



Like Father, Like Son

Trial of Dr Null

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a Lame Mage Production

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Introduction

“This is Patricia Watanabe, reporting live from the steps of the Municipal Courthouse, on the first day of this historic trial...”

After all the terrors he has inflicted upon society, Dr. Victor Marsden, better known to the world as Dr Null, has at last been brought to justice. The eyes of the world are turned to the city courthouse as the fate of the scientific mastermind is decided.

This trial of the century provides the dramatic backdrop for the adventure’s action, the abduction of boy genius Melvin Thackery by his estranged father and failed mastermind supervillain Professor Chaos. At first the scenes with Melvin may seem to be an unrelated distraction from the larger issue of Dr Null’s trial. As the action proceeds heroes may even incorrectly guess that Dr Null is really Melvin’s father, and that his kidnapping relates to some escape plan. In the end the two plots come together when Melvin tries to cement his reputation as a scientific mastermind by destroying Dr Null.

Can the heroes save the most dangerous man in the world from being annihilated by a rampaging eight-year old? Even Dr Null is innocent until proven guilty. And can Melvin be saved from himself, or is the next great evil genius emerging right before the heroes’ eyes?

This scenario is designed for three or four PL 10 heroes and includes notes for adjusting difficulty where appropriate. There are some scenes where you can include Action Shticks from other *Lame Mage* adventures if you have them but they are not necessary for play. Complete stats for Dr Null are included in **Dr Null: Battle on the Bay Bridge**, a free download.

Dr Null? I thought he was dead!

The details of how Dr Null came into custody are intentionally left vague since they depend on how your previous games with Dr Null went.

If the heroes already captured him you are all set. But what if Dr Null got vaporized by the imploding Nega-Sphere at the Blake River Dam when you ran **Death of Dr Null**? Or did he fall into the volcano when you ran **Ice Age** from **Evil Genius #1: World Domination**? Not a problem: the **Trial of Dr Null** includes options for Dr Null’s unexpected return.

If you have not run other Dr Null adventures and want to introduce the world-threatening mastermind for the first time, the **Past Crimes of Dr Null** section includes suggestions for establishing his criminal credentials and using the trial as his first appearance for your heroes.

Don't want to use Dr Null? You can replace him with any mastermind villain (preferably a renowned scientific genius to justify Melvin's rivalry), then adjust the specific twists of the trial to match.

Running a Trial Subplot

When the heroes smack down Gorbok the Overmind and hand him over to the police, he does not go straight to jail, no matter how many innocent bystanders he mind controlled or how much he cackles insanely. He gets his day in court, and he is innocent until proven guilty.

Most supervillain trials are forgone conclusions and happen off-screen—we know what's going to happen, so there is no point playing it out or even talking about it. But sometimes you want to include a trial that is a critical part of the plot, particularly when the outcome is important, interesting or unpredictable—preferably all three.

Simply playing out the court case is boring. The wheels of justice turn slowly, and most players won't find it exciting to sit and watch lawyers give speeches while their superheroes sit on their capes in the courtroom day after day. Instead, a trial makes an excellent background plot, a backdrop or context for other action that occurs simultaneously. The details of the trial occur off-screen, with the heroes only becoming involved or hearing about the key twists and turns.

Twists & Turns

Something unexpected should happen during a trial, or else it is pointless to cover the case at all. Two surprises are even better. Three is usually too many.

The basic stages of a trial are the charge, the plea, the opening statements from both sides, prosecution witnesses, defense witnesses (sometimes finishing with the defendant testifying), the closing statements, and then the verdict. You are not going to show most of this, but by understanding the structure you can keep track of where you are at in the trial as a whole when you show the good bits.

The best places to spring surprises are:

- Startling opening statements (“And we will further show that Kid Crater was secretly an agent of the Federal government, carrying out these ‘crimes’ under orders from his superiors!”)
- A surprise witness (“Your Honor, I would like to call... Dr Null's mother!”)
- Unexpected testimony from a witness (“It's true! I was the Neutron Fist's love child!”)

- Unexpected questions from the lawyers during testimony, possibly directed at a player character (“But Mr. *Guardian*, isn't it true your real name is Vincent Holland, and you aren't really from New Jersey but an alien planet?”)

You can also have a surprise plea (“That's right Your Honor, I said not guilty!”) but since there are only two real choices there is not much you can do with it. The closing statements just wrap things up, so it is too late to spring a twist by then. The verdict should always be unpredictable until the last minute (or else the trial is no longer interesting) but it is the end of the action, not a twist per se.

In a real world there are all sorts of legal rules preventing one side from ambushing the other with surprise witnesses or unexpected evidence, but in the superhero world this kind of thing is mandatory.

Does a twist have to change the outcome of the case? No. It might have no impact on the charges but still be interesting or shocking news. Personal confessions about forbidden relationships, the truth about a villain's origins—these things do not affect the verdict, but they can be sensational revelations nonetheless. Trials are excellent tools for exposition. You can show the heroes interesting bits of character background that you might not have been able to surface before—the heroes fought Dr Null so many times, but they never really knew much about his origin until his mother's weeping testimony.

When a twist is revealed, emphasize that everyone is caught off-guard, that it really is a surprise. Murmurs in the courtroom or an outright uproar, the judge pounding for order, reporters rushing to phones to call in the story, the works. A twist can also happen outside the courtroom: someone comes forward and holds a startling press conference, police turn up new evidence at a crime scene that might bear on the case, a reporter digs up something and breaks the story.

The surprises you pick are the parts that you are going to play out—it's the outline of your subplot. If you can't think of any good twists you want to reveal, there's probably not much point including the trial.

Involving the Heroes

The heroes are not sitting in the courtroom—they are doing other things, patrolling the city, saving the world, or whatever else is going on in the main plot. The trial is going on in the background, but it periodically gets brought to the foreground when the heroes become directly involved or something interesting happens.

Called to Testify—The hero has to sit on the hot seat and answer questions, usually for the prosecution, but sometimes for the defense. The other side gets to

cross-exam, so they will ask questions too. You can play out a small section of the testimony (especially if there will be a surprise question), or summarize it after the fact.

This does not mean that all heroes who do testify have to be played out. If there is nothing interesting to say, just note that the hero testified or run a post-scene discussing the testimony after the fact.

Interviewed by the Press—Reporters crowd the courtroom steps, and they will certainly crowd a well-known hero as she tries to make it into the courtroom.

Answering the press might put the hero on the spot just as much as testifying, but without any of the polite rules of order.

News Flash—The heroes hear the latest twist through the news. They are not at the trial, but once they have the info it may spark a good roleplaying interlude.

A Speedy Trial

Instead of taking months the way a real trial might, you can compress an entire trial into what seems like only a few days of game time.

Like Father, Like Son

Parenting can be a challenge, particularly when your child wants to grow up to be a criminal mastermind. But should it really be such a surprise, when his father was a supervillain before him?

Melvin Thackery has been getting into a lot of trouble at school recently: constructing make-shift rockets out of fire extinguisher tanks, turning vending machines into robotic destructo-bots—not the usual pranks of an eight-year old delinquent.

His mother hopes it is just a phase, but she's really afraid he's taking after his father. **Vera Thackery** divorced her husband, **Herbert Billings**, several years ago, after he declared his intention to quit his job at the patent office and pursue his dream of becoming an infamous supervillain, **Professor Chaos**!

It was the last straw. She knew it would be hard to raise a boy without a male role model in the house, but an evil genius hardly seemed like the kind of influence that young Melvin needed. She reverted to her maiden name and hoped to never see her husband again.

In the years that have followed, Billings' progress in the supervillain sphere has not been all he had hoped for. Despite his best efforts he remains a complete unknown, a B-list mad scientist next to figures like Dr Null. But why? His inventions are just as ingenious, his schemes just as nefarious, but no one seems to care. But instead of provoking terror, the name Professor Chaos usually provokes a chorus of "professor who?"

It's frustrating to say the least, and the constant failure has made him think more about his former life. Maybe it is just loneliness, but it has awakened a strong urge to be reunited with his son, someone he can share his achievements with and eventually pass the torch to.

Comedy or Tragedy (GM Craft)

Professor Chaos is something of a laughing stock, a pitiful wannabe evil genius, but his life is also genuinely sad: a middle-aged man pleading with his son for acceptance, only to have the boy mock him for being a failure, is pretty tragic.

So is Professor Chaos a comical or a tragic figure? Well, he can be some of both. The heroes might well be the first to mock him, but then feel some pity for the guy when his own son rejects him—even if they do beat him up and take him to jail a minute later.

The same applies to Melvin and even his mother. Melvin is a stereotypical egocentric child genius, and Vera is a stereotypical indulgent and protective mother, but that does not mean they can't be real people too.

Game at a Glance—Interweaving the Plots

Courtroom drama is fun, but actually playing out a trial in a superhero game is not that interesting unless someone is going to burst through a wall and try to melt the judge. By running the trial as a background plot, you can highlight interesting twists and turns of the case and let the heroes have philosophical discussions about justice, but mix it up with action from the foreground plot they can sink their teeth into.

In this adventure the scenes alternate between dealing with the crises created by Melvin and Professor Chaos (foreground plot) and following the events of the trial

(background plot). Some trial interludes may involve the heroes directly as they are called to court to testify or give statements to the press, but others could just be news flashes covering the latest shocking twists and turns in the case.

Part 1–Terror in the Cafeteria

Trial Interlude 1–Trial Introduction

Part 2–Tea with Mrs. Thackery

Trial Interlude 2

Part 3–Yet Another Secret Warehouse

Trial Interlude 3

Finale–Melvin attacks courthouse

Trial Verdict

Guidelines for running a trial in any game are outlined in the **Running a Trial Subplot** section.

Revelations

- 1) The entire school is afraid of one eight-year old boy.
- 2) Melvin’s mother got divorced years ago.
- 3) Did Dr Null or his machines kidnap Melvin? Is Dr Null really Melvin’s missing father? (Red Herring, optional)
- 4) The Octosaucer belongs to Professor Chaos. He kidnapped Melvin. (“Professor who?”).
- 5) Professor Chaos is Melvin’s father.
- 6) Melvin thinks his dad is a loser. Because he is.
- 7) Melvin wants to destroy Dr Null to prove he is the best mad scientist.

Action

Part 1–Terror in the Cafeteria

One or more of the heroes are asked to come to Birch Grove Elementary School and address the students. It’s actually a misunderstanding–Principal Werthers never wanted the heroes to speak to the students in general, just one student in particular, Melvin Thackery. Melvin has proven to be more of a handful than his teachers can manage. The principal hopes that a superhero, a role model for the community, can straighten the boy out, or at least take back control of the cafeteria.

As the principal welcomes the heroes and leads them through the school, it should become evident that something strange is going on. The principal is not trying to keep the heroes in the dark, but since he thinks they already know the situation he is not very informative.

- The principal is very edgy and talks almost apologetically about the school’s principles of encouraging individuality and creativity.

“Children are very sensitive at this age, as I’m sure you understand.”

- It’s lunchtime, and all the students are out in the playground, but most are sitting on the ground eating their bag lunches rather than playing. Why aren’t they eating in the cafeteria? Numerous children watch the heroes through the windows as they pass by, but they seem to be waiting to see what happens next instead of being openly excited to see superheroes.

Principal Werthers leads the heroes to the cafeteria, clears his nervously throat, and waits for them to go inside. If confronted or the heroes hesitate, he will just say:

“What? Melvin’s inside. Please, I’m sure you’ll be a positive influence.”

The cafeteria is empty except for one boy sitting at a table, eating his lunch and surrounded by a stack of books. There are numerous tables and a row of vending machines along one wall. Melvin likes having the cafeteria all to himself, and he’s not intimidated by the heroes. He insults them with his eight-year old wit until they make it clear they won’t go or they try to get him to leave.

“Nobody eats in the cafeteria unless I say so. Isn’t that right?”

From across the room a chorus of electronic voices drone: “YES MASTER MELVIN”

The row of vending machines begins to rumble to life, waddling forward on mechanical feet. Melvin has re-engineered them into killer robots. Not bad for an eight-year old.

Include two or three vending machines per hero, but not more than eight. Some robots fire high-velocity barrages of soda cans, others just creep forward and try to surround and crush heroes.

Mobs of children (and not a few teachers) press their faces against the cafeteria windows to see what happens.

Melvin’s vending machine robots are not a real threat to the heroes. The challenge is to minimize collateral damage, avoid making fools of themselves, and be good role models to the children watching the battle.

The humor value of a hero emerging from the cafeteria dripping with soda, holding a kicking Melvin by the collar, should not be overlooked.

Child Psychology (GM Craft)

Melvin may be an antisocial boy genius, but he's still an eight-year old. If the heroes try to hit him with anything more harmful than a stern spanking, they are on shaky moral ground. You want them to remember that for all his mischief, he is just a kid. Capping his dialog with the occasional "neener-neener-neener!" or "I know you are but what am I" should keep the heroes from forgetting who they are dealing with.

Melvin is a spoiled know-it-all, but idealistic heroes have a role-playing opportunity to try to be good role models and teach him the error of his ways, even while he mocks them and zaps them with atomic lasers.

Grounded

"No fair! You smashed my loyal minions! You big stinkers!"

After the vending machine robots are smashed, Melvin kicks and cries, but the heroes should have no problem grabbing him by the collar and marching him out. The cafeteria is once again safe for lunch. Streams of joyous children stream in to oogle the battlefield and have something to eat.

Melvin's teachers take a guilty pleasure in seeing the young truant brought down. The heroes are thanked for their assistance and assured that Melvin will be properly punished for his bad behavior ("No recess privileges for you for a month, young man!"). If the heroes made a mess and caused more damage than they prevented, Principal Werthers is more shocked than angry. He is not the type to blame the heroes directly—he's too busy wondering how he is going to explain things to the school board. Oh dear, oh dear.

Trial Interlude 1-Trial of the Century

(see Trial of Dr Null)

Part 2-Tea with Mrs. Thackery

The heroes may take the initiative and try to investigate Melvin's home life, leading straight to this scene. If not, Melvin's mother extends a polite invitation through the school or whatever other channels can reach the heroes.

Vera Thackery hopes the heroes can bring her son around where his teachers have failed. After his cafeteria

coup d'etat, Melvin continued to misbehave and is now suspended from school.

"I can't thank you enough for coming by. I'm sure Melvin will be so pleased to see you!"

An all-too-familiar boy's voice yells from upstairs "I don't walk to talk to those super-dorks!"

"Melvin honey, what did Mother say about behaving ourselves in front of guests?" The only answer is a slamming door, rattling the picture frames on the wall.

"Would you like some tea?"

Mrs. Thackery makes polite conversation and talks about the difficulties of parenting. If you want, you can play up the humor of Mrs. Thackery becoming enamored with a dashing hero.

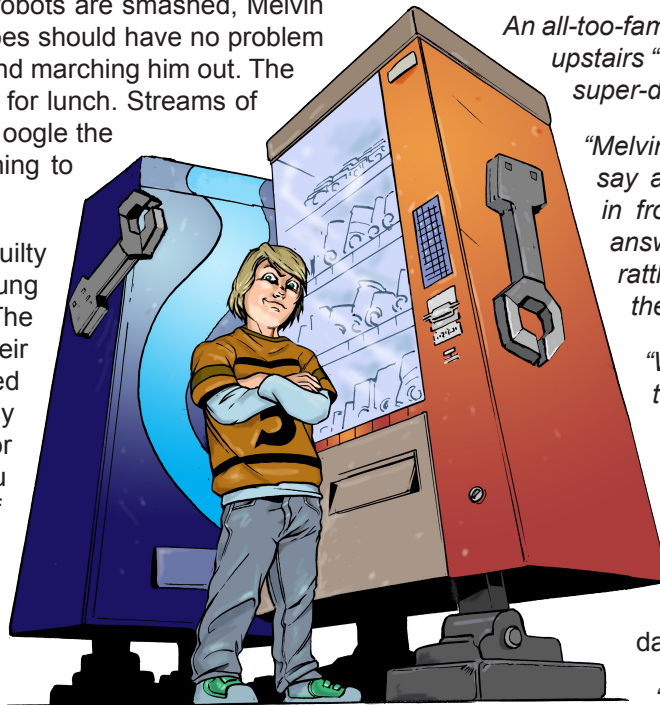
"I'm so sorry for all the trouble Melvin has caused.

His father and I have been separated since Melvin was very young. He really is a very good boy deep down inside. He just needs a good male role model in his life. A strong man around the house can make all the difference in a young boy's life..."

Kidnapping

Outside the afternoon has become gloomy... but a gloom that only covers the yard and street nearby, as though a cloud had settled over the house.

Suddenly the house shudders as though it is being torn from its foundations. Tea cups skitter across the table and cracks race up the plaster walls. From upstairs there is the sound of crashing of timber and breaking glass, as the though the whole roof of the house were caving in.



Mrs. Thackery cries out for her son as she staggers towards the stairs.

Heroes who have dealt with Dr Null in the past may momentarily suspect a return of the earthquake-producing Seismic Converter, but a dash upstairs reveals the truth.

The Octosaucer hovers over the Thackery household, using its many arms to tear off the roof of Melvin's bedroom. De-assembled toasters and homemade circuit boards litter his room, typical boy genius clutter.

If the heroes act fast they may see one of the mechanical arms deposit the screaming boy in a hatch on the underside, which closes behind him immediately. The strange craft immediately begins to fly away.

To maintain the potential Red Herring that it might be Dr Null in the Octosaucer (or a clone, or an automated system doing his bidding even while he is in jail), do not have Professor Chaos say anything through the saucer's loudspeakers.

Unidentified Fleeing Object

The heroes can try to stop the saucer, but they have to pull their punches for fear of hurting the kidnapped child inside.

Professor Chaos has Melvin, so he just wants to get away, not get into a pitched battle with the heroes. If the Octosaucer is having trouble escaping, try one of these options to give the heroes the slip:

Run Silent, Run Deep—The Octosaucer dives into whatever major body of water is nearby (a river, bay, ocean, etc.) and cruises away out of sight. Some heroes may be able to continue an underwater pursuit, but without super senses the saucer may be able to lose them in deep dark water or clouds of stirred up silt.

Cloud Cover—Same as **Run Silent, Run Deep**, but the Octosaucer flies up into the clouds, hiding it from the heroes. They can search blindly hoping to bump into it, or patrol the skies to try to catch it when it emerges.

Another option is to confront the heroes with endangered bystanders, forcing them to break off the pursuit to save innocent lives. These situations are accidental: Professor Chaos is not cold-blooded enough to intentionally threaten civilians to slow down the heroes (just one more reason he will never be a great criminal mastermind).

Collateral Damage—The Octosaucer accidentally clips an apartment building, tumbling debris into the street and leaving citizens hanging precariously from the smashed upper floors (use the **Falling Debris** Action Shtick if you have **Day of Dr Null**). It could also graze

a telephone pole or slice through power lines, leaving high voltage lines dangling into the street endangering pedestrians.

Eyes on the Road—Drivers are distracted by the sight of the saucer floating overhead and lose control of their vehicles. Heroes have to race to stop pedestrians from being run down when a truck pops the curb (use the **Hit by a Car** Action Shtick from **Evil Genius #2: Crime & Punishment**). For an even bigger threat include a tanker truck or gas spill and the threat of an explosion (use the **Danger: Flammable** Action Shtick from **Evil Genius #2: Crime & Punishment**).

As always award Hero Points for Complications or heroics.

If the Heroes Win

If the heroes take down the Octosaucer despite the Professor Chaos' best efforts to escape, he is dazed by the crash and does not put up a fight (adding a battle with Professor Chaos on top of the battle with the Octosaucer would prolong the scene unnecessarily). See **Curses, Foiled Again!** for how to deal with Professor Chaos's premature defeat.

Trial Interlude 2

(see **Trial of Dr Null**)

Part 3—Yet Another Secret Warehouse

Heroes suspecting a connection between the kidnapping and Melvin's father (who they might think is Dr Null) may want to question Mrs. Thackery about her ex-husband, but she is a weeping wreck without her son and can't get more than a few words out without breaking down into sobs. The doctors give her a sedative to calm her down (and put her to sleep) which takes her out of the loop. If the heroes are really determined to research her husband rather than just go follow the action and find out first-hand, they can check the records to learn that she divorced someone named Herbert Billings, no criminal record.

Tracking Down the Octosaucer

After he gives the heroes the slip, Professor Chaos flies the Octosaucer to his hidden warehouse lab to spend some quality time with his son. How do the heroes track it down?

Follow the Ion Trail—An inventor hero adjusts sensors to pick up the faint ion trail left by the saucer's thrusters, or a mystic conjures up a spell to see back through time and follow the ghostly saucer as it flies through the city.

Curses, Foiled Again!

Things rarely go as planned. Heroes may do something crafty or just roll well and capture Professor Chaos or Melvin when you expect them to get away. Here are some ways to handle untimely defeats:

Out on Bail—Professor Chaos is arrested, but despite his grand-standing rants in court (“no prison can imprison the genius of Professor Chaos!” and “the city will rue the day it crossed me!”), the judge is not impressed with this wannabe world conqueror. Because of clerical errors it looks like the divorce may not be official, making him part owner of the house he destroyed, and of course a legal guardian of the child he “kidnapped.”

Bail is posted by his wife’s family, who just want to avoid scandal (oh the shame!), and Billings is somewhat resentfully released to return later for his day in court. He rants on the steps of the courthouse, passionately protesting the failure of the justice system and his own release, but in the shadow of the trial of Dr Null everyone ignores him until he gets tired and shuffles away.

Heroes confronting Billings and warning him to “keep out of trouble” find he welcomes the attention. He makes steely-eyed yet vague threats about masterplans and vengeance until the heroes get bored too.

Sneaking Out—Armed with a large flashlight, a backpack full of peanut butter sandwiches, and no water, Melvin sneaks out of his bedroom window after dark and makes his way to Professor Chaos’s Octosaucer (either parked in the warehouse, cordoned off in the crater it crashed in, or towed to the police impound depending on where his father was captured). He sneaks in, susses out the equipment, and launches his own reign of terror.

Does he spring his dad from jail? Not intentionally, but his attack on the courthouse could accidentally free Chaos, who thinks his son did come for him (hurray!) and then gets terribly disappointed when Melvin calls him a loser.

Scanning for Trouble—A scientist hero jury-rigs a device to home-in on the energy radiating from the saucer’s power source (“lucky my sensors noted the strange energy signature before it got away”), leading to the hide-out. A mystic hero looks in her crystal ball to scry the Melvin’s location or a telepath scans the city for the boy’s brainwaves.

Billings Pays His Bills—Billings actually rents the warehouse under his own name. Establishing a false identity with a decent credit line is harder than it looks! If the heroes checked into Melvin’s father and got this name, they could check public records and find the warehouse. It’s boring detective work, so explain the connection but do not draw out the process.

Concerned Citizens—Someone sees the saucer and reports it to the police. The heroes either overhear and make the connection or are called in. After all, how many “A flying saucer just flew into the warehouse next to my apartment building!” calls do the police really want to investigate?

Lucky Patrol—A patrolling hero just gets lucky and spots something unusual, like strange lights from inside the warehouse or an unusual sliding door on the roof (big enough for a flying saucer).

Professor Who?

Emphasize that despite all his boasts of world conquest, the heroes have never heard of Professor Chaos. He is an unknown, a nobody, a small fish in the supervillain pond.

Nothing exasperates him more than the heroes pointing this out, or even just asking something like “and what was your name again?” Well, there is one thing that can make him madder, and that is any unfavorable comparison to Dr Null (“Octosaucer? Didn’t Dr Null make something like that a few years ago? But I think his had nine arms...”).

Coming of Age

When the heroes bust into his warehouse lab, Professor Chaos fights back aggressively. He is determined not to let the heroes bring him down just as he was really bonding with his son. He also wants to look good in front of Melvin—this is his first chance to show his son what he does for a living.

Melvin is not a combatant. After all, he’s the victim the heroes are supposed to be rescuing. The Octosaucer is parked in an adjoining room, out of sight.

Whether Chaos is winning or losing, at some point it comes out that Melvin is not impressed. After spending the day with him and poking through his lab, Melvin thinks his dad is a loser, a second-string wannabe mastermind. Melvin mocks his dad, and Billings is crushed by his son's rejection.

"Don't worry son, they're no match for Professor Chaos! Wait until I give them a taste of my vertigo ray!"

"Yeah sh'right! Loser-ray is more like it!"

"But, but, what do you mean son..?"

Just as the heroes have Professor Chaos under control they notice that Melvin is missing—he slipped away during the fighting. There is a tremendous rumble as the Octosaucer crashes up through the roof, showering debris on everyone below.

"So long, losers! We'll see who the real genius is now! Neener-neener-neener!"

"No, son, don't go!" Professor Chaos cries out in despair as the saucer rises into the sky.

If you would rather not have the heroes chase the Octosaucer again, use GM's Fiat to have the collapsing warehouse momentarily bury the heroes (and Professor Chaos), giving Melvin the time he needs to get away.

If you want to play out the chase, use the options given in **Unidentified Fleeing Object** to let Melvin give the heroes the slip, but be sure not to use the same trick you used before.

Melvin's temporary escape creates a gap between this scene and the finale, making room for a trial interlude or a roleplaying discussion with the subdued Professor Chaos (to go into more depth about his relationship with his son, his failed ambitions, etc.).

A break in the action, either between the kidnapping and the warehouse or the warehouse and the courthouse, also provides some logical explanation for Melvin having time to tinker with his father's inventions.

Trial Interlude 3

(see **Trial of Dr Null**)

Finale—There Can Be Only One!

Determined to show the world that he is the greatest scientific mastermind, not a loser like his dad, Melvin sets out to destroy the biggest evil genius of them all, Dr Null.

Melvin pilots the Octosaucer straight towards the city courthouse where Dr Null's trial is underway. If Melvin gave the heroes the slip, his sudden reappearance over downtown should bring them running. The courthouse is thronged with press covering the proceedings, with crowds of protesters demanding swift justice surrounding the building and spilling out into the streets.

When the Octosaucer reaches the courthouse, Melvin starts to use the mechanical arms to tear it down brick by brick to get to Dr Null. Civilians flee in terror as the monstrous flying machine knocks debris into the streets (use the **Falling Debris** Action Shtick from **Day of Dr Null** if desired).

When the heroes intervene, Melvin unleashes his new secret weapon, the **Virtual Video Grid** (or Vivigrid for short). His dad built it to do something boring with lasers, but the boy genius revamped it to project animated constructs of "hard light" modeled after video games. Soooo much cooler.

Beams of light scribble out a three dimensional grid, then flare and erase themselves, revealing a strange figure formed of glowing light. Nearly a dozen more other laser grids flash and fade at the same time.

Virtual Video Grid (Vivigrid)

Summon (Minion) 8, general type (light constructs), fanatical, horde, range, mental link, progression 6 (100 minions max), power drawback: only 10 minions at a time (-2), power drawback: constructs must stay within sight of device (-2)—51 pp device

If there are fewer than 10 light constructs active, Melvin can create more as a Standard action, bringing the total up to 10. The Vivigrid can create any combination of Video Grid Monsters desired. When he has used up 100 light constructs, he is out of power (though the heroes will probably stop him before then).

To make the fight harder, increase the number of light constructs the Vivigrid can maintain at once (15 or even 20).

Melvin has the video game monsters smack the smart-aleck heroes around while he hovers in the Octosaucer and mocks them over the loudspeakers. Melvin is getting the hang of being an evil genius pretty quickly—he's already better at it than his dad ever was.

"It's hard light, dum dum. Hellooo! Matter and energy are interchangeable! What part of $E = MC^2$ squared don't you understand?"

Heroes who can see in the infrared or ultraviolet ranges may spot invisible lasers connecting the saucer to the

constructs and realize that the Octosaucer needs an unobstructed line to maintain them.

If you want to give the heroes a break, make the Vivigrid a visible device sticking out of the Octosaucer, giving them a chance to destroy it before they take out the Octosaucer (you can use the **Take Out the Guns!** Action Shtick from **Evil Genius #2: Crime & Punishment**).

The heroes have to hold off the video monsters, shield the innocent bystanders, and take out the Octosaucer. If

the Octosaucer breaks into the courthouse, the heroes might even find themselves in the awkward position of having to protect the helpless Dr Null—innocent until presumed guilty, after all.

Trial Finale—The Verdict

(see **Trial of Dr Null**)

Trial of Dr Null

It's the trial of the century. Dr Null has finally been brought to justice. But is there still such a thing as justice or a fair trial when the entire world has already decided who is guilty?

As described in **Running a Trial Subplot**, instead of watching every moment of the trial (which would be boring) the idea is to only focus on the interesting parts, the key twists and turns that make the case interesting.

Each trial interlude should introduce a twist or advance the plot of the trial, as described below.

Trial Interlude 1—the Trial of the Century

The introduction starts with the first day of the trial: the world holds its breath as Dr Null enters his plea. In a flurry of news coverage the media recaps the events leading up to the trial. Newscasters summarize Dr Null's most terrible schemes and the circumstances of his capture. Superheroes who stopped Dr Null (or failed to stop him) get special attention.

Commentators and pundits from around the world discuss Dr Null's infamous history and his alleged crimes (though even calling his crimes "alleged" could spark bitter recriminations among those determined to see Dr Null punished). Analysts flood the airwaves with guesses about the tactics the prosecution and the defense will use, as well as their theories about the likely outcome of the case. It's all premature since the trial hasn't even started yet, but the public appetite for information about the case is insatiable.

The introduction of the trial is an opportunity to remind the players of the games that led up to this point and put the whole thing in context. The plea sets the stage for the defense, but nothing further happens yet.

Trial Interlude 2

Introduce the first twist or require a hero to appear and testify. If the heroes are not testifying, they may just hear about the developments through the news instead of sitting around at the courthouse (see **Involving the Heroes** in **Running a Trial Subplot**).

Trial Interlude 3

Introduce a second twist (if there is one) or call a hero to testify or answer media questions.

Finale—The Verdict

Does the court find Dr Null innocent or guilty? Does he get released on a technicality? The eyes of the world are on this trial, which cuts both ways—the letter of the law must be obeyed, but no one wants to see Dr Null go free. If word gets out that Dr Null is going to be released (whether true or not) there could be rioting in the streets.

What if the defense does its job and introduces a reasonable doubt, but the court finds Dr Null guilty anyway? The public (and the heroes) might celebrate their victory, only to recognize in quieter moments that even if Dr Null was guilty, the system as a whole failed.

Because the trial subplot provides background to the action in the main **Like Father, Like Son** plot, the verdict provides a denouement, wrapping up the adventure after the climactic battle between the heroes and Melvin's Octosaucer outside the courthouse.

Trial Options

Here are two different ways the trial could play out, but of course you can tweak or change them to make them fit better with previous Dr Null games you have run. Each option includes twists that could come out during the trial, but you don't have to use them all. Pick as many as you want to keep the trial interesting without overwhelming the action of the main scenario.

Each option also includes questions that the heroes may be confronted with, either during their sworn testimony or while badgered by the eager press. Heroes may not want to take a break from the busy schedule chasing Octosaucers to testify in court, but failing to appear could leave them in contempt of court, and even worse their testimony could be vital to convicting Dr Null—what hero wants the blame for letting Dr Null go free because he had no time to show up and answer a few questions?

Option 1—Temporary Insanity

This option works if Dr Null is already captured. He may have been injured during a battle in a previous adventure (knocked unconscious by the explosion of his Nega-Sphere or a hero's right hook) or unexpectedly collapsed in his cell days later.

After medical treatment he regains consciousness, but a sweeping change seems to have come over him. He is disoriented but basically calm and cooperative, not at all like the vengeful criminal mastermind the world fears. At his arraignment the now normal Dr. Victor Marsden pleads innocent by reason of insanity. He claims that the well-documented lab accident that caused his amnesia and super-intelligence drove him temporarily insane. Now that he has recovered, he has no recollection of the years he spent as Dr Null.

Could it be true? Could the most dangerous man in the world go free after some trivial psychological examinations? Or is it all an act, an unusually clever ploy to escape imprisonment?

Twists & Turns

Like father, like son (redux)—The defense presents old medical records showing that Victor Marsden's father (Ruger Marsden) was committed to a private overseas sanitarium decades ago for psychiatric treatment. How did they get their hands on this confidential information? Who knows. Expert witnesses are called to testify that a family history of mental illness increases the likelihood of a mental break like the one Marsden is alleged to have had after his accident.

Plea Bargain—The press breaks a story that a plea bargain is in the works, secret negotiations to offer

Marsden a reduced sentence in exchange for scientific assistance. It could even include a presidential pardon. There's little doubt that the genius of Dr Null could be a huge boon to the military and certain corporations. The public is outraged—the thought of Dr Null being put on the government payroll and a cozy lab to crank out pet inventions causes a furor. Protesters storm the courthouse. The story may not even be true, but there could be riots before the crowd is convinced.

Hero Testimony

- “In a statement to the press didn't you say Dr Null was (and I quote) ‘a mad man?’ So you agree he was insane when he committed these crimes?”
- “Do you think Victor Marsden should be punished for what he did, even if he was literally a different person at the time? You bear quite a grudge against him don't you?”

The Big Picture

The underlying dilemma in this version of the trial is that even if the law is upheld, justice might not be served. Even though Dr Null is undeniably guilty of terrible deeds, he could go unpunished if he can demonstrate that insanity made him unable to control himself, and that the accident that injured him was really to blame.

The fear that he could be granted a plea bargain and have all his crimes wiped away is part of the same theme. It's the fear that justice for all takes a back seat to potential military or monetary gain for a few.

Option 2—The Wrong Dr Null

This option works if Dr Null is already believed dead, but it can also be used if Dr Null is thought to still be at large.

Police arrest a man trespassing on the Marsden family estate which has stood unoccupied for years, and only later realize that he is the spitting image of Dr Null. Authorities are shocked to find that a) he is alive and b) he fell right into their laps with no resistance.

Once in custody, the prisoner claims to be Victor Marsden but denies being Dr Null. He pleads innocent to any of the alleged crimes, but offers no further explanation before his trial.

Twists & Turns

The Wrong Dr Null—No matter how many times it looks like Dr Null went down with the ship, he always turns up to torment the world later. That's because there is not one Dr Null, but many.

When he is called to the stand, Marsden testifies that shortly after he awoke from the coma caused by the accident (see **Origin of Dr Null**) he created clones of himself to use in discovering a cure for the brain damage behind his amnesia. In the middle of the process he suffered a relapse, and the clones he created arose and escaped. The incomplete process left them dangerous sociopaths, each thinking it was the real Victor Marsden. It was one of these clones (possibly several) that went on to become Dr Null, not him. He has remained out of sight, fearing to be blamed for his creations' crimes.

Prisoner 51—The defense calls a surprise witness: a federal captive, codename Prisoner 51, who is none other than another Dr Null! The defense claims the Feds captured this Dr Null some time ago and have kept his existence a close secret after it was clear that Dr Null, or someone claiming to be Dr Null, was still on the loose.

The Feds deny everything, resisting any attempts to even verify the existence of any Prisoner 51. If any such prisoner did exist, they argue, it would be a matter of national security, and whoever leaked the information would be guilty of a federal crime.

The defense team claims that DNA testing would verify that Prisoner 51 is a clone of Victor Marsden, but if the government chooses to withhold that evidence, they are violating Marsden's rights to a fair trial and the case should be thrown out. If the government does concede that there is a second Victor Marsden, how can anyone say which one committed the crimes of Dr Null? It's a win-win for the defense.

The real Victor Marsden?—In an unusual move, the prosecution presents medical records from Marsden's hospitalization after his accident. Examination photographs taken a year into his coma clearly show minute scars along the base of his scalp where he was injured. The prosecution demands that the defendant submit to a brief examination to show whether he has those same scars. He doesn't. Could the scars have simply healed so completely that they vanished entirely, or does this mean that the defendant isn't the real Victor Marsden, but a clone?

Being a clone doesn't prove or disprove that he is Dr Null, but it does prove that his story isn't true. He may

truly believe he is the real Victor Marsden and be just as surprised as anyone, or he might have figured it out some time ago and fabricated this whole story to establish himself as the original.

Hero Testimony

- “You said before you saw Dr Null die. If that's the case, this can't be him. Or would you like to change your story? I remind you, you're under oath...”
- Hero with scientific expertise could be called as an (involuntary) expert witness for the defense to swear that cloning technology is possible.



Professor Chaos: he's no Dr Null

The Big Picture

Victor Marsden is not any more likeable than he was before, but if his story is true, he's an innocent man. But is that enough for him to be acquitted? The public (and maybe the heroes) may be so committed to seeing Dr Null punished that they don't care what the truth is. At what point is justice really just revenge?

Past Crimes of Dr Null

If you have not run other Dr Null adventures, you can use the trial to introduce the world-threatening mastermind. In order to establish his credentials as a mad genius worthy of the world's attention, you can cite the plots below as schemes Dr Null tried in the past. Refer to them during testimony or

commentary on the trial. These plots are different than the scenarios in **Day of Dr Null**, **Death of Dr Null** and **Evil Genius #1: World Domination**, so you can still run those adventures later if you want to.

Trans/Fusion Virus—Dr Null unleashes an “energy virus” that infects the city's power grid. Electricity congeals and fuses into dangerous nodes of concentrated plasma, energy tentacles that erupt out of shattered stoplights and household outlets. The Trans/Fusion Virus wreaks havoc across the city and threatens to spread across high tension lines to outlying areas and neighboring cities, eventually infecting the entire country.

Magna-Marauder—A lumbering monster emerges from Dr Null's labs, a synthetic life form that generates powerful magnetic fields. Nearby metal is drawn to the creature and absorbed, forming into a jagged armor

as it shambles through the city and grows larger and larger, parked cars, lamp posts and even skyscraper girders jutting from its hide. Guns, tanks and planes that try to stop it become part of the beast instead.

How were these schemes stopped? They could have just failed on their own because of some design flaw, or other superheroes who preceded your current heroes could have put an end to the threat (of course now that those old heroes are retired, it's up to the new generation of superheroes to deal with whatever Dr Null comes up with next...).

If you want to give your heroes a fast introduction to Dr Null, run **Dr Null: Battle on the Bay Bridge** (free download). The heroes may capture him at the end of the scenario, but if they don't you could have his ruptured escape pod bob to the surface and get picked up by the harbor patrol after the scenario is over—damage the heroes inflicted during the battle weakened the pod, causing it to collapse under water pressure. Dr Null is alive (barely) but unconscious and badly injured.

Origin of Dr Null

Dr Null was Dr Victor Marsden, a brilliant if somewhat arrogant research scientist. He had little tolerance for his perceived lessers, the short-sighted fools the world seemed to stock in such abundance, and while such an attitude endeared him to no one it is the kind of attitude expected to accompany genius so it was largely tolerated. After his initial successes, inventions of various sorts, there was no doubt that a bright future awaited Marsden. In time and with unrelenting work he could become one of the scientific greats of the world. As is often the case, fate intervened.

Marsden was working on his first real breakthrough project, a device that would use harmonic frequencies to absorb widespread seismic forces from the Earth's crust and then convert that force into harnessed electricity. This Seismic Converter not only provided free clean energy, it reduced the risk and magnitude of earthquakes by reducing tectonic pressure.

Marsden and his team worked around the clock to complete the device, but a malfunction in the lab's power grid caused a surge that back-flowed into the Seismic Converter. Instead of absorbing kinetic energy and outputting electricity, the surge pumped energy into the device and caused the Seismic Converter to broadcast dangerous harmonic waves. The resulting earthquake woke people in their beds all across the county.

In the lab it was total chaos, the quake rocking the building to its very foundations. Even as his staff tried to drag Marsden away he berated them for incompetence and

refused to leave, determined to bring his creation back under control and prove that his design was sound.

Whether Marsden finally succeeded or the damage cut power to the Converter, no one is sure. Rescue teams found him in the rubble, unconscious from a head injury. At the hospital he lapsed into a coma. It was impossible to tell when he would recover, his doctor's announced. It could be weeks, it could be months.

In fact Marsden did not wake up for three years.

When he awoke he was alert and communicative, his mental faculties apparently unharmed but without any recollection of who he was. He remembered the accident, but nothing before that point. His doctors hoped that with time and exposure to the facts of his old life his memory would gradually return. They tried to teach Marsden details of his past life but it was just meaningless trivia to him. A picture of his mother did not strike any more of a chord in him than the Periodic Table of the Elements. It seemed to have nothing to do with him.

It quickly became clear that while personal memories were a blank, his technical knowledge, intelligence and logic had not suffered. If anything Marsden was even sharper than before, quicker to leap to scientific conclusions that would take others days to plod through, quicker see new approaches. Medical scans showed unusually high activity in his brain, interpreted at the time as signs of his recovery from the coma. Much later after Dr Null emerged as a national threat the medical data was carefully re-examined. Marsden's expanded intellect seemed to be the result of extensive branching and remapping in his neural pathways, an inexplicable side effect of his brain's healing process.

Marsden had been arrogant and uncompassionate before the accident, but his new lack of identity robbed him of any real human connection or sympathy to those around him. His psychologists hoped that this was a short term reaction to his trauma and that he would adjust with time. In fact quite the opposite seemed to be happen: Marsden became more megalomaniacal as he adjusted to his amnesia and became more certain of himself. It became increasingly clear that after his coma Marsden saw those around him as little more than gnats, irritating and inferior creatures. Attempts at therapy just revealed a rising paranoia—they were all against him because he was better than they were. They were jealous of his genius and wanted to smother it.

After a final abortive attempt by his doctors to fit him back in his previous life, Victor Marsden dropped out of sight, simply disappeared. In a sense he never did return, never even survived the accident at the lab. Victor Marsden was gone. In his mind he had tried to give the world the fruits of his genius and in return he

lost himself. He was left with no identity. He was no one, nothing, a null, and he held the world responsible. When he appeared again months later, he was only Dr Null, and he intended to make the world pay.

Criminal psychologists have theorized that his desire for public recognition of his grand schemes stems from his sense of lost identity. Others say that's a load of psychobabble. Marsden went crazy when he got hit on the head and he's been a menace to society ever since. It's as simple as that.

Most people don't care one bit about that why Dr Null does what he does, they want to know who's going to stop the Destructo-Sphere floating down Fifth Avenue erasing the skyline. They want to know who's going to stop Dr Null.

Further Adventures

The trial could be the end for Dr Null, or it could be just the beginning:

Citizen Null

If Dr Null is acquitted (either a now seemingly sane Victor Marsden or a revealed Victor Marsden clone), what does he do next?

If Dr Null goes free the public takes it badly. Very badly. They don't care if the court says he was insane at the time but is all better now, or that he's not really Dr Null just a clone, or any number of other strange excuses. They wanted justice and they are not getting it. Rioting in the streets is almost guaranteed, and lynch mobs storming the courthouse are not out of the question. Police and superheroes might find themselves using all their energy defending the man they hunted for years.

After the fire storm dies down, an apparently reformed Dr Null could go to great lengths to ingratiate himself to the public—volunteering his services to charitable

scientific foundations, curing disease, solving the world's energy problems, all to "give back to the society he has wronged." Is this change of heart sincere or just a scheme to wait until the time is ripe to reveal his true colors? Will it be the Return of Dr Null? Some people will never trust Dr Null, will never believe he could be reformed, and they may just be right.

Clone Wars

So far the world has been unwittingly fortunate that only one Dr Null clone has attacked at a time, but what if two or even several Dr Null's struck at once? If you used The Wrong Dr Null trial option then there could still be an unknown number of Dr Null's out there somewhere, hatching who knows what nefarious plans.

Because of flaws in the mind copying process, each Dr Null has a slightly different personality—they're all evil geniuses, but one might be a raving psychopath, while another is a more subtle schemer. One might be an antisocial loner, while another tries to recruit supervillains to serve under him in his own league of supervillains.

The action starts when one Dr Null emerges and unleashes his master plan, but even as the heroes are dealing with it they are surprised by the intervention of a second Dr Null who is dead set on eliminating this "impostor." If two Dr Null's battling it out in the city streets from the helms of their Iron Juggernauts and Destructo-Spheres is good fun, why not add a third or a fourth? Raving Dr Nulls plunge straight into the fray, but a more scheming Dr Null might sit back and weigh how to manipulate the situation for greatest advantage.

One thing is for certain, and that is that it is going to be a rough time for the city caught in the middle of this clash of the titans. And what if the hidden cloning facility is still operational, periodically spawning even more Dr Nulls? The heroes will have their hands full like never before.

Melvin Thackery

"Captain Stupid is more like it!"

Sometimes bad things come in small packages. Melvin Thackery is an up-and-coming mad scientist (current rank: bratty boy genius). He's only in 5th grade, but he's already showing more talent than his estranged father, the not-so infamous Professor Chaos.

Personally Melvin's not much in a fight, but what do you expect, he's ten years old? He more than makes up for that with inventions like his Vending Machine Kill-bots. Like many evil children, Melvin's incessant mocking chatter ("I know you are but what am I?") can provoke an urge to kill in even the coolest crusaders, but any hero who decides to slug it out with an elementary school kid is going to have a lot of explaining to do.

What Melvin really needs is a stern talking to by a positive role-model, and possibly a spanking. Otherwise he is going to be a serious threat to society some day. Right now he has some homework to finish.



Melvin Thackery			villain / PL 5	
STR	DEX	CON	POWERS	FEATS
6/-2	12/+1	6/-2	<i>kid</i> (Shrinking 4 permanent innate)	evasion inventor taunt
INT	WIS	CHA		SKILLS
24/+7	8/-1	12/+1		bluff 4 (+5) computers 10 (+17) craft-chemical 4 (+11) craft-electronic 10 (+17) craft-mechanical 10 (+17) disable device 6 (+13) knowledge-physical sci 8 (+15) knowledge-technology 10 (+17) stealth 2 (+7)
ATTACK	+4 strike -2			
DEF	15 (13 flat)			
TOUGH	-2			
FORT	REF	WILL		
+0	+6	+6		
INIT	GRAP	SIZE		
+1	-3	Small		
<small>abilities 12 + skills 16 + feats 3 + powers 5 + combat 14 + saves 14 + drawbacks 0 = 64 pp</small>				

Vending Machine Kill-bot			minion construct / PL 4	
STR	DEX	CON	POWERS	FEATS
20/+5	6/-2	--	<i>soda can barrage</i> (Blast 3 autofire, accurate) Immovable 2 Immunity 30 fortitude Toughness 8 Impervious 4	<i>none</i>
INT	WIS	CHA		SKILLS
--	6/-2	--		<i>none</i>
ATTACK	+5 Blast 3 autofire +3 crush 5			
DEF	8			
TOUGH	+8 (4 impervious)			
FORT	REF	WILL		
--	-2	--		
INIT	GRAP	SIZE		
-2	+8	Med		
<small>abilities -28 + skills 0 + feats 0 + powers 54 + combat 2 + saves 0 + drawbacks 0 = 28 pp</small>				

Professor Chaos

“The world shall tremble at the sound of my name! What? No! Professor Chaos! My name is Professor Chaos! Will you just shut up and let me finish?!?”

Professor Chaos wishes he were Dr Null. He wants the recognition. He wants the respect. He wants the world to tremble in terror at the mere mention of his name.

Sadly, it’s never going to happen. Herbert Billings is a solid scientist and a talented inventor, but only compared to other conventional scientists. Sanity is what holds Billings back: despite all his posturing he is not a mad scientist, just an angry one. He lacks the firm foundation of insanity to be a true evil genius. He wears safety goggles in the lab. He keeps meticulous notes. He obeys the laws of thermodynamics—basically all the things that a real mad scientist would never do. He’s a B-list supervillain, plain and simple.

Like most mad scientists he doesn’t consider the day well-spent unless he has come up with some new nefarious invention, but his signature devices are his mesmer monocle and repulsor harness. Later adventures could find him with a retooled selection of devices, but these are his defaults.

Vertigo Ray—*Dizziness and nausea grip you as the twisting, turning spiral ray washes over you.*

Hypno Ray—*As the spiral ray envelops you the world becomes distant and hazy, leaving only the glowing eye and droning voice of Professor Chaos, your master!*

Repulsor Field—*A tremendous pressure builds as you reach for Professor Chaos, ripples of force appearing*



in the very air between you. The moment you make contact it’s like a rubber band snapping, hurling you away with incredible power.

His area attacks and telekinetic repulsion field gives him a good chance of holding off a group of heroes for a few rounds, but his defenses weaken quickly (Fades) making him unlikely to go the distance. Story of his life.

Professor Chaos						villain / PL 10
STR	DEX	CON	POWERS			FEATS
8/-1	10/--	12/+1	mesmer-monocle (Device 7, easy to lose)			equipment 26 (vehicles, headquarters)
INT	WIS	CHA	vertigo ray (Nauseate 10, area cone) [30 pp array]			inventor
18/+4	12/+1	8/-1	(alt) hypno ray (Mind Control 10, area cone, sense-dependent)			minions 10 (constructs)
ATTACK	(cone) nauseate 10		(alt) Super-Senses (microscopic vision 4, infravision, ultravision, extended vision 2 (100x))			SKILLS
	(cone) mind control 10		repulsor harness (Device 5, hard to lose)			computers 8 (+12)
	+6 strike -1		Force Field 10 impervious, subtle, fades			craft-chemical 8 (+12)
DEF	17 (14 flat)		Telekinesis 10 aura (touch, sustained), selective, subtle, fades, limited: repulsion only, side-effect (if TK is resisted, Prof Chaos is repulsed instead)			craft-electronic 10 (+14)
	aura telekinesis 10					craft-mechanical 10 (+14)
TOUGH	+11 (10 impervious)					disable device 6 (+10)
FORT	REF	WILL				drive 2 (+2)
+6	+5	+9				knowledge-life sci 4 (+8)
INIT	GRAP	SIZE				knowledge-physical sci 10 (+14)
+0	+5	Med				knowledge-technology 12 (+16)
						pilot 2 (+2)
<i>abilities 8 + skills 18 + feats 37 + powers 41 + combat 26 + saves 18 + drawbacks 0 = 148 pp</i>						

Octosaucer

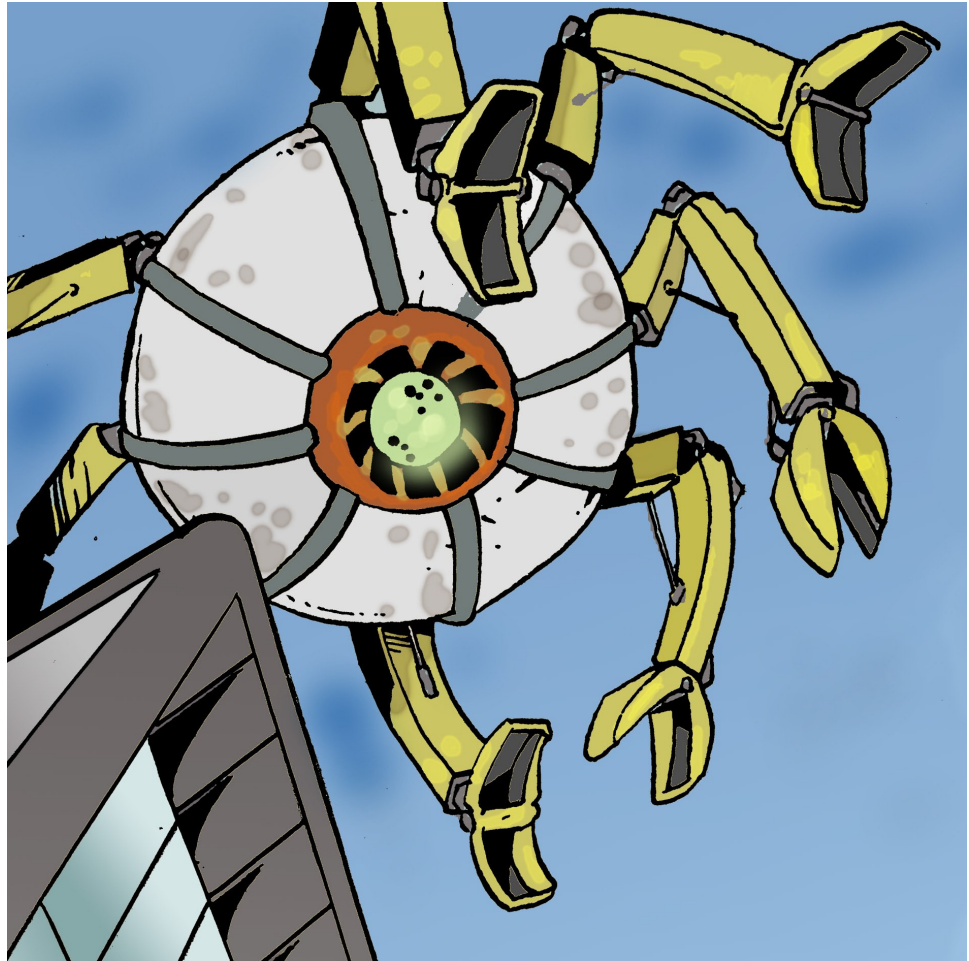
Professor Chaos's Octosaucer is a sixty-foot diameter flying saucer, named for the eight massive mechanical arms spaced around the lower outer edge. When they are not being used the arms hang down below the saucer partially curled, sometimes nearly scraping the ground below.

Why put arms on a perfectly good flying saucer? Maybe Billings heard that Dr Null was building a four-armed robot and decided to do him one better (four better actually). It's an odd design with questionable utility, but that's Professor Chaos for you.

In addition to the eight powerful arms, the Octosaucer is loaded with a powerful Vertigo Ray identical to the one projected by Professor Chaos's monacle (use the Silent Sound Effect listed in his entry).

Not only is its hull as thick as a tank (a flying tank no less), the Octosaucer is also protected by an invisible force shield capable of stopping many conventional weapons.

Future incarnations of the Octosaucer could be equipped with different devices and weaponry, such as the **Virtual Video Grid** Melvin jury-rigs in the last scene.



As described in the M&M FAQ, Constructs get a Toughness save versus attacks like Drain, Corrosion and Disintegration instead of an automatic failure. You can opt to also apply this rule to unique vehicles like the Octosaucer.

Octosaucer			vehicle / PL 10	
STR	SIZE	MOVE	POWERS	FEATURES
40/+15	Garg	100 mph	<i>vertigo ray</i> (Nauseate 10 area cone) Additional Limbs 4 (eight arms), Takedown Attack Flight 4 (100 mph) (alt) Swimming 5 (50 mph) Force Field 8 impervious, subtle Immunity 9 (life support)	navigation system loudspeakers
ATTACK	(cone) nauseate 10 +5 strike 15 takedown grapple +35			
DEF	6			
TOUGH	+19 (8 impervious)			
abilities 0 + features 2 + powers 70 + size 3 + saves 0 + drawbacks 0 = 75 pp / 15 eq				

Video Grid Monsters

Melvin's jury-rigged **Virtual Video Grid** (Vivigrid for short) creates animated constructs of living light in the shape of familiar arcade game adversaries.

The Video Grid Monsters appear to operate independently, but they must stay within line of sight of the Vivigrid. If the invisible laser beams that maintain them are interrupted, the digital menaces disappear.

Angry Ape—Perches on rooftops and bombs the street with bouncing barrels. Jump or die. Where does he get all those barrels?

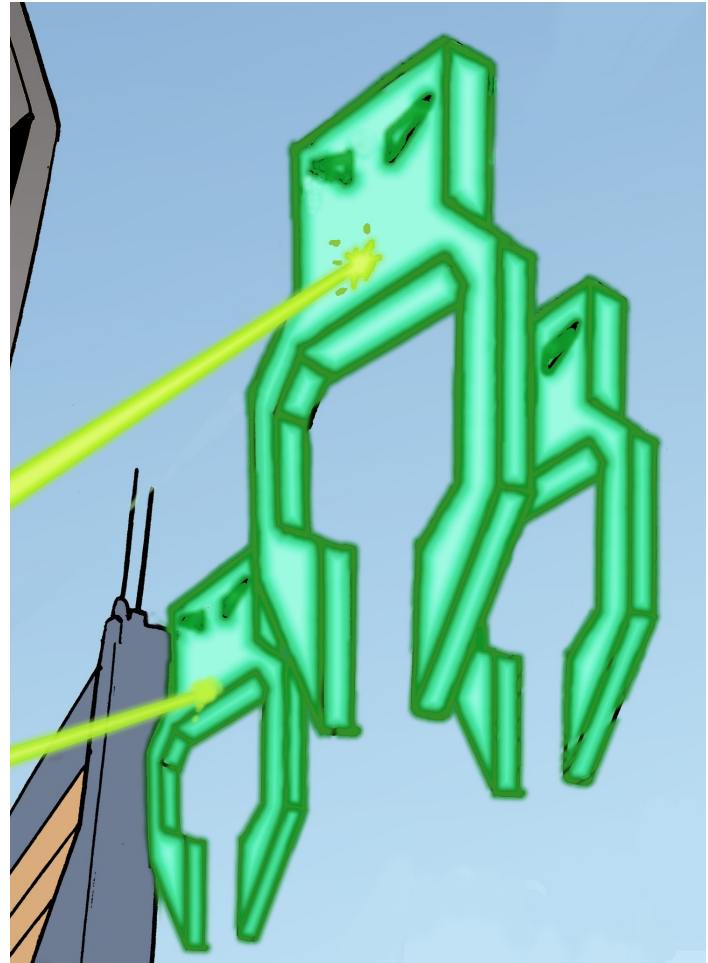
Jet-Mecha—Humanoid battle mecha that flips and transforms into fighter jet.

MunchMan—Mammoth munching mouth hungers for heroes' hides. Gobbles up everything in its path, but only makes 90 degree turns. Wakka-wakka-wakka.

Space Evaders—Clusters of aliens hang in the air strafing the ground below. Shift to the left, reverse, repeat. Never break formation.

Tanks—Heavy armor unit that grinds along and lobs explosive light bits at foes.

Want a different video game homage? Add your own favorites.



Video Grid Monsters						minion construct / PL 8	
STR	DEX	CON	POWERS		FEATS		
26/+8	12/+1	--	Immunity 30 fortitude		none		
INT	WIS	CHA	Growth 4 permanent (Large)		SKILLS		
--	10/--	--	Toughness 8 Impervious		none		
ATTACK	+8 strike 8		Super-Senses 2 (infravision, ultravision) (44 pp for individual models powers)				
DEF	16 (13 flat)		Jet-Mecha		Angry Ape		
TOUGH	+10 (8 impervious)		<i>turbolaser carbine</i> (Blast 8 autofire)		<i>thrown barrels</i> (Blast 8 + linked Trip 8, both area line 200 ft, range touch)		
FORT	REF	WILL	Flight 5 (250 mph) (in fighter plane mode)		Leaping 4		
--	+5	--	Space Evaders		Super-Movement (swinging, wall-crawling)		
INIT	GRAP	SIZE	Blast 8		MunchMan		
+1	+21	Large	Flight 2 (25 mph)		<i>swallow</i> (Snare 10 engulf)		
			Teamwork 2		Growth 4 (Huge, Str 30, permanent)		
			Tanks		Immovable 4 unstoppable		
			Blast 10		Move-by Action		
			Super-Movement (surefooted 2)		Speed 3 (50 mph)		
			(Attack 6, Damage 10, Def 14, Tough 12)		(Attack 6, Damage 10, Def 14, Tough 12)		
abilities -20 + skills 0 + feats 0 + powers 104 + combat 32 + saves 4 + drawbacks 0 = 120 pp							

GM Fast Reference Sheet

Octosaucer			vehicle / PL 10	
STR	SIZE	MOVE	POWERS	FEATURES
40/+15	Garg	100 mph	<i>vertigo ray</i> (Nauseate 10 area cone) Additional Limbs 4 (eight arms), Takedown Attack Flight 4 (100 mph) (alt) Swimming 5 (50 mph) Force Field 8 impervious, subtle Immunity 9 (life support)	navigation system loudspeakers
ATTACK	(cone) nauseate 10 +5 strike 15 takedown grapple +35			
DEF	6			
TOUGH	+19 (8 impervious)			
<i>abilities 0 + features 2 + powers 70 + size 3 + saves 0 + drawbacks 0 = 75 pp / 15 eq</i>				

GAME AT A GLANCE
 Part 1—Terror in the Cafeteria
 Trial Interlude 1—Trial Introduction
 Part 2—Tea with Mrs. Thackery
 Trial Interlude 2
 Part 3—Yet Another Secret Warehouse
 Trial Interlude 3
 Finale—Melvin attacks courthouse
 Trial Verdict

REVELATIONS

- 1) The entire school is afraid of one eight-year old boy.
- 2) Melvin's mother got divorced years ago.
- 3) Did Dr Null or his machines kidnap Melvin? Is Dr Null really Melvin's missing father? (Red Herring, optional)
- 4) The Octosaucer belongs to Professor Chaos. He kidnapped Melvin. ("Professor who?")
- 5) Professor Chaos is Melvin's father.
- 6) Melvin thinks his dad is a loser. Because he is.
- 7) Melvin wants to destroy Dr Null to prove he is the best mad scientist.

VIRTUAL VIDEO GRID (VIVIGRID)

Summon (Minion) 8, general type (light constructs), fanatical, horde, range, mental link, progression 6 (100 minions max), power drawback: only 10 minions at a time (-2), power drawback: constructs must stay within sight of device (-2)—51 pp device

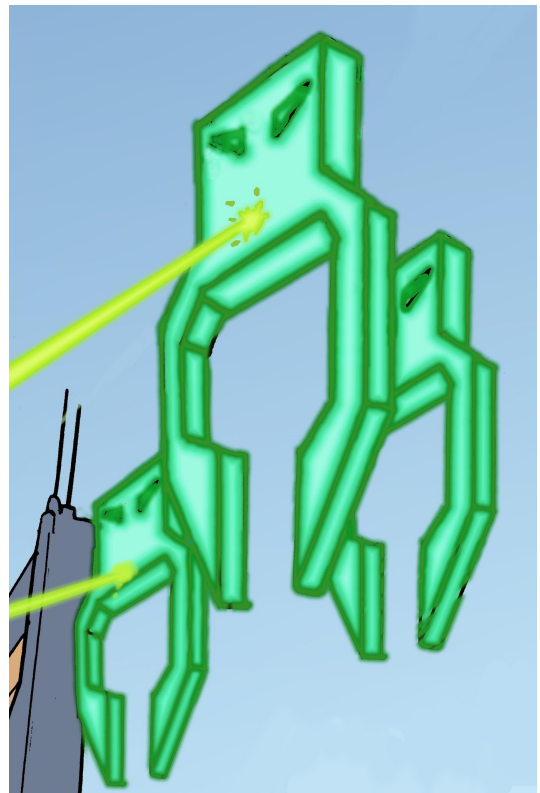
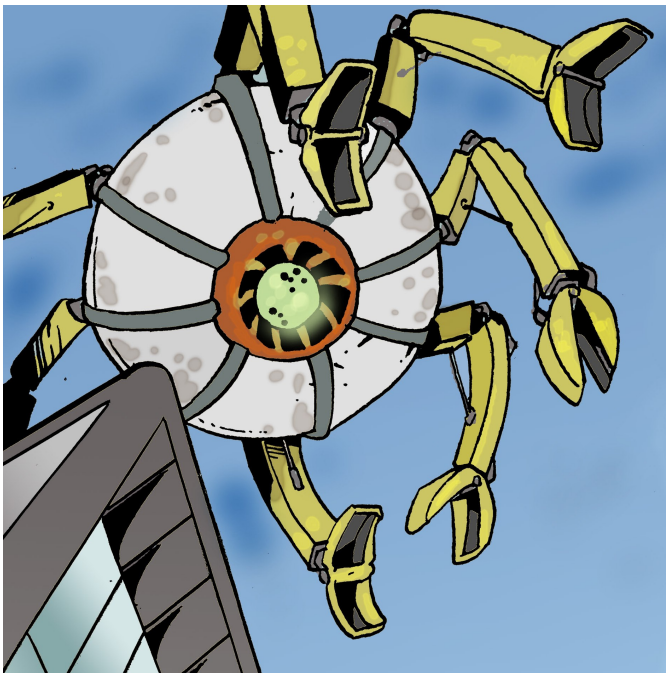
If there are fewer than 10 light constructs active, Melvin can create more as a Standard action, bringing the total up to 10. The Vivigrid can create any combination of Video Grid Monsters desired.

When he has used up 100 light constructs, he is out of power (though the heroes will probably stop him before then).

To make the fight harder, increase the number of light constructs the Vivigrid can maintain at once (15 or even 20).

Video Grid Monsters			minion construct / PL 8	
STR	DEX	CON	POWERS	FEATS
26/+8	12/+1	--	Immunity 30 fortitude Growth 4 permanent (Large) Toughness 8 Impervious Super-Senses 2 (infravision, ultravision) (44 pp for individual models powers)	<i>none</i>
INT	WIS	CHA		SKILLS
--	10/--	--		<i>none</i>
ATTACK	+8 strike 8			
DEF	16 (13 flat)			
TOUGH	+10 (8 impervious)			
FORT	REF	WILL		
--	+5	--		
INIT	GRAP	SIZE		
+1	+21	Large		
			Jet-Mecha <i>turbolaser carbine</i> (Blast 8 autofire) Flight 5 (250 mph) (in fighter plane mode)	Angry Ape <i>thrown barrels</i> (Blast 8 + linked Trip 8, both area line 200 ft, range touch) Leaping 4 Super-Movement (swinging, wall-crawling)
			Space Evaders Blast 8 Flight 2 (25 mph) Teamwork 2	MunchMan <i>swallow</i> (Snare 10 engulf) Growth 4 (Huge, Str 30, permanent) Immovable 4 unstoppable Move-by Action Speed 3 (50 mph) (Attack 6, Damage 10, Def 14, Tough 12)
			Tanks Blast 10 Super-Movement (surefooted 2) (Attack 6, Damage 10, Def 14, Tough 12)	
<i>abilities -20 + skills 0 + feats 0 + powers 104 + combat 32 + saves 4 + drawbacks 0 = 120 pp</i>				

Player Handout Illustrations



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