attacks beyond the first twenty points do only half damage. See page 231 of HU2 for details.

Super Power Category: Mutant (with a variant Major Super Ability).

Major Super Power: Natural Combat Ability, but with a bit of a twist. The character's combat bonuses are roughly half when he is calm, but triple when he goes berserk on a rampage.

Minor Super Powers: Extraordinary Physical Strength, Energy Expulsion: Energy and Energy Resistance.

Education Level: High School Graduate.

Scholastic Bonus: +5%

Skills of Note: Language: English 90%, Language: Spanish 90%, Literacy: English 80%, Basic Math 85%, Pilot Automobile: 89%, Streetwise 49%, Pick Locks 65%, Concealment 49%, Cardsharp 53%, Prowl 60%, Wrestling, Body Building & Weight Lifting, Running and Climbing 75%.

Secondary Skills: Radio: Basic 75%, Auto Mechanics 60%, Swimming 85%, General Athletics, Pick Locks 65%, Pilot: Motorcycle 88%, W.P. Knife, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Pistol, and W.P. Shotgun.

Appearance: A bruiser with muscles like iron.

Occupation: Professional bodyguard and freelance hired muscle.

Body Armor: None.

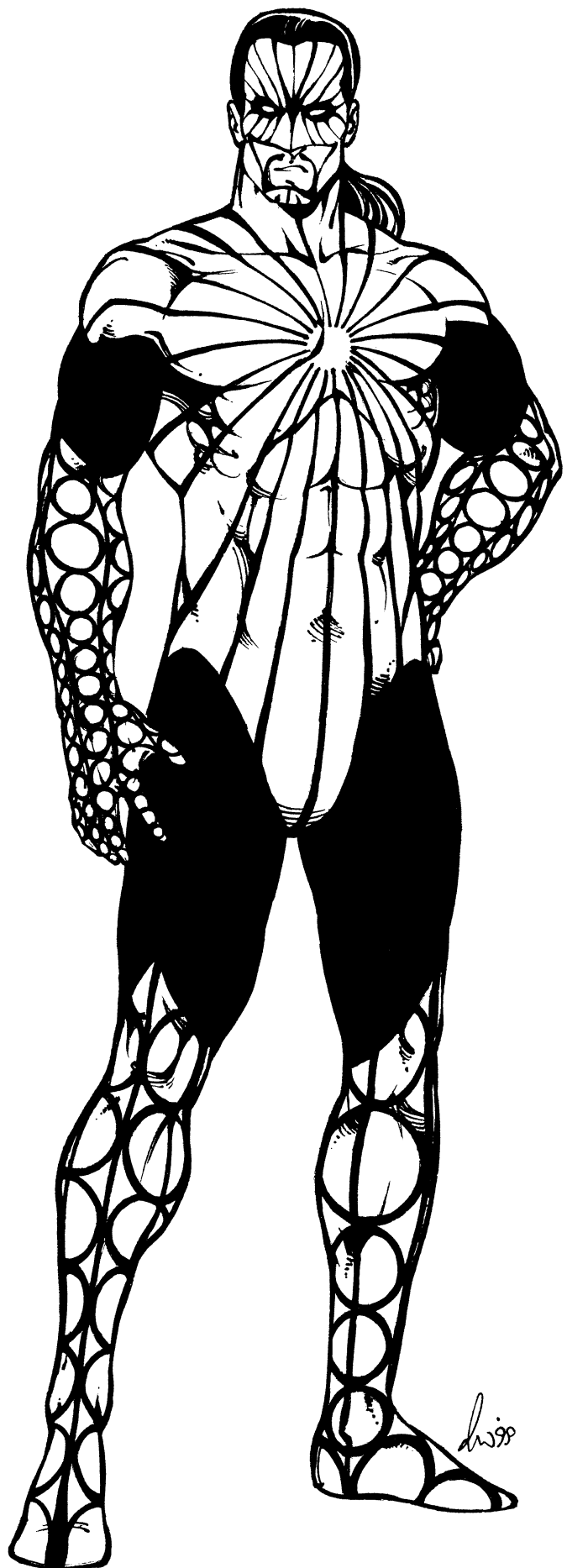
Weapons, Vehicles & Equipment: A shotgun and .45 automatic pistol are usually carried, along with a knife, but Rampage generally relies on his super abilities. Prefers using a motorcycle to get around, but has a souped-up sounding sports car as well. His criminal contacts and employers provide him with anything else he needs, from wardrobe to weapons and equipment.

Available Money: Has 380,000 dollars hidden away and 90,000 in the stock market. Has 1D4x10,000 dollars in his pocket at all times. You know, for card games, fun and stuff.

Minion

By Steve Sheiring

The story of Minion is one of tragedy and misery. He was mentally and physically abused as a child and committed to a mental institution as an adult. Minion never developed any real friends or relationships and by time he



was twenty-five, anyone who knew him or cared about him had died. He was an ideal candidate for unscrupulous experimenters, if anything happened to him, no one would question it.

An evil and ambitious doctor in charge of Minion sold the vulnerable young man to a private research organization for forty thousand dollars. The doctor has subsequently sold others as well. Each time a patient is sold, it is reported that he died of natural causes or escaped and ran away. All are loners with no family, like Minion.

The research organization believed they could create a superior human, one more intelligent but also one with the best attributes from the animal and insect kingdoms. Bigger, better and faster was their motto. As with everything else in Minion's life, the "Minion Project" was a failure. Worst of all, Minion's mind was severely damaged. He would transform into a person with a genius intelligence one moment and act like a screaming, uncontrollable lunatic the next. It was during one of these screaming fits that Minion managed to escape his captors. When he awoke, he remembered nothing of his escape. In fact, he remembered nothing of his entire past. His only instinct was that he didn't trust humans and must avoid contact with them whenever possible. In addition, his mind had settled down and was no longer an uncontrollable battleground. Minion was now a genius without any of his past mental and emotional traumas, and that's when he discovered he had strange new powers. Powers that seemingly allowed him to control and manipulate insects.

Nowadays, Minion lives a secluded lifestyle. He prefers the night, darkened buildings and even underground locales, like sewers and tunnels. These preferences allowed him to encounter many strange and unusual people, everyone from the homeless and runaways to criminals and members of the Mutant Underground. Over time, Minion has realized that he has a certain bonding with the dark and feels very comfortable and commanding in dark environments.

As a result of his distrust and dislike for humans, Minion enjoys the company of animals, insects and fellow mutants. He would do just about anything, kill, steal, use force or violence, in order to survive or to help another mutant, especially those with insect or animal traits. This has made him something of a guardian for such mutants, sending Minion out on nightly patrols keeping the streets safe for mutantkind. That means taking on both criminals and the law when they are out to capture, hurt or exploit mutants. He also steals from humans, though never the poor, and gives and gives to mutants and the Mutant Underground.

At the moment, the organization from which Minion escaped is secretly trying to hunt him down and terminate him. Minion has no idea this is going on or why anyone would target him for death. Minion would probably assume that "it's just another reason to avoid humankind," especially those laboratory types. They always give him the willies any way. Minion has made MTF agents and mutant hunters/exterminators his primary concern.

Name: Minion.

Real Name: Sigfried Schmidt.

Aliases: Robert Wagner and William Goethe.

Status with the Law: A known criminal and prankster who interferes with the law, assaults police officers, robs, and kills (so far the latter has been limited to mutant hunters and criminals).

Alignment: Aberrant evil because he breaks the law, steals and does kill those he feels are his or mutantkind's lethal enemies.

Attributes: I.Q. 24, M.E. 22, M.A. 18, P.S. 12, P.P. 12, P.E. 20, P.B. 9, Spd. 17

Hit Points: 40. **S.D.C.:** 45.

Weight: 155 lbs (70.kg). **Height:** 6 feet (1.83 m). **Age:** 30.

Disposition: When dealing with humans, Minion is shy and apprehensive but easily provoked to anger. When dealing with mutants, animals and insects, he is friendly and compassionate.

Experience Level: Six.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks Per Melee: Five.

Bonuses (includes all): +1 strike, +2 parry and dodge, +1 initiative, +4 roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to pull punch, Karate style kick does 2D4 damage, Snap Kick does 1D6 damage, critical strike on unmodified 19 or 20 (double damage).

Other Bonuses: +10% bonus on all skills (included in stats), +4 to save versus psionic attack, +5 to save versus insanity, 50% to trust/intimidate, +10% versus coma/death, and +3 to save versus magic/poison.

Weapon Proficiency Bonus: W.P. Blunt, +2 to strike and parry, W.P. Knife, +2 to parry, +1 to throw, +1 to strike.

Super Power Category: Experiment.

Major Super Powers: Control Insects and Arachnids, and Darkness Control.

Minor Super Powers: None.

Education Level: High School Graduate – Physical and Domestic (+5%).

Skills of Note: Math: Basic 90%, Cook 80%, Fishing 85%, Sewing 85%, Prowl 70%, Swimming 95%, and Gymnastics.

Secondary Skills: Running, Literacy 98%, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Knife, Holistic Medicine 60%, Identify Plants and Fruits 65%, Land Navigation 70%, Ventriloquism 50%, Streetwise 54%.

Appearance: Lean with long, dark straggly hair. Heavy beard and mustache, basically unkempt and smelly. Oddly, Minion does enjoy tailoring and will use whatever material he comes across to make his own clothes. Some of which are really cool and others are silly, like a jacket with extra sleeves that serve no purpose.

Occupation: None. Survives by doing odd jobs for the Mutant Underground and by criminal activities, mostly robbery. Is also an unofficial protector/vigilante in the Underground community.

Weapons: Knife, lead pipe or baseball bat.

Vehicle: None.

Armor: Insect Armor via Control Insects and Arachnids power.

Other Equipment: Doesn't have a lot of use for material possessions. Most of what he owns he carries on him.

Money: Anywhere from \$1000 to \$6,000 (1D6x\$1,000), which is his entire life savings at the moment. What he doesn't know is, he is the only heir to a family fortune and estate worth about \$20 million. He is presumed dead and no one is particularly looking for him.

Frostbite

By Steve Sheiring

Frostbite is the nickname of an alien bounty hunter/assassin with the reputation of being cold, determined, ruthless and heartless. No one knows why or how Frostbite came to Earth. All they know is that he will hunt down and kill or bring to justice anyone or any creature for the right price. Many stories and rumors about his past bounties surround Frostbite, making him a living legend. Frostbite himself only sneers at the stupidity and inaccuracy of these rumors.

Once this villain takes on a client, he is completely focused on getting his bounty. It is rumored that Frostbite never eats or sleeps until he completes his contract. Oddly, Frostbite never reneges on a deal and would die trying rather than fail. As a result, he has amassed a small fortune and has many clients vying for his services and willing to pay top dollar.

Frostbite has many contacts and sources of information. Some are high profile executives, politicians or military personnel, others are street urchins and regular people just out for a buck. Regardless, his network of informants is worldwide and highly motivated by the large sums Frostbite is willing to pay for truly valuable and accurate information. Of course, anyone who lies or provides false information is dealt with harshly.

Now that Frostbite is wealthy, he will not hesitate to hire one or more individuals to assist him. If he doesn't have the necessary training in an area, he hires the necessary person or team, including aliens, mutants, super beings and humans. As long as his employees follow his orders, there is no problem. Conversely, failure, treachery or rebellion is not tolerated.

Name: Frostbite.

Real Name: Yuga Icca.

Legal Status: Known to have ties to the underworld, but has no crimes against him. Suspected of at least a half-dozen murders (mutant killings don't count), assault, extortion and other crimes, but alleged victims and witnesses have a habit of disappearing or recanting their claims and charges.

Aliases: Richard Snow, Henry Waters, and Franklin Icer.

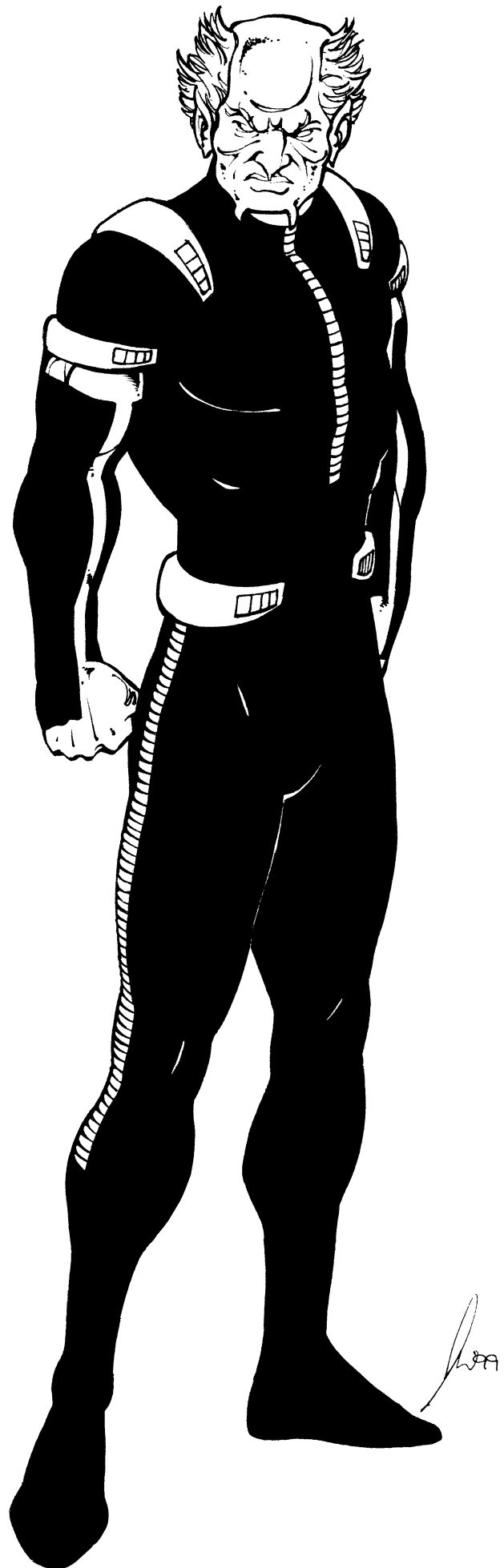
Alignment: Aberrant evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 12, M.A. 12, P.S. 20, P.P. 21, P.E. 22, P.B. 5, Spd. 23

Hit Points: 60. **S.D.C.:** 75 (A.R. 14, +50 S.D.C. in ice form).

Weight: 160 lbs (72 kg). **Height:** 5 feet, 10 inches (1.76 m). **Age:** 31.

Disposition: Cold, calculating, mean and nasty. Abrupt and straight to the point, and don't ever expect Frostbite to compliment you. Cusses constantly. Has no time



for friends or a good time. Only truly enjoys himself when he is just starting out on a contract and imagining and deciding how he will capture his target.

Experience Level: Seventh.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Assassin and Boxing.

Attacks Per Melee: Six.

Bonuses (includes all): +2 on initiative, +5 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +3 to disarm, +3 pull punch, +3 to roll with punch, fall, impact, +9 to damage, death blow, body flip/throw, +5% on all skills, +14% to save versus coma/death, +4 to save versus magic and poison.

Weapon Proficiency Bonus: W.P. Energy Pistol, +5 to hit aimed, +3 to strike with burst, W.P. Rifle, +5 to hit aimed, W.P. Auto Rifle, +5 to hit aimed, +3 to strike with burst, W.P. Blunt, +2 to strike and parry, W.P. Knife, +2 to strike, parry and throw, W.P. Archery, +3 to strike with six attacks.

Super Power Category: Alien, though he lets most people believe he is a mutant.

Major Super Powers: Alter Metabolism and Alter Physical Structure: Ice.

Minor Super Powers: None.

Unusual Physical Characteristics: Completely white skin and hair, with a pair of tiny, alabaster horns protruding from his chin.

Special Abilities: Can use four of the following at one time: No sleep for 105 hours, no food or water for 7 days, calm self, adrenal rush, hyper metabolism, slow metabolism and accelerated healing.

Also can perform the following: Create snow/ice, create and hurl snowballs, create and hurl ice balls, create and hurl ice shards, ice wall or shield, encase in ice, generate ice, transform into ice form. Frostbite is not dependent on using his ice/snow abilities, but they are useful at times. In extreme cold, when normal weapons may malfunction or not operate, Frostbite is still formidable. See page 244 of HU2 for more details on Ice powers.

Education Level: Combat Specialist. **Scholastic Bonus:** +10%.

Skills of Note: Running, Swimming 98%, Prowl 75%, Wrestling, Hand to Hand: Assassin, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Auto Rifle, W.P. Rifle, W.P. Knife, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Archery, Pilot: Automobile 89%, and First Aid 95%.

Secondary Skills: Language: English 90%, Computer Operation 80%, Math: Basic 85%, Land Navigation 69%, Wilderness Survival 70%, and Recognize Weapon Quality 65%.

Appearance: Looks like a white-haired, old man. At first blush, he is not very impressive looking and looks like he could be beaten with one hand tied behind your back. But looks are deceiving. In actuality, he is relatively young, strong, virile and quick as a cat. Those who underestimate Frostbite often pay with their lives.

Occupation: Mercenary bounty hunter.

Weapons: His favorite is his laser pistol with twenty shot clips (5D6 damage, 2000 foot/610 m range, 20 shot payload). He has a dozen energy clips and the means to recharge them, but it takes about seventy-two hours to recharge just one.

Vehicle: Prefers sports cars.

Armor: Varies, depending on the assignment. Sometimes he will wear none and other times he will wear Class 4 armor. With his means and contacts, he may even have access to some new, high-tech experimental armor.

Other Equipment: Basically whatever he wants, he is a collector of weapons and anything military related throughout mankind's history. He may accept payment for a contract in exchange for a rare military artifact or weapon. Frostbite finds weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, gas) unappealing and would never use them himself. He considers himself a professional and, as such, tries to avoid unnecessary collateral damage and killing.

Money: Approximate wealth of 50 million U.S. dollars, about twenty percent is kept in overseas banks.

Foresight

By Steve Sheiring

Foresight is an alien who came to Earth to avoid capture for smuggling and piracy crimes on his home world. His ship is intact, usable and hidden in a remote location. For the moment, Foresight is enjoying his stay on Earth and is not likely to leave.

This handsome character hires himself out to various organizations and governments as a tracker of mutants and super-criminals. "It takes one to know one" is his motto, and since he has spent most of his life evading the authorities on his home world, he has a good idea how fugitives think. It must be true, because he seems to know the mind set of a mutant on the run. Foresight is very persistent when it comes to tracking down a mutant target and enjoys the fact that he is not the one being hunted.

Foresight has worked with Frostbite in the past, but their relationship is only professional, not friendship. He has also hooked up with the Lost Company and rather likes these misfits, especially the team leader.

Name: Foresight.

Real Name: Freefar Harmdos.

Aliases: Frank Harm.

Legal Status: Has a reputation for being a clean cut, up-standing guy for a bounty hunter. Always tries to work within the law and cooperates with (and flatters) law enforcement officers, who in turn give him their full cooperation.

Alignment: Aberrant evil, has his own twisted code of ethics and honor. Respects law and order, hates corruption among authority figures and is a man of his word.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 14, M.A. 20, P.S. 15, P.P. 15, P.E. 19, P.B. 19, Spd. 17

Hit Points: 40. **S.D.C.:** 30.

Weight: 190 lbs (88.5 kg). **Height:** 6 feet, 3 inches (1.9 m). **Age:** 33.

Disposition: Cool, calm and reassuring. He can appear to be very charming at times, especially around women and local authorities. Ultimately, he is only concerned about acquiring material wealth and possessions. Since his livelihood depends upon it, Foresight is very persis-



tent at tracking down his targets and almost always seems to "get his man."

Experience Level: Fourth.

Attacks Per Melee: Five physical or psionic actions.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Basic; karate kick does 2D4 damage, Snap Kick does 1D6 damage.

Bonuses (includes all): +2 parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 roll with punch/fall/impact.

Other Bonuses: +2 to save versus magic and poison, +3% on all skills, +8% to save versus coma/death, +6 to save vs mind control and psionic mind control, +6 to save vs possession, 45% to charm and impress, and 60% to evoke trust or intimidation.

Weapon Proficiency Bonus: W.P. Knife, +1 strike, +1 to strike when thrown, +2 parry, W.P. revolver, +5 to hit aimed.

Super Power Category: Alien.

Major Super Powers: Control Others (see page 267 of HU2).

Minor Super Powers: Supervision: Infrared and Ultraviolet, Nightvision, Advanced Sight and X-Ray Vision.

Special, Limited, Psionic Abilities: Has the following psionic powers: Clairvoyance, Sixth Sense and Presence Sense. I.S.P.: 42.

Education Level: Rogue/Smuggler.

Scholastic Bonus: +13% Rogue/Smuggler, +8% all other non-secondary skills, +3% on all secondary skills.

Skills of Note: Computer Hacking 63%, Concealment 49%, Find Contraband and Illegal Weapons 55%, Palming 53%, Pick Locks 53%, Prowl 58%, Streetwise 49%, Detect Concealment 58%, Intelligence 61%, Tracking 58%, Wilderness Survival 63%, Optic Systems 58%, Surveillance Systems 58%, W.P. Knife, W.P. Revolver, Basic Mechanics 58%, Locksmith 53%, Climbing 68%, Basic Math 73%, and Computer Operation 68%.

Secondary Skills: Language: English 73%, Swimming 73%, Pilot: Automobile 71%, and Land Navigation 55%.

Appearance: Wears glasses or goggles in order to protect his eyes. He looks very impressive and tough, but in reality is a very average fighter.

Occupation: Mercenary tracker and guide.

Weapons: Standard revolver with silencer.

Vehicle: Prefers 4-wheel drive vehicles.

Armor: Generally, does not wear any.

Money: Varies greatly. Foresight has made a fortune over the years, but he is also a gambler and has lost a great deal on wagers, games of chance and living large. Has 1D20x\$10,000 at any given time.

Notable Mutants & Superhumans

Nevermind

By Julius Rosenstein

When he was growing up, Peter York was never the brightest student or the top athlete of his class, though he always wanted to be, and often put on airs and tried to hang with the “cool kids” and “prime cliques.” He was always among the very best looking, which won him popularity and acceptance by those he sought to impress and hang with. Peter assumed that it was his good looks and personality that allowed him to get the prettiest girls to date him, the smartest kids to do his homework for him, and the top athletes to befriend him and make him the big man on campus. In short, Peter York grew up thinking that he was a very special person whom destiny had selected for great things.

Unbeknownst to Peter, he was correct about being somewhat *special*. Pete was a latent psionic who was subconsciously and unwittingly influencing the people around him.

Unfortunately, one of Peter’s teachers in high school caught him not only cheating on a final exam but then trying to blame it on one of his classmates. Peter was unceremoniously expelled from school.

Without a diploma and unable to find a job that he felt was worthy of his talents, Peter was reduced to exploiting his most obvious asset – his good looks. Peter got a job as a male stripper.

Although the work was demeaning at first, when Peter saw the effect he had on the women customers, he soon decided that this too was part of his destiny. Soon, Peter was adding the role of gigolo to that of stripper. In addition to the money he was making dancing, he was now going out with women of wealth and influence. Peter definitely thought that he was God’s gift to women.

Peter York might have spent his life as just another ladies’ man and high-class hustler except for one thing, his latent psionics finally began to surface. Once these abilities emerged and he was able to exert some degree of mind control over others, Peter’s psionics just went to his head (pun unintended but unavoidable).

This, Peter realized, was his “true” destiny – to use his awesome powers to enrich *his* life. Thus, the masked adventurer Nevermind was born.

Since then, Nevermind has become (in Peter’s mind) the Robin Hood of the modern age. Cutting a wide swath through the ordinary and mundane and touching the lives of the common people with his greatness.

Real Name: Peter York.

Alias: Nevermind.



Legal Status: Wanted by various authorities for grand theft, public disturbance and destruction of property, but is more of a nuisance and an amusing jerk than anything else. Is not considered to be a major threat to the public.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 9, M.E. 14, M.A. 15, P.S. 11, P.P. 11, P.E. 10, P.B. 22, Spd. 10

Hit Points: 23. **S.D.C.:** 30.

Height: 6 feet, 2 inches (1.88 m). **Weight:** 200 lbs (90 kg), all sculpted muscle. **Age:** 23.

Disposition: Nevermind is cocky and overconfident with an inflated sense of his own importance. Despite being just a minor leaguer (as far as super villains and vigilantes go), when Nevermind comes on the scene, he acts as if everyone around him should a) know who he is, and b) be honored that he is there in person to rob them. Sees himself as a daring and charming rogue and a kissing bandit. Likes to make splashy appearances and tries to be charming toward his female victims. Tends to target the "rich and beautiful."

Insanities: Without professional psychoanalysis, it is difficult to say for sure if Nevermind is truly insane and suffering from narcissism and delusions of grandeur, or just a jackass with an incredibly inflated opinion of himself.

Experience Level: Third.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks per Melee: Four.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to parry, +2 to dodge, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to pull punch, karate style kick does 2D4 and snap kick does 1D6.

Other Bonuses: 60% to charm/impress.

Super Power Category: Latent Psionic.

Psionic Abilities: Mind Wipe (special), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Death Trance (1), Mind Block (4), Object Read (6), Resist Hunger (2), Sense Time (2), Telekinetic Push (4), and Telepathy (4).

I.S.P.: 70

Skills of Note: Speak English 98%, Literacy (English) 98%, Basic Mathematics 55%, Cardsharp 32%, Dance 60%, Pilot Automobile 64%, Pilot Motorcycle 68%, Seduction 46%, Streetwise 28%, and Swimming 60%.

Occupation: Former male stripper turned Professional Criminal.

Equipment: Nevermind is so cocky that he doesn't use weapons or special equipment, preferring to rely on his "awesome" mental powers (yeah, right). Even when he gets trounced, he still figures that his powers will ultimately carry the day next time (or the time after that, etc.). Surprisingly, he has been pretty lucky and has avoided capture by the police and is so second-rate that (so far) he is beneath the radar of any "super-heroes."

Vehicles: Nevermind uses his psionic abilities to "borrow" vehicles that he considers to be "worthy" of him: Luxury cars or fancy sports cars are preferred, especially Rolls-Royces, Bentleys, Lambourghinis, Mercedes, or stretch limousines. However, he will return (or attempt to return) these vehicles if possible, figuring that the owner must be a person of quality and taste such as

himself. Note that, on a couple of occasions, Nevermind almost got himself captured by his refusal to commandeer a lesser vehicle such as a compact car or pickup truck for his getaway. **Armor:** What? Armor for the likes of mighty Nevermind? Nonsense!

Appearance: A tall, muscular man with wavy, windswept blond hair. Nevermind wears a body suit colored blue, black, and yellow with the letter "N" as his symbol. He also wears a purple face mask which completely obscures his true face. However, he has been known to lift the mask just enough to give a big smooch to some of his more beautiful lady victims.

Money: At the moment, Nevermind has only \$2,000 set away. He only gets 10-20% of the real value of jewelry he steals, and about 30-40% of his robberies are usually botched (Nevermind is quick to make good his getaway at the first sign of trouble). Stolen money is spent as fast as he gets it; Peter is quick to spend his money living far beyond his means and being a big shot, leaving extravagant tips, buying drinks for others and living the high life.

Relationship to Mutant Underground: Nevermind considers the Mutant Underground to be a good thing in general except for two things: 1) The Underground does not seem to appreciate Nevermind for the master strategist that he is, and 2) consequently, they have never offered him a position of leadership in their organization. For their part, members of the Underground either try to ignore this thief, or try to humor Nevermind as politely as they can while not giving him the opportunity to muck things up for others. What the Mutant Underground doesn't realize is that Nevermind has decided it's time to be a "hero" like Robin Hood, by protecting poor, defenseless mutants from evildoers (i.e. crime lords, other evil mutants, hunters and exterminators, and the authorities). The problem with this is the cocky coward is likely to bring unwanted attention to the Mutant Underground and/or get innocent people killed. Nevermind has also considered giving some of the money from his criminal exploits to the Underground or poor mutants living on the street, but somehow there never seems to be enough to go around after his living expenses. He'd have to make a truly big score for that to happen, and even then he's not likely to fork over more than 10-15%.

Notes: 1. Nevermind is definitely chagrined that his full face mask (which is so important to the aesthetics of his costume) prevents people from seeing and appreciating his true handsome features. It is not unusual for him to inform his victims (and bystanders) that he is indeed quite handsome. Also, on occasion, Nevermind will roll up the bottom part of his mask in order to kiss a particularly attractive female victim or bystander (after all, how often will she be fortunate enough to be in a position to be kissed by the great Nevermind?).

2. Although Nevermind is wanted by various law enforcement agencies, he is considered to be strictly a minor leaguer, a petty criminal with a costume. The criminal element (especially super-villains acquainted with him) regard Nevermind as a *joke* and not a particularly funny one at that. Should he ever rob from a crimi-

nal organization or thwart super-villains exploiting mutants (or humans), he may earn their enmity and a beating (if not a contract on his life).

3. Recently, Nevermind has been reported saving a pair of mutant children from capture by the police, and chasing off a trio of mutant bounty hunters (really three half-drunk yahoos looking for trouble) from Mutant Underground turf.

Arista

By Julius Rosenstein

Arista is the product of a long series of genetic experiments that began decades ago in East Germany. At that time the Communists were working on a number of projects to create Super Soldiers.

One such project, Operation Krystalnacht, involved injecting subjects (voluntary or otherwise) with various compounds designed to enhance their innate resistances. Unfortunately, although several of the test subjects showed marked progress in the early stages of the experiments, the later stages almost always resulted in the death of the subject.

One of the subjects, a girl named Una, was slated for the later stage of the experiment. However, Una and one of the project's leading scientists, Prof. Dieter von Wasser, had fallen in love with each other. The good professor started a fire in the lab (destroying much of the research), and, in the confusion, he and Una escaped and defected to the West. The pair married and eventually ended up settling in France.

With its research gone and nothing but failure to show for it, Operation Krystalnacht was eventually scrapped by the East German government. The von Wassers remained in France, raising a family and living an otherwise unremarkable life. For all intents and purposes, it seemed as if Operation Krystalnacht was gone and forgotten. Just another experiment that did not succeed. However, appearances can be deceiving . . .

Una seemed unaffected by the experiment, as did her children.

One of these children, a daughter named Renee, met and fell in love with Eric Gorman, a young American who came to study cooking at the Cordon Bleu. When Eric returned to America, Renee went with him as his wife.

The Gormans raised a family with three children, two sons and a daughter named Judy. The boys seem to be normal, healthy human beings with no effect from the experiment their grandmother underwent. However, the super-powers that lay dormant in Una and Renee have manifested in Judy.

When she turned 16, Judy first noticed that she could focus her energies and become superhuman for a few minutes at a time. At 17, she observed that certain things either hurt her less than most people or, in some cases, did her no harm whatsoever. Finally, at 18, Judy discovered that she could generate a sort of crystal substance that would cover things she touched.



Bewildered, Judy visited the one scientist she was willing to trust with this information, her aging grandfather, Professor Dieter von Wasser. The Professor discreetly contacted some of his colleagues in the scientific community and arranged to have a containment suit made. Judy has since used this suit as her costume.

Deciding that these powers should be used for the betterment of mankind, Judy has embarked on a career as a super-heroine, taking the name Arista.

Real Name: Judy Gorman.

Aliases: Arista.

Legal Status: Wanted by various authorities (but for questioning only). Has no current criminal charges pending against her.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 9, M.A. 13, P.S. 11/21*, P.P. 15/25*, P.E. 21/30*, P.B. 25, Spd. 11/51* – The asterisk (*) refers to bonuses and attributes when major power is active.

Hit Points: 42/52*, **S.D.C.:** 114/234*. **Natural A.R.:** 15*

Height: 5 feet, 6 inches (1.68 m) tall, **Weight:** 110 lbs (50 kg). **Age:** 19.

Horror Factor: 11 only when her power is demonstrated.

Disposition: Arista is basically a good person but has been betrayed too often to readily trust in others. Furthermore, as a teenage girl, she sees drama, intrigue and conspiracy everywhere. She will rely on herself until others demonstrate to her that they are worthy of her trust and friendship. She radiates a certain degree of sweetness, innocence, compassion, good intentions and boldness that is just her natural spirit.

Experience Level: Fourth.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +2/+5* to strike, +3/+6* to parry, +3/+6* to dodge, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to pull punch, and +6 to physical melee damage*.

Other Bonuses: 75% to charm/impress, +3 to save vs magic/poison (*+8), +12% to save vs coma/death (*+30%).

Super Power Category: Mutant

Major Super Abilities: Energy Expulsion: Crystal (new; see description below).

Minor Super Abilities: Energy Resistance, Extraordinary Physical Endurance and Extraordinary Physical Beauty.

Skills of Note: Speak, Read & Write English 98%, Speak German 70%, Read & Write German 50%, Basic Mathematics 85%, Concealment 36%, Detect Ambush 50%, Detect Concealment 45%, Land Navigation 52%, and Pilot Automobile 78%.

Appearance: An incredibly attractive, athletic blonde in a red and white body suit. Her eyes glow when she uses her powers.

Weapons: Arista relies on her own powers and will use no other weapons if she can avoid doing so.

Armor: Arista's body suit is made of a Kevlar-like material and provides A.R. 10 and S.D.C. 45 when her powers are *not* active.

Money: Arista's parents were fairly well-to-do and left her with just over \$160,000 in a trust fund. This is what's

left after some of it was spent on medical research to deal with Arista's condition, but she still has enough money to take care of her day-to-day needs for a while. She will, however, need to subsidize her trust money with some kind of income or she'll be broke in four or five years.

Relationship to Mutant Underground: Arista is sympathetic to their plight and goals, so she does not oppose them. However, she will not align herself with the Underground as long as they continue to work as a covert movement operating outside the law. For their part, the Mutant Underground considers Arista to be well-intentioned but naive.

New Major Super Ability:

Matter Expulsion: Crystal

Similar to *energy* expulsion, but this power allows its user to generate a crystalline substance to various and diverse effects.

1. Crystal Armor: Can cover oneself with a flexible, transparent crystal coating that functions like a suit of armor. Works only on the super being herself.

Natural Crystal Armor A.R.: 15; any attack equal to or below 15 does no damage. Plus the crystal diffuses light and laser beams so they inflict only one third their normal damage.

Provides its creator/wearer with enhanced abilities and bonuses as follows: +10 to P.S., P.P. and P.E. attribute, +40 to Speed attribute, +10 to Hit Points, +120 to S.D.C., +3 to strike, parry and dodge, and +4 to damage.

2. Crystal Blast: The character can fire a hard hitting bolt of crystals that seem to appear out of thin air and rocket at their target at great speed.

Range: 20 foot (6.1 m) blast +5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience.

Damage: 1D6 per level of experience. The exact amount of damage can be regulated in increments of 1D6. (Arista currently does 4D6 maximum damage.)

Duration: Instant and fades into thin air after 30 minutes.

3. Encase in Crystal: The character can also encase objects and people in crystal. *Small targets* as large as a microwave can be completely encased in 1-2 seconds (counts as one melee attack). Small targets like a gun or isolated body parts on a humanoid such as the hands or feet to bind an opponent also take 1-2 seconds and count as one melee attack/action. The crystalline encasement has an A.R. of 15 and 20 S.D.C. +10 points per level of experience.

Larger targets up to the size of a love seat or 50 gallon drum or half the body (like the feet and legs up to the hips, or hands, arms and upper torso) take 2-3 seconds to encase, but still count as one melee attack. The encasement has an A.R. of 14 and 20 S.D.C. +10 points per level of experience.

Encasing the entire body up to 10 feet (3 m) tall or an object the size of king-size bed or small car takes 4-6 seconds, counts as three melee attacks/actions and the en-

casement has an A.R. of 12 and 20 S.D.C. +10 points per level of experience.

The crystal weighs as much as a corresponding amount of glass (about 100 lbs/45 kg for a typical human body) but is many times harder.

Range: Touch or 6 feet (1.8 m) per level of experience. (Arista currently has a range of 24 feet/7.3 m.)

Damage: None unless the head is encased and no oxygen can get through. Most living creatures and humanoids suffocate and die within 1D6+3 minutes after their air supply is cut off. No damage if the head is left exposed and able to breathe.

Duration: 30 minutes per level of experience, but can be canceled and made to disappear upon the command of the super being who made the crystal or by a different, but higher level being with the same power. (Arista's encasements currently last up to 120 minutes/two hours.)

Game Design Note: A basically identical power can be used as **Matter Expulsion: Stone**. All data is identical except as follows: **Armor:** No laser resistance but same A.R. of 15 and bonus Hit Points is 20 and S.D.C. is 180 when the armor is in place, plus the following bonuses: +10 to P.S. and P.E., but *no* P.P. or speed bonus, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +8 to damage. **Encasement in stone** takes an extra second or two and weighs twice as much as crystal. **Stone Blasts** do 2D6 +1D6 damage per level of experience.

Kenny & Ossie

By Julius Rosenstein

Even among the myriad of bizarre individuals that comprise the Mutant Underground, two figures that merit special attention are Kenny and Ossie. At first glance, it seems that the pair have little in common other than that they are both mutant animals.

Kenny (a goose) is the product of a genetic manipulation experiment by the U.S. Army. He was trained to be a super-sentry but was mistreated and eventually escaped when his handlers relaxed their control over him. Kenny's ill treatment in the past has left him sullen, suspicious of strangers, and distrustful of humans in general (and the military and authority figures, in particular).

His antithesis, **Ossie** (a horse) was created by a secret medical research organization. Ossie was well-treated and educated and trained by the organization as if he was human. When Ossie expressed curiosity to see the world outside the lab, his geneticists (who wanted to see what effect their creation would have on society) gave their permission. Ossie is still on good terms with his former mentors and has contacted them on several occasions since his departure (usually by telephone).

At first glance, the two mutants seem to be a mismatched pair. Ossie is cheerful where Kenny is sullen, Kenny is often aloof and uninterested in assisting others where Ossie is quick to offer a helping hand, Ossie is friendly and outgoing while Kenny is leery of strangers. Yet, these two have become best friends despite (or perhaps because of) their differences.

Because their views and attitudes are so far apart, the two complement one another and create a synthesis greater than the sum of their parts. Each of them provides a check and balance to the other. During difficult times, Ossie's optimism will often overcome Kenny's pessimism and give the pair the strength to battle on. At other times, Kenny's down-to-earth pragmatism helps to rein in Ossie's idealism so that the two can better focus on the situation.

The two mutant animals have now known each other for a couple of years. They have fought together side by side on innumerable occasions and have saved each other's lives several times. The best of friends, anybody dealing with either animal will soon find themselves dealing with the other as well.

Kenny

Real Name: Kenny.

Aliases: None, though the authorities have taken to calling him "Gooseman."

Legal Status: Has a criminal record and is currently wanted by the authorities for destruction of property, obstruction of justice (has interfered with the capture of fellow mutants in the Underground), and assaulting an officer (while protecting fellow mutants).

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 9, M.A. 6, P.S. 17, P.P. 13, P.E. 16, P.B. 13, Spd. running 24, flying 120 mph (192 km).

Hit Points: 34, **S.D.C.:** 48.

Weight: 132 lbs (60 kg). **Height:** 5 feet, 5 inches (1.63 m).

Disposition: Kenny is willful, stubborn, and overbearing.

Although he does not make friends easily, he can be very protective of the few individuals whom he does consider as friends. Chief among these few friends is Ossie the Mutant Horse. He also has a weak spot for helpless or innocent mutants, especially children and misfits with child-like minds. He has come to the aid of such mutants to protect them from hunters, exterminators and the law on numerous occasions. Likewise, he has challenged a mutant predator a time or two in the defense of a human child.

Experience Level: Fifth.

Super Power Category: Mutant Animal – Goose (created using **After the Bomb®** rules).

Mutant Animal Powers: 1. Basic Flight, 2. Hold Breath, 3. Insulating Water Repellent Feathers (benefits from these powers are listed below under bonuses).

Mutant Animal Disadvantages: Webbed Hands and Feet (penalties from these disadvantages are applied where appropriate).

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts equivalent.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +2 to S.D.C. hand to hand damage, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to pull punch, disarm, kick attacks (six types including Karate kick and jump kick; all kicks inflict an extra 1D6 damage because of Kenny's claws), extra dodge bonuses while flying: +2 while hovering or flying up to 20 mph (32 km), and when flying at high speeds, Kenny is +1 to dodge for every 30 mph (48 km) to a maximum of +4 to dodge.

Flyby Attacks: Flying faster than 20 mph (32 km) allows a "flyby" attack in which the attacker zooms in to strike, zips past after striking its target, and quickly loops up and around again to strike again at the same or greater speed. Consequently, each flyby attack counts as two melee actions/attacks and only one particular target may be attacked per melee round. However, "flyby" attacks inflict +1 damage for every 30 mph (48 km) up to a maximum of +4.

Other Bonuses: +1 to save vs magic/poison, +4% to save vs coma/death. Feathers provide Resistance to Cold, Rain, and Snow. Can hold breath underwater for 15 minutes.

Skills of Note: Speak English 95%, Read & Write English 70%, Basic Mathematics 65%, Climbing 75/65%, Fishing 60%, Find Contraband & Illegal Weapons 57%, Hunting, Identify Plants & Fruits 60%, Land Navigation 67%, Locksmith 40%, Military Etiquette 70%, Preserve Food 45%, Radio: Basic 75%, Running, Swim 85%, Track Animals 60%, Wilderness Survival 75%, W.P. Rifle and W.P. Blunt.

Appearance: Kenny looks like a hybrid between a human and a goose. He has a round head with a wide, flat beak, long flexible neck, large feathers, a roundish body, long tail feathers, and short legs with clawed, webbed feet. His hands are also webbed but have fully opposable thumbs. He is partial to wearing military (particularly camouflage) gear. **Note:** Kenny's speech is just partial human (his vocal cords are equivalent to a parrot or a poor speech synthesizer). His voice is shrill, definitely inhuman, and difficult for people unaccustomed to hearing it to understand in its entirety.

Occupation: Currently a fugitive and member of the Mutant Underground.

Weapons: Rifles are Kenny's weapon of choice. Although he prefers sniper rifles, he is not particular and will use any rifle that he manages to acquire. His current firearm is a .30 caliber weapon which inflicts 4D6 damage per shot.

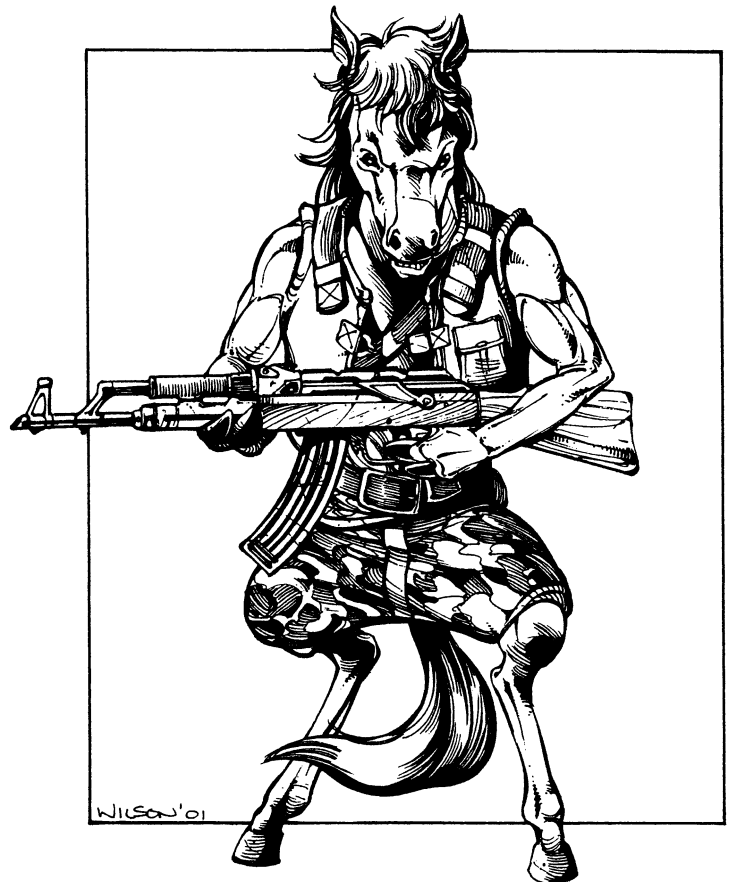
Vehicles: Kenny does not generally rely on vehicles. Most of the time, either walking or flying (under his own power) will suffice. If some type of vehicle is needed, he will try to hitch a ride from someone.

Body Armor: None.

Money and Equipment: Kenny has \$2700 in cash and approximately \$15,000 worth of various kinds of equipment. A lot of the equipment he cannot use but will use it as barter (G.M.s, feel free to throw in whatever unlikely devices you want to).

Relationship to Mutant Underground: Kenny distrusts most humans and even most mutants, except for fellow mutant animals. Despite this, he realizes that his kinship to mutants is his best hope of survival in a hostile world of humans. If not particularly friendly, Kenny is at least civil with most mutants when he first meets them. Those few who earn his trust and respect are put under his protection (whether they even want or need it). The few who become his enemies are harassed whenever the opportunity avails itself. However, most of the mutants Kenny meets remain simply acquaintances who are tolerated at a distance.

Though Kenny would snarl and deny it, he is a champion of the underdog and hates cruelty and injustice, which is probably why he is an active member of the Mutant Underground, serving as a lookout for danger and defender of the weak.



Ossie

Real Name: Ossie.

Alias: The Bronco Buster.

Legal Status: No criminal record as of yet, but is currently wanted by the authorities for questioning and suspected of being an accomplice to a troublemaker known as Kenny.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 10, M.A. 7, P.S. 25, P.P. 9, P.E. 17, P.B. 15, Spd. 22

Hit Points: 31, **S.D.C.:** 56.

Weight: 390 lbs (176 kg). **Height:** 7 feet, 3 inches (2.18 m).

Disposition: Although generally good-natured and helpful, Ossie is first and foremost, self-reliant and does not count on assistance from anyone other than himself.

Experience Level: Fourth.

Super Power Category: Mutant Animal Horse (Mustang).

Mutant Animal Power: Leaping: Standard.

Mutant Animal Disadvantages: 1. Prey Eyes, 2. Vestigial Hooves, 3. Vestigial Tail (penalties from these disadvantages are listed below under bonuses).

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Combat Bonuses: +1 to parry, +3 to dodge, +10 to damage, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to pull punch, kick attacks (Karate kick and snap kick; all kicks inflict an extra 2D6 damage because of Ossie's hooves), can leap 8 feet (2.4 m) across and high, but is -2 to strike with modern guns or any projectile weapons.

Skills of Note: Speak English 90%, Read & Write English 65%, Basic Mathematics 60%, Biology 65%, Business & Finance 60%, Chemistry 55%, Computer Operation 65%, Fish 55%, Paramedic 65%, Running, Swim 75%, Athletics, and W.P. Rifle.

Appearance: Ossie looks like a small (by equine-standards) brown horse with a particularly long tail. He generally stands on his hind legs except when he is running or eating. His chunky, hooved hands have fully opposable thumbs. For clothing, Ossie wears shirts or vests (preferably in dark colors or earth tones) with several pockets for keeping his miscellaneous possessions.

Occupation: A freelance troubleshooter. Ossie's parent organization manufactured some spurious credentials as a private investigator to provide Ossie with some semblance of legitimacy for the authorities.

Weapons: The only weapons that Ossie has ever trained with are rifles. His current firearm is a .50 caliber weapon which inflicts 5D6 damage.

Vehicles: Ossie does not generally rely on vehicles. Most of the time, either walking or running under his own power will suffice. If some type of vehicle is needed, he tries to hitch a ride from someone or hail a taxi. Since Ossie enjoys meeting new people, he takes public transportation such as cabs, buses, and subway trains fairly often.

Body Armor: None.

Money and Equipment: Ossie has \$3600 in cash. Since he is a firm supporter of the Mutant Underground, he has donated much of his money to assist the Underground in its activities to help feed, house and hide homeless mutants. However, Ossie can call upon his creators for various types of assistance, including financial.

Relationship to Mutant Underground: Ossie is a staunch supporter of the Mutant Underground. Although he himself gets along well with most humans, he realizes that many of his fellow mutants (both mutant humans and mutant animals) are less fortunate in finding tolerance in society. Thus, the Mutant Underground fulfills a valuable role in providing a safe haven and meeting place for disenfranchised mutants. He is especially sympathetic toward mutant animals whose creators consider them to be possessions rather than intelligent beings who should be allowed to live free.

Notes: 1. Ossie's speech is just partial human (his vocal cords are equivalent to a poor speech synthesizer). His voice is gravelly, definitely inhuman, but reasonably understandable unless he's talking too fast.

2. Despite his education, Ossie has never really accepted concepts about the importance of wealth, and, as such, Ossie has also been liberal in lending money to friends and acquaintances and donating large sums to worthy causes. Most of the time, a simple IOU, a

handshake, or a verbal promise to pay will suffice as collateral for a loan. Ossie has never dunned anyone for payment and is not too concerned about his debtors paying him back.

Skyscraper

By Steve Sheiring

Skyscraper was the only survivor of an alien scientific expedition that crash-landed on Earth. The purpose of the expedition was to catalog and study the various species on this planet and determine if any should be brought back to their home world.

Fortunately for Skyscraper, a member of the Mutant Underground happened to be the first to discover the crash site and whisked him away before human authorities got to him. The Underground nursed Skyscraper back to health and found him a residence. In return, Skyscraper has been a loyal member of the mutant organization, helping and protecting other mutants in need.

Skyscraper has discovered that his own natural abilities are greater here on Earth than at home. He can see farther, fly faster and heal quicker than on his home world. But what really impresses Skyscraper is how much stronger he is, especially compared to normal humans, making him a genuine "super-hero."

Due to his large set of feathered wings, Skyscraper cannot easily walk and move among the public. Therefore, he usually limits his outside activities to nighttime. At night, Skyscraper patrols the city, helping those in need, whether mutant or human. The alien has been known to harbor any mutants that are on the run, regardless of the consequences to himself, and has made some death-defying moves to rescue mutants from the clutches of the government and mutant recovery teams. This, however, has made him an irritant to the Mutant Task Force (MTF) who finds this character to be a growing annoyance.

Skyscraper prefers to live in the downtown area of large U.S. cities. He likes the top stories of high-rise apartment buildings or lofts and abandoned skyscrapers and warehouses. Human or human-looking members of the Mutant Underground assist the beloved hero with his daily needs and acquire food and other items for him.

Skyscraper is actually quite wealthy. His expedition was well-financed, having plenty of Earth money, gems and other valuables to trade with the inhabitants of our planet. Fortunately, the wealth and much of his medical equipment survived the crash, and a surprise raid by other mutant superhumans snatched the items from government agents before it could all be cataloged and locked away. This has provided Skyscraper with the tools and equipment to practice medicine and perform minor surgery, but nothing like heart or brain surgery. However, with the right facility and equipment, the alien is a skilled enough doctor that he could perform or assist with almost any type of major surgery. As a result, he can deal with most gun wounds, provided the bullet has not penetrated any major arteries. His alien lab kit also allows him to create a limited



supply of painkillers and healing drugs from raw materials at minimal cost.

Name: Skyscraper.

Real Name: Skwol Ukan.

Aliases: Robert Condora and Alex Hawkner.

Legal Status: No criminal record per se, but is wanted by the authorities for questioning about stolen pharmaceuticals, obstruction of justice (i.e., helping mutants escape the authorities) and the Mutant Underground.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 12, M.A. 15, P.S. 28, P.P. 12, P.E. 19, P.B. 11, Spd. 9 running, up to 210 mph (336 km) flying.

Hit Points: 45. **S.D.C.:** 85.

Weight: 235 lbs (106 kg). **Height:** 7 feet, 0 inches (2.13 m). **Age:** 25.

Disposition: Bold, confident, compassionate and rather extroverted; he loves being a hero and helping others, makes no bones about it and soars into action at the first sign of trouble without hesitation or regard for who may be watching or filming. He comes across as genuinely noble, honest, compassionate and caring. Women sometimes swoon in his arms.

Experience Level: 5

Attacks Per Melee: Five on ground (6 when flying).

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Bonuses (includes all bonuses): +1 on initiative, +1 to strike (+3 when flying), +2 to parry (+4 when flying), +2 dodge (+6 or +8 when flying, depending on speed), +2 pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +13 damage (+23 maximum damage when flying), +28% to save versus coma/death, +5 to save versus magic and poison, +3 to save versus psionics, and +5% on skills.

Bonuses in Flight (added to the bonuses above): +1 attack, +2 strike, +2 parry, +4 damage for every 20 mph/32 km of flying speed, +4 dodge when hovering/flying under 80 mph (128 km) +6 dodge when flying over 90 mph (144.8 km).

Other Bonuses: Can carry up to 2800 pounds (1260 kg) and lift up to 5600 pounds (2520 kg), plus advanced sight and nightvision have a range of five miles (8 km).

Weapon Proficiency Bonus: None. Prefers to rely on his own natural abilities.

Super Power Category: Alien super being.

Major Super Powers: None.

Minor Super Powers: Five: Extraordinary Physical Strength, Flight: Winged, Healing Factor, Supervision: Advanced Sight, and Supervision: Nightvision.

Unusual Physical Characteristics: Large, feathered wings, otherwise human-looking.

Education Level: Science Specialist with medical training.

Scholastic Bonus: +25% to all Science, +15% to all others (bonuses include I.Q. bonus); all are already factored into the skills listed below.

Skills of Note: Anthropology 70%, Biology 80%, Chemistry 80%, Basic & Advanced Math 95%, Analytical Chemistry 75%, Pathology 80%, Medical Doctor 98%/90%, Optic Systems 75%, TV and Video 60%, Computer Operation 80%, and Read Sensory Instruments 70%.

Secondary Skills: Literacy 98%, Research 80%, Language: English 80%, Language: Spanish 80%, and Writing 55%.

Appearance: Large, well-proportioned human with large, green, feathered wings. Some actually believe Skyscraper is an *angel* and react accordingly.

Occupation: No earthly job. Independently wealthy. Patrols and protects the innocent of every race, but is an active member of the Mutant Underground protecting mutants from human hunters, exterminator teams and anybody (including mutant crooks and predators) who are out to exploit, enslave or hurt mutants (actually anybody). In fact, Skyscraper has made three public ap-

peals for recognition of human rights for mutants. Each speech was made after a heroic act rescuing humans and done through the television media. The last time was after saving 27 people from an apartment fire. This high profile has earned the alien the status of "super-hero" in the media, but has also drawn the attention of the MTF, several bio-tech corporations who contend their mutant creations are their "property," and the authorities who are always leery of masked vigilantes. Everyone has assumed that the noble and charismatic Skyscraper is a mutant human (or angel), no one suspects he is an alien, so S.H.O.C.K. has not come onto the scene.

When he is not being a super-hero, Skyscraper spends his time providing much needed medical assistance to mutant refugees and homeless humans. He secretly sponsors the 26th Street Shelter (132 cots and a warm meal), and the 12th Street Free Clinic.

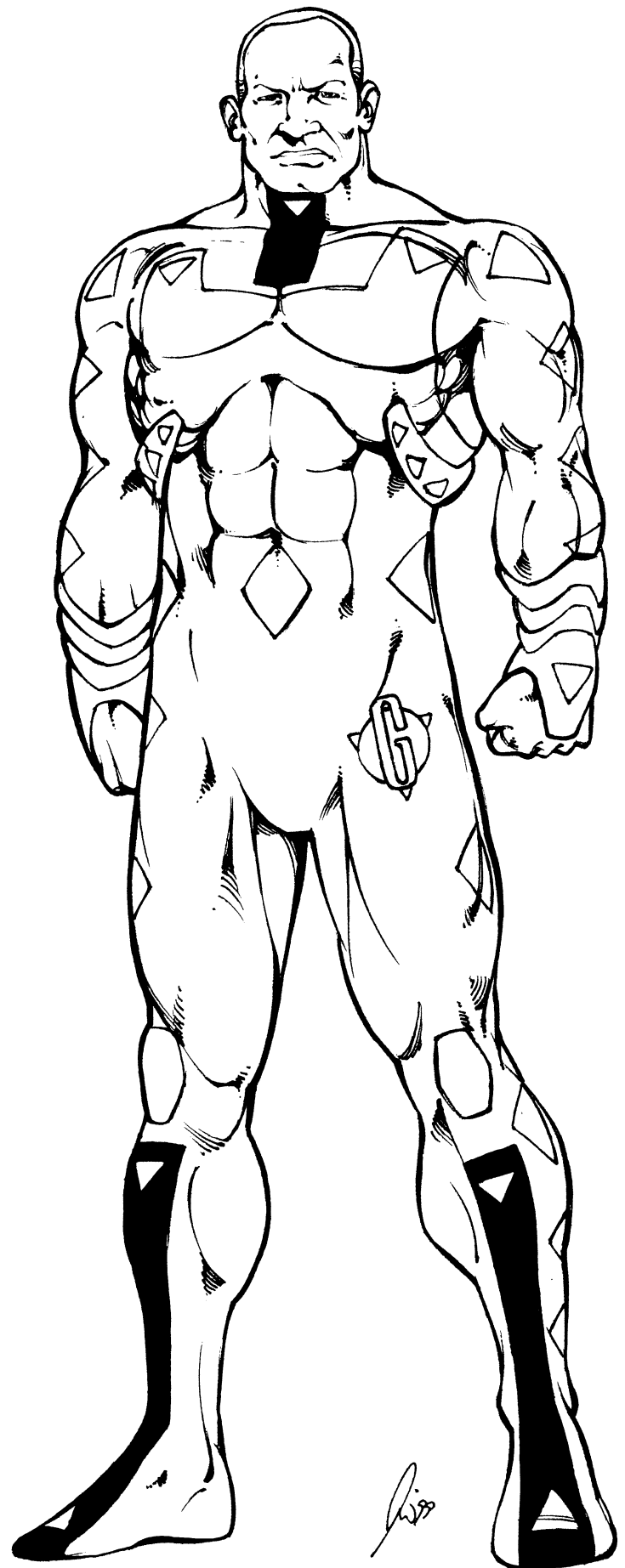
Weapons: None; prefers to use his own natural strength and abilities.

Vehicle: None.

Armor: None.

Other Equipment: Alien medical equipment and biological lab kit for studying Earth species. The other remains of the crashed spaceship were either destroyed by Skyscraper or seized by the U.S. government.

Money: Net worth of about twenty-six million U.S. dollars that generates an annual income of 2.5 million U.S. dollars a year making the hero a truly independent operator.



Grenadier Ghost & The Spook

By Steve Sheiring & Kevin Siembieda

Grenadier Ghost

Grenadier was a colonel in the US Army and team leader of a secret Super Soldier program code named, *Project Ghost*. The goal of the program was to make a small team of elite soldiers with ghost-like abilities to better infiltrate top security enemy compounds, acquire intelligence or plant a bomb, and then leave without a trace, just like a ghost.

Colonel Grenadier was so confident in the program that he allowed himself to be the first experiment. Initially the results of phase one were very promising. Grenadier felt thirty years younger and could function on little sleep. As a result, other recruits were turned into experimental subjects.

Suddenly, however, everything went wrong in phase two when the ghost-like super abilities were to be instilled. While Colonel Grenadier and a few others responded well, most of the recruits died because their bodies couldn't handle the toll placed on them. Others suffered such severe side effects that they wished they were dead and subsequently committed suicide. Consequently, Colonel

Grenadier sought cancellation of the project. He could not stand to see his men suffer any further and wondered about his own fate. Instead of sympathy for his situation, the Army Commander of Project Ghost decided to remove Grenadier from the project and forced the Colonel to retire. This infuriated the Colonel and he decided to take action on his own.

Grenadier and the only other *known* surviving member of Project Ghost (who later became known as the Spook), decided to take matters into their own hands. They used their military and political influence in an attempt to dismantle the project's Super Soldier program. When that failed, they tried to sabotage the project, using their developing powers. Unfortunately, this move severely backfired and Grenadier and the Spook have been branded spies and traitors. They are now hunted men and if captured, will be court-martialed and either imprisoned for life or executed as traitors! Or, they might find themselves the object of a deadly "accident" or "volunteers" for further experimentation in the Super Soldier program, or even locked away in the super-secret facility known as the Nursery.

Grenadier and the Spook felt that they had no choice but to take the offensive. Rather than wait for the Army to come to them, they were going to destroy the Super Soldier program with force. This was not an easy decision for Grenadier. He is a devoted father and family man. He misses his wife and children a great deal, but he dares not contact them. He needs to believe that everything is fine with them in order to continue on with his mission. One which he views as just and right.

Grenadier Ghost and the Spook sought sympathetic recruits for their mission. During their recruitment, they happened upon rumors and stories of the Mutant Underground. They realized that they were not alone, other organizations had also been performing similar experiments. As a result, the scope of their mission increased. They would seek out others like them and build a resistance force to stop the injustice. Grenadier Ghost wants to find irrefutable evidence of wrongdoing and practically outright murder of good soldiers by Project Ghost to put a stop to it. He also hopes to put a stop to inhuman government and private industry genetic enhancement programs by exposing their crimes to the public. So far, his private covert intelligence network is only in the planning and development stages.

The Spook is onboard with anything the Colonel wants done, but he continues to lobby for a more direct and militant approach, namely sabotaging and destroying any experimental project that created mutants without regard for their test subjects. Thus, he is willing to use any means necessary.

The military experiments of Project Ghost are still ongoing. The results have been wide-ranging with no two recruits receiving the same exact powers and many dying or suffering physical or mental agony driving them to suicide or insanity. The project leaders continue to cover up their mistakes and believe they can correct the problems. When they do, they plan to send the successful Super Soldiers after Grenadier Ghost and the Spook.

Name: Grenadier Ghost.

Real Name: Richard Nathan Grenadier.

Aliases: Colonel Grenadier, The Colonel, and Dick Nathan.

Legal Status: Military criminal branded as a spy and traitor wanted for military sabotage and espionage. He is considered a living weapon, armed, unstable and extremely dangerous. Numerous government agencies are on the lookout for the Colonel and his accomplice, the Spook, including the U.S. Army, FBI, CIA and MTF (Mutant Task Force).

Alignment: Unprincipled (was Scrupulous).

Attributes: I.Q. 21, M.E. 19, M.A. 23, P.S. 22, P.P. 14, P.E. 14, P.B. 9, Spd. 19.

Hit Points: 45, **S.D.C.:** 45 (+50 at nighttime only).

Weight: 205 lbs (93 kg), **Height:** 6 feet, 1 inches (1.85 m), **Age:** Chronologically he is 52, but the experiment has given him the mind and body of a thirty year old.

Disposition: A true leader who is loyal to the men under his charge. Energetic and confident. He has a deep, resonant voice that lets others know that he is in command, and loves to talk and tell stories. He is very religious and a devout father and family man. On the other hand, he is a soldier, and does not hesitate to kill the enemy in moments of battle. An excellent military leader, strategist and tactician. Accusations of being a traitor (possibly with ties to Russia) are all lies. Grenadier Ghost is 100% loyal to his country, the USA, its ideals, safety and prosperity. However, he is disillusioned with the military and sees those behind Project Ghost and other Super Soldier projects to be unscrupulous "rogues" and a cancer that threatens the military and the nation.

Experience Level: Eighth.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: Six.

Bonuses (includes all bonuses): +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +4 disarm, +12 to damage, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 pull punch, critical strike on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20, paired weapons and leap attack (critical), +7% on all skills (included in skill stats), +2 to save versus psionic attack and insanity, 75% trust/intimidate.

Weapon Proficiency Bonus: W.P. Auto-pistol, +5 strike aimed, +3 strike burst, W.P. Knife, +2 to strike when thrown, +2 to strike, +3 to parry.

Super Power Category: Experiment: Super Soldier.

Major Super Powers: Bio-Armor and Chameleon.

Minor Super Powers: Nightstalking.

Unusual Physical Characteristics: None.

Special Abilities: Bio-Armor has natural A.R. of 16, S.D.C. 360. Cannot be turned into the undead, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m), Horror Factor 13, +50 S.D.C. at night only, sense the exact moment when the sun will rise and set, and can hide motionless in shadows at 97%.

Education Level: Military Specialist.

Scholastic Bonuses: Basic Military Program (+27%), Basic Espionage Program (+22%), Military Demolitions Program (+27%), Modern Weapons Program (3), Language Program (+17%). I.Q. and all other bonuses have been added to appropriate stats.

Skills of Note: Running, Climbing 92%, Boxing, Military Etiquette 98%, Radio: Basic 98%, Basic Electronics 97%, Basic Mechanics 97%, Demolitions 98%, Demolitions Disposal 98%, Underwater Demolitions 98%, Detect Ambush 98%, Intelligence 86%, Wilderness Survival 97%, Tracking 87%, Detect Concealment 87%, W.P. Knife, W.P. Automatic Pistols, W.P. Rifle, W.P. Heavy Weapons, Language: Spanish 98%, Language: Russian 98%, Language: Japanese 98% and Basic Math 98%.

Secondary Skills: Literacy (English) 98%, Pilot: Automobile 83%, Prowl 98%, Swim 98%, Computer Operation 87%, and Research 97%.

Appearance: Extremely athletic and well-sculpted body. Clean shaven, military haircut. On the surface, he has a very stern countenance and tough demeanor, but has a heart of gold.

Occupation: Currently, mercenary jobs as a super being for hire; mostly involved with training or security and very low profile. Avoids normal jobs since he is worried that the government may be able to track him down. Payment is normally in cash.

Weapons: Many, but prefers an auto-pistol and several knives, since he is usually fighting in hand to hand. He uses explosives and demolitions expertly to deal with undermining the enemy's infrastructure and sabotage.

Vehicle: Prefers used cars that are at least ten years old and hard to trace. Once a mission is executed, whether a success or failure, he usually ditches the car. Furthermore, he will buy another car paid for in cash (never steals one) whenever he establishes residence in a new city.

Armor: Bio-Armor: A.R. of 16, S.D.C. 360.

Other Equipment: Nightvision scopes and binoculars, up-to-date computer system, cell phone, ear mike radio receiver and transmitter, military G.P.S. system, smoke and incendiary grenades, plastic and gelatin explosives, guns, ammunition and whatever else he may need to research and take out a particular target.

Money: Ranges from \$25,000 to \$250,000. Most of it is spent on missions and very little is left for luxury items. Money is acquired by doing odd jobs for private industry and borderline criminal operations training militia groups or other mercenary organizations and low profile security jobs.

Relationship with the Mutant Underground: He has recently hooked up with the Mutant Underground, serving them as a (low) paid strategic consultant. He has mixed feelings about mutants and the Underground. On one hand he sees many of them as unstable, hostile and dangerous. Furthermore, he brooks no nonsense from those engaged in blatant criminal activity. To the Colonel, a criminal is a criminal regardless of circumstances, being a mutant is not an excuse. On the other hand, he understands their plight as fugitives and outcasts, and knows that many of them are good people falsely branded (as he and the Spook are) as criminals and evildoers. He also recognizes that many mutants who bend the law or hate and fear the authorities would be good, honest, law abiding people if they were accepted by society and given a fair chance. He can't

stand seeing any intelligent beings treated like animals, slaves or property. These last injustices are not the American way and are what draw his increasing support to the Underground.

The Colonel has contacts with some very prominent international arms dealers, agents and mercenaries (and even a few loyal friends in the US military), keeping him in the pipeline regarding his and the Spook's status among the various organizations looking for them, as well as other goings on in the military and the various Super Soldier programs. Much of this data is rumor and hearsay, but at least 60% is quite reliable. Of special interest is Project Ghost, which reputedly has made a major breakthrough. Another rumor suggests that new Super Soldiers from Project Ghost *may* be assigned to hunting Grenadier Ghost and the Spook down. At any rate, the Colonel has a loose network of contacts keeping him informed and enabling him to acquire whatever military grade weapons and equipment he needs, provided he has the funds.

The Spook

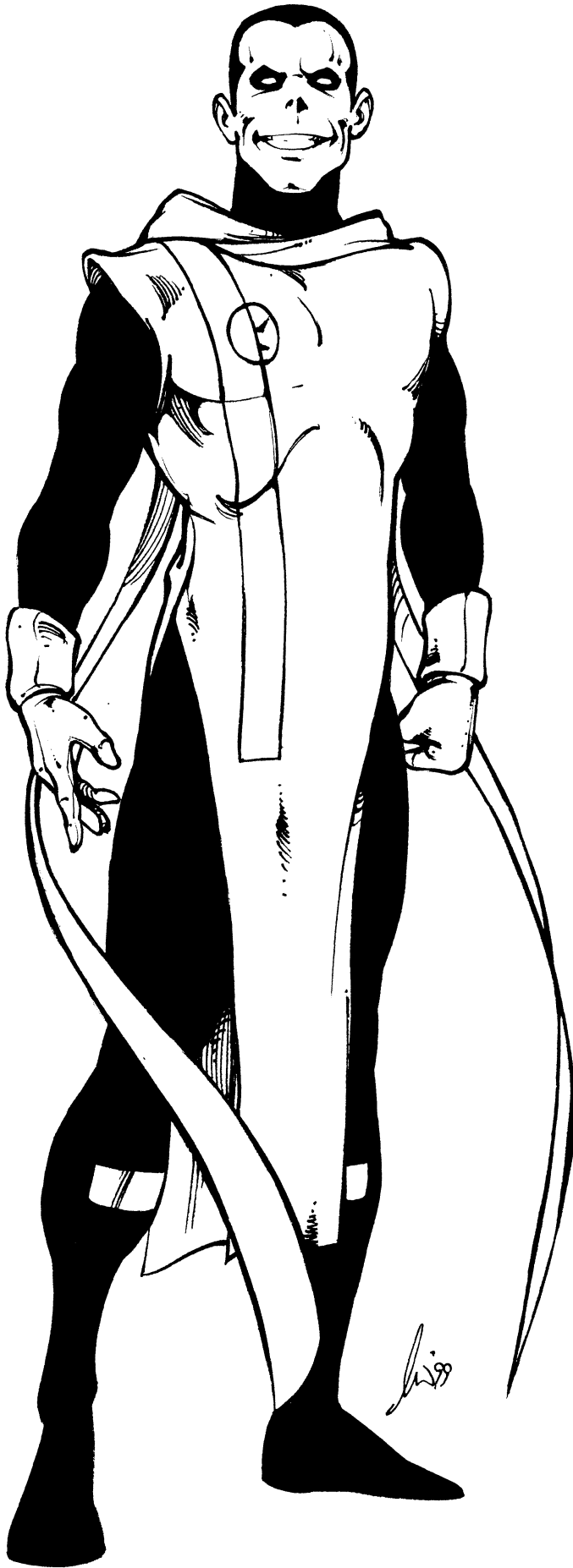
Anthony Gregory Robinson, a.k.a the Spook, was once a promising young lieutenant in the US Army. He was recruited to join the Super Soldier program under the auspices of Project Ghost, and agreed in a heartbeat since he was a devoted patriot and admirer of Colonel Grenadier. Anthony was raised as an orphan and never married. He was always somewhat of a loner, so if the experiment did kill him, no one would really miss him.

Like Colonel Grenadier, he was eager and excited about the program until his fellow soldiers started dying or suffering terrible side-effects. Eventually, all of his fellow test subjects died, killed themselves, or were killed in mysterious accidents. Only he and the Colonel survived, with a half dozen in the infirmary apparently at death's door. Codenamed the Spook, and instilled with the powers of Intangibility and Control Others, Lt. Robinson did some snooping around and found out that the Project Commander was minimizing and covering up the extent and severity of the project "failures" and planned to drum the Colonel out of the military for daring to challenge his authority and the ethics of Project Ghost. When Colonel Grenadier solicited the Spook for his aid in terminating the project, the Spook was already making similar plans. When legitimate military channels failed and they were both about to be forced out of the military, the Spook and the Colonel tried to sabotage the project, but only managed to delay progress before the two had to go underground to escape persecution as spies and traitors. The two have become fast friends, have been together ever since, and would kill themselves rather than betray or desert one another. In many respects, Grenadier Ghost is a respected and loved father figure to the Spook. A man to be respected and honored.

Name: The Spook.

Real Name: Anthony Gregory Robinson.

Aliases: Many, uses common names like Tom Smith, Mike Green, and Kevin Robinson.



Legal Status: Military criminal branded as a spy and traitor wanted for military sabotage and espionage. He is considered a living weapon, armed, unstable and extremely dangerous. Numerous government agencies are on the lookout for the Spook and his partner, Grenadier Ghost, including the U.S. Army, FBI, CIA and MTF (Mutant Task Force).

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 14, M.A. 21, P.S. 17, P.P. 19, P.E. 19, P.B. 5, Spd. 22

Hit Points: 35. **S.D.C.:** 70.

Weight: 215 lbs (97 kg); all muscle. **Height:** 5 feet, 10 inches (1.78 m). **Age:** 24.

Disposition: Quiet and reserved, but also a positive go-getter who enjoys a good time and laughter. He prefers Grenadier Ghost do most of the talking, negotiating and planning, but is a fair leader and strategist in his own right. The Colonel is the only one that the Spook feels completely trustworthy and at ease with. One notable quirk is that the Spook will break out into a smile when he is nervous or in an uncomfortable position. Most observers take this to mean he is fearless or crazy.

Experience Level: Fourth.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: Five.

Bonuses (includes all bonuses): +2 on initiative, +4 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +2 to disarm, +2 to damage, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +18% to save versus coma/death, +2 to save versus magic/poison, +6 to save versus possession, 65% trust/intimidate, and Karate style kicks do 2D4 damage.

Other Bonuses: Horror Factor of 14 when semi-transparent or walking through walls, heals twice as fast as a normal human and cannot be turned into an undead being.

Weapon Proficiency Bonus: W.P. Rifle, aimed: +4 to strike, burst: +2 to strike, W.P. Knife, +1 to strike when thrown, +1 to strike, +2 to parry.

Super Power Category: Experiment.

Major Super Powers: Control Others, Intangibility and Multiple Lives.

Minor Super Powers: None.

Education Level: Military Specialist.

Scholastic Bonus: Basic Military Program (+20%), Basic Espionage Program (+15%), Military Demolitions Program (+20%), Modern Weapons Program (3), Language Program (+10%).

Skills of Note (include all appropriate bonuses): Running, Climbing 80%, Military Etiquette 75%, Radio: Basic 85%, Basic Electronics 70%, Basic Mechanics 70%, Demolitions 92%, Demolitions Disposal 92%, Underwater Demolitions 92%, Detect Ambush 65%, Disguise 60%, Intelligence 63%, Wilderness Survival 65%, Tracking 60%, Detect Concealment 60%, W.P. Knife, W.P. Auto-Pistol, W.P. Rifle, W.P. Heavy Weapons, Language: English 98%, Language: German 80%, Language: French 80%, Language: Chinese 80% and Basic Math 90%.

Secondary Skills: Literacy (English) 98%, Pilot: Automobile 68%, Pilot: Motorcycle 76%, Prowl 65%, and First Aid 65%.

Appearance: Broad shoulders and a muscular build. The experiment severely deformed his face, turning it a pale white with a skeletal nose, and dark circles around the eyes accentuating his white, blank eyes. Many parts of his body are also scarred. As a result, he often wears make-up and uses disguises, clothes and masks to conceal his real features when not out working or adventuring as the Spook. His costume is black, with a flowing light blue tunic over it and a long white scarf. Nothing covers his face. The scarf is often used as a rope to climb or wrap up an opponent, but can also be used to strangle.

Occupation: Grenadier Ghost's right-hand man and partner in mercenary and low profile security jobs. Will not take a "normal" job and enjoys military and covert operations.

Weapons: Favorite weapon is a sniper rifle and his fists and feet.

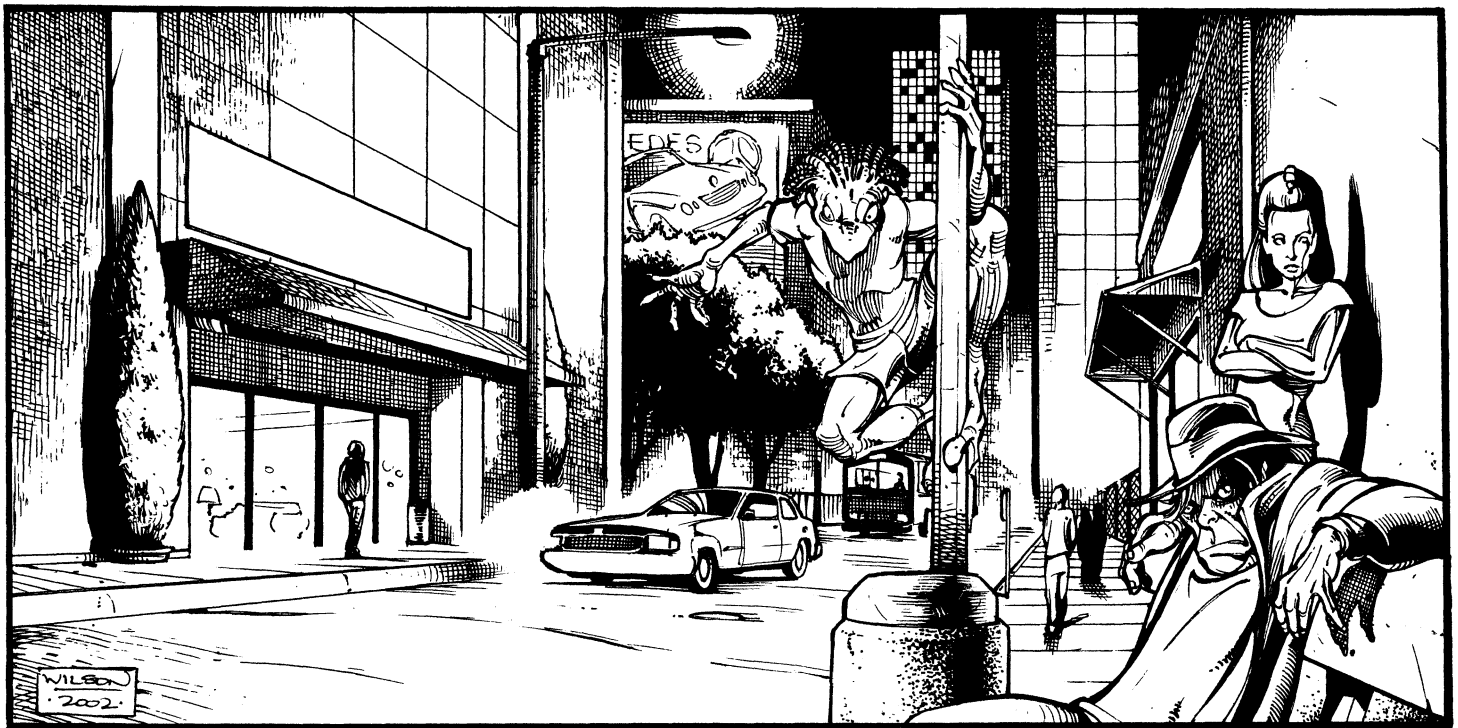
Vehicle: Prefers motorcycles over cars.

Armor: Usually none.

Other Equipment & Money: Has no savings of his own. Everything he has is shared with Grenadier Ghost. Exactly how much the Ghost may have socked away for

him is unknown, because the Spook trusts him completely (it's already at 220,000 US dollars).

Relationship with the Mutant Underground: He joined the Mutant Underground, serving them as a paid strategic consultant and group leader along with his partner, Grenadier Ghost. Unlike his partner, however, the Spook sympathizes completely with the mutant refugees and happily does whatever he can to help between paying mercenary jobs. Though he frowns upon mutant predators and career criminals, the Spook thinks Grenadier Ghost should take a more active hand in organizing and training them as a self-sufficient militia force as well as recruit them – build an army of mutants even – to strike down Project Ghost and all genetics and augmentation organizations that have no regard for human life or the lives of the new beings they create. (The Colonel has avoided this for fear that a strong, organized, para-military group of mutants would get carried away and reap mayhem in the name of revenge or justice.) Thankfully, the Spook respects Grenadier Ghost's judgement and follows his direction without wavering.





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Mutant Underground

This is the setting in which we find ourselves. A nebulous world of humans where super beings appear as both heroes and villains, and where genetic freaks and super beings are manufactured for fame, glory and profit in the burgeoning bio-tech industry. The result is a growing world market for genetic enhancement and the promise of superhumans “on demand.” In the wash is a new class of disenfranchised nonhumans without rights or a place in modern society.

The Mutant Underground is many things: A subculture of mutants and super beings that quietly (and not so quietly) coexists with our own, an organization, and an idea.

When ordinary people talk about the Mutant Underground, they usually mean **the subculture**: Mutants and misfits living in the shadow of hometown America to the streets of Europe and the back alleys of the Orient. Cast-offs, mistakes and renegades born into a world that doesn't want them and will barely acknowledge they exist at all. A euphemism for the ever growing population of genetic mutants, freaks and experiments born of science and technology and who manage to escape captivity only to end up on the streets.

The specifics of their plight may vary from place to place, but the basics are the same everywhere. Where does a genetic freak or mutant animal go when they escape? How do they survive in a society that sees them as terrifying abominations of nature and monsters? Shunned by polite, “human” society and uneducated to the ways of the world, how do mutant refugees educate themselves. What work is there to find? Where can they live? Who wants them as neighbors?

That's where the Mutant Underground **organization** comes in. A loose knit network of volunteers, humanitarians, and super beings with a common goal: To save the mutant castoffs from society and themselves. For without guidance and aid, there are few choices for mutants. They can forsake freedom and return to their makers to be caged, poked, prodded, tested, sold and treated like lab rats, pets or property, *or* they can scratch out a miserable existence on the streets as nowhere people – freaks pushed into the darkest corners with the other castoffs, misfits, and criminals. They inhabit places where polite society doesn't want to live as it tries its best to forget they even exist, at least until they spill over into their white picket fenced backyards and frightens the children. In this environment, the mutant castoffs and rejects must fend for

themselves in a harsh setting where the strong and smart prey upon the weak and innocent. Where one must become a brute and do terrible things to survive. For in the concrete jungle of the mutant underworld only the strongest survive – at least for a little while. Those who turn to humans and plead for help – not much, a warm place to sleep, work to make enough money for food and clothing – are often met with horror and attacked to be driven back into the shadows they crawled out of. The mutants' words are lost in the screams of ignorance and fear. The mutants' humanity and fragile spirit remain hidden behind an inhuman veneer most humans cannot see beyond. Their gentleness and all too human needs are unrecognized at all, masked by their ugliness and strange powers. Their unnatural origins become justification to treat them like savage animals or soulless property. And violence . . . violence is always the answer. Attack, stab, and chase them away until the “things” disappear – from sight, but not the world. And so the mutant problem remains, festers and grows in the shadows where they have been made forced to hide.

Lost, alone, homeless and effectively thrown into a living hell, genetic freaks, mutants and rejects become resentful, bitter and hate-filled. They turn to crime and victimize the ones who hurt them first. Making each new act of violence and survival also an act of retribution and rage, a painful cry of defiance and sorrow. Left unchecked, this venom and bile can only turn into something wicked and terrible for both mutants and humans. It is from this that the **ideals** behind the Mutant Underground blossomed and gave birth to the organization. Actually, the Underground is more of a *movement* kept alive through the compassion and hard work of volunteers, idealists, humanitarians and outcasts themselves. Each is a hero in their own way. Each believes that someone must help these poor creatures find a place in the world or all of humanity faces disaster. They realize that unless someone can offer mutants a safety net to help them make a home and survive without victimizing others, human society is headed for disaster and disenfranchised mutants will lead the charge to our mutual destruction. For most members of the Mutant Underground, the way mutantkind is treated is shameful, cruel and just plain wrong. Things need to change, but until then, mutants need tenderness and care.

The active members of the Mutant Underground are sympathetic to the mutants' plight and want to do some-

thing to help as well as eventually right the injustice of their circumstance. Humans, fellow mutants and super beings are all part of the Underground, but they are too few to help so many. Still, the battle is on to make a difference and to save lives.

The Goals and Operations of the Mutant Underground

The agenda of the Mutant Underground has three main objectives, but the first one takes up most of its time and resources.

1. Rescue mutants on the street.
2. Free and protect mutants.
3. Mutants' civil rights.

Rescue Mutants

Step One: Make contact. First and foremost, the active members of the Mutant Underground seek out mutants just unleashed or escaped into the world. They try to get to them before the authorities, hunters and Recovery Teams, or slavers and exploiters. They offer a friendly face and an avenue for help. Of course, even when a misfit castoff is found quickly, the individual has probably endured so much pain and horror that he doesn't know what to do or who to trust. It is the job of the Underground to break through the newbie's walls and fears with kindness and sincerity, in order to get the mutant to a shelter and put some food in his belly and a safe roof over his head.

Step Two: Shelter. Homeless and without a friend in the world or anywhere to go, the next thing to do is get the mutant refugee off the streets and someplace safe. The Mutant Underground has scores of safe houses, sanctuaries and hiding places that are warm, dry and (relatively) safe. New mutants are usually taken to a "holding camp," a safe place where the character can get some sleep and be assessed and checked out. The Mutant Underground has many enemies and must be careful not to bring a bad guy into their fold, and certainly not into the inner workings of the organization. Criminals, spies, hunters, exterminators and Recovery Team agents are always trying to get into the inner recesses of the Mutant Underground in order to find the target(s) of their latest bounty and to learn as much about the Underground's structure and secrets as they can to better exploit it for their own selfish (or evil) purposes.

Step Three: Food and clothing. To win the heart and mind, one must first satisfy the needs of the body. That means providing food, clothing, a blanket and a cot. Likewise, those in need of medical care are given whatever aid is available. Once the individual has received nourishment and given a chance to rest and relax, guidance counselors can try to help in other ways.

Step Four: Orientation (rescuing mutants from themselves). Many of those unleashed into the world are simply not prepared for it. More than half are uneducated,

unskilled and less than two years old even though they may have the body of a mature adult. Most have only known life in a laboratory, or may have, until recently, been caged or just crawled out of a test tube. Consequently, they don't possess the skills or experience to manage in society. They don't have any concept of "law" or "morality" or know the difference between right and wrong. Many act like animals because they are, and may actually be driven by instinct. Furthermore, people who are desperate, afraid and alone (even those with a highly evolved intelligence and some training in the ways of the world) may be driven to act like savages and do whatever it takes to survive. Their plight is made all the more difficult if they are obviously inhuman or ugly and can't fit in among humans unnoticed.

The Mutant Underground tries to give these mutants a point of reference and work to orient them to the modern world. The first step toward this goal is establishing a rapport and trust. With any luck, the new mutant will find a sense of belonging within the Mutant Underground. To feel that he or she is no longer lost and alone. The Underground tries to give them the guidance to be good, productive individuals and not to give in to hate and vengeance (which is the short road to a quick death or captivity and suffering). However, while the mentors of the Mutant Underground try to teach these emotional infants the way of the world, there are those who lack the patience, intelligence or desire to learn. These are frequently the ones with a chip on their shoulder the size of Colorado, and who crave action and/or revenge, not words and studying.

Step Five: A place in the organization. Next is finding the mutant a place in the organization so he feels like he has some roots and belongs to a community. Not all people want to be activists in the organization. Some just aren't cut out for it, are incapable of it (due to deformity, low mental capacity, or a debilitating defect), or just don't want to do it. That's okay. As a movement and a loose network of idealistic volunteers, one can be a member of the Underground without being an active part of it. Technically, just being a mutant or reject makes one a member of the movement. Whether one actively works toward the goals of the Underground is left up to the individual.

• *Independents*, may be fellow mutants and may even sympathize with the cause, but just don't want to be associated with the movement for any number of reasons. A good 40% are mutants who can pass for human despite their powers, 30% are loners or just want to go it alone (may or may not believe in the Underground), and the rest are mutants who have chosen a different group (typically criminal) in which to belong.

• *Those who don't care* tend to be thugs, street punks and predators who do what they please, the teachings of the Underground and the laws of the humans be damned. They are the lowlifes and criminals of the mutant community that give mutants a bad name. This group also includes recluses, hermits and loners who want to be left alone.

• *The least active* are typically either those who want to be left alone to live a quiet life in the shadows, or those too frightened or frail to take an active role, as well as

those who have other responsibilities and demands on their time (like raising and supporting a family, caring for an ailing loved one, etc.). However, most of these people share the goals and dreams of the Mutant Underground and do little things to help. For example, they report rumors, word on the street, and talk about the things they see and hear to Underground leaders and protectors, as well as warn about suspected (or known) hunters and lawmen, and offer their opinion on a wide range of issues. Many will go so far as to offer small donations of money and supplies to the cause, hide or lie on the behalf of a respected Mutant Underground hero or leader, and may even take a stand and fight when push comes to shove.

- *Compassionate souls* volunteer their time cooking, cleaning, working at shelters, providing transportation for those without, providing nursing care, teaching, counseling, and anything else that can make a difference. Most are quite outspoken about their views and the goals of the Underground.

- *The most dedicated* are the movers and shakers in the Mutant Underground, serving as organizers and leaders. They are the foundation upon which everything is built. Independent chapters or factions of the Underground are found in cities and towns across North America and worldwide. However, the network most people mean when they talk about the Mutant Underground is the one that started in the United States and spread to Canada and Mexico. Similar movements have since cropped up in Europe and Asia (and as the mutant/genetics engineering issues spread, to other places in the world as well). Each "chapter" has its regional leaders, protectors, and local concerns, but all strive for the same basic goals and dreams.

- *Protectors* are generally the more powerful and militant people in the Underground. They can be mutants, humans, aliens, robots or whatever. The best are noble and honorable champions of justice, others are grandstanding toughs looking for glory, still others are embittered and angry fighters looking for revenge, and some are no better than criminals or super-villains except that they fight on behalf of mutants. The worst become disassociated with the Underground movement and become independent mutant avengers, vandals, terrorists and killers. The best become notorious vigilantes and super-heroes who help all people in trouble.

- *Freedom fighters* or liberation squads are among the most militant and driven of the Mutant Underground's warrior sect. Most (80%) are mutants themselves who have suffered at the hands of humans. Most also possess one or more super abilities or have psionic powers. Many are angry, bitter, and vengeful. Most are fanatical about *stopping* the bio-tech industry, the government and anybody else trying to create super beings, mutants and new life forms without a care for their mistakes or their test subjects. These callous businesses and agencies are at the top of the freedom fighters' "hit list." Next are those active in the mutant slave trade, followed by those who use the practice of "dumping" genetic rejects and accidents, followed by those who trick and intimidate mutants into life-long service (i.e., indentured servitude and sweat shops). *ALL* are targets for their raids and liberation.

Mission objectives: Prime is raids for the purpose of freeing/rescuing mutants and test subjects from the evil clutches of those noted above. Second, to harass and damage the enemy, preventing them from continuing their operation and making more mutants. It is the Freedom Fighters' hope that such actions will deliver the message to the target of their rage and others like them to stop the inhumanity. Third, to bring public awareness to what they are doing and the atrocities mutants are suffering.

Other missions for these groups include find and rescue victims of snatch and grabs, kidnappings, and slave rings; destroy slave rings (and slavers); protect against hunters, exterminators, Recovery Teams and predators; rescue mutants from the law (often even if they are guilty of terrible crimes); free mutants from all types of captivity, including prison and the custody of the law; free indentured servants; stop criminal protection rackets; and find/rescue runaway mutants and bring them into the fold.

Note: While dedicated and extreme, they stop short of wholesale destruction and mass murder, with most missions conducted with surgical precision as hit and run operations. Though they engage in sabotage, vandalism and combat, mutant freedom fighters seldom engage in actions that will jeopardize innocent lives, human or mutant.

- *Avengers and terrorists.* Every group has its extremists, and the Mutant Underground is no different. These are the people who demand justice with bloodshed and violence. They attack bio-tech corporations not to rescue enslaved mutants but to *kill* those responsible (corporate leaders, top scientists, and the henchmen they hire to protect them), *destroy* the facilities, and to terrorize humans into giving mutants civil rights, freedom and a place in society. As terrorists, they also engage in acts of kidnaping and extortion to get what they want (money, equipment, new legislation, and attention to their cause), public spectacle and mass murder. The other members of the Mutant Underground try to talk sense into these hatefilled extremists, but they are usually ignored. Truth be told, most mutant avengers and terrorists are independent subgroups within the Underground, and are only considered to be part of the Mutant Underground because they are mostly mutants, uphold all the same goals of the Underground, and often come to its aid in battles against the authorities and evildoers who threaten it and mutantkind. **HOWEVER**, these independent groups go to extremes and favor a violent solution rather than self-preservation and going through legal channels. For these fanatics, the end justifies the means and any innocent people who get hurt in the conflict, be they human or mutant, are collateral damage, and acceptable casualties of war.

Free & Protect Mutants

The second goal of the Mutant Underground is to free mutants held in captivity, often by corrupt bio-tech companies that appear to be legitimate and law abiding, and secret government facilities engaged in inhuman genetic engineering experiments and Super Soldier programs. Both of them put the Mutant Underground at odds with the law. The most fundamental and common rescue missions have been outlined under *freedom fighters* and *avengers*

and terrorists, above, in the previous section concerning members of the Mutant Underground. The former work to free and rescue mutants (and sometimes humans) from the clutches of unscrupulous bio-corps, government agents, slave traders, and others who would enslave and abuse mutants, including those who keep indentured servants and mutant sweat shops. The latter, though they wrap themselves in the banners of freedom and justice, are terrorists out for blood and revenge more than anything else. They are lost to vengeance and crave only destruction and death to heal the pain they have suffered. Unfortunately, they fail to realize that such terror and murder can never heal.

The typical approach of protectors (vigilantes, heroes and crime fighters) involves working independent of the law, patrolling a particular neighborhood or sector of the city known to be widely inhabited by mutants or under the control of the Mutant Underground. When trouble arises, the protector comes a runnin'. These heroes may also investigate crimes, murder, rumors of slave activity and other types of trouble. Likewise, they always keep their eyes open for Recovery Teams, hunters, exterminators and government agents searching for one or more particular mutants. Under this circumstance, the protector may work to help pull their mutant target's fat out of the fire, rescuing and hiding him, and/or intervening by jumping in between the hunters and their quarry and taking them on. Protectors regularly battle mutant hunters of every variety, which can earn them the enmity of the police, federal agents, local crime lords, slave rings, street gangs, powerful corporations, individuals and super-villains. They also take on mutant predators, monsters and killers who stalk the people on "their turf" or bring trouble to the Underground. Between crises, protectors seek to break up slave rings, rescue those in captivity, stop crime and make people feel safe (sometimes just by making their presence known or helping in other, more pedestrian ways). Most are true heroes who care about others and fight for the rights and freedom of all people, coming to the aid of a human or alien as quickly as a mutant. Of course, some are less generous and compassionate to downright self-serving or savage. Exactly how these heroes conduct themselves is left to the individual. As with most positions in the Mutant Underground, the role of protector is voluntary and sometimes attracts glory hounds, criminals and opportunists.

Note: The law generally sees even the most noble and heroic mutant protectors as lawless vigilantes, criminals or madmen, and a danger to honest people. However, as long as they stay out of the better parts of town and don't interfere with police or government business, they are usually ignored. Sometimes a politician or top law official gets a bug down his shorts and launches a campaign to "get" a mutant protector/vigilante or group of "rogue mutants" (heroes) working outside the law (or openly challenging or defying it). This can lead to a manhunt by law officers or hired guns like Recovery Teams, mercenaries, hunters, exterminators, special government agents, super-villains and even super-heroes. Only one third of such campaigns are successful as these protectors and heroes are usually loved by their community and have

plenty of friends and admirers to help them hide until things blow over. Other times they result in titanic battles that can lead to civilian casualties or mass destruction bringing public outcry and a halt (or increased effort) to the campaign, or result in the defeat and embarrassment of the agents or super beings hired to do the job. Similar campaigns may be deployed to "recover" or "exterminate" a mutant runaway (usually branded a criminal and a menace), bringing trouble to the protector's domain and drawing him into the fracas. In this case, the brutes and super beings brought in usually ignore the law when it comes to mutants and street people, break into homes, damage property, steal, and rough up and threaten mutants in the Underground. This forces the local mutant heroes to step in to calm things down, protect innocent people, and even battle the invaders. Likewise, the protectors may join the battle to protect or hide the very one(s) the hunters seek, or are required to save innocent bystanders from trigger happy hunters, evil super-villains working for the government with a license to kill, and disasters created by the man-hunters (fires, collapsing building, car or train wreck, explosions, etc.). The ultimate irony comes when a mutant hero has to step in to save the life of the hunters! Remember, places where the Mutant Underground operates are run-down slums and the bad part of town to begin with. They are also home to all manner of mutants, including those not wanted or actually affiliated with the organization, villains and psychos. Consequently, there are a number of super-villains and mutant predators who just love to kill (and sometimes eat) lawmen, agents, hunters and traitors (super beings who hunt mutants). Additionally, the Underground has its share of mentally and emotionally deficient mutants and super-powered monsters who, if spooked or provoked, could attack with murderous rage or run amok, threatening everyone in their path.

Who speaks for a man's shadow?

Nobody.

And that's how most mutants are treated. Like shadows to be ignored, avoided and feared. Shadows of the living with no rights, no laws and no reason to live. Nobodies. Abominations, freaks and mistakes that shouldn't even be alive, and whose very existence is ugly and repulsive, best kept locked away in the shadows and forgotten.

As noted in the opening section of this book, mutants have none of the civil rights, freedoms or protections of the law that we humans take for granted. Thanks to the confusing moral issues of genetic engineering and the creation of life, most creatures created in a laboratory without a biological parent and "built" through genetic manipulation are considered *patented products*. They are creations of science able to be replicated, mass produced and sold! After all, it's not actually born or, strictly speaking, *human*.

Lab *animals* mutated and genetically altered and enhanced through genetic manipulation and other processes are viewed as "animals" owned by the corporation, who is free to do with them as they deem fit. But is a white rat, rabbit or dog transformed into an intelligent humanoid really an animal? It walks on two legs, has opposable thumbs, talks and questions whether or not there is a su-

preme being. Can it really be said to be an animal? The property of its owner? A living, thinking being who can be enslaved, caged, sold, experimented upon, tortured and destroyed as its owner desires?

That's the way the laws are written right now, and it creates a moral ambiguity that borders on the criminal or the insane. A void that promotes slavery, torture and inhumanity on a scale never before imagined.

Sadly, the powers that be turn a blind eye to these questions, preferring not having to address them at all and hoping, somehow, things work out. The average person doesn't even know half of these things are going on, and when faced with the issues they become confused or frightened and turn to their leaders for answers, passing the buck and hoping the leaders of the land do the right thing. Unfortunately, those leaders are busy burying their heads in the sand or lining their pockets with the money and favors of the very companies creating the problems and asking them to do nothing or look the other way. It's a vicious circle.

This is what the Mutant Underground wants the world to recognize, stop and make right.

Mutant Civil Rights. It's not enough to wipe the tears away and put some food in the belly and then ask a mutant to live like a shadow, scrounging through garbage to survive on the streets with nothing. The future must be addressed. Mutants must find a way to make a life in the world, not just survive in the shadows. Thus, the Underground's long term goal is to make the world a better place for both humans and mutants through coexistence, equality, personal freedom and civil rights. The fight for mutant rights is made all the more difficult by the fact that



no powerful human stands up for them. It is a battle they must launch and implement on their own, despite the fear and prejudice of a world who sees them as monsters or a threat to the human status quo.

The first thing to do is raise awareness of the mutants' situation, to win public sympathy and support to change the law and give mutants equal rights. This too is extremely difficult because there isn't any poster child to represent all mutants, and many mutants are ugly, frightening and monstrous. Many are antisocial miscreants who pose a threat to others, though in their defense, they were "made" that way. To compound matters for the Underground, they must first spend most of their time, energy and resources on rescuing and helping mutants with the most basic of needs just to help them survive, leaving little for this important crusade. And their problems don't end there. The paranoia and anti-mutant sentiment stemming from the question of evolution and whether mutants are destined to subvert and replace humankind is a huge obstacle to overcome. Then there is the issue of super-powered mutant menaces, villains and militants.

Militants on the warpath. This last objective is broad, diverse and often attracts the more militant and brazen members of the Mutant Underground: Those willing to wage a private, bloody and often invisible war on evildoers, exploiters and the world governments. This means open conflict with those who invade the Mutant Underground to kill, capture, retrieve or abuse mutants, as well as war on the callous creators of mutants for profit and science.

While many in the Mutant Underground try to bring public attention to the mutant plight and stop the injustice through the law, legal system and media, militants take their war directly to the root cause, the criminal, corporate and evil organizations responsible for creating and selling mutants as property and slaves. This means raids on corrupt bio-tech corporations and government agencies who conduct genetic experiments with high mortality rates, engage in torture, promote the idea of mutants as property or engage in the slave trade.

Raids typically involve sabotage, freeing mutants from captivity, stealing rare and vital components, destroying data and formulas, trashing offices, threatening or blackmailing key figures in the corporation and even assassinating corporate and government leaders. The most militant engage in acts of terrorism, wholesale destruction and mass murder to make their point or to extract revenge. None of it helps to win sympathy for the mutant cause. Nor is any of this endorsed or encouraged by most factions of the Mutant Underground.

Militants and extremists have a fire in their belly. A fire lit by feelings of hate and a lust for revenge, or by a powerful sense of justice and goodness. Again, however, without proper direction and guidance, even the best of intentions can go awry or be hijacked by evil or selfishness. Though often branded as mutant terrorists and murderers, these extremists don't see any alternative. They refuse to wait for the slowly grinding wheels of the justice system to turn while thousands of mutants (and humans) are tormented, enslaved and killed on a weekly basis.

They also break mutants out of bio-tech labs and prisons, solicit super beings (including villains) to join their ranks, and speak of dying with honor for “the cause.” Many militant factions eventually turn their backs on the Mutant Underground as being too unorganized, ineffective and weak. Unfortunately, the media and most authorities don’t see any difference between militant extremists and the Underground or any other mutant group.

Mutant Sanctuaries

Most of these so-called “sanctuaries” are actually slums, abandoned warehouses, sewers, tunnels, back alleys and places that have been abandoned by human people long ago, and are so terrible that polite society shuns them and the law turns a blind eye to the inhumane goings on there.

In many cases, these sanctuaries are so dangerous that the authorities refuse to go into them and simply pretend they don’t exist. In a strange sense, they don’t, because the average, hardworking person doesn’t know these places do exist. Only street people and other castaways of human society know about them, as does the criminal underworld that supplies these forgotten masses with booze, drugs, guns and other material needs, as well as use these places as recruiting grounds for superhuman stooges, henchmen, enforcers and assassins.

Mutant sanctuaries come in many shapes and sizes. While some are dark, dank, abandoned tunnel systems, sewers and falling down buildings and homes, most are located in neighborhoods and sections of town where the law is blind and only sometimes enforced, and where the ugly blight of poverty, hopelessness and crime keeps most good, law-abiding people away. These are the mean streets where drug dealers and gang-bangers rule their turf through blood, sweat and intimidation, and mutants make their home.

The economy in the Mutant Underground

In the Mutant Underground, a mutant may trade goods, services and favors with fellow mutant refugees and other street people on a sort of unofficial barter system to get the things they need and want. (“Hey, Sara, I’ll heal your wound from that mugging, if you give me half of those apples – or if you let me sleep in your back room tonight,” and so on.) However, even most street scavengers will do things that might be considered wrong or petty crimes to survive or help friends and family. This might include breaking into an abandoned home or building to live as a squatter, stealing a shopping cart or milk crate from a supermarket, snatching a piece of fruit or two from a street vender, or stealing money or a jacket or shoes from a drug dealer or gang banger, not to mention rifling through the pockets of a fellow street person who passed away during an especially cold night, or grabbing a pair of sunglasses or a Walkman from the front seat of a parked car, and similar things. Most of the time they are little things that don’t add up to a lot, but which could make a difference surviving on the streets.

Vigilante, Robin Hood types and mutants who take on the role of protector will justify stealing from known crooks, drug dealers and criminal lowlifes, or even corrupt cops and organized crime by telling themselves that they are putting ill-gotten gains to *good* use helping other people. And they will too, using the “blood money” to buy food, clothes, blankets, medicine and shelter for fellow mutants, other runaways and the homeless. They may also (or in the alternative) see their actions as “cleaning up” the neighborhood by fighting crime and driving the criminal element away with their attacks, sabotage and looting raids. Not wanting to keep the money, jewelry, cars, clothes, guns and other goods acquired by trouncing criminals, these self-styled heroes give them to the street community or sell them for money to give to people in the Mutant Underground or other disenfranchised and needy people.

Notable factions in or dealing with the Mutant Underground

Human Vigilantes & Heroes

These self-styled and self-proclaimed “heroes” are often as confused by the issues and fearful mutants as the next guy. Media hype, statements and files from the authorities, and propaganda from genetics organizations all paint many mutants as wanted criminals, dangerous monsters and threats to society. Listening to the press and rhetoric of the companies who have created and lost the mutant animals can easily convince anybody that these beings are dangerous, half-crazed fiends or psychopathic killers who need to be captured, contained or destroyed.

Furthermore, many mutants, especially mutant animals, freaks and misfits, find safety and acceptance (or indentured servitude) among street gangs and criminal organizations (both super-powered and human groups) where they can earn money, live (relatively) free and strike back at those who would enslave or reject them. Other mutant animals are enslaved and forced (or tricked) to serve an evil master, a fact that the vigilante, super-hero, and the law often fails to recognize. And even when the mutant is able to bring up this fact, many a misinformed, prejudiced vigilante, hardened hero or lawman finds the claim hard to believe. As a result, mutants are constantly misunderstood and assumed to be villains. Furthermore, because mutants have learned they can’t trust “the system,” they fight tooth and claw to avoid capture and cannot trust the word of naive good guys who just don’t understand how badly the cards are stacked against mutants. All of this leads to regular clashes between vigilantes, heroes and the law with mutants they think are bad guys, dangerous monsters or fugitives from justice, when really the hero(s) is being set up by prejudice, misinformation, and manipulation by those looking to keep mutants right where they are. Misunderstandings and battles between super-powered mutants and superhuman heroes also cause massive

amounts of destruction and lead to other misunderstandings and trouble. (The stuff of comic book style adventures, to be sure.)

This puts so-called super-heroes in a bind, because those who take the time to investigate the situation may find it difficult to tell who the *real* good guys and bad guys are. Moreover, some of the shenanigans going on in the military and government agencies, not to mention corruption among local authorities and wrongdoing concealed by the bio-tech industry, could challenge the heroes' own systems of belief and values. They might not know who to trust or how to handle a situation, and some might actually speak out on behalf of the "mutant injustice" (a good thing by the Underground's reckoning) or even join the Mutant Underground as a protector. Either response is likely to blackball the hero as having "gone rogue" or "turned into a villain."

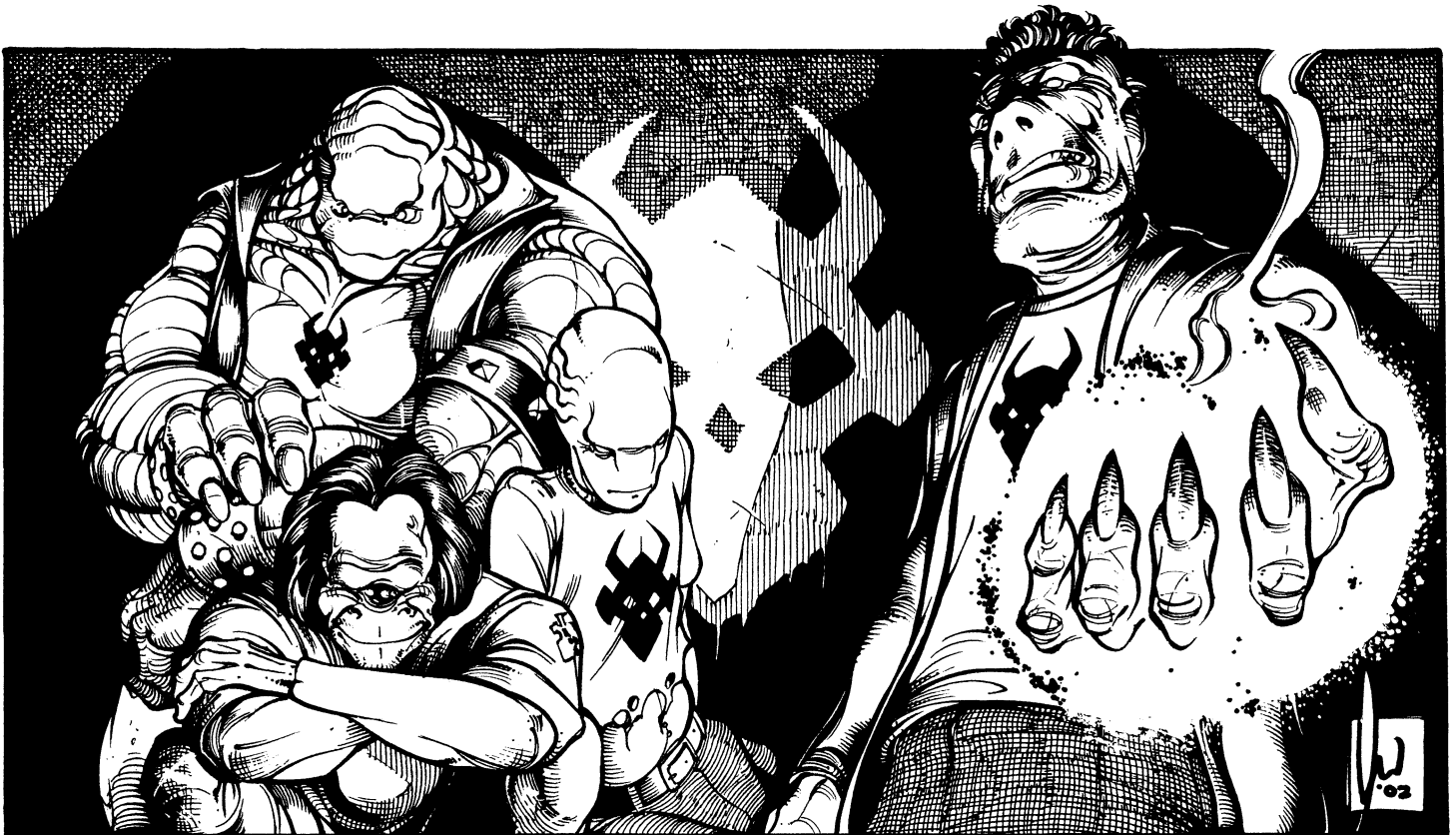
Mutant Street Gangs

Since most mutants simply cannot live in normal human society, they have to form small groups for mutual protection from normals and, in some cases, criminals, and mutant predators. One example is a gang of young mutants known as the **Grotesk**. Mutants who are horribly disfigured as part of their mutation, they are shunned by all and often victimized themselves, so they think nothing of doing the same to others. In a sense, they are part of a caste in the Mutant Underground and considered outcasts or untouchables. The Grotesk are not all bad, and have been known to come to other mutants' defense when threatened by outsiders, the law and hunters/exterminators, but all are headed down the road of crime, violence and prob-

ably an early death. All are frustrated and filled with rage that boils over into random acts of vandalism, crime (mostly boosting cars, muggings, and purse snatching) and violence (i.e., scaring humans, beating people up for fun, messing with the police, random acts of destruction for laughs, etc.). Even among the Grotesk, those mutants who are truly evil and homicidal are set apart, left to fend for themselves.

Another gang is the **Silents**. These are mutants who are drawn together by similar psychic abilities. All have the power of telepathy and rarely speak to anyone using their voice or Telepathy, finding comfort in the privacy of their group. They stick together, don't cause trouble nor commit crimes or acts of violence against humans, they just want to live in peace without trouble. To accomplish that, they have learned to stick to their own kind, mutants with telepathy and other mind and sensitive powers. For the good people among them, they try to live life as close to normal as possible. And for those of a criminal nature, knowing their thoughts, the peaceful and good Silents know not to trust them. Caring about each other and the goals of the Mutant Underground, they sometimes use their mind powers to make hunters and other invaders forget why they came or to forget about the group and/or about the Mutant Underground, or to wipe a memory away, or to plant a suggestion and other such things to protect themselves, their homes and fellow mutants.

Another example is the **Tiger Claw** gang, a group of violent punks who control a three block neighborhood where they sell drugs, orchestrate their criminal exploits, and live like kings while they terrorize everybody else who lives there. They are savage brutes who think freedom equals respect. They engage in all kinds of crime, victimiz-



ing humans and mutants alike. Their group is exclusive to mutant animals and those with animal powers or appearance.

Note: All three of these mutant gangs are found in the Chicago-land area.

The Mutant Underground Railroad

Much like the days of old, when runaway slaves were helped to escape from the south and transported up north, there is a “mutant” underground railroad. The Mutant Underground plays a key role in this movement on every level.

Ordinary members of the Mutant Underground (humans and nonhumans) are always on the lookout for new mutants wandering the streets. When one is spotted they may be approached by a concerned member of the Underground and directed or taken to a holding camp or reported to an active member of the Underground charged with the responsibility of helping runaways. If no such camp is nearby, the runaway must be taken or directed to one or to a mutant freedom fighter who can help the runaway(s) find his/her/their way to a sanctuary or mutant community.

Before we go any further, there are a few points to clarify. While it may sound like mutants and super beings are everywhere, they are not. Those who are the product of genetic manipulation originate in cities where the bio-tech industry is strongest and genetic engineering is an important area of research and development. However, while such locales may be the point of origin, mutants who escape don't necessarily want to stay in the area. The bio-tech industry is likely to have a great deal of influence with the local authorities and government in these places, local agencies that are likely to look the other way and let the industry get away with a lot more skullduggery than other places. Why? Because the bio-tech industry in these communities represents jobs, money and government grants (not to mention positive P.R.) important to the prosperity of the region. Consequently, local officials (and the law) are likely to give them much more latitude, support and flexibility than other communities. That latitude and support is likely to include agreement with the views of the corporation (in the case of mutants, that they are property and large lab rats without human rights), a willingness to work with the corporation in recovery and public safety (i.e., capturing and exterminating runaways with as little fuss and media coverage as possible), and will usually take the word of, and back, the corporation over the word of others (especially stinkin' mutants and liberal outsiders). This makes that particular city, county, state, province, or country a hazard for mutants. If the runaway stays, he is likely to be captured and subjected to a cruel fate, but how does a penniless mutant with only the clothes on his back

(if that much) make his way to someplace safe? And where is such a place? Remember, growing up at an accelerated pace in a laboratory, or being a human volunteer transformed into something more than human, can leave both types of individuals unprepared for the cold, cruel realities of the world. They don't know how mutants are mistreated by their maker or anything about the laws (or lack of laws) concerning mutants, and they sure as heck don't know anything about the Mutant Underground. Even the bio-tech industry and their hired Recovery Teams are only beginning to realize how large and organized the Underground is really becoming. Anyway, the point is, most mutant runaways don't know to look for the Mutant Underground, because they don't even know the Underground exists. As far as they are concerned, they are loose, lost, frightened and on their own, so the Underground must go looking for them.

Search and Rescue

Finding a mutant runaway is a lot harder than it might sound at first. Think about it. This is probably one or two lone individuals (only sometimes a small group of 3-8) terrified and hiding. Hiding from the authorities and those who made them and want them back. Fearing for his life as much as his freedom, a runaway does everything in his power to remain hidden and unnoticed as he wanders around, perhaps aimlessly, trying to figure out what to do. When faced with being discovered the mutant either flees or kills to protect/cover its trail and then flees, living in shadows and running for . . . some dream of freedom.

First sympathizers, mostly humans, keep an eye out for news and police reports about trouble at bio-tech corporations and genetics laboratories, as well as rumors and media reports concerning mutants on the loose, unidentified mutant sightings, and suspicious robberies and other incidents (i.e., a local clothing store or a home is robbed but only clothes were stolen, and only enough for one or two people; or a convenience store was broken into but only food and/or over-the-counter medicine was stolen – or eyewitnesses, a couple of kids, teens or street people, claim to have seen the shadowy perpetrator run away on all fours like a dog or fly off into the night sky, and similar reports). These sympathizers (and sometimes eyewitnesses) immediately send news clippings, reports and e-mails to various websites on line. Some sites are supposedly general information forums and public sites for people interested in mutants, super beings and strange phenomena or even crime. Others are mailings to private sites created specifically by active members of the Mutant Underground and monitored around the clock. For those who aren't yet connected to the worldwide web, the Underground has drop boxes and clearinghouses for mail monitored daily. The most active and trusted human sympathizers may have a direct line to an agent or team in the Underground, via telephone or online, and may also have a drop point or face to face meeting place.

Once the Mutant Underground is alerted to the situation, someone is sent out to investigate. Depending on the scale and immediacy of the situation (the police are on a manhunt, numerous sightings have been reported, or several mutants are known to be on the loose), as few as one

or two Mutant Underground agents to 1-6 teams (3-8 people per team) may arrive on the scene. Their goals, 1) confirm the reliability of the reports, 2) determine the seriousness of the situation (needs more support, lives are in danger, etc.), 3) find the mutant runaways before the authorities or freelance Recovery Teams do, and 4) get the runaways to safety. Numbers 3 and 4 are the most difficult and dangerous, for not only might the runaways not believe and trust their would-be rescuers and willfully run and hide from them, but they might also attack their saviors with deadly force. Additionally, the authorities and Recovery Teams have no qualms attacking other mutants, especially if they suspect the individual or group is out to rescue the ones they are searching for. Recovery Teams are especially merciless and bloodthirsty, sabotaging and killing competition they suspect to be the Mutant Underground. The police and government agents are usually satisfied with chasing off Underground operatives and taking suspicious characters into custody for questioning, rather than attacking and killing outright. However, if they mistake the Underground heroes as the mutants they are after, or if they are attacked, they regularly retaliate with deadly force.

When contact with one or more runaways is made, the agents from the Mutant Underground (typically freedom fighters, vigilantes and heroes, but may also include human sympathizers in the Underground Railroad who go out like storm chasers in cars, trucks and vans to help triangulate and find runaways), need to hide them and figure out a way to get them to safety. This is where the *Mutant Underground Railroad* comes into play.

The Mutant Underground Railroad is, again, a network of mostly human (80%) volunteers and sympathizers willing to help mutants escape the clutches of their cre-

ators and defy the law. This is a considerable risk, for while abusing and killing a mutant has minimal consequences, those who try to help rescue them can be charged with several serious offenses. The most notable of these include interference with a police investigation, aiding and abetting or harboring a fugitive, accessory to a crime (all the worse if that "fugitive" is wanted for assault of a police officer, arson, kidnaping or murder), and conspiracy (the latter is an extra 3-8 years in prison all by itself when it involves a Federal crime or investigation in the United States – FBI, MTF, etc.). Furthermore, Recovery Teams and other freelance hired guns have no qualms about surveilling, threatening, beating, and torturing those who help mutant runaways. Most stop short of killing when it comes to humans, but they may tell the authorities about their involvement, and even if they don't, that member of the Railroad has had his cover blown and is no longer a useful agent. Mutants who are discovered passing for human and secretly working in the Mutant Underground Railroad are much more likely to be severely hurt or killed by hunters, exterminators and the authorities.

Human members of the Mutant Underground Railroad sympathize with the mutants' plight and are willing to provide one or all of the following services:

- 1) Provide mutant fugitives with clothes and disguises.
- 2) Provide the runaway with food and other basic needs (including small amounts of money).
- 3) Provide basic medical supplies and/or first-aid treatment.
- 4) Provide a place to hide (concealed secret places to a barn, garage, cellar, attic and their own homes) for as long as it may take to get them to safety. This may also involve moving the fugitive from place to place to keep the authorities off the trail.



Wilson 2002

5) Smuggle the fugitive(s) out of the city and through police dragnets. This may involve getting them away in a vehicle or providing the runaway with transportation (from a bicycle to a car to train or airplane ticket, to escape on a private aircraft or boat).

Escape is seldom a direct line from point A to point B, and to prevent suspicion ("Say, where is the Jenkins family at this time of night?"), mutant refugees are typically shuttled from one member of the Mutant Underground Railroad to another, like a series of relay stations, seldom more than 40-120 miles (64 to 192 km) apart. Sometimes this involves dropping a mutant off in the middle of nowhere or a city slums with instructions on how to get to the next "pickup" point (seldom more than 20 miles/32 km away and usually within five/8 km) with a code word and/or other means of identifying the next volunteer in the Railroad. **Note:** When a mutant runaway is found hiding on someone's property, the owner can pretend not to know anything about it, but this ploy only works once or twice before the authorities and mutant hunters get suspicious and may put the place under surveillance and start checking it out regularly.

6) Escort and protect. When a mutant is important for some reason, or there are several runaways, or the Underground is trying to make a point (or foil a hated enemy), the runaways may be joined and escorted by superhumans from the Mutant Underground. These are usually vigilantes, heroes, freedom fighters, militants and other volunteers with super abilities and experience in fighting and smuggling or espionage and military operations. In the alternative, rather than escort and protect the runaways, these super beings may attempt to divert those giving chase, leading them on a wild goose chase, or even attacking them with the intent of destroying vehicles and causing enough trouble to slow them down long enough for the fugitives to make good their escape. This latter scenario typically uses hit and run tactics against the most obvious and formidable pursuers; lone individuals, pairs and small groups of covert pursuers are likely to slip past the protectors unnoticed. **Note:** Militant protectors may be working with or outside the Mutant Underground (50/50 chance). If working with the Underground they should follow orders and a plan, but might give in to their hate and get carried away, causing P.R. trouble for the Underground at the least, mass destruction and carnage at the worst. Militants working outside the Mutant Underground may help or hurt the cause. They follow their own agenda and usually ignore any commands, pleas or petitions from the Mutant Underground. Most are present to extract bloody revenge and/or make a political statement, forgetting all about (or never caring about) rescuing the runaways. Furthermore, if things get really out of hand evil mutants and super-villains (and rioters and looters for that matter) *may* use the commotion to launch their own criminal escapades, complicating matters considerably and probably getting the runaways or the heroes of the Mutant Underground blamed for their crimes. This could make for a nice adventure hook.

Adventure Hooks: In addition to the riot or crime spree idea noted above, there are numerous adventures that can rise out of the Underground Railroad setting. The

most obvious is orchestrating a getaway. One idea is the player characters could be the *runaways* themselves. This is a nice way to introduce new super-powered character in to a **Heroes Unlimited™** campaign. In fact, if all the characters are new, the campaign could start shortly after their creation, the abuse and cruelty they endure (or witness) at the hands of their makers, and the actual escape from the institution that created them. This is followed by *the hunt*. The hunt may involve the police, the MTF, bounty hunters and/or the superhuman members of one or more Recovery Teams sent out to retrieve them. In this case, the Mutant Underground is likely to be secondary with the player characters doing most of the work of saving their own skins (the Underground arriving, perhaps, like the proverbial cavalry to save the day).

More likely than not, the player characters are already established heroes and/or members of the Mutant Underground and they arrive on the scene to find and rescue the runaways or create a diversion so they can get away, or to engage the most powerful Recovery Team to get them out of the picture (old rivals or old enemies, perhaps). This story can get more complicated if one or more of the runaways gets caught and the heroes have to break him/them out and escape again. Or if one of their adversaries is an old enemy, or the government decides to field test a group of new Super Soldiers or super-powered agents on the heroes or the runaways. Or if one or more of the runaways mysteriously disappears (or dies), what happened to him? Who's responsible? This can be the catalyst to any variety of adventures: Kidnaped by the government, crime ring, slaver ring, super-villain, the real monster behind the trouble, an evil bio-tech corporation, foreign government, aliens, etc. Ultimately, our heroes are required to do some investigation, find and rescue the runaway, put an end to the one(s) responsible or find themselves led to discover some entirely unexpected plot.

It is also possible that the player characters are innocent heroes trying to keep the peace and/or to recover these "dangerous genetic monsters" before they hurt somebody. In this case, they are played for dupes, but for how long and to what degree?

Other adventures involving the Underground Railroad could be investigating stories of mutants on the loose causing trouble and crimes. Maybe the troublemakers are mutants or maybe they aren't. If they *are*, the mutants could be frightened and well-intentioned, stealing and fighting only to escape to find someplace safe. Or they might be despicable villains who don't give a hoot about the Underground or escape and only want loot or blood; bad eggs that the heroes have to take down. If they aren't mutants, they are villains using mutants as a convenient cover and fall guys for their crimes. Or the heroes clash with mutant militants, or must save innocent people from something unleashed or caused by the ensuing carnage. Here's one: Maybe the heroes are mistaken for the runaways, attacked and captured and put into slavery or taken to the bio-tech corporation for some other possible purpose (experiments, study, mutation, sale, to die, etc.). Or our heroes are framed for something, or discover something unexpected or draw the attention of an old enemy who strikes when they are weakened.

Yet another set of possibilities could involve an attack on the Underground Railroad. Perhaps members of the Railroad are disappearing or somebody is killing members along a particular route, one by one. Is there a traitor in the Mutant Underground? How else could this kidnaper or killer be finding his targets? Is this revenge? Extortion? What? The player characters have to find the one responsible before someone else vanishes or dies. If it is kidnapping then the missing people have to be found too. If it is a killer, what's his motive? Is he trying to lure the player group into the open, or is he after someone else or just extracting revenge? Perhaps some anti-mutant hate group is responsible, or an old enemy, or a crazy mutant who was actually saved by these people once. Or perhaps a mutant driven insane by grief because he lost a loved one being helped by the Railroad and blames these innocent, good people for the loss, and this is his revenge. Or maybe it's a maniacal hunter or exterminator or MTF, or . . .

Similarly, the MTF or some other investigator or villain could be too close to discovering one of the Underground Railroad's routes and has uncovered a number of the agents/sympathizers involved. Maybe he plans to notify the authorities as soon as he is certain or gets enough evidence. Or perhaps a mutant hunter has discovered a route and some of the folks involved and plans to wait until the time is right to snatch or kill the next batch of mutant runaways who come through. Or maybe this agent or anti-mutant hunter has followed the trail to a base camp and plans on raiding it along with a bunch of his super friends, and so on.

Another approach might involve building an Underground Railroad route, and escorting runaways to safety as part of what the player characters do. Only . . . well, something goes wrong, they are uncovered or . . . who knows? Unleash the imagination.

Notable Bio-Tech Centers in the United States of America

California: Berkeley, Palo Alto, San Diego, San Francisco, and Thousand Oaks.

Connecticut: Branford.

District of Century Station

Georgia: Cities of Atlanta and Augusta.

Iowa: Ames.

Maryland: Bethesda, Gaithersburg, and Rockville.

Massachusetts: Boston, Cambridge, Charleston and Waltham (including MIT).

Michigan: Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids.

Minnesota: St Paul.

North Carolina: Durham, Pittsboro, and Research Triangle Park.

Pennsylvania: Exton.

Texas: Irving and Montgomery.

Washington: Seattle and Olympia.

Notable Bio-Tech Centers

elsewhere in the world

Belgium

Brazil

Canada

China

France

Germany

Israel

Japan

Russia

South Africa

Switzerland

United Kingdom/England

Venezuela

Major places of sanctuary for the Mutant Underground in the USA

Note: Many of the old industrial cities along the southern region of the Great Lakes (most notably from Chicago to Detroit and Toledo), St. Lawrence River and Eastern Seaboard are major mutant sanctuaries and play key roles in the Mutant Underground and the Underground Railroad. Old eastern and midwestern cities have been chosen because they have many old and seedy parts of town, and/or large populations where mutants can hide. In some cases, poverty and inadequate police departments make a location attractive too, as might weather or proximity to major waterways, highways, railways, etc. These are some of the most notable places where mutant fugitives can be found in reasonably large numbers. **Note:** Mutants also inhabit the *Canadian* cities of London, Windsor, Montreal, and Toronto, all of which are part of the Underground, but in much smaller numbers than the US cities noted below.

Arizona: Phoenix and the Rocky Mountains (the latter only for those who seek a wilderness setting and seclusion).

California: Los Angeles (and surrounding metro area) and Oakland (as well as here and there in other Californian cities and communities).

Florida: Orlando and Miami.

Illinois: Chicago, Cicero and East St. Louis.

Indiana: Gary, South Bend and Michigan City.

Louisiana: New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

Maryland: Baltimore and the District of Columbia/Washington D.C.

Massachusetts: Boston and Brookline.

Michigan: Detroit, Pontiac, Warren, Roseville, Ypsilanti and parts of the Down River area (Lincoln Park, Southgate, Taylor and Woodhaven).

New Jersey: Atlantic City, Jersey City, Newark.

New York: Buffalo, Manhattan/New York City (and the boroughs of Brooklyn and the Bronx), Rochester, Troy, and Utica.

Ohio: Toledo, Cleveland and Cincinnati.

Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Pittsburgh.

Texas: Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Washington: Seattle and Renton.

Wisconsin: Milwaukee and Racine.

A few notable players in the Mutant Underground

Knightfall

By Alex Marciniszyn & Kevin Siembieda

Knightfall is an enigma even in the Mutant Underground. A dangerous, secretive loner, and a mercenary, he selects the people he'll work for, develops no close relationships, and disappears when the job is done. The word is, if you're looking to hire him, he will somehow find out, leading many to believe he has psychic powers.

The reason he is so successful is his amazing Cloaking power that makes him invisible to all forms of mechanical detection, photographic devices and sensors like radar, motion detectors and heat sensors. An avid reader of scientific and technical journals, with a photographic memory, he looks for hints of new technologies and may offer his services to one of a number of competing companies, which usually results in a job stealing someone's secrets, plans, and prototypes. It is unknown why he has chosen this line of work and some rumors suggest he is an operative for a foreign government. He is not. Knightfall is a *super-thief* who covets obtaining technological secrets to further his obsession with finding out all he can about cutting-edge science and technology. His interests cover computers, aerospace, and medical advancements, especially in the area of genetic engineering, plus all kinds of other gadgets.

But is he just a techno-obsessed nut? Rumors also suggest that Knightfall does this work because he may be looking for a way to change a loved one back into a normal human. On the darker side, another rumor suggests he wants to obtain some super-weapon and organize a faction of the Mutant Underground into an army that can defend itself against all comers, with him as leader.

Real Name: Alan Westerman.

Alias: Knightfall, Alan Fallan and Doctor West.

Legal Status: Whatever the truth is, he is wanted by the CIA and numerous law enforcement agencies for theft, assault and industrial espionage. The CIA is actually looking to recruit him, wondering if they can turn Knightfall into a spy.

Alignment: Aberrant evil, has his own twisted code of honor, but has no regard for the law.

Attributes: I.Q. 18, M.E. 18, M.A. 17, P.S. 16, P.P. 17, P.E. 18, P.B. 14, Spd. 21, or 120 mph (192 km) gliding from the top of a skyscraper, or 40-50 mph (64-80 km) from lesser heights and half that indoors.

Hit Points: 48. **S.D.C.:** 34 (+50 at night).

Weight: 240 lbs (108 kg). **Height:** 6 feet, one inch (1.83 m). **Age:** 29.

Disposition: Obviously intelligent sounding and warm when he chooses to speak to people he knows and

likes. Otherwise, very business-like, with a cold, calculating air to strangers, and loves playing the role of the mysterious adventurer. He clearly enjoys what he does and while he sells many of the secrets and devices he



steals, he keeps just as many for himself (collector items or trophies) and clearly is in it for the challenge and thrills. He loves what he does.

Experience Level: Seventh.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert. Karate style kick doing 2D4, critical strike on an unmodified roll of 18, 19 or 20.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Bonuses (includes all): +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +3 to damage, +4 to roll with punch, fall, impact, +2 to pull punch.

Nightstalking bonuses (can only be used at night or in dim, eerie places): Hide motionless in shadows/darkness 91%, +10% to prowl, nightvision 1000 feet (305 m), +1 on initiative, +1D6 damage only at night, and +50 S.D.C. only at night. See page 236 of HU2 for more details.

Other Bonuses: +2 to save vs psionic attack and insanity, 45% chance to trust or intimidate, +4% to save vs coma/death and +2 to save vs magic and poison.

Super Power Category: Mutant.

Major Super Power: Cloaking.

Minor Super Powers: Nightstalking (includes Nightvision 1000 feet/305 m) and Flight: Glide.

Education Level: Four Years of College.

Scholastic Bonus: +20%

Skills of Note: Language: English 98%, Language: Japanese 75%, Literacy: English 98%, Basic Math 95%, Basic Electronics 84%, Computer Operation 94%, Computer Programming 84%, Computer Repair 79%, Locksmith 79%, Prowl 79%, Climbing 74%, Acrobatics, Surveillance Systems 84%, W.P. Pistol, W.P. Rifle and W.P. Submachine-gun.

Secondary Skills: Radio: Basic 98%, Auto Mechanics 79%, First Aid 98%, Palming 84%, Pick Pockets 79%, Streetwise 68%, Safecracking 68%, and Wilderness Survival 84%.

Appearance: A rather serious looking man who wears a cape with a hood over his costume (maybe a black man, but conflicting rumors have made him black, white, oriental and Native American).

Occupation: Industrial espionage specialist and thief.

Weapons, Vehicles & Equipment: He always carries a 9 mm pistol, and owns a rifle and submachine-gun. Knightfall drives a mid-size, dark brown sedan, but he also has a van. His locksmith tools are all he really needs to get his work done.

Available Money: With over three million dollars in cash at a secret location, Knightfall can enjoy himself and has no retirement concerns.

Note: Despite rumors to the contrary, Knightfall doesn't have any psionic powers.

Warhawk

Warhawk is one of the most visible, active and famous leaders of the Mutant Underground. He started out as a nocturnal crime-fighter using the cover of darkness and night based super abilities to wage a one-man war on crime. He started out in Detroit, but his exploits led him to Chicago where he now makes his home. It was in Chicago that he discovered the Mutant Underground, about five years ago. At the time, it was a fledgling movement with a shaky foundation and members scattered across the country. Warhawk first found himself watching from afar and studying the sad situation. The more he watched, the more his heart went out for the mutant street people, making the mutants' secret habitat and stomping grounds part of his patrol area. His months of observation also gave him a clear perspective on the overall setup and the potential strengths and many weaknesses of the organization. He was drawn into the Underground when a hate group launched a campaign to ferret out homeless mutants and kill them, and again when a vicious Mutant Recovery Team started tearing up the streets in search for a mutant already under Warhawk's protection. After that, Warhawk stepped out of the shadows to join the Chicago leg of the Mutant Underground. As it turned out, this chapter also managed satellite groups in Gary and Michigan City (Indiana) and Detroit (Michigan), the latter being his old stomping grounds. Each of these cities harbored secret mutant communities and were active parts of the Underground Railroad. Warhawk was soon making runs from Chicago to Detroit (and recently Toledo has been added to the route), keeping a watchful eye on the Underground Railroad routes and protecting mutants along the way, as well as fighting crime and injustice whenever he came across it. Before he knew it, his keen mind for organization and tactics had him shaking up the organization for the better, and put him in the position of second-in-command. A few years later, he finds himself as the head honcho.

Warhawk is the resourceful, strong, charismatic leader of the *Great Lakes Mutant Underground*. He is respected by those he helps and those who work under his command, and feared by evildoers and enemies of the Mutant Underground. In addition to being a superb fighter and vigilante hero, he is a master of strategy and tactics. Warhawk tries to never underestimate his opponents, plays to and capitalizes on his enemies' weaknesses and works hard to keep civilian casualties to a minimum. A true hero, Warhawk is as quick to come to the aid of an innocent human as he is a mutant. That attitude and his position within the Underground make him a voice of reason and temperance toward humans.

As a rule, Warhawk tries to dissuade his mutant brethren from vendettas on the police and humans in general as well as all-out-war on evil institutions responsible for creating, dumping and enslaving genetically engineered creations. He is also the lead force behind attempts to bring the mutant plight to the media and win public sympathy in order to get civil rights for mutants through the proper channels of the law. That having been said, Warhawk is deeply frustrated and disappointed in the government and the American legal system. He is infuriated



by the manipulation of big business to blur the issues and paint mutant runaways as freaks and monsters just so they can make a dollar. He is saddened by the apathy of the American people who turn a blind eye to the injustices suffered by mutants, and the callousness of world governments that do little except try to figure out how they can benefit from advancements in genetic engineering. All of this would be hard on anybody, but for Warhawk it is devastating and weighs on him like a ton of chains. As a vigilante he's in the trenches every day, swimming in the ugliness and cruelty of man against man. He sees how

mutants are victimized and brutalized in every way imaginable. He's in the streets fighting those who seek to enslave, sell, torture, and kill mutants without a thought to the individual "person" they are destroying. He sees females selling themselves to get food for their young, children being pressed into slave labor or beaten and abused, and adults worked, caged and traded like animals. All of it kills a little piece of him every day as his plans in the political and public arenas seem to go nowhere and because of *his* failures (or so he thinks), thousands of intelligent beings suffer a little more every day. There are times when he would love to lead the militant factions into war to tear down and smash the ones who permit and profit from these atrocities – but he holds himself back, taking out his frustrations on the lowlifes who cross his path. And every day that frustration and anger is a little stronger and he's a little more vindictive and brutal.

Rumors: Warhawk has never revealed his origin or why he became a costumed hero. According to one popular urban legend, Warhawk was born on the west side of Detroit and is really an African American, but wears "white-face" to conceal his true identity. (The rest of his costume covers his body completely, so only the portion of his face that can be seen indicates his race. Supposedly, this gives him total freedom to do as he pleases in his civilian identity.) Close to his mom and three younger sisters, he worked hard on a full-time job and pulled down a 4.0 average while going to school – the first in his family to go to college. His powers manifested on a night of tragedy one week before his 19th birthday. While working at night, his mother and three of his sisters were gunned down in a drive-by shooting. The gang bangers sprayed the house in retaliation because he and his mother had started a neighborhood watch and brought local media attention (and subsequent pressure from the police) on the drug lord operating on their block. His mother and his youngest sister were killed. His two other sisters survived their wounds, but one lost the use of her legs due to a bullet to the spine. That night, it is said, the young man's rage and sorrow caused his super abilities to appear and gave birth to the driven super-hero that would become known as *Warhawk*. Over the next six months, each and every one of the thugs connected to the gang responsible for the shooting was arrested or met with a grim fate; seven of them murdered or found dead. Of the survivors, many spoke of a demon or lunatic rising out of the night shadows like some spirit of vengeance. Shortly after the gang was wiped from that street, the vigilante calling himself Warhawk appeared, declaring his own personal war on drugs and evil in "his city."

It should be pointed out that this is only one of the more commonly accepted urban legends about Warhawk, there are numerous variations and other completely different tales. Nobody knows what parts might be true and which are fiction. The facts are, Warhawk has waged war on drug dealers for nearly a decade now, moving from Detroit to Chicago, but returning (home?) to Detroit frequently to keep the vermin of the town in control. Fact, for the last six years he has shown even greater ferocity and determination in his war on those who would victimize mutants. Warhawk still fights crime and battles drug dealers, but, it

is said, he fights hardest for the Mutant Underground. And as of late, those who have faced him before claim he is more savage and relentless than ever before, sending some underworld sleaze-bags fleeing the windy city in search of greener pastures, and making others talk about doing something about this tireless Demon of the Night once and for all.

The following rumors are all part of the urban legend that surrounds Warhawk: He is half demon and has been killed twice only to rise from the dead to get his revenge, can meld into shadows, read men's minds and moves silent like a ghost, he commands an army of mutants, can control hawks and falcons which serve as his eyes and ears, has an arsenal of high-tech weapons and gimmicks, wears a mini-jet pack or uses an anti-gravity device to help him leap and swing from the rooftops, has a super-high-tech hideout called the "Hawk's Nest," and several other secret hideouts scattered from Chicago to Detroit. What may be true and which are fiction is impossible to say.

Real Name: Devon Carboneaux.

Alias: Warhawk, Demon of the Night as well as Danny Clark and Deon Winston when undercover in one of his known civilian identities.

Legal Status: Wanted by various authorities for aiding and abetting criminals (i.e., mutant refugees), assaulting police officers and federal agents, assault, breaking and entry, theft, and murder (mutant hunters and a government agent, the latter by accident).

Alignment: Unprincipled with leanings toward Aberrant evil as Warhawk finds it increasingly difficult to do the right thing or work within the law.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 14, M.A. 15, P.S. 23, P.P. 21, P.E. 22, P.B. 12, Spd. 34 running or up to 360 mph (576 km) flying.

Hit Points: 62, **S.D.C.:** 75 (+50 S.D.C. at night).

Weight: 250 lbs (112 kg); all muscle. **Height:** 6 feet, 4 inches (1.93 m). **Age:** 31.

Horror Factor: 13 (night only).

Disposition: A charismatic natural leader who is compassionate, sincere, noble and brave. He thinks quick on his feet, and very resourceful, analytical, and an excellent organizer and planner, with a good head for strategy and tactics. Warhawk is an idealist and hero who is slowly losing his idealism, compassion and sense of right and wrong. The "good fight" is wearing him down. The level of inhumanity, cruelty and evil he continues to see from corrupt corporations, Recovery Teams, the government and its agents, the police, super-villains, criminals and even ordinary humans and fellow mutants is crushing Warhawk's spirit and making him more ruthless, brutal and hard when dealing with his enemies. Unless somebody anchors him or something happens to renew his faith in people, he may very well slip into Aberrant evil and become even more savage and violent in his crusade to help and protect mutants on the streets of the Midwest. (He splits most of his time between three cities in the Mutant Underground with 45% in Chicago, 35% in Detroit and 15% in Gary, the rest wherever duty calls, including Michigan City and Toledo). More and more he finds himself giving in to rage

and sorrow, compelling him to whip the snot out of those who oppose him or threaten those under his charge. Even he is starting to worry that he might snap one day and do something he'll regret.

Experience Level: Eighth.

Super Power Category: Mutant.

Major Super Abilities: Animal Abilities: Nocturnal and Alter Metabolism.

Minor Super Abilities: Nightstalking and Wingless Flight.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts and Boxing.

Attacks per Melee: Six (+1 when flying).

Combat Bonuses (includes all bonuses): +3 on initiative, +5 to strike, +10 to parry and dodge, +4 to disarm, or +1 to entangle, +8 to damage, +7 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to pull punch, back flip 95%, sense of balance 91%, walk tightrope/ledge/high wire 98%, climb rope/rappel 98%, and Prowl 98%.

Other Bonuses: +7 to save vs magic/poison, +5 to save vs Horror Factor, +3 to save vs psionics, +2 to save vs possession and mind control, +34% to save vs coma/death, extra bonuses for *Alter Metabolism* (see **Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition**, page 240 for more details) and *Nightstalking* (see **Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition**, page 236 for more details).

Alter Metabolism (see HU2, page 240) Bonuses: No sleep for up to 112 hours/4.6 days. No food for up to eight days. *Calm Self:* +1 to save vs magic, +4 to save vs Horror Factor and Mind Control, +2 to save vs possession for up to 40 minutes at a time. *Adrenaline Rush:* +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +4 to P.S. and +1 melee attack! *Hyper Metabolism:* +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +2 attacks per melee and triple normal running speed.

Accelerated Healing: Instantly restores 14 S.D.C. or 7 Hit Points once every 12 hours, plus normal healing and there is no scarring. *Slow Metabolism:* Reduce Spd, combat bonuses and attacks per melee by half, but reduces the effects of poisons, drugs, gases and disease by half. **Note:** As many as four Altered Metabolic states can be used at a time with cumulative bonuses, but when they wear off the penalties are also accumulative.

Summary of Super Abilities: Nocturnal Animal (see HU2, page 253): Exceptional hawk-like vision, nightvision (1000 feet/305 m; great range due to Nightstalking), enhanced sense of smell (+72% to recognize common smells, 75% to track by smell, and identify a specific person by scent 40%), natural Prowl ability 98%, and can control 2D4+8 nocturnal animals (rodents, bats, owls, cats, ferrets, etc., but his favorites are hawks and owls).

Alter Metabolism (HU2 page 240): No sleep for up to 112 hours/4.6 days, no food for up to eight days. See *Combat Bonuses* for possible bonuses from metabolic changes.

Nightstalking (HU2, page 236): Hide in shadows/darkness 97%, Sense the exact moment of sunrise and sunset, cannot be turned into an undead, recognizes vampires and sees Shadow Beasts as well as those cloaked in magical darkness, +1D6 to damage at night from physical attacks.

Wingless Flight: Bonuses applicable only when in flight (add to those above): +1 attack, +2 to strike and parry, +4 to dodge when hovering or flying under 80 mph (128 km), +6 to dodge when flying 90 mph (144 km) or faster, +4 to damage for every 20 mph (32 km) of flight speed.

Damage from Hand to Hand Combat: Punch: 1D6+8, Power Punch (counts as 2 actions): 2D6+16, Kick (ordinary): 2D4+8, Karate Kick: 2D6+10, Jump Kick (counts as 2 attacks) inflicting automatic Critical Strike (4D6+16), Jump 10 feet (3 m) high by 15 feet (4.6 m) long; increase the latter by 50% if he has a running start. Leap Attack: Critical Strike. Head Butt: 1D6+8. Knockout/Stun on a roll of 19-20 and Judo-Style Throw/Flip: Victim takes 2D4 damage and loses initiative and one melee attack. **Damage Note:** Add +5 to damage *at night*.

Educational Level: Two years of college (+15% skill bonus).

Skills of Note: Speak, Read & Write English 98%, Research 98%, Computer Operation 98%, Computer Programming 95%, Mathematics: Basic 95%, Writing 98%, Surveillance Systems 95%, Disguise 80%, Imitate Voices & Impersonation 92%/63%, Intelligence 79%, Tracking 90%, Land Navigation 83%, Pilot Automobile 91%, Pilot Motorcycle 92%, Pilot Motor Boats 95%, Acrobatics, W.P. Sword, W.P. Pistol, and W.P. Rifle.

Secondary Skills: General Athletics, Climb 95%, Swim 90%, SCUBA 90%, Running, Radio: Basic 90%, Radio: Scrambler 80%, Streetwise 52%, Palming 60%, W.P. Paired Weapons and W.P. Knife.

Appearance: A tall, rugged mountain of muscle and courage. He wears a grey suit with purple gloves, boots, cowl, and cape, a yellow or black (or red, depending on his mood), wing-shaped mask is over the eyes. It provides extra protection to the eyes and cheeks (extra padding plus the "wings" help to deflect and lessen blows to the eyes, nose and temples). A rather imposing figure especially when emerging from the shadows.

Occupation: Vigilante hero, protector of mutants and a leader in the Mutant Underground.

Weapons: **Gimmick Weapon:** Clawed gloves: +5% to climbing, does 2D4 damage (+8 P.S. damage bonus) as a slashing or clawing weapon.

Gimmick Weapon: Smoke & Tear Gas Pellets: The claw-like studs on his gloves, up on the forearm, can be pulled off, and thrown to release smoke for cover, or tear gas to undermine opponents and create confusion. Same basic stats as hand grenades of the same type, only the radius of effect is 30% smaller. **Payload:** Nine smoke, nine tear gas.

Gimmick Weapon: Boot Pellets: The claw-like studs on the boots of his lower leg can be pulled off and used to various purposes. There are nine on each boot, 18 total.

Three are *explosives* (do 4D6 damage to a three foot/0.9 m area).

Three are *sonic disruptors* unleashing an ultrasonic squeal that disrupts characters with a Heightened Sense of Hearing, Radar and Sonic Power (hurts their ears, confuses sound, prevents them from listening in,

reduces the range of their hearing and powers by half, and inflicts a -1 penalty to all combat bonuses).

Three are *signal flares* (burn for five minutes).

Three are *stink bombs* that disrupt characters with Heightened or Advanced Sense of Smell (makes them feel nauseous and want to puke, reduces all scent/smell abilities by half, and is likely to make them lose a scent trail, at least temporarily; 1D6 minutes). Normal people have a 01-60% chance of vomiting, while characters with a keen sense of smell have a 01-80% likelihood of vomiting (lose initiative, two melee attacks that round, and suffer the following penalties) and everyone is -2 on initiative, -1 on all other combat skills and -10% on skill performance, plus they will all want to vacate the area to escape the noxious fumes. Duration is 1D4+1 minutes.

Three are *magnetic bugs* that can be attached to a vehicle or slipped in a pocket.

Three are *throwing spikes* (1D4 damage each).

Other Weapons: Sometimes uses an old-fashion ball and chain (3D6 damage +P.S. bonus), sword, automatic pistol and a variety of rifles when called for. Usually has 4-6 throwing knives (1D6 damage each) or shurikens (1D4+1 damage each) hidden in his cape or on a belt.

Vehicles: Known to use a souped-up black motorcycle, and said to have an entire fleet of other vehicles.

Equipment: Two-way radio and communicator system is built into his cowl and mask. Can listen to AM or FM radio, police and CB channels as well as two-way communication.

Trick cape with concealed pockets to hold knives, shurikens, 1-4 pairs of handcuffs, \$1,000-5,000 in cash, and other extra stuff; all small items or things that fold or roll up.

Body Armor: His suit is made of Flexi-Steel fabric (A.R. 14 and 60 S.D.C.), plus the head/cowl is reinforced to function as a helmet (has an A.R. 16 and 40 S.D.C. all by itself). The suit is also insulated, and fire retardant.

Money: Although money has not been his primary concern, it is a necessity for protecting mutants. Warhawk usually carries several thousand dollars with him and has several thousand more stashed away in various secret locations.

Notes: Most of Warhawk's opponents don't know he can fly under his own power and assume he leaps from great heights, swings from buildings and may have a jet pack. This is deliberate on Warhawk's part. He likes to keep his enemies guessing and underestimating his abilities, because it gives him an edge and makes him all the more mysterious.

Warhawk has a number of his own secret hideouts and weapon/equipment caches in addition to those of the Mutant Underground in every city he regularly patrols. Likewise, he has a huge network of agents, mutants, friends, admirers, street people, informers, lookouts and associates (superhuman and human) in addition to his massive (and growing) network of mutants, freedom fighters, Underground Railroad sympathizers and other friends and allies throughout the Mutant Underground. In fact, Warhawk as leader of the

Great Lakes Mutant Underground chapter is the head of the largest, best organized faction within the Underground (most others are one tenth to one quarter the size), making him a true power in the mutant liberation movement.

Old Beth

Old Beth was a young lady when her mutant powers appeared. Her family was so frightened and horrified she overheard them talking about calling the federal government to have her "locked away or something." Of course, that was nearly seventy years ago, when super powers weren't nearly as common or appreciated. Back then, she was truly a freak and her family, sadly, panicked. Terrified, Beth ran away and never looked back. Too ashamed to be around "real" people, she hid in shame on the streets, panhandling and shifting through garbage cans for food and clothes. As her powers developed further it made her larger, stronger and bulkier, convincing Beth that she was indeed a monster. Feeling ugly and rejected, she hid her body under layers of clothes and a hooded cloak. During the roaring '20s through the Great Depression, Beth rode the rails from coast to coast, but it was the Pennsylvania to Minnesota run she enjoyed most. She learned the countryside like the back of her hand and watched as cities grew and faded. Detroit of the 1950s and '60s, and Chicago of the '80s and '90s are two of her favorite places and times.

Unknown to most, it was Old Beth who started to help and take in mutants along the Great Lakes and it was Beth who founded the Mutant Underground. Starting to feel her age a wee bit, and recognizing a superior leader, she let Warhawk take over the Great Lakes faction. With Warhawk spending so much of his time in Chicago, and Old Beth looking for a city that's a bit smaller and slower, she moved to Detroit, where she heads the main Mutant Underground chapter as second-in-command to Warhawk. Nobody knows the streets, alleys and underground salt mine tunnels of Detroit better than Old Beth, after all, she used to visit them when they were new. The old lady continues to fight mutant predators, hunters and lawmen, she just pretends to be more frail and helpless than she really is. This is done, in part, to encourage the new generation of mutants to take a more active hand in their fate and the Underground. To that end, Old Beth is trying something new, a recruiting and training program for young mutants ages 12-20. In this program she teaches them "the basics" as she sees them: reading, writing, math, and history along with mastery of their powers and a strong sense of self-worth and belonging – two things she never knew till late in life. In her mind she is grooming them to be the new, noble leaders of the Mutant Underground, but whether her plans work out is yet to be seen. Certainly she is a beloved combination den mother and drill sergeant.

Old Beth is Warhawk's friend and right-hand person for the Great Lakes Mutant Underground and leader of the Metro-Detroit area chapter. He relies on her for suggestions, support and help to keep him in line. If a foul and

treacherous fate should befall Old Beth, it might be enough to push the hero over the brink and into an aberrant alignment. On the other hand, the cagey old lady recognizes what's happening to Warhawk and has a scheme in the works to restore his faith in people and the world at large (it might be her mutant prep-school or something else – she's keeping her plans to herself).

Real Name: She claims not to remember, but it is Elizabeth Pearson.

Alias: Old Beth, Old Crone and the Big Lady.

Legal Status: Not wanted by anyone or suspected of anything. She's just a bag lady.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 10, M.A. 19, P.S. 20, P.P. 17, P.E. 22, P.B. 7, Spd. 12

Hit Points: 61, **S.D.C.:** 65 (plus those gained from the Copy Physical Structure super ability).

Natural A.R.: Varies (Only applicable when the Copy Physical Structure ability is used).

Weight: 320 lbs (144 kg), solid. **Height:** 6 feet (1.8 m) when not standing hunched over.

Age: 99 years old, looks like a craggy, weathered, but strong and healthy, 60 year old.

Disposition: She rather comes off as a martial arts sensei or a giant female Yoda. She puts on this tough facade and acts like she is a cantankerous old biddy at times. She has seen a lot and is as hard as nails, but Old Beth has never lost her humanity or compassion for others. Beneath her tough exterior is a heart of gold that cares deeply about people of all races. She thinks quick on her feet and is very cunning and crafty, often tricking people to do what she wants or into leaving her alone. In recent years she has begun to feel a little more tired and wonders if she might not be coming close to the end of her time. Those who know her are convinced she'll be around another 50-100 years.

Experience Level: Thirteen.

Super Power Category: Mutant.

Major Super Abilities: Copy Physical Structure (see page 271 of **Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Ed.**)

Minor Super Abilities: Healing Factor, Bend Light and Manipulate Kinetic Energy.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Basic

Attacks per Melee: Seven.

Combat Bonuses (includes all bonuses): +3 on initiative, +5 to strike, +10 to parry and dodge, +4 to disarm, or +1 to entangle, +8 to damage, +7 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to pull punch, back flip 95%, sense of balance 91%, walk tightrope/ledge/high-wire 98%, climb rope/rappel 98%, and Prowl 98%.

Other Bonuses: +7 to save vs magic/poison, +5 to save vs Horror Factor, +3 to save vs psionics, +2 to save vs possession and mind control, +34% to save vs coma/death, does not fatigue, fire and cold do half damage, drugs and poison do one third damage and last only a third the normal duration, recovers 3 S.D.C. every 10 minutes (18 per hour) and one Hit Point per every 15 minutes (4 per hour); no scarring. Can also "instant heal" 4D6 Hit Points twice per 24 hour period. Bonuses have already been applied to stats (see **Heroes Unlimited, 2nd Edition**, page 233 for more details on *Healing Factor*).

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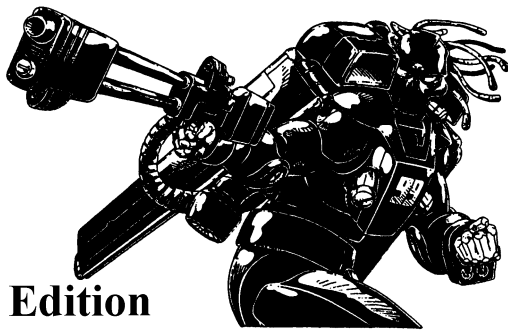
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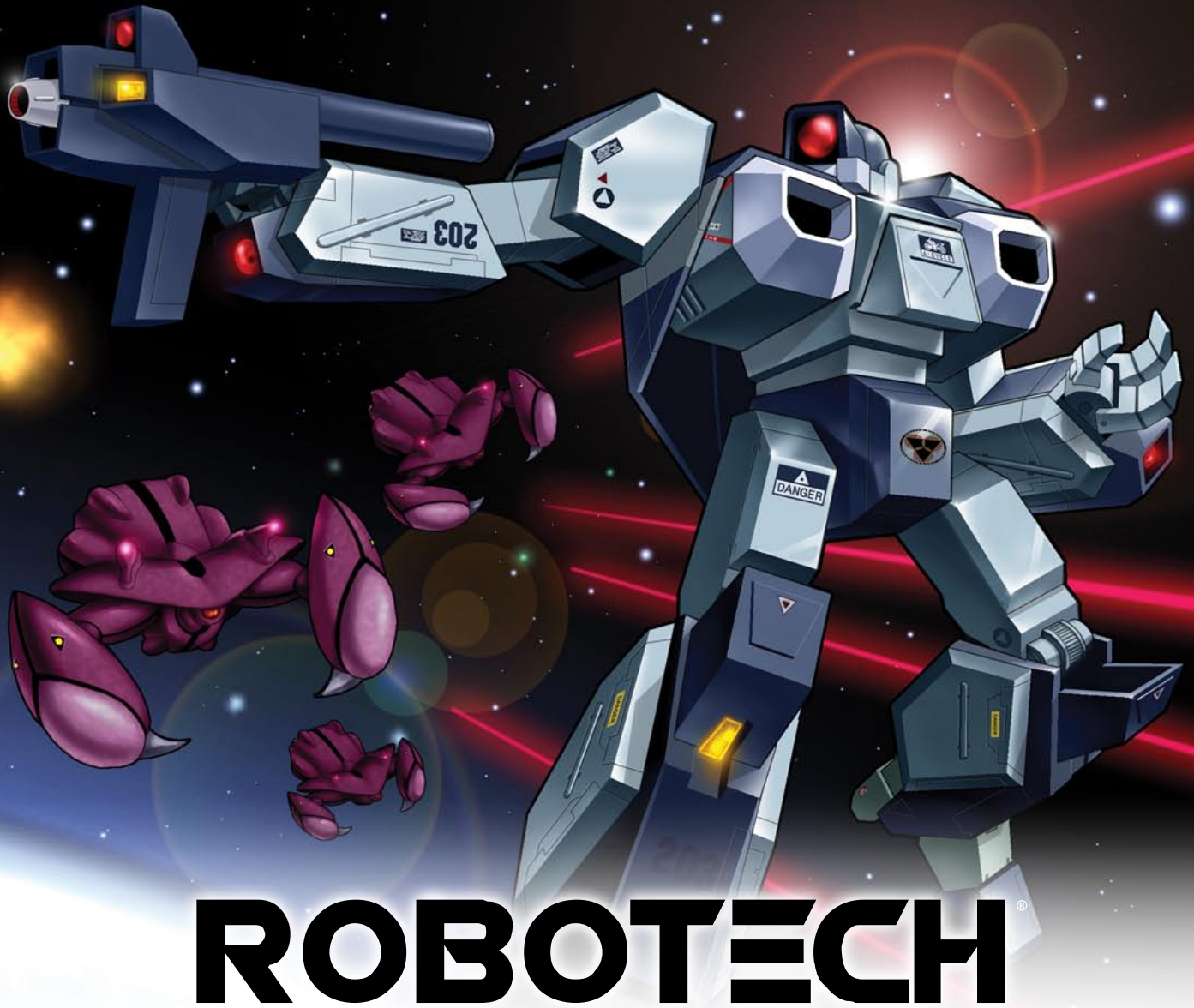
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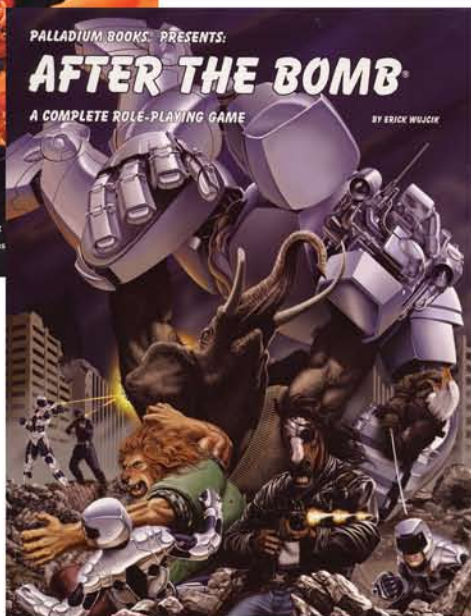
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