

CHURCH + STATE



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Church and State*, a full-length Bronze Age adventure for the M&M Superlink. *Church and State* is a generic adventure, suitable for modern-day city settings and 3 to 6 PCs of Power Levels 10 to 12, though advice is given for running the scenario for higher- and lower-powered characters. All you need to run this adventure is the *M&M* rules and this book.

Church and State uses a wide range of challenges to test the PCs and give them a chance to flex their muscles, their minds, and their ethical fiber. PCs should be able to hold their own in a fight, and in addition it is very helpful if at least one PC is a capable investigator and one PC has mad social skills, especially Sense Motive and Diplomacy. While these abilities are not necessary, there are some nasty battles that can be avoided with sweet talk and keen insight. PCs lacking these skills will end up brawling with both angels and anarchists.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

It should go without saying, but if you're planning on playing in this adventure you should stop reading now.

For several months before the start of *Church and State* the activities of the super-humans Mikhael Archangel and Rock N Roll have been turning the City on its ear. Both are powerful, charismatic, and have large and active followings that let them wield political power to match their superpowers. Both have upset politicians and businesses, and both have been cutting heavily into the Mafia's activities: Mikhael, a living battle angel, has led a street crusade against drug dealers and prostitution, nearly wiping out both activities in whole districts; Rock N Roll, a workers' rights activist and neo-Marxist revolutionary, has led a similar battle in the unions, helping them to stomp out mob corruption and graft and has also destroyed the mob's control of bootleg media. The dons of the Five Families felt that something had to be done about all these meddling super-humans, and formed their own team of super-henchmen, The Made Men, to fix the situation.

Church and State starts with PCs rushing to stop a massive fire in a rush hour subway station. The Made Men's plan was to create a public hazard that would draw superheroes into a vulnerable position. Unfortunately for everyone involved

WITH LESS POWER COMES MORE BRUISING

Church and State can be run with characters under PL 10, but they will need to rely on their brains and social savvy if they want to have a chance of not being repeatedly beaten senseless. A group that focuses on investigation, social skills, and/or mental and misdirection powers could avoid most of the fights and find all the important secrets without too much pain.

For groups lacking this edge, the GM can lower the PL of the major NPCs by 1 for every PL the PCs are under 10. Also, groups with a PL of under 8 will be below the radar of the really powerful NPCs, and thus will face combat with minions while getting a chance to blindside the big NPCs. By playing up the arrogance and decreasing the tactical intelligence of the adversaries, a GM can give a lower PL group a chance.

Characters between PL 12 and 15 will not have to be as careful, as they can stand toe to toe with any of the NPCs. However, the scenario can still be a challenge for such a group as they will have to rely on more than brute force if they want to discover the secrets behind the troubles. To keep combat entertaining the GM may want to raise the PL of the major NPCs by 1 to 3, and the NPCs should use every tactical advantage they possess — such as headquarters and minions — to maximum advantage.

the team's leader, Arson, turned into a psychopath, and rather than making a small and contained blaze he started an inferno that is consuming an entire subway station. The resulting crisis endangers more lives than even the most hardened mob boss finds acceptable, and brings the City's superheroes, including the Archangel and Rock N Roll, running to help the PCs. Together the super-heroes stop, track down, and pound the Made Men.

When the Made Men (or their immediate superiors, if no Made Men survived) go to court, the PCs become part of the media circus that erupts into a trial of the century. PCs are subpoenaed as witnesses, and have to deal with cops, DAs, reporters, and the manipulations of evil defense attorney Joshua Withem — who will turn into the PCs' nemesis. PCs who play smart can help the prosecution, but those who goof could

be responsible for a mistrial that lets a group of mass murders loose.

During the trial, Withem starts to gather information on all of the supers. While his clients are facing the jury, he decides that more can be gained through subterfuge and manipulation of human weakness than through the brute force approach of his Mafia employers. He decides to prove his worth and earn a consigliere's position by bringing down Rock N Roll, Mikhael, and hopefully the PCs as well. Withem's plan is devious and complicated enough to be worthy of a super-villain while prosaic enough to be all too human. Using information drawn from the news, his clients' personal histories, and the histories and case files of other lawyers (which he accesses illegally), he discovers a web of love, guilt, and prejudice that he uses to bring about a murder. He turns a generally decent but homophobic working man who happens to be a follower of Rock N Roll's, a religious woman at war with her own sexuality who happens to be a follower of the Archangel, and a priest trying to do the right thing against each other — knowing that a murder will result (or at least a situation that can be fixed up to look like a murder) and that it will pit the two super-human juggernauts against each other.

While this is going on the PCs are invited to a high-class soiree to celebrate the verdict of the trial and raise money for the victims and their families. The PCs get a chance to hobnob with celebrities, publishers, and politicians of all stripes as well as to make connections and get a super-model boyfriend/girlfriend. The PCs also get a chance to notice when Rock and Mikhael sneak out of the party, followed by the Chief of Police, as all three get word that one of Rock's followers has brutally murdered one of Mikhael's priestly followers in his own church.

From that point on the adventure becomes less linear, and PCs must chart their own course. Their choices could result in anything from peace between all factions to a war between the army, superheroes, and the people's revolution in the streets of the City. What follows is the path most commonly taken, but it should not be viewed as an unchangeable plot.

The PCs find out about the murder, either by following the suspiciously departing supers or Police Chief, or on the morning news. The murder turns into a firestorm when the Archangel accuses Rock N Roll of conspiring in the murder for political reasons. Rock returns fire with an accusation that Mikhael

committed the murder to cover up the fact that one of his priests was performing gay marriages. The two come to blows unless the PCs stop them, and then both withdraw to question their followers and prepare to deal swift justice to the other faction.

PCs then have to balance between negotiating peace between the two supers, deciding to take them out before they can become a real threat, investigating the crime in the hopes of finding the truth behind the rhetoric, and dealing with whatever parts of their normal lives the GM sees fit to introduce.

Eventually the PCs will start to find signs that something fishy is going on, but by that point Rock and Mikhael's follow-



ers will be fighting in the streets, causing riots in the Square. Any accords the PCs were able to reach are soon shattered when the stubborn and self-righteous supers clash again, colliding when a wake and political rally collide. While the PCs are searching desperately for key witnesses, one of whom will be kidnapped and murdered if they don't act fast enough, a super-powered brawl erupts that can only be stopped by the PCs stepping in.

While the PCs close in on the truth behind the killings, the Made Men escape from jail, pushing an already jumpy public to the point of panic. Rock N Roll and the Archangel both make public ultimatums and withdraw into their fortress strongholds as they get ready for war. The government responds by calling in the National Guard and/or Army, determined that they will not let the actions of two rogue supers dictate the future.

After a tense chase the PCs recover a key witness from mob hitmen, and he gives them the information they need to force a peace between Rock and Mikhael, and prove that Withem is the real architect of the murder. Rock and Mikhael stop their posturing to go after Withem. This leads to a final climatic battle with the Made Men in the high-rise office of a powerful legal firm.

Of course, there is also the alternative that the PCs will conclude that Rock and Mikhael are no longer being heroes or allies, and decide to take them out by force. In this case the PCs have a chance to storm their headquarters, possibly capturing or driving off the powerful supers. If they succeed they may buy a temporary peace, or they may just drive the two that much farther towards total war.

PCs that negotiate a fine course have a chance to strike a blow at the mob, remove a corrupt and evil lawyer, and show two problematic supers what it is to be a hero. Those who choose less wisely will end up in a fight for their lives against men who could have been their brothers in arms while tanks roll through the streets and F-15s fly overhead. At that point even if the PCs take out the rogue supers it will be at the cost of two heroes fallen and a very smart and wicked man bending the law to serve all the wrong people.

THE SETTING

Church and State is written to take place in the City, a generic modern American metropolis. While the City is based heavily on modern New York and Toronto, it is generic enough to be used as most cities, from Gotham to LA or even 1920's Chicago. There are a few elements that your city needs to match up with the City for the purposes of this adventure:

The Mob: Organized crime plays a large role in this scenario, therefore a large and powerful crime organization with history needs to exist in your city. While it doesn't have to be *The Godfather* there should be a mob of some type (even if it's Yakuza, though you'd need to change the names and modus operandi in that case).

Unions: A large amount of the politics of one of the major characters of *Church and State* is based around the Unions and workers' rights.

Church: The Church in this scenario looks a lot like the Catholic Church, but any large and powerful religious institution with political power and theology that includes angels will work.

Legal System: A lawyer misusing his power and breaking confidence is one of the key players in this drama. Therefore there needs to be a working judicial system with at least basic power and authority for the adventure to work as written. If you could see an episode of *Law and Order* happening in your city, it will work.

Large Numbers of Upset People: People being pissed enough to take radical action is one of the things that makes *Church and State* run. A city in which everyone is content, happy, or mind-controlled would take some work to be suitable for this scenario. You don't need a dystopia, but you do need a city that has discontented folks in it.

A Subway: The first scene of *Church and State* takes place in a subway, and uses many of the unique challenges that setting provides. While it is possible to set the scene at an L-Train or bus station, doing so changes the scene and the challenges presented.

THEN I READ THE ANGEL'S MIND

There are always super-powers that can blow holes in a pre-generated adventure faster than a fireblast through an ice cube. GMs should let the players use their powers, but find ways that the use of the power makes the adventure interesting. Super powers, after all, allow PCs to do things no one else can do and they should be both fun and useful — but that doesn't mean they have to blow everything open with one roll.

Postcognition: There are several complications that can be used to keep things entertaining for a postcog. First, the murder scene was actually quite complicated and took place over some time and involved multiple assailants. A precog viewing the scene may think they know what they are seeing, but in fact be fooled by the sequence of events. Second, a Postcog may have trouble convincing the insanely stubborn NPCs of the truth of their vision. Finally, while a postcog can see what happened, they can't always see why it happened.

Super-Mental Attributes & Super-Investigation Skills: In general these powers shouldn't be too destructive, as *Church and State* is written with them in mind. The biggest thing to remember with these powers is that certain information can come from certain people and places, and even the best roll can only find out what is present to be found. While super investigators will be able to move through the mystery quickly, they will still need to do their legwork.

Telepathy: Many of the NPCs in *Church and State* have high will saves, and several have the Indomitable Will feat, which makes things a bit tougher on telepaths. However good

telepaths will still be able to break through and get masses of information no one else could get. This information, however, faces the same problems that a precog would have (above). Also, GMs may want to play with the subjective nature of thought, a great trick used in many Bronze Age comics. Just because a telepath knows what someone thinks does not mean they know the facts, and figuring out the truth can still require legwork. Adventurous GMs could even play around with the way the telepath gets the information, making scenes and facts look distinctly different when viewed in different minds. Trying to sort out the differences in perception between how a nun and a pimp saw an event can lead to great role-play. Telepathy can give PCs a big jump, but alone it won't solve all their problems.

Time Travel: The most problematic of all powers, and one that could stop the scenario in *Church and State* from ever happening in the first place! GMs are encouraged to consider the Immutable Timeline option (*M&M* page 89), just to make sure that the whole adventure isn't sidestepped from the start. Another interesting option might be to have the PCs able to stop the first murder, only to have the troubles be started by a different spark when they return to the present. At that point PCs could figure out that something more than chance is trying to start the trouble, and would have to use other powers and abilities to find out what is behind the seemingly unavoidable conflict. Such a scenario would leave PCs doing much of the same investigation work as non Time-Travelers, but could lead to a very different result.

A large body of water: One of the scenes in *Church and State* takes place on a yacht, which would presumably be in a large enough body of water to sail in. If your city is landlocked, however, the scene can be moved to a mansion or hotel.

If your city has a close approximation of the above elements, then running *Church and State* will be no trouble. Even if a few are missing, or altered in some minor way, the adventure should be playable — it will just need a little more elbow grease from the GM.

ENTER THE ANGEL

Introducing major new characters to an existing campaign can be tricky. Several powerful supers simply appearing in an established setting can be jarring, but GMs who paid good money for this book may not want to have to spend months working them into their setting, so here are some ways to work it:

They've Always Been There: In comic books, new parts of town, new mega-corporations, and new personalities pop up like mushrooms. Even small nations will appear without as much as a by-your-leave. Thus it may be possible to simply claim that the NPCs have always been there. So long as PCs aren't heavily involved in the political areas (unions and religion) where Rock and Mikhael have their greatest power, the PCs may be able to buy it without it disturbing their world view. The main problem with this setup is that it may be jarring for two powerful and politically connected supers to just show up in the game, especially if the PCs characters are the type that would have had connections to an Angel or a Marxist revolutionary.

New Kids In Town: Rock and Mikhael could be new players in town, only having arrived in the few weeks since the PCs' last adventure. The main problem with this setup is that both NPCs are assumed by the scenario to have fairly heavy connections with the community and a history with the locals. GMs could assume that their power level, charismatic leadership, and large number of devoted followers have allowed them to gain such positions quickly. Doing so, however, may make the PCs feel upstaged by these Johnny-come-latelys.

Enter the PCs: The opposite of the New Kids scenario, this setup assumes that the PCs have come into the city as the newbies. The main problem with this approach is finding a reason why the PCs would leave their normal stomping grounds.

The Setup: If the GM is willing to wait several sessions to start playing *Church and State* then it is possible to integrate the NPCs more smoothly. Having the NPCs either come to town or develop their powers in town and then set up their powerbases allows the PCs to develop a standing relationship with them before the scenario starts. The downside of this approach is that the GM can't start running this wonderful, awesome, spectacular module right away.

New Campaign: If you're running a new campaign, then it's easy to have the NPCs be an existing part of the world. Of course the bad news is you're just starting a new campaign and have all of the difficulty of setting up a new world. The good news is that *Church and State* makes a great kicker campaign.

THEME AND TONE

The theme of *Church and State* is that we make the world we live in. Self-righteousness, blind factionalism, and anger create a world that is self-righteous, blind, and angry. Acts of compassion, temperance, and clear thought create a reasonable world where alliances can be built, mistakes can be fixed, and hope can be reclaimed. The PCs will be dealing with powerful NPCs who start the scenario as heroes, but due to self-righteousness become outlaws, villains, and even murderers. The common people of the adventure are little better off, swept up into a world of easy answers and violent solutions that keep them from accomplishing their goals. GMs can reinforce this theme by causing rash, violent, and intemperate actions of the characters to cause an increase in the intolerance of those around them, while rewarding PCs who stay calm and rational by allowing them to persuade those around them to do the same. Hate begets hate, but temperance begets temperance.

While *Church and State* can be run with a group of mercenaries or with a group of four-color paragons of perfection, it will be most interesting when played with PCs who try to do the right thing but aren't always sure what that is. The PCs' foibles and failures can make the adventure more interesting, as their blindnesses can make the situation both worse and more dramatic. At the same time the PCs can rise above the problems they create if they are willing to see past their own interests and fight for the greater good. GMs should encourage players to do occasionally bone-headed things, but should also allow them to start seeing past their limitations as the adventure progresses (using the optional Genre Points rules on page 101 may be helpful).

In terms of tone *Church and State* is a Bronze Age adventure, reflecting the feel of comics such as *The Ultimates* and *The Authority*, with heroes who are not always heroic, whose ideals often lead them to fanaticism, and who face issues of power gone wrong. Even the heroic NPCs of the scenario can be close-minded, judgmental jerks that are hard to tell apart from villains. PCs who are overly reactionary or violent may find themselves falling into the same trap, becoming tools of those who would use them for their own ends. At the same time the scenario assumes that if the PCs are willing to be reasonable and to look beyond the obvious they can make positive changes. The PCs can gain real triumph, but only if they work for it. The tone should thus be guardedly optimistic, with failures easy to come by and successes requiring real effort.

In the end it will be the PCs and their actions that determine what the world of *Church and State* becomes. It is their actions that will determine if Withem and the Mob get away with their wickedness, and if Rock and Mikhael can be redeemed. Though there is a good bit of darkness and prejudice in the world, how dark or bright things are at the end of the day will depend on how hard and how smart the PCs fought, and what they chose to fight for. GMs should thus let the PCs choice matter, even when they do the "wrong" thing — as that is the whole point.

ROCK OF AGES

Many groups may find the default tone of the scenario isn't what they want. Some may want a darker world with less hope, and others may want a Golden Age setup where mighty heroes can fix the wrongs of the world by swinging mighty fists. One of the best ways to modify *Church and State* to fit your group's preferences is to change how reasonable people are, and how willing to do stupid things the NPCs are.

In a Golden Age game the "confused heroes" of the scenario should be easily brought back to the path of angels — quite probably by beating some sense into them, and minions will be two-dimensional anarchist goons who can be pounded without regret. Scheming lawyers will burst forth with full confessions when confronted with super-heroic opposition, and the common folk will be willing to put aside all their fears and prejudices to stand behind the good heroes. Played this way *Church and State* will probably be a series of big two-fisted fights and heroic speeches that instantly sway crowds to the side of law and right (the two being one and the same).

A Silver Age game would call for some investigation and smart talking on the part of the PCs, as NPCs can't be convinced simply by being pummeled. The investigations can be difficult, and the prejudices of the people real, but people will listen to reason when it is spoken rather than having to be forcibly convinced of it. Even the angriest heroic NPC should still be heroic and refuse to harm the innocent. Minions, while having personality, should still be thug-like and only occasionally sympathetic. Played this way the scenario will have fewer brawls and more investigation than the Golden Age game, and will have lip service to the legitimacy of creeds other than that of the heroes, while still being sure that the PCs' shining example of morality is able to save the day by its own obviously superior merits.

For a darker, more Feet of Clay age game, the GM need only make people more conniving and less reasonable. In this setting the Marxist union members are all anarchists wanting to drag down the government, the religious members of the community are intolerant theocrats who want to force their morals on the world at the point of a sword, all the minions are real people forced to violence by poverty and desperation, and no matter how hard the PCs work the real big bads will still get away, possibly with active collusion from the government and other supposed heroes.

GMs may want to use the alternate rules in *M&M* (pages 128 - 129) for differing degrees of lethality to help set the tone of the game. Those going for a Bronze Age game may have even really nasty attacks like Arson's fire-blasts do Stun damage. Those wanting a Feet of Clay game, on the other hand, may make all super-powered attacks lethal to represent the fact that human bodies simply can't take that level of punishment. In a game like that characters who have a "dual damage" stunt should still be able to do Stun damage, but everyone else will default to lethal.

SCENE SETUP AND GENERAL NOTES

Several scenes in *Church and State* contain new systems for running specific types of scenes. From a system of collecting Verdict Points to win a trial to doing montage scenes for investigation, these systems are designed to make the adventure easy and fun to run. However, many groups will already have methods for dealing with such matters. If the GM already knows how the group prefers to run a certain type of scene, they should feel free to disregard the scene mechanics. All the information needed to run will be provided anyway, the mechanics are there for people who want to use them — they are not necessary to the game.

Also, many of the investigation and social tests in *Church and State* include notes on how to resolve them with the game system. These system notes are provided for when the players want to work through the scene systematically; they are not supposed to indicate that players can't use their own brains to figure out problems. If a character figures out what is going on through things revealed in the game, they should not have to make a roll to come to the conclusion.

The various scenes in the adventure are presented in the order that they are likely to occur in. However, the order depends a lot on PC choices, and so the various scenes should be seen as pieces that can happen whenever the PCs get to them, rather than as a plot that must happen in order. Some PCs might go right from **Film at 11:00** to **Into the Lion's Den**, while others may play a dozen scenes between the two — or never get to **Into the Lion's Den** at all! This modularity allows the PCs actions to guide the plot, while still giving background and support to the scenes.

Church and State is a toolkit: it gives the GMs everything they need to run the scenario, and thus might give some GMs far more than they need. So GMs should use what they need, take what they like, and discard the rest. No published scenario can possibly please your group as much as you can, so make the material yours.

"Just because we've never taught ourselves, and haven't grown as a race enough to overcome the need for government control, doesn't mean we never can. What humanity is can be changed - and if cloning, the internet, the talk about AI's being real in the next year doesn't prove it to you, then I certainly should. How many historical humans do you know of who could produce sounds loud enough to shatter steel? If we can get this level of power, if we can change like this, then learning to work together shouldn't even be a thing. We make the world we live in, man, so lets start making it a place worth living in."

Rock N Roll, in a 2003 interview in *Rolling Stone*.

I NEED A HERO

In which Church and State kicks into action when PCs are called to save the lives of hundreds of innocents trapped in a fire while battling a new super-villain team. When things get tough the PCs are joined by Mikhael Archangel and Rock N Roll, forming an alliance that will come back to haunt them.

THE SITUATION

The mob put a lot of money into the Made Men, and decided it was time for the Made Men to prove their worth. The dons sent them to start a fire in a store in a subway station, hoping to both intimidate some of the locals into paying protection money and to lure superheroes into an ambush.

It was a good plan, but no one realized how far Arson's powers had unhinged his mind. Rather than setting a small and easily controlled fire he let his inner pyromaniac run free, and lit up the main subway platform and a whole subway train. Even the other members of the Made Men were stunned by this act of wanton idiocy, and as a result did nothing to contain the situation or restrain their brainless leader.

Within moments of Arson's first strike the station became a madhouse as his napalm fires raged and bystanders panicked. Now smoke fills the tunnels and station, billowing out the doors of the station and the sidewalk grates above the tunnels, combining with hordes of screaming people and sudden 911 calls to give a clear indication that something has gone terribly wrong to any hero or emergency worker in the area.

As the PCs arrive on the scene they find a smoke and toxic-gas filled horror, trains flaming and innocent people trapped by flames, stuck doors, overcome by smoke, or trampling each other in their hurry to get out. If that isn't bad enough the Made Men are still present, protected from the fires by Arson's suit, and just waiting to do something — anything — that will keep their bosses from murdering them for this screw-up.

THE SETTING

This subway station is one of the larger stations in the City. It has three levels filled with stores and restaurants as well as platforms and trains. At the street level the station can be entered through two stairwells or through a station building. The building is square and grey on the outside, and most of the interior is done in yellow and green-blue tiles. This level contains several newsstands and cigarette stores as well as an information booth and token machines. Doors front onto the street, and side doors lead to bus-departure points in the side alleys. There are sets of stairs, two sets of escalators, and a single elevator reserved for the handicapped (which is often used by teenagers whose only handicap is ethical). Once smoke and screams start sounding, this area clears quickly then becomes a site of confusion as people coming up from the lower levels start colliding with emergency workers trying to get in. A full sized map of the Subway Station is found in the combat booklet.

The first underground level of the station has platforms for north and southbound trains, and its hallways contain two convenience stores, two small restaurants, a 99-cent store, and a video rental store. It has an equal number of stairs going upstairs and down (three), but only one set of escalators goes all the way to the bottom level. This level quickly becomes clogged with people, forming a mob that pushes blindly towards the elevator and stairs. After a few minutes it also becomes thick with smoke, and several of the lights are broken or go out — leaving the whole room dim and hazy, filled with coughing and screaming.

The second underground level of the station has platforms for east and westbound trains, a newsstand, and poster packed walls advertising the newest movies. It also happens to currently have an inferno raging across the westbound platform, a burning train, and nearly a thousand panicked and choking people. A good part of the electricity to the level has been cut by the fire, including the fans that normally help ventilate the tunnels. Until the PCs do something to clear the air the whole floor will be thick with poisonous vapors and smoke, as wekk as being dimly lit.

The burning train is about halfway out of the station, with four of its cars in the wide tunnel alongside the station, and the front car partially turned into the narrower split tunnel that leads to the next stop. Getting to the rear of the train is no problem (save for the panicked crowds and sniping super-villains) but getting to the front cars requires the PCs to either force their way through the inside of the train or go into

the tunnel, which narrows until there is only about five feet of space on either side of the front-most car. (Fortunately the electricity is currently off, so they don't have to watch their step.)

At the start of the scene most of the Made Men are on this level. Arson starts in an area where the fire rages highest, Hitman is hidden several hundred feet down the empty side of the westbound tunnel (opposite the train), Numbers and Riot are posing as civilians — Numbers on the eastbound platform and Riot on the west, Battery is hiding in the elevator, holding the doors closed. Smash and Grab is blinking between the first floor and the second, keeping an eye out for emergency workers and heroes, relaying the information to Arson by radio-link.

For the emergency workers use the EMT, Firefighter, or Police Officer archetypes (*M&M* pages 154-155). Transit workers should use the Union Worker archetype (page 91).

WEIGHT, HARDNESS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL DCs

The Train: Each car weighs in at between 30 and 35 tons, depending on how full of screaming innocent bystanders it is. The cars will be between 40 and 50 feet long, 12 ft tall (from wheel to roof), and between 8.5 and 9.5 feet wide. Each car can hold a maximum of around 180 passengers (though most in this train have around 75). The whole train is made up of 8 cars, for a total weight of just over 250 tons with 750 passengers.

The walls of the cars are made of an aluminum-steel alloy and are hardness 13. The windows are reinforced clear plastic and have a hardness of 7. The doors are just under 5 feet wide, and stuck doors can be forced open with a Strength check (DC 20 to 25 — depending on how jammed the door is).

Subway trains have an average speed of 25 miles per hour, with a top speed around 60 mph.

The Station: The interior walls and pillars of the station are made of cement, and have a hardness of 10 (pillar) to 15 (interior wall). The grates separating the top of the tunnel from the subway are steel, with a hardness of 12, and can be pried away or pushed up with a Strength check (DC 15 to push up, 25 to pry away). The walls between the tunnels and the street (or basements around the subway) are several feet of concrete and stone, with occasional rebar support, and have a hardness of 20 to 30. Characters with advanced senses could make a check to find places where the walls are thinner or cracked, and face a hardness of 15.

The shops and stalls in the station are built like typical buildings, and their interior walls are only thin wood, with a hardness of 5 to 7. Turnstiles are metal welded to the floor and have a hardness of 15. They can be pried up from the ground with a Strength check (DC 30) or removed by breaking their bolts (hardness 12). Booths are metal and plastic, with a hardness of 6 to 8. Benches and soda machines, as well as other random props, are prolific and have hardnesses of 5 to 12.

The Fire: Because the fire is started and maintained by Arson it has a rank of 12, and can force unprotected characters to make a Fortitude check every minute (10 Rounds, DC 10 + 1 for each minute of exposure) to avoid becoming fatigued. If Arson is incapacitated the fire will drop to rank 10.

Smoke and Gasses: Poison gasses released by burning materials, such as the heaters in the seats of the subway car, fill the train. PCs inside the train must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) unless they have Immunity (poison) to avoid becoming nauseated.

Smoke fills large sections of the station. Anyone in an area filled with smoke must use the suffocation rules (*M&M* page 143). Getting to an area clear of smoke requires a Spot check (DC 15). Arson hides in the smoke, as he is immune while wearing his suit.

Panicked Civilians: Until the panicked bystanders are clamed and/or evacuated they are a hazard all their own. In addition to doing annoying things like needing rescuing from fire, smoke, or crushing, the crowd as a whole can suddenly move and rush into a character as a wall of shoving, stamping humanity. PCs that get in the way of such a crowd must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to get out of the way. If they fail to do so then they are affected by the crowd as if it was a rank 8 Slow attack (resisted by Fortitude) as they are buffeted, pushed, and confused by the throngs of humanity. PCs that are knocked down may be trampled, which is an area attack with a damage of +5S.

The Center Rail: At the start of the encounter the electricity to the station is out, so none of the subway rails are active. However, if the power should return or be substituted by an electricity wielding hero, characters would have to be careful about stepping the rail that carries the electrical charge to the subway cars. Stepping on an active center rail hits the character with a 10L continuous electrical energy attack, and requires them to make a Fortitude save (DC 20) to step off of it.



Random civilians can use the Bystander or Professional archetypes (*M&M* page 154 — 155) or the Biggest Fan and Congregationalist Archetypes (page 92 and 84, respectively).

ACTION!

“*I Need a Hero*” should start *Church and State* fast and hard. People are dying and every second counts, so the PCs should get into the action quickly and shouldn’t be penalized for doing things on only a thumbnail of a plan. The scene should be frenetic, a little desperate, and obviously dangerous — but it shouldn’t make the PCs feel overwhelmed or make them slow down with agonizing tactical decisions. Keep the emphasis on the possibilities fighting in this setting and on the many ways heroes can use their powers to save innocents.

INVOLVING THE PCs

Bringing the PCs into the scene shouldn’t be a big stretch. Heroic PCs have every reason in the world to become involved. The fire is a dire situation that could cost hundreds of innocent lives, and any hero worthy of the name should jump at a chance to help. Heroes can find out about the fire from emergency frequency radio broadcasts, police or firefighter con-

tacts, early media coverage, or just from seeing the smoke as they are on patrol (or even out their window).

Non-heroic PCs can be lured in several ways. First, even a mercenary may have qualms about letting a hundred people burn. If that won’t do it, PCs can always get calls from loved ones or rich contacts caught in the fire begging for help. City or government contacts could offer rewards, from money to pardons or favors. Finally, some PCs may find themselves trapped on the train when the fire starts — in the City even super-heroes sometimes take the subway.

Another method GMs can try is to set the scene, describe the fire and the panic, the nauseous smell of burning chemicals and flesh, the screams of the innocent and Arson’s maniacal laughter and then ask the PCs why it is their characters are on the scene. Let them decide how they got there and what their motivation is — giving them a higher degree of involvement from the start. PCs who come up with particularly good reasons, especially reasons that add drama to the scene may even get a Genre Point (page 101) if the GM is using the system.

SAVING THE MUNDANES

PCs’ biggest job in this scene isn’t fighting the Made Men; it’s saving as many lives as possible and stopping the fires. Every

round at least one PC should dedicate an action towards saving the bystanders. Any round in which at least one PC action does not go towards stopping the disaster will result in people dying. (GMs who want to cut the PCs some slack can give them one last-ditch chance to save the innocent, but at a +2 to the difficulty of whatever action they take, as the PCs' neglect has led to the people being in a worse position.) Actions the PCs can take to help include:

Heroic Leadership: Because of their state of panic, natural and from Riot's powers, the civilians in the subway station count as Hostile for the purposes of social interaction checks (*M&M* page 148). PCs can try to rally and comfort the people with orations, dramatic leadership, or mental projection. The level of noise and confusion in the station makes it hard for PCs to be heard, and so they will have a -5 to all rolls unless they come up with a clever way of being heard over the din and rush (such as leaping to the top of newsstand and using a power to draw eyes).

If the crowd is moved to Unfriendly they will stop trampling each other and the heroes, but will still be disorganized and clogged up at exits. Getting them to Indifferent is necessary before they can be successfully herded by anything less than brute force. Moving them to Friendly will get a section of the crowd cooperative and calm enough to not get into further trouble. NPCs made Helpful will do what the PCs ask of them, even risking their lives to help others.

Large Scale Power-Usage: Many PCs will have powers that can dramatically change the situation. Using air, fire, or water control to put out the fire, remove the smoke and poison gasses are all obvious choices — though they'll be opposed by Arson's power. Electricity controllers or gadgeteers may want to get the ventilation and lighting systems working. Using Super-Strength to drag the train away from the worst of the fire, punch holes in walls for better ventilation, or pound an escape tunnel to the street or nearby basement would also work. Creative players should be allowed to make a big difference in a hurry, especially if they push their abilities.

Troubleshooting: Dealing with individual problems may not be the most efficient course of action, but it will also be necessary. The following are all situations the GM can give the PCs to deal with.

- Once Battery comes out, the elevator resumes working. The sight of it leads to smashing and pushing as people try to force their way into it, and unless a PC gets involved (or directs a calm NPC to do so) at least 2 fatalities will occur from trampling.
- The stairs and other exits quickly become choke points. PCs can direct people to alternate exits. Once the PCs know that the electricity in the tunnel is out, they can direct some of the crowd to cross to the eastbound platform — which is much emptier, or have transit workers lead groups out of the station and down the tunnels to a safe point.
- The train is a flaming nightmare, and most of the doors have jammed closed since the power went out. Getting

doors open or breaking holes in the train will be necessary to getting the hundreds of passengers out.

- Until the crowd is Indifferent or better, individuals will need to be rescued from being trampled or crushed. Children and women with babies are, unfortunately, most likely to fall to this threat.
- People that pass out from smoke inhalation or become unable to move due to poison gasses will need to be moved to safety. If the PCs don't do this they should direct NPC assistants to do so.
- Individuals on fire will need to be extinguished.

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

In the middle of their struggle to save the innocent, the PCs will also have to fight a devious and dangerous group of supervillains. These maniacs will start targeting PCs as soon as they get to the bottom floor. If PCs came in from the levels above without using stealth, Smash and Grab will have seen them coming and the Made Men will attack from surprise. If the PCs came in another way, or beat Smash and Grab's Spot roll with stealth skill or power, then they have a chance to surprise the Made Men. If they can beat Hitman's Spot check they gain a surprise round. If not, then the Made Men will attack known supers the turn they come in — new supers without obvious costume will be attacked when they do something obviously against the Made Men's plans.

The Made Men will fight with their standard tactics (page 74). Arson will be the most aggressive, and will use the raging fires and his heat immunity to his advantage — he'll also try to cause explosions so that he can use his Absorption to boost his strength. Numbers and Riot will both hide in the crowd, though doing so may make them vulnerable to smoke and fire if they move out of Arson's zone of control. Smash and Grab and Battery will be unobtrusive — but neither will actually move to stop a PC who is in the processes of saving an innocent life. Bad as they are both have a conscience, and are deeply disturbed about the situation. Hitman will not come into the station, staying several hundred feet (at least) down the tunnel and taking sniper shots at anyone who gets close to Arson or the train — and he has no qualms about shooting a PC trying to save innocent lives.

The Made Men are in a bad place and they know it. They desperately need to bag a hero, or their bosses are probably going to send them for a dirt nap. Arson doesn't realize he's in trouble, and is too psychotic to care either way. This combination of desperation and madness makes the Made Men fight harder than they normally would. Battery and Smash and Grab will fight until incapacitated or killed. Arson will retreat, but will keep coming back until dealt with. Numbers and Riot will flee if they take more than 3 stun or 2 lethal hits, and Hitman will flee if attacked (he doesn't even have to be hit — just shot at).

BRINGING IN THE CAVALRY

At some point in the scene Mikhael and Rock N Roll need to arrive on the scene to help the PCs out. An important part of this scene is to introduce those two characters as heroes and positive forces, in order to get the PCs to see their potential for good when both of them start acting like morons later in the adventure. PCs should also get a sample of how powerful both of the NPC heroes are, as it will let them judge what kind of tactics they will use later in the adventure when they find themselves on opposite sides.

A good way to introduce Rock and Mikhael is to have them come in at critical moments, make a difference that swings the fight in the PCs' direction, but that does not end the fight or give it to the PCs in a paper bag. After they take this big action, and possibly have a few words with the PCs about what is going on, they can move into the background. It is important that both characters have a role in the fight, but that they do not overshadow the PCs or take the scene away from them. A good way to do this is to have both accept PC authority — as the PCs were first on scene and know more about what is going on, Rock and Mikhael will follow their instructions. GMs can also use the size and confusion of the scene to their advantage, letting the two do something impressive, then disappear into the general confusion so the PCs maintain center stage. Finally, if the PCs start relying too much on the NPCs or wanting them to run the battle, Hitman could get a “lucky” critical hit and wound them badly enough that the PCs have to come back into the forefront.

Some good actions for Rock to take are: blowing a hole through the subway into a nearby basement and organizing an evacuation through the hole, using his powers to relay information and cut down on the noise so that PCs can give orders, and helping out a PC in danger with the temporary use of his force-field. Mikhael may resurrect the innocent among the dead, and will certainly heal the injured, he'll also use his massive boosted Charisma to help organize the bystanders and evacuate them in good order — pausing to brutally smack any Made Man who tries to use an innocent as a distraction or human shield before vanishing into the smoke to save more innocents.

If the PCs want to fight with Mikhael and Rock N Roll, have the two play it cool for now — there are lives to save, after all. Though PCs might think it fun to have a heroes' fight the timing would be off to have it now. Chances are very high that the PCs will end up brawling with both the Archangel and Rock at some point, but for now the heroes should try to work together. Use this scene to show up Mikhael and Rock's heroic potential and to get some kind of connection between them and the PCs.

KNOCKBACK CATASTROPHES AND COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Just in case saving thousands of people from a fire, fighting a gang of psycho super-powered mob hitmen, and meeting an angel doesn't make this scene exciting enough, here are a few complications, spectacles, and explosions to add spice:

- **Runaway Train:** If something goes wrong with the insulated joints that section off the track circuits (such as from a fumbled use of powerful electrical powers) the burning train will start racing down the tunnels, forcing the PCs to chase after it. Alternately the surge could cause a problem with the automatic train stops and cause other subway trains to come flying up the tunnel — heading for a massive collision with the burning and immobilized train.
- **Long Way Down:** The over-worked elevator gets filled way past capacity during the evacuation. When this happens the elevator's cords can snap just as it gets near the top of the shaft — sending it and a good dozen passengers hurtling down the shaft with the squeal of metal on metal and the screams of the doomed.
- **Revenge of the Paper Boy:** Battery picks up a newsstand and throws it at the PCs — with several people still inside it. Having a booth thrown at you is one thing, having it be full of innocent people is another.
- **Cave In!** An overzealous PC knocking holes in walls (or knocking villains through walls) hits a structurally important point and causes a cave-in. Because the PCs already have enough innocent bystanders to worry about, it might be amusing if the cave-in lands on an important allied NPC, or one of the PCs. Characters in the area of the cave-in must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or suffer the effects of a level 10 Snare.
- **Mad Mom in a Minivan:** If anyone gets pounded hard enough to be knocked through a wall (ouch!) they find themselves in an underground parking garage — with an SUV driving right at them (Reflex save DC 15 to get out of the way, 8L damage if hit). Once the SUV is dealt with clever characters may want to try and draw the Made Men into the garage, getting them away from the fire, or to evacuate people through the new escape tunnel.

WHAT NEXT?

PCs who want to hunt down any escaped Made Men (as it is likely at least Hitman made a run for it) should go to “**Through the Tunnels Darkly.**” If they captured all of the Made Men then “**Murder is the Case that They Gave Me**” is next.

If the PCs don't give chase, they can finish saving lives and helping emergency crews with repairs. They will still be called on for the trial, and so after they finish their business play should go to “**Murder is the Case that They Gave Me.**” PCs who want to track the Made Men down another day should go to “**Through the Tunnels Darkly**” subsection “**Slow and Steady Wins the Race.**”

Incapacitated or murdered PCs may be healed by the Archangel on the spot (if they are “innocent”). If not they'll wake up later in the hospital. In either case it's best to let the PCs regain some dignity by letting most of the Made Men escape so that the PCs can track them down in “**Through the Tunnels Darkly.**”

THROUGH THE TUNNELS DARKLY

In which PCs chase down the Made Men who fled from "I Need a Hero," taking vengeance and doing justice with extreme prejudice.

THE SITUATION

There are two possible setups to this scene. The first is that the PCs have just finished the fight in the burning subway station and are now chasing down fleeing Made Men. The second is that the PCs have come back at a later date to try and track down the Made Men. In the first case the PCs will be running down several dangerous men through a series of smoky tunnels, in the second they'll be able to avoid the tunnel chase, but will have to deal with the Made Men dug into their headquarters and well fortified.

In either case the scene should feel different than "**I Need a Hero.**" Rather than focusing on saving innocent lives and having a standing fight with the Made Men, this scene should put the PCs in the role of hunters and hunted. Combat will be important, but more important will be movement, tracking, and awareness as the PCs avoid ambushes in narrow tunnels. It is likely that both the PCs and the Made Men will be injured, and so desperation and pain should be played up in descriptions, contrasting the fatigue of the chase with frantic bursts of combat. Alternately, the PCs might be healed and deliberately stalking the Made Men, in which case the superior feeling of the hunter should fill the scene.

NPCs, such as cops or Rock N Roll and Mikhael, will be happy to help the PCs out in this scene, as everyone wants the Made Men to be punished for what they have done. As in the last scene GMs should be sure that any involved NPCs do not outshine the PCs or take control of the scene away from them. Having NPCs argue with PCs about tactics or help out in a pinch is fine, but don't let them run the show. Its always possible

for the NPCs and PCs to split up, and have the NPCs go down a tunnel and vanish until the fight is over.

THE SETTING

Most of the scene will be set either in the subway tunnels or the Made Men's headquarters: the Speakeasy. A few of the Made Men may flee through the streets towards their base, in which case the GM should simply assume they are running through a normal downtown area of the City.

The subway tunnels are hundreds of miles long, criss-crossed with access tunnels, electrical and gas tunnels and access points, several holes and access walks leading towards the sewers, many older abandoned subway and steam tunnels, and vents and grating leading to the sidewalks above. Lighting varies between dim in modern well-accessed tunnels to non-existent in old abandoned tunnels. Dirt, grease, and various unpleasant kinds of mold and vermin excretions cover everything, and even the most fastidious character will have a hard time staying clean. Sudden turns, dips and rises in the level of the tunnels, crossovers and switchbacks are all common and all lead to sound becoming oddly distorted. Subway trains race along lines not affected by the fire, hurtling through the narrow tunnels too fast to stop, coming through blind intersections seemingly out of nowhere. In other words the subway and underground system is a large, dirty, scary maze, both dangerous and confusing.

No map is provided because no map can cover the interaction of thousands of tunnels. The tunnel leading out of the

burning station's third level leads to the west, and is isolated for several hundred yards. After that it interconnects with access tunnels and utility vents, and in a mile it crosses over another subway line. Past that point the tunnels all start to loop in and out of each other, becoming a vast maze that even experienced tunnel workers and explorers get lost in. Hardnesses and environmental hazards can use the same statistics as those in the "Weight, Hardness, and Environmental DC" sidebar on page 7.

The other setting for the scene is the Speakeasy, which is detailed on page 74 and a map of which can be found in the combat booklet. If the Made Men get there well ahead of the PCs then they will have had time to activate the security systems and use the facilities to heal and get ready for a raid. If the PCs are hot enough on their heels the Made Men won't have time to set up their defenses, and the concealment and security system features won't be working.

If the PCs encounter anyone in the tunnels they can either use the Union Worker (page 91) or Bystander (*M&M* page 154) archetypes. Police who are helping the characters can use the Police Officer archetype (*M&M* page 155).

FIRST OUT THE GATE

PCs chasing the Made Men immediately after "**I Need a Hero**" have the advantage of fresh tracks and still fleeing quarry. PCs who go after the fleeing villains within a couple of minutes can follow them with Spot or Listen checks opposed by the Move Silently and Hide checks of the Made Men. If there are multiple Made Men in a group then they get the lowest skill bonus of any member of the group — not even a ninja can sneak while traveling with elephants. Once the PCs spot the Made Men they can move to engage. The Made Men will continue trying to shake the PCs, fighting only so long as they are forced to before running down a side tunnel and trying to hide again.

PCs that stay at the subway to help clean up and get the last of the bystanders to safety will have a slightly harder time tracking the Made Men. The subway tunnels are very hard ground, but there are still ways to track them, as feet leave prints in areas of grease, soot, or grime, and brushing against a wall can leave tell-tale smears and smudges that sharp eyed hunters can follow with the Track feat (DC 15 if they have light, 21 if not, DC 20/26 for Hitman — who covers his trail.) PCs who track the Made Men at half speed will catch up to them just before they get to their headquarters (the Made Men move slowly from injuries and unfamiliarity with the tunnels), if they track at full speed (+5 DC to check) they can catch the Made Men in the tunnels, in which case the situation becomes like the running fight above.

Additionally, PCs with applicable skills may be able to use them to advantage. Knowledge skills in areas such as City, Subways, or Underground can be used in a check (DC 20 for a general knowledge, 15 for subway/underground specific) to let the PC figure out the general direction of the Made Men's

flight. A second check (same DC) will allow the character to find a way to get ahead of the Made Men — such as by going out of the subway and racing across the surface streets before coming back into the tunnels several blocks up, or by taking a shorter series of access tunnels. If the group has a good communications system they could arrange to trap the Made Men between two groups in an area where there are no side-tunnels from which to escape.

The Made Men want to escape. Riot, Battery, and Smash and Grab will have no interest in fighting, and with no particular skill in stealth or running fights they will do their best to simply get away. Smash and Grab will stay near Riot unless his life is in jeopardy, and then he will try for an extended teleport to get away for good. Numbers, with his city knowledge and luck, will try to lead the characters into danger in the tunnels, tricking PCs into actions like walking into a tunnel just as a subway train is coming around a blind corner (15L collision). If he can't shake the PCs in the tunnels he will move to the surface streets and try to vanish into a crowd, using extemporaneous disguises to throw the PCs off his scent. Arson will not flee long term; he'll hit and run the PCs until they drop him. He'll also be searching for a gas main to blow, so that he can absorb the energy of the blast to boost himself. Hitman will move slowly, hiding and covering his tracks. If the PCs go after the other Made Men he'll let them go unopposed, but if they go after him he'll start a running battle in which he shoots from ambush, using ricochet attacks to make it difficult to determine where the shot came from, and then using stealth and city knowledge skills to move to a new ambush location.

If the PCs catch one of the Made Men, they can try to force the location of the headquarters out of him. For Hitman this doesn't even require a check, as he will tell the PCs everything he knows about the other Made Men, their headquarters, and their powers the minute he's caught. For the others it requires an Intimidation check or power use, with a DC of 5 higher than normal due to group loyalty and fear of reprisals.

If the Made Men make it to their headquarters, they button up inside, using medical and technical facilities to heal and repair equipment. They trust their security system to detect incoming enemies, and so will not be on guard unless it is triggered. If it is, they will set up to catch incoming PCs in a cross-fire in the main room, but they will only fight until they take another hit, and then the combination of fear and exhaustion will prompt them to surrender. PCs who have been vicious or have a rep for killing villains out of hand will have to beat them the hard way, as not even Hitman is stupid enough to surrender to someone he knows will kill him.

SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE

PCs who want to wait to chase the Made Men can track them down days or weeks later. The most obvious way to do so is by tracking their steps through the subway tunnels. This has a DC as described above, but with an increase in the DC of +1 for

every 6 hours that have passed. (The activity in the subway tunnels makes trails degrade much faster than usual). Success on this roll will bring the PCs to the entrance to the Made Men's headquarters after several hours of mucking about in the dark and dangerous tunnels.

Alternately the PCs might want to track the Made Men through social and investigative channels by seeing who in the local scene knows about them, their base, or their route of escape. PCs can make a Gather Information check against the table below.

| Result | Info Gained |
|--------|--|
| 17 | The Made Men never left the subway tunnels, every exit was watched by someone and no one saw them. |
| 19 | A lot of strange construction was going on in several of the abandoned tunnels a couple of months ago, but nothing the city knew about. |
| 21 | The safe house is in an abandoned station, and is very secure, with walls even super-heroes can't punch through. |
| 23 | Arson and Riot both have cars parked in a garage near 19th and 28th Street. |
| 25 | The safe house is built in the abandoned station at 19th and 28th street. You can get to it through the tunnels or a hidden door in the sub-basement of the shopping complex above it. |
| 27 | There is a very good security system guarding the safe house, but it's a type that the PCs can get the schematics to from Mohareb Secure Systems — a well-known vendor. |

Other sources of information include: Tunnel runners and morlocks who saw something suspicious (Diplomacy, Knowledge: Morlocks, Underground); transit authority or utility workers who know the tunnels (Diplomacy, Bluff, Knowledge: Transit); snitches who know about bribes made to city officials and contractors working on shady deals or mob contacts who may think the Made Men are psychos and know about where they live (Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge: Criminals); construction workers and contractors as someone had to build the thing (Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge: Contractors/Building/Business, Profession: Carpenter, Contractor, etc); computer checks of power usage in the tunnels or footage of security cameras (Computers); and analysis of dirt and grease the Made Men left in the station (Science: Geology, Biology, Botany). Also, because the public is so outraged by the damage the Made Men did, the DC for any secondary investigation rolls is lowered by 2.

Once the PCs find the Made Men's headquarters they can raid at will. The Made Men's bosses have told them to stay at home until they decide what is to be done with them (it doesn't sound good), and thus will all be there when the PCs come knocking. They still are relying on their security system, so if the PCs can bypass it then they can take the Made Men by surprise (possibly asleep). If not then the Made Men will

scurry to get their gear ready and will try to get the PCs caught in crossfire in the main room. The Made Men will be a more rested than in the previous scenario, and so will take more pounding before being forced to surrender (around 2 to 3 hits).

RUNAWAY TRAINS AND ALLIGATORS IN THE SEWERS

- **Sewer Surge:** Battery, or a super-strong PC, breaks through the subway tunnel into an adjacent sewer tunnel, filling the whole complex with a massive flood of sewage. Reflex save (DC 20) not to get swept under and be knocked prone. Fort or Will save (DC 15) to resist nausea.
- **When Animals Attack:** The noise of the fights disrupts a colony of bats, which fly in a mad panic around the room, giving everyone one-quarter concealment.
- **Please Don't Kill Me!** The PCs, while in a running chase, stumble across a group of stupid but innocent armature tunnel-explorers, who in the darkness may look like one of the Made Men (Spot DC 15, 10 for those with Dark Vision). Even if the PCs don't attack them, the kids may panic and try to flee — possibly getting themselves into real danger. Alternately, if the PCs are trying to kill the Made Men, one of the kids may take pictures of them while they're in the act.
- **Power Hazard:** Wiring exposed after a super attack makes a giant arc of electricity that courses from one side of the room to the other, blindingly intense and certainly lethal. Anyone looking directly at it takes a PL 8 Dazzle vs. Sight, and anyone touching it takes a rank 10L continuous energy blast.
- **Crocodiles.** Need we say more? (Move 15' run, 30' swim; Melee attack +3, Damage 8L bite; Saves: Dam +5, Fort +3, Ref -1, Will -2; Feats: Amphibious.)

WHAT NEXT?

Once the PCs capture the Made Men they will have to decide what to do with them. The government will demand that PCs turn the Made Men over for trial, having a serious need to prove they can handle the situation. It would be good if at least one of them lived to go to trial in **"Murder is the Case that They Gave Me"** and so if the PCs seem bound to slaughter the whole group it might be best to have one of the Made Men escape and not return to headquarters (Hitman is a good choice for this, as he can probably escape with his high stealth skills), and after the slaughter of his fellows turn himself in to the authorities.

The next official scene takes places at least a month of 1C time after the end of this scene. PCs may have subplot scenes to run between the close of this scene and the start of the next as there is plenty of time for PCs to heal, deal with the news or government surrounding the subway fight and fire, deal with real life entanglements, and so on.

MURDER IS THE CASE THAT THEY GAVE ME

In which the PCs help send the Made Men up for mass murder, face off with a sleazy lawyer who will become their nemesis, and get to experience the power and silliness of the legal system by talking smack like a lawyer from Law and Order.

THE SITUATION

Several weeks or months will have passed since the last scene, and the (surviving) Made Men are now on trial. Any Made Men the PCs didn't nab will have been picked up by NPC heroes or cops. If the PCs got them all then they'll be the heroes of the hour.

The Mafia dons, horrified at what happened and the public backlash against it, have decided they need a sacrificial goat. They've decided that Arson will swing for the subway massacre (which it is called regardless of how many people the PCs managed to save). Their top lawyer, Joshua Withem, is their hand on the scene. He hopes to get Arson the death penalty, thus deflecting the public's anger from his other clients. He also plans to use character witnesses and evidence that the Made Men's families were held in interment camps to make them seem like victims of Arson's madness. Despite the seemingly ironclad case against them, Withem will succeed at his goals if the PCs can't stop him.

Because of the spectacular nature of the crime and the propensity of both defense and prosecution to play to the public through the media, the trial quickly becomes a media circus. Everyone wants a piece of the action, between the legal drama of the court and the lists of witnesses that reads like the "hot sellers" of Comic Collectors Monthly. One wag describes it as being "Like the OJ trial with spandex shorts and adamantium fists."

The Prosecution is led by the able Charleen Biscardi, who wants to make the PCs her key witnesses. They were on the scene, they're heroes of the hour, and their eyewitness testimony is invaluable to her. She will do anything she can in order

to get at least one PC to testify, and can even play dirty and threatening if the PCs won't cooperate. She'll even go so far as to get the FBI or other federal agencies to speak to the PCs, getting them to help her leverage them into the witness box. (They'll also let PCs know that the Made Men, unlike most suspected Mafia hitmen, won't be given a chance to roll for a plea — the public outrage over the massacre is too great.)

PCs that take the stand will be the focus of media scrutiny and hype, and will face off with the quick-witted, unethical, and utterly sleazy Withem as he tries to ruin their testimony. PCs that don't take the stand will have other problems to deal with, from stopping jury bribing to dealing with the media as the trial spills out of the courtroom and into the TVs of an angry public.

UM, THEY'RE DEAD JIM

If the PCs managed to murder all of the Made Men, then the authorities will have to have pushed a little harder in order to keep from seeming incompetent. As a result they will have arrested Don Ferro Cennini and his lieutenants Saul Lamotta and Bruno Ralli and will be putting them on trial. Withem will still be representing them. The trial can be run as below, but Withem will still put the onus on the (now dead) Arson and try to get his clients off with a slap on the wrist. Most of Withem's questions and techniques will remain the same, just with the change that they focus on the PCs as killers who have already given the public "justice." Regardless of the outcome of the trial Withem will make sure new Made Men get made as his payment, ensuring their return later in the adventure.

THE SETTING

"Murder is the Case That They Gave Me" has several settings, as it will take place across multiple locations. The most important of these settings is the court itself. Located in the center of the Judicial District, surrounded by the DA's office and the Supreme Court, the building is a large square building done with a classical Roman style front. Carved on the frieze in large letters are the words "TRUE JUSTICE IS THE CENTRAL PILLAR OF GOOD GOVERNMENT." The words are guarded by classical heroes with drawn swords and strong shields.

The front steps and streets surrounding the courthouse will be a circus for the duration of the trial, choked with reporters, cameramen, news cams, police, and angry members of the public with pickets ranging from "BURN THEM ALL!" to "DIE TERRORIST DIE!" and "THE DEATH PENALTY IS MURDER!" Several police and bailiffs will be there round the clock to maintain order, escort witnesses and lawyers in and out of the building, and make sure that no unauthorized personnel can access the building. They'll even scan the PCs, and won't let them in while they carry weapons or offensive gear (unless special circumstances apply). Over 10,000 people will be in the area around the building at any time, and slightly over 3,000 will be inside during the day.

The interior of the court will be calmer, as the chaos is largely kept outside. Suited attorneys, groomed witnesses and smiling defendants will fill the halls alongside well-behaved court reporters. The trial will be held in Part 45, on the second floor up a set of well polished wooden stairs, with double doors overlooking the entrance and foyer from across a wide, flag-crowded balcony.

Inside the courtroom there are benches behind the balustrade separating the attorney's tables and court proper from the gallery. The judge sits at a huge wooden bench, a raised platform at the front of the room just above the witness seat, watched over by a statue of blind justice. The court reporter sits under the judge, near the witness box and the clerk sits under the judge on the opposite side of the podium from the witness box. Doors for jurors are to the right, for prisoners to be brought in on the left. The jury box is on the right, separated from both the witnesses and attorneys by a balustrade. Bailiffs stand near all doors, the judge, and (in this case) the jury box. The room is well furnished, with a heavy serious feeling from lots of dark woods, flags, and imposing statues of justice and truth. A map of the courtroom can be found in the combat booklet.

Other scenes in this section may take place in attorney's offices, police stations, or the like. For the attorney's office just assume a normal office with a conference room nearby, the map of Withem's office can be used as a template. The DA's office is near the courtroom and is a little run-down, showing its age and cluttered with books that don't fit on the shelves anymore. Withem's office is several blocks down, taking up the top floor of a skyscraper, and is very posh and ele-

gant, obviously designed by a professional. Police stations are dirty, smelly, loud, overcrowded and tend to be overly full of desks, little dark interrogation rooms, holding cells, and mounds and mounds of paperwork in rickety old file cabinets.

Withem's stats are on page 99. Head Prosecutor Charleen Biscardi uses the lawyer archetype stats (page 93). Police, reporters, and bystanders can use the stats from *M&M* (pages 154 — 155). A few of the protestors might have Union Picketer stats (page 92).

TRAINED ATTACK LAWYERS AND YOU

"Murder is the Case that They Gave Me" is not supposed to be an accurate representation of the legal system. It's a scene in which the social and mental skills of the PCs clash with the wicked wit of a sleazy lawyer. Use and misuse of legal terminology and lots of talk about things like "due process" and "civil rights" can be used to spice up the drama, but the scene shouldn't use technical detail unless doing so increases the drama.

A Verdict Point system can be used to keep track of the trial on a game scale. The system is a simple way to track the PCs' performance in an objective way, keeping score of their successes and failures. If the PCs get involved at all they start the trial with two Verdict Points, to represent the prevailing public opinion about the guilt of the accused and the influence that supers have upon a jury. Successes in the trial gain them more points, and failures lose points. Each section gives ideas for how many Verdict Points various actions can gain and lose, and GMs can ad lib for unexpected player actions by giving them 1 Verdict Point for successful actions (2 if it is a critical action), and taking 1 for failures (2 if it is a critical failure). At the end of the trial all the points the PCs accumulated will determine the Verdict. (See "The Verdict" for the final chart.)

There are many possible sub-scenes in this section, and GMs should decide which they wish to run and which they think might be too much for their group. PCs should all have a chance to be involved, but the trial shouldn't drag past the point where it stops being fun. Any scene the GM decides not to run shouldn't be counted for purposes of Victory Point gain or loss. (For example if the GM doesn't run "Witness Tampering" then PCs should not lose Victory Points for not getting involved.)

GETTING INVOLVED

Lead prosecutor Charleen Biscardi knows that this case will either make her DA or turn her into a laughingstock, and so she does everything in her power to make the case perfect. First on her list is getting the super-heroes who stopped the Made Men to testify at the trial, as they are among the few reliable witnesses (those not in a panic state) and because she knows the cachet that super-heroes carry with the general public. She will insist that at least one PC testify, and will try

to get the rest of the PCs involved in other ways. For ideas on her tactics see the sidebar **"I Can't Testify, the Government Wants Me Dead!"** If the PCs want to testify, or volunteer in another way, then they're already involved and no more sweat need be spilt.

Alternately, if one of the PCs just happens to be a famous and connected prosecuting attorney, she could try to get the case for herself. Doing so would require at least one Bluff check (DC 20) to convince the DA that she's not already involved in the case (as being tried by the person that beat you up and arrested you is something of a no-no), a Diplomacy check (DC 25) to convince the powers that be that she is the best lawyer for the job, and a Profession (Lawyer) check (DC 15) to make sure all the Is get dotted and the Ts get crossed. Players who take over will have to run their own trial, and will get to make all their own rolls to confound Withem and figure out his strategy.

TESTIFY!

Testifying PCs will form the backbone of Biscardi's case. She will set them up so their testimony plays to their strengths. Highly charismatic PCs will be asked open ended questions that leave them a lot of room to work their magic on the jury, highly intelligent PCs will be asked questions full of technical detail and information to awe the jury with their expertise, and characters neither brilliant nor shining will be asked sim-

ple questions to keep their testimony directed and on point. At the end of the PCs' testimony they make a social roll to make their impression on the jury — which will be important when Withem comes after them. The most common skills used are Diplomacy, Perform (Oratory or Acting), or a specialized Knowledge or Science skill for characters whose testimony focuses on their knowledge. PCs check against the following table to determine the results of their testimony, with a +2 bonus for Biscardi's aid.

| Result | Jury Reaction |
|-------------|--|
| -10 or less | The judge and jury are angered by the PCs actions, giving the PC a -2 to all checks and Withem a +2 to all checks during cross. Lose a Verdict Point |
| -9 to 0 | The jury is upset or disturbed by something the PC says, giving Withem a +2 to all checks in the cross. |
| 1 to 15 | The jury is favorably disposed but not bowled over — no modifier. |
| 16 to 30 | The jury finds the PC compelling and will not take easily to Withem's cross -- +2 to all the PC's rolls during cross. |
| 30+ | The jury is in the palm of the PC's hand -- +2 to all the PC's rolls and -2 to all Withem's rolls during cross. Gain a Verdict Point. |

I CAN'T TESTIFY, THE GOVERNMENT WANTS ME DEAD!

Given the relation of Bronze Age heroes to the law, it's likely that one or more of the PCs will have good reason not to come anywhere near a courtroom. However, a trial is a great source of drama and contention, and so GMs might want to find a way to get the players involved despite reluctance on the characters' part. Here are a suggestions:

Begging Like a Starving Man: Mrs. Biscardi knows how to get people to do what she wants. She will play up PCs' sense of civil responsibility, patriotism, and desire to see the Made Men punished. If none of that works she will beg, which isn't easy for such a proud woman. If pleas don't work she isn't above contacting loved ones to do her pleading for her, or putting out the word that the PCs won't testify to turn public opinion against them. SOs, little brothers, and orphans begging a PC to testify and demanding to know why he won't do the right thing may soften even the hardest heart.

Court Order: If begging won't work, the prosecution does have another option. The PCs are material witnesses and can be ordered to testify, or else arrested if they won't. While Mrs. Biscardi hesitates to use this method against a super-human she will if needs be. In addition she will call up the government ladder for favors from other agencies. PCs might find themselves being asked by the Mayor, the FBI, or the governor to testify. PCs that play their cards right may even be able to finagle immunity or leniency for past crimes and

indiscretions. While the DA won't like it, she'd rather put the page 1 psychos in jail than harass the PCs for dubious crimes committed months and years ago. Even mutant PCs may find themselves with offers of protection and government support if they'll let go of "past misunderstandings" and prove that mutants and humans can work together for justice.

Answer the Question, Masked Man: Finally, it is possible the judge could give special consideration to PCs. Though Withem will oppose it, the PCs may be able to get the right to testify in costume — keeping their secret identity secret. Other options to keep the PCs shielded from public scrutiny, such as testifying to closed circuit camera, can also be discussed. The one thing the PCs won't be able to do is avoid Withem's cross, as it would break the accused's constitutional right to confront their accuser (and more importantly because it would bypass the most dramatic part of the scene). However, the judge can direct Withem that only questions directly regarding the crime can be put to the PCs, so they won't have to worry about him digging about for answers about their personal lives or asking sticky questions about the source of their powers or sexual deviancy.

If the PCs absolutely refuse to testify they can still get involved in the trial in other ways. However if they don't testify it counts as Withemwinning the cross absolutely, giving the PCs -4 Verdict Points.

Biscardi will not set the PCs up to Bluff, Intimidate, or Taunt the jury — as the results of such actions could be disastrous. PCs who want to try it anyway use the table above, but subtract 15 from their result. As a group PCs may not gain more than 2 Verdict points from testimony.

Once the PCs have made their roll Withem will start his cross-examination. Throughout the cross Withem will be smiling, genteel, and even his taunts will be delivered in an honest and faintly quizzical sounding voice. Only if a PC successfully counter-taunts him will he let his demeanor slip and seem like anything other than an intelligent, dedicated professional with a sparkling wit.

Withem's cross will focus on four general areas: trying to negate the PCs influence on the jury with rhetorical appeals, trying to move the remaining force of the PCs testimony solely against Arson, making the PCs look like they may have been partly responsible for the extent of the damages, and either drawing dirt out of the PCs past or insinuating that such dirt exists. If only one PC is testifying then Withem directs the full range of his cross against that lucky individual. If more than one PC is testifying Withem will only cross on one or two areas, focusing on the aspects on which each PC is weakest.

Each of the following sections gives Withem's approach to a subject, some sample questions he might ask, and gives the skill he uses and the skills PCs can use to resist and counter his assault. For all of these checks the feats Attractive and Fame add to the PCs' checks, while Infamy subtracts.

The legal appeal: One of the first things Withem will do is try to confuse the jury by involving fine points of the law in order to cloud the PCs' testimony. This area of questioning focuses on the legality of PCs' actions, testimony, and position in the City, and is often about the legal troubles caused by super-beings in general. Withem will often start with a question in this area, then move to related question in other areas as the PCs' responses give him openings. When he's exhausted the possibilities of other lines of questioning, he returns here. Some sample questions are:

- Did you read my clients their rights? Did you deny them council? Did you question them only after you had beaten them senseless?
- Do you work for any legal law-enforcement or emergency service? (If so) Why did you break procedure by not following proper methods for evacuation as laid out in section XV-567 of your agency's operational manual? (If not) What gives you the right to extract information under threat of torture? If the police cannot beat someone until they confess, why should you be allowed to?
- Did you even try to get my clients to surrender, or did you just attack under the assumption that the only good Italian is a senseless Italian? Can you honestly tell me you followed correct procedure for the administration of force? How can I know you won't beat me for just doing my job?
- You obviously are a powerful individual, and are trying to do the right thing. However, if you have free reign to

beat and pursue any individual you want, what is to stop you from becoming judge and jury all on your own? You already seem to have decided this case, despite the fact that my clients are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty.

For this check Withem will use his Diplomacy, with the Law bonus. PCs can counter with Diplomacy with a +2 bonus, or Perform (Oratory, Acting, Public Speaking). PCs who have skills in Law, Police Procedure, or similar areas can gain a +2 synergy bonus to this roll.

It was Arson: Throughout the questions around other issues, Withem will constantly but subtly try to shift the blame for everything that happened in the subway station onto Arson's shoulders, making the other Made Men out as victims of Arson's madness. He'll focus on the fire, started specifically by Arson, as being the main cause of death and damage; by showing that the actions of the other Made Men were focused only on defending themselves from the PCs; and even by arguing that some of the Made Men's actions were supposed to be helping the bystanders escape from the disaster Arson caused. The following are some examples of questions Withem might ask in this area.

- Were these children you saved in danger from fire?
- Did Mr. Noth (Numbers) make any move to harm you or bystanders before you made him afraid for his life?
- Were the victims of Mr. Amato's (Riot) powers moving away from the fire? Weren't they trying to get out of the area, just as you wanted them to?
- Didn't Mr. Calero (Battery) get out of the elevator, freeing it for use by the evacuating citizens?
- Isn't it true that Mr. Vespuchi (Hitman) was not present in the station? Isn't it possible then that he could not see the extent of the danger?

Because he does not want to tip his hand to the prosecution or let the jury know he is manipulating them, Withem will use his Innuendo for this check. Because Withem is being subtle any social skill other than Intimidate can be used to counter, Science or Knowledge (Criminal Psychology) can also be used to counter with a +2 bonus and counter Innuendo also gains a +2 bonus.

Who caused what: The third area that Withem will focus on is the specifics of what happened during the fight in the subway. He'll try to confuse the jury by indicating that it wasn't just the Made Men who were responsible for the extent of the catastrophe, that it was also the City, the heroes, and the subway workers. When questioning the PCs he'll focus on damage caused by their superpowers during the fight, the risks that their engagement with the Made Men put bystanders in, and any obvious inadequacies that smart PCs may have noticed with the emergency systems. Some example questions are:

- But wasn't it you that struck my client, causing him to be flung into the group of people who were injured? (This could be replaced with anything spectacularly destructive or accidental that the PCs did in the fight.)

- Weren't you the one that destroyed the newsstand?
- Did you actually see my client cause that injury, or did you only assume it? If you were as busy helping people evacuate as you claim, how did you see that with such detail through the smoke and the confusion?
- Were those people already injured before you ripped the train open, causing it to tilt and metal debris to go flying through the air, or only after your reckless bravado?
- Do you think there were enough sprinklers in the station? Enough exits? How hard was it for you to get the people out of the station? Is that responsible design?
- Did you know that more than a dozen injuries were caused by firemen working under your directions?

For this check Withem will use his Diplomacy. However, if PCs become touchy about the subject he may switch to well hidden barbs and use his Taunt to get them to display anger or poor judgment. PCs may counter with any social skill other than Intimidate, and may also use Knowledge or Science skills based around crime, subways, or perfect memory/detail recall. Any character with the Photographic Memory feat gets a +2 bonus to any check in this situation.

Muckraking and lies: Super-heroes tend to have a lot of secrets and have questionable histories with many incidents of violence and innocents being harmed in their presence. It's common for parts of a super's background to be mysterious, or for them to have worked for a government organization with a less than perfect track record. Even the cleanest of heroes has often had run-ins with the law, even if it was only because of a frame up or mistaken identity. In this line of questioning Withem will attack the PCs on all of those points, digging up and grinding their faces into their past mistakes, indiscretions, and crimes. Anything the PCs have ever done wrong could come up here, used to discredit them, and even perfect heroes may find Withem twisting their actions and histories into a sinister light involving conspiracies and murder. Example questions are:

- Isn't it true that the last "act of public heroism" you performed also left over a dozen people injured because of reckless acts you took against the advice of the authorities?
- How often in the past have you "accidentally" killed civilians?
- Isn't it true that you used to work for (a government murder squad, organized crime, a racist organization, or any other group that would make the jury nervous — including legitimate groups given a sinister cast by Withem's tone)?
- Have you ever killed anyone? Why were you wanted by the police last year, if it wasn't for murder?
- Have you ever lied to the authorities? Why did the police think you were a criminal for so many years then?
- How can you, with your history of violence and brutality, sit here so smugly judging my clients?

If a PC has history that Withem can use to discredit him

then Withem will use his Taunt for this check, goading the PC and showing their weakness. If the PC has no dirty history then Withem will use Bluff to hint that the PC does. PCs can resist with any social skill (though Intimidation would be difficult). PCs with a long standing sterling reputation (GM's call) get a +2 to their check as does anyone who uses Taunts or Innuendo based around prodding Withem about who is paying his fees to defend the Made Men.

Each area in which the PCs defeat Withem gains the group a Verdict Point. Each check that a PC loses costs them a Verdict Point. The group as a whole cannot gain or lose more than 6 Verdict Points from Withem's cross unless they do something remarkably stupid — such as punching Withem in the head. (Yes, it would feel good, but it wouldn't really help the trial.)

HELPING THE PROSECUTION

Charleen Biscardi is a very good lawyer, but she still has blindneses and limitations. Her plan for the case is to rely upon the solid and time-tested methods of having lots of witnesses, security tape footage, and public outrage on her side. She is very methodical and not overly imaginative, and so the PCs may need to help her on a few points that come up in the trial.

First off, Biscardi will miss the main thrust of Withem's strategy to scapegoat Arson for the crime. She simply assumes his emphasis on Arson's part in the roll is a mistake based on Withem trying to be cleverer than he really is. A PC who sees through this and figures out the real reasons can get a Verdict Point if they convince the prosecutor about the truth of what is going on before her closing arguments (where she can try to put the blame on all the Made Men in equal measure).



PCs can see through Withem with a successful check opposing their Sense Motive with his Bluff, either during or after their cross-examination. PCs who are present in court during the testimony of other witnesses can make the same check, and get a +2 situational bonus if they watch the cross of more than two witnesses (as the repetition shows Withem's emphasis). A failure by more than 20 on this roll will give the PC a horribly wrong reading, possibly assuming that Withem is trying to get Arson off by making him look insane. If the PC convinces Biscardi of this wrong motive, it will cost them a Verdict Point as she misapplies her rhetorical skills.

Another area that Biscardi miscalculates is the effect of Withem's assertion, made when he interviews character witnesses, that the Made Men's grandparents were held in internment camps during WWII and that their parents were frequently harassed by police. Withem uses this testimony to build a psychological profile of the Made Men as being alienated from society and subject to the control of evil men like Arson. Biscardi refuses to believe it has any import, and doesn't bother to look into the matter. PCs who want to check the matter out may make Gather Information, Science (Criminal Psychology), or Knowledge (History) checks (DC 15) to find out that though many Italians were put in camps by the American government, none of the Made Men's ancestors were, and that none of their families has had an unusually negative relationship with the law. PCs who convince Biscardi to use this information can gain a single Verdict Point by helping her shoot down Withem's innuendo. If the PCs botch the information, or make wrong claims (such as asserting that no Italians were ever put in internment camps in America) and get Biscardi to act on the false information, they will lose Verdict Point as they are publicly exposed as fools.

Finally, PCs with mental powers may also want to take a look into Withem's mind to see what he is up to. Doing so requires that they make a check sufficient to read his memories, with the result that they see not only his emphasis on Arson to get the others off, but also the false nature of his appeals towards the history of the Made Men's ancestors. (PCs who get a good enough check to deeply read Withem's subconscious may also learn that he is planning to do something to get them, and Rock and Mikhael, in deep legal trouble. However at this point he hasn't worked out the details himself, and so no real information can be found about the upcoming plot other than the general warning that Withem means them ill.) Convincing Biscardi of this information can be difficult, as she'll be loathe to use information gained that way, and so the PCs will have to make a Diplomacy check (DC 25) to get her to turn the screw. If they can get her to use it, however, it gets them the same two Verdict Points as with the skill methods above (not cumulative). However, if the PCs botch the roll or otherwise make it obvious to Withem that they were reading his mind he can use the extremely illegal nature of the probe to take 3 Verdict Points away from the PCs as he has them removed from court and any evidence based on their testimony stricken. Similar measures will be taken if the PCs are found reading anyone else's mind and using the information — though few other than

Withem have information of value, and none of it is admissible, so reading minds randomly will get the PCs more trouble than benefit.

RECRUITMENT DRIVE

PC testimony is good, and the testimony of more super-heroes is even better. As fate (or plot) would have it, Rock N Roll and the Archangel were on scene, and both of them would make ideal witnesses — famous, attractive, and massively charismatic. However, both of them have issues with testifying in court. Mikhael feels that it is something below him, subtly tainted with the stain of mortality and a fallen world. Rock, while not so high and mighty does have a boatload of issues with the government and the “farce they call the justice system.”

Getting these two stubborn asses to testify won't be easy. Either superhuman will listen to the PCs, if for no other reason than that they fought side by side against the Made Men. This gives the PCs a break that few others get, as the DA would have a hell of a time even getting an audience. It also gives the GM a chance to have the PCs role-play a scene with the two NPCs before things fall apart. PCs can play the scenes of interaction out, arguing as they would against Rock and Mikhael's stubborn positions. Rolls may not be required, as deep down both Mikhael and Rock want to help — they just need to be given an excuse to satisfy their egos. However, if PCs want to roll, the general DCs for Diplomacy checks would be 15. Other social skills may work as well, but bluffs, taunts, and intimidation will certainly have large scale negative consequences and would be much more difficult (DCs of 20 to 35, depending on the situation).

Getting either super to testify will add 1 Verdict Point and getting both to turn their charismatic guns on full force gets 3 Verdict Points. If neither shows up, however, Withem will point out the conspicuous absence and take a Verdict Point away.

WITNESS RELOCATION AND JURY PROTECTION

While the mob as a whole is staying out of the trial, some of Riot's friends are not being so civic-minded. A passel of mob wannabes and hangers-on takes it into their minds that they can intimidate witnesses into not fingering their boy, and they don't use a lot of subtlety in their approach. They start out by beating the snot out of one of the few witnesses who clearly remembers seeing Riot and understands his role in the atrocity. Then other witnesses start getting calls. Pretty soon the witnesses, while still willing to testify against Arson, are starting to become unwilling to talk about the other Made Men. The police and the DA may ask PCs who are specifically not involved in the case to step in and protect the witnesses, preferably tracking down the thugs doing the intimidating. If the PCs have multiple headquarters, allowing them to keep testifying PCs separate from the witnesses, then they may even be asked to hide and protect the witnesses. PCs that do

nothing will lose two Verdict Points.

Even when the PCs get involved, the powers that be will warn any characters planning to testify that they should stay well away from the other witnesses, as they don't want Withem to be able to accuse them of polluting witness testimony. He will argue this anyway, but if the testifying PCs keep away from the rest of the group it will have little effect — but if there is any evidence that tampering did go on it could get witnesses excluded and end up harming the case, taking a Verdict Point away.

If the PCs simply protect or hide the witnesses without looking for the thugs who were trying to intimidate them then the thugs will start targeting the families and friends of jurors next. The PCs can try to protect all of these people, but the threats will keep coming through the cracks until they decide to take preventive and percussive maintenance by removing the problem at the source. If the PCs do nothing it will influence the outcome of the case and cause them to lose two Verdict Points (not cumulative with the loss for doing nothing above).

PCs who want to track down the thugs can do so in several ways. They can set a trap by posing as friends of a juror or witness, they can use various superpowers (such as postcognition or ESP) to track them, or they can track them down with investigation. The following table can be used for Gather Information checks.

| Result | Info Gained |
|--------|--|
| 15 | There are 6 of them, all bruisers and none too bright. |
| 17 | None of them are really Mafia; they're all wannabes and hangers on who work for Riot. |
| 19 | They have a bookie they used to enforce for, his name is Jimmy "Three Card" Tortemi |
| 21 | Their names are Clay Giarrusso, Roman Dalsanto, Percy Artiga, Bradford Bettini, Tommie Kushi, and Saul Modzeleski. |
| 23 | Their turf is in Hangman's Alley, where they have a part share in a bar. |
| 25 | The bar is called the Golden Shovel. |

Possible sources of information are mob contacts who want nothing to do with the trial (Bluff, Intimidate, Knowledge: Mob), snitches or bookies who've worked with the thugs in the past (social skills, Knowledge: Criminals), knowledge of the criminal underworld and who is stupid enough to pull this stunt (Knowledge: Criminals, Underground), interviews with the beaten witness who remembers some pertinent details (Diplomacy), and checking criminal records to see who was arrested with Riot in the past (Computers, Knowledge: Law).

If the PCs stop the thugs from interfering with the trial they gain a Verdict Point as the grateful witnesses and jurors express themselves. If the PCs bring the thugs in to the police and notify the DA then the thugs can be rolled against Riot, and it will give them another Verdict Point. The thugs all use

the stats for Union Picketers (page 92) or Elite Thugs (M&M page 157).

MAKING A MADE MAN SQUEAL

No officer of the court would ever suggest it, and Withem would have a field day if he found out about it, but PCs might decide to take some matters into their own hands and do to the Made Men what their little buddies tried doing to the prosecution's witnesses. Doing so is very risky and could blow up in the PCs faces, but if they can succeed at it they can gain a huge edge in the trial.

PCs can try to get at the Made Men indirectly, by working at their friends and loved ones. Doing so will not be easy, as most are either Mafia or protected by the Mafia. PCs would have to do some investigation to find out who might be vulnerable to such coercion and who would have enough pull on the villains to get them to turn on the others. Because of the callous nature of the Made Men and their code of loyalty, only Smash and Grab is vulnerable to such tactics. A Gather Information check (DC 18) can deduce that he has a little sister that he would be willing to turn on the other others for. The little girl is named Mary, and she's a huge fan of Rock N Roll and possibly one of the PCs with a fame feat. Getting the sister to influence her brother requires a relevant skill check, such as Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate (DC 25). If the PCs get Rock N Roll to help out (which he'll do if they ask — no rolls needed) they get a +5 bonus on the roll. PCs that succeed can get her to make Smash and Grab testify against all the other Made Men — gaining them a Verdict Point. However PCs who try to intimidate the girl and fail by 10 or more, or who fail by 20 using any method, will send her running to Withem, who will turn the attempt into a scandal that will cost the PCs 2 Verdict Points.

The other way the PCs could go after the Made Men is to arrange for "private time" with them. Unethical police contacts or stealthy forays into the prisons where the Made Men are being held could result in the PCs being able to spend awhile talking to the Made Men — while the villains are handcuffed, disarmed, and have their powers neutralized. Doing so is incredibly risky, and very difficult to pull off. PCs will have to make either Diplomacy (to get a guard to set it up) or Hide/Move Silently (to sneak in) checks (DC 30) to get the chance. Once there they must either use a mental power (DC 18 + Will Save bonus) or try to Intimidate (DC 20 + Will Save bonus) the victim into doing something compromising. Arson, who knows he's facing the death penalty and sees no way out, is an even tougher nut, and adds 5 to all DCs to affect him. PCs who succeed can earn a Verdict Point for every Made Man they turn. However, any degree of failure on any roll will tip off Withem and he can use the characters' actions to take two Verdict Points for the first failed attempt, and a number of Verdict Points equal to Number of Failed Attempts + 1 for each attempt after that. (So the first failure is a 2 point loss, the second a 3 point loss, the third a 4 point loss... which is a total of 9 points of loss.)

JURY TAMPERING

PCs might decide that what's good for the goose is good for the gander and try to manipulate the jury on their own. Doing so requires that the PCs first make rolls to get access to the jury in a situation where they can't be monitored, or to have a power that allows communication in a way that lets them get at the twelve angry men without interference. Move Silently and Sneak rolls to get into jurors' hotel rooms unnoticed are a possibility (DC 25), as are bribing or finessing guards into looking the other way with various social skills (DC 25). Once in with the juror the PC must make a social roll or use a power (DC 20) to convince them to vote guilty no matter what happens in the trial.

The effectiveness of this method is a bit dubious, as most of the jurors have a predisposition towards finding the Made Men guilty anyway. Only a few of the jurors would really have their minds changed by this method, and PCs would have to have a way to single them out, such as a Sense Motive or Science (Psychology) check (DC 25). If these jurors are convinced it can gain the PCs a single Verdict Point. However, if the PCs fail in any of their rolls by more than 10 it gives Withem ammunition which will take a Verdict Point from the PCs as he gets jury members replaced and impugns the PCs' reputations and calls the fairness of the trial into question. If they fail any Intimidation rolls against jurors, or any roll to bribe or turn a guard by more than 10 then it gives Withem enough ammunition to take two Verdict Points for the first failed attempt, and a number of Verdict Points equal to Number of Failed Attempts + 1 for each attempt after that. (So the first failure is a 2 point loss, the second a 3 point loss, the third a 4 point loss for a total of 9 points of loss.)

RING MASTERING THE MEDIA CIRCUS

Part of Withem's strategy, even before the trial starts, is to try to influence public opinion through the mass media. He knows that the Made Men are seen as the worst form of terrorist scum, but he's so slick and so quick that he thinks up lies and he thinks them up quick. He will play on the noble traditions of scapegoating, politically correct guilt, and a charming smile to ebb the tide of public hatred for his clients. If he does so unopposed he can gain enough swing to take two Verdict Points from the PCs as jurors and the judge actually start thinking about justice rather than just punishing the Made Men.

Though the DA will play the same game as Withem, she isn't as good as he is at it. PCs have a chance to step up and give Withem a verbal smacking, playing their little war out in the papers and on the evening news. PCs with Fame, Connections, or media ties have a big advantage here, and can play the game on many levels. Simply sermonizing to the reporters on the courtroom steps can be effective, but actually going on news shows and giving "exclusive" interviews can be even more so. Withem is a clever lawyer in the middle of a huge trial, but the PCs are super-humans, and the press will love every word

they say in a way Withem can't compete with. Simply opposing Withem with successful opposed checks in Bluff, Diplomacy, or Performance can keep him from taking any Verdict Points. Going the extra mile and setting up exclusive interviews and using skills like those used in "Helping the Prosecution" can gain an extra Verdict Point for the team (if they already made these rolls in "Helping the Prosecution" they don't have to make them again — they just have to expose the information publicly). The group cannot gain more than 4 Verdict Points using this method.

THE VERDICT

| Verdict Points | Verdict |
|----------------|--|
| -10 or less | All of the Made Men, even Arson, are given a full acquittal. |
| -4 to -9 | Arson is found guilty of multiple counts of 2nd degree murder (possibility of parole in 25 years), but the other Made Men are given acquittals. (default if PCs do nothing) |
| 1 to -4 | Arson is found guilty of multiple counts of 1st degree murder (life, no possibility of parole), but the other Made Men are given acquittals. |
| 2 to 6 | Arson is found guilty of multiple counts of 1st degree murder (death penalty), and the other Made Men are found guilty of reckless endangerment (about a year of jail) |
| 7 to 11 | Arson is found guilty of multiple counts of 1st degree murder (death penalty), and the other Made Men are found guilty of multiple counts of 1st degree manslaughter (5 to 15 years in jail). |
| 12 to 16 | Arson is found guilty of multiple counts of 1st degree murder (death penalty), and the other Made Men are found guilty of multiple counts of 2nd degree murder (parole possible in 25 years). |
| 17 to 20 | Arson is found guilty of multiple counts of 1st degree murder (death penalty) and the other Made Men are found guilty of multiple counts of 1st degree murder (life without chance of parole). |
| 21+ | All the Made Men are found guilty of multiple counts of 1st degree murder (death penalty). |

When all is said and done, after the media mobbing and the courtroom theatrics, the jury is going to come out of their deliberation and give the verdict. The bailiff will carry the paper with the verdict to the judge, who will read it then send it to the jury foreman to be read aloud to the court. Everyone holds their breath while the juror rambles through the openings, giving the details of the case and court, the names and crimes of the accused, before revealing the all important guilty or not guilty.

Exactly what that foreman is going to say will depend on how the PCs performed during and around the trial. The table above summarizes the results by the number of Verdict Points

the PCs got. GMs not using Verdict Points can simply use this table as a rough guide to determine the results by how well the PCs did or by what they find most dramatic for their game.

If PCs are against the death penalty they may be able to make deals with the DA to keep the Made Men locked up in hard time without having them killed. If, for some reason (such as the players having been difficult or disrespectful before) the DA won't go for it, the PCs trying to keep the Made Men alive may well find themselves testifying for Withem during sentencing, using their oratory and heroic stature to keep the villains from being killed by the will of the angry populace. In this case the PC must make a Diplomacy or Performance (Acting or Oration) check (DC 25 + (Verdict Points) for Arson and 25 + (Verdict Points - 10) for the others) to convince the jury that taking the lives of the guilty is wrong even in a situation like this.

Any of the Made Men that get a walk are not going to stay in town. Immediately after the end of the trial they will walk out of the courtroom, get into a black town car, try to ditch any tails (opposed roll vs. the drivers Drive skill of +6), get onto a private jet at the airport, and leave the country. There they will go until the bosses decide that they're usable assets again.

If the PCs got at least 4 VPs, they will be invited to a black-tie event called "The Hangman's Party" celebrating the verdict and raising money for the families of those who died in the "subway slaughter." This invite could come from Rock N Roll if he testified or helped the characters, from the DA if the PCs did a good job at the trial, or from the Mayor, Chief of Police, or rich patron/friend of the PCs. If the PCs get less than 0 VPs the event will still be held, but the PCs won't be invited unless they can make a Diplomacy check (DC 20) to finesse an invite. If they get less than -9 VPs the event will be solely to raise money for the victim's families, and will be much more sober. The PCs will not only not be invited, they will be specifically told not to attend — despite the fact that they were the heroes who stopped the Made Men in the first place. In this case they can still try to sway public opinion and swing an invite, but the check is much harder (DC 35).

WHAT NEXT?

PCs who got invited to the Hangman's party, or who decide to crash the party, can go to "**That Whore Babylon.**" Those who want to get back to work on fighting crime can skip the party and go to "**Film at 11.**" If they don't want to get involved with the murder investigation they can go to "**Blessed are the Peacemakers.**" However, if they don't get involved in the rest of the plot by the point of "**Blessed are the Peacemakers**" Rock and Mikhael will be blowing up half the City by the time the PCs get back into the action and the PCs may end up going straight to "**By Pride Cometh Contention.**"

VERDICT POINTS BREAKDOWN

Here is a breakdown of how and where the Verdict Points fall, collected for easy reference.

| Situation | Verdict Points |
|---|-------------------------|
| Being involved in the trial at all | 2 |
| Figuring out Withem's Strategy | 1 |
| Misreading Withem's strategy | -1 |
| Gathering info to disprove Withem's claims | 1 |
| Getting wrong information or fabricating information proven wrong | -1 |
| Reading Withem's mind and getting caught | -3 |
| Angering the jury during testimony | -1 per PC |
| Critically succeeding during testimony | 1 per PC (max 2) |
| Beating Withem during cross | 1 to 4 (1 per check) |
| Getting beat by Withem during cross | -1 to -4 (-1 per check) |
| Getting Rock N Roll or Mikhael to testify | 1 |
| Getting both to testify | 3 |
| Getting neither to testify | -1 |
| Not stopping the witness intimidation/jury tampering | -2 |
| Stopping the witness intimidation in a way that looks inappropriate | -1 |
| Stopping the witness/jury thugs | 1 |
| Turning the thugs over to the DA so she can roll them | 1 |
| Getting Mary to help turn Smash and Grab | 2 |
| Getting Mary upset enough to go to Withem | -2 |
| Rolling a Made Man by force | +1 per Made Man |
| Trying to roll a Made Man and failing | -2 to -20 |
| Successfully tampering with the jury | 1 |
| Botching the jury tampering job | -2 to -20 |
| Not getting into the Media Circus | -1 |
| Doing well in the Media Circus | 1 per PC (max 4) |

THAT WHORE BABYLON

In which the PCs hobnob with the rich, powerful, and beautiful creatures of the City. They also have a chance to notice suspicious early departures, giving them a jump on the terrible events about to unfold.

THE SITUATION

A US Senator, two State Assemblymen, the mayor, several major philanthropic organizations and a few corporate underwriters are putting on a huge fete just after the end of the Made Men's trial. The purpose of the party is to raise money for the victims and families of the assault, and to show the City that its leaders stand together. The jaundiced press calls the event "The Hangman's Party" and the name sticks — even for most of those attending it. Gathering together the rich, the famous, the powerful, and the beautiful of the City, the Hangman's Party is a perfect opportunity for everyone to see and be seen, and thus becomes the site of a large amount of business, politicking, and more intimate introductions.

If the PCs did well during the trial then they will be the heroes of the day. If Rock N Roll or Mikhael participated in the trial as well then they will stand beside the PCs as the prized dogs and ponies. Purple and overly enthusiastic newspaper articles will talk about how the "Coalition" shows that heroes of different backgrounds and ideals can work together (an example of which can be found in the Sidebar "Heroes of Democracy"). Between this hype and the conviction of the Made Men the party will be a joyous affair, with a slightly disturbing undertone of brutal glee over any executions. There will be laughter, full glasses of champagne, and everyone will want the PCs for a photo-op.

If the Made Men got off despite PC efforts, the fete will go on, but as a far more somber event. The rich and pretty will be there, but instead of glee the party will be filled with bitterness and sense of futility. The PCs will get stories of how

the judicial system keeps failing when it is most needed, and it's unlikely that anyone would want to have a photo-op with people associated with such a failure. Of course not everyone will blame or avoid the PCs — Rock and Mikhael are unlikely to, as are any number of folks who like bad boys or have less than sterling agendas.

All of this assumes the PCs either have public identities or will be going to the party in their super-heroic ID. PCs with fitting backgrounds may be able to get an invitation for their secret ID. Doing so allows them to meet and greet without having to worry about the attention outlined above.

THE SETTING

The Hangman's Party is held on local corporate mogul Frederick Hans's mega-yacht. The yacht, subtly named "Kraken" is a monstrous ship, pushing the definition of "yacht" to its limit. Just over 400 feet long and weighing 10,000+ tons, with 4 decks, 11 state rooms, a gym, a banquet-sized dining room, 3 bars, a huge sunbathing/stargazing area, and a dance hall, the Kraken is within a breath of being an ocean liner. Every inch of the yacht is done in rich decorative styles with an art deco flair. Trendy lamps, solid wood furniture, teak paneled rooms, expensive paintings by the hottest new artist, and crystal chandeliers are among the more common touches.

The party will start at 10pm, and by 10:30 the Kraken will cruise out to deep water. Guests needing to arrive or leave early can catch one of the 10 speedboats servicing the ship. The party will continue until 3 in the morning. There are speeches from important city figures in the dining room at

HEROES OF DEMOCRACY

[continued from page A1]

In the midst of this political circus, with everyone from our Senator to the Mayor riding on the execution of a human being as though it was a triumph of freedom rather than an unfortunate necessity, there are a few heroes who stand out above the mass of self-interest and politics.

I am speaking, of course, about the brave heroes who apprehended these horrid criminals, saved the lives of the innocent, and saw to the legal punishment of the guilty. Putting aside differences of background, of race and religion, of politics and self-interest, these brave few overcame all obstacles. That they fought super-powered madmen is not even their most impressive feat. No, what really makes me hail them as the icons of Democracy is that they stood against tyranny and terror as a coalition of equals. An angel, a Marxist, accused vigilantes, and all the others did what our country cannot do: they overcame their differences and stood together. None stopped caring about their beliefs, but they put the joint cause of freedom and life above factional politics and egos, and so accomplished a unity of different strengths greater than the sum of its parts.

If only the rest of us can do so well, can come together without hatred or suspicions, then maybe we can regain that feeling of unity that we had when we all found out about the horrible crimes of the past few years — but this time with hope rather than terror at its heart....

11pm, and there is a meteor shower viewing scheduled for midnight on the sundeck. Other than that the party is lightly scheduled as the party organizers count on the open bars, two live bands, two media centers in the staterooms, the view of the City across the nighttime waters, as well as the presence of celebrities and super-heroes to keep everyone content and busy.

Politicians and Publishers can use the Lawyer stats (page 93) or the Professional stats (*M&M* page 155). Stars and starlets can use the Musician stats (page 91) but with Charisma 16 and the Attractive feat, and Profession: Actor rather than Musician. The reporters present should use the reporter stats (*M&M* page 155), and security should use the stats for Elite Thugs (*M&M* page 154).

TRIPPING THE LIGHT FANDANGO

Most of this scene is social in nature, and focuses on giving the PCs a chance to participate in Bronze Age politics and fame. Despite the wheeling and dealing the scene should be lighter on the tension and mechanics, letting the players have a chance to relax after the combats and trial. The PCs can direct the scene, speaking with those that would be important to their goals, but the GM can also throw some interesting or humorous encounters at them. Following are some ideas for such encounters.

THE DAMNABLE DUO

Both Rock N Roll and Mikhael will show up to the fete, much to everyone's surprise. Rock comes on time and spends the evening working the crowd, finding anyone with socialist or Marxist leanings to network with. Though he may hate much of what the party represents, he's politically canny enough to realize the kind of opportunity it presents. He'll be glad to see and be seen with the PCs, talking excitedly with them about politics and making sure that everyone thinks they are all close friends. PCs who are sympathetic to his politics or who passionately and honestly argue for another idealistic system to change the world may earn his honest respect.

The Archangel, on the other hand, comes late and under his own power — flying onto the sun-deck just after the meteor shower. He's not there for parties, which he has no time for, but to talk specifically to the mayor and senator about their feelings on gay marriage. Anyone other than the PCs attempting to approach him will be politely but firmly put aside and ignored. (Most won't persist, as having an angel brush you off is hard to misread.) He'll talk with the PCs if they approach him, but he'll be distracted and short unless they engage him about religion or theology, especially anything to do with gay marriage.

MEETING STARS AND SEXY YOUNG THINGS

Stars such as Sandra Roberts and Denzel Cruise are thick on the ground at the party, all of them doing their best to help the poor unfortunate victims by getting drunk and talking to other sexy and famous folks. There are also a large number of very beautiful folk who aren't famous — yet. Many of the stars would be interested in meeting the PCs, both for publicity and to excite a jaded palate. For those not famous the same rules apply, but with the addition that being seen hooking up with a super may be the boost they need to go big time.

No rolls are needed for PCs to meet and talk with any star they want unless they're out of favor, in which case they may need Charisma or social checks. Characters that want to make a more lasting connection with a star can do so either through good RP or with a fitting skill check (DC 15 to 25 if they're in good favor, 30 to 40 otherwise). Many skills could work, from standard Diplomacy to win friend and influence people, to a display of superhuman knowledge and dazzling intellect from a Science or Knowledge skill, or even coming to the rescue of a star with a broken Rolex that gets fixed with a Repair check. Success gets the PC a connection that will last longer than the party. A high success with a member of the PCs preferred sex might get them more than that. What super-hero could resist dating Selma Zeta-Jolie?

While there are no media cameras on the Kraken, there are gossip columnists from some of the larger papers. A PC who gets up close and personal with someone famous will find their story printed in the national news the next day. If PCs have pre-existing relationships this may really put them into the hot seat.

HOBNOBBING WITH CITY HALL

Politicians are just as interested in meeting the PCs as the movie stars are. PCs who are riding high will practically be assaulted by every politico present, trying to wrangle endorsements from the heroes of the day. PCs who are low in the public's opinion will still have to deal with the politicians, but in a different context. Conservative politicos, or those with current seats, will openly flame and castigate the characters. On the other hand minor politicians wanting to ride a reform platform into office will cozy up to the PCs, trying to use the situation to gain contacts they can use when the PCs are back on top.

PCs can deal with the politicians as they choose. Those that schmooze and play the game with good RP and/or Diplomacy and Knowledge (Politics) checks (DC 15+) will make friends and contacts (making a perfect reason to buy the Connected feat), but will do so at the price of getting their name dragged into the minefield of local and state politics. PCs who want to debate the politicians to beat them at their own game, either with rhetoric (Diplomacy) (DC 20+) or solid understanding of the points (Knowledge skills) (DC 20+), can earn both the respect and fear of those in the political arena, and may end up with some contacts but still maintain their independence. PCs who just want to be left alone can do so either by patiently putting off questions (Diplomacy DC 15 and patience), or by more direct methods. Angering even minor politicians however, can lead to PCs being audited, having their car towed, their headquarters redistricted to a no-fly zone, and so on.

WEREN'T YOU IN "TEARS OF THE WOUNDED SOUL?"

Putting real stars at the Hangman's Party will be a lot of fun for most groups, and GMs need look no farther than the TV to get a million names. However, some GMs may want to avoid real world politics and meta-knowledge by using the older comic formula of cheesy names for supposed superstars. For those that want to avoid using real names, here are some fittingly cheesy names for people the PCs can meet at the party:

Celebrities (and their most recent movie): John Hudson (Tall On the Range), Sandra Roberts (The Agency), Selma Zeta Jolie (Once A Sweetheart), Denzel Cruise (Back 2 Back 2), Viggo Bloom (Bow and Blade), and Jennifer Gellar (Superchick).

Politicians (and their office): Andrew Deering — R (US Senator), Paul Lehman — R, Timothy Sweatt — D, Rosalie St. Clair — D (State Congress), Gary St. Germain — R (Mayor), Freeman Rumer — I (Chief of Police), Nicholas Wayne — D, Keith Warwick — D, Earl Godoy — I, George Aiken — R, Lucille Bolton — D (City Council).

Publishers (and their Publishing House): Maurice Sill (Random Dream), Herman Pardon (Drumlin), Corinne Collier (Cockerel), Polly Swearingen (Chronology-Cautioneer), Chris Lindroos (Red Samurai).

MOVIE OF THE WEEK

Another breed of glad-hander on the scene is the publisher and media mogul. Unlike the stars looking for fame and spice, or the politicians looking for RP, these folks are mostly after one thing; money. A true life movie of the week based around the PCs stories, novels and book deals, new comic lines with action figures, trading cards, shirts, and "RPGing role-games" would all be vastly profitable to these folks, as well as to the PCs. Every single one of them wants to make the PC famous so that they can pluck the fruits of other's suffering and hard work.

PCs can wrangle and argue with the publishers, either trying to resist their deals or just trying to get the most money for themselves. PCs who try to resist will be harangued by publishers who claim that they have only the noblest of motives and grandest artistic intentions. They'll argue that the PCs' story needs to be told to give people hope, that part of the proceeds can be given to victims of the villains the PCs fight, that children need role models, that the PCs need to take charge of their public image by telling their own story — before someone else tells lies that could harm their reputation, and so forth.

PCs who want to get a deal can use the publishers present against each other, playing all sides against the middle to gain increased profit and/or artistic control of the product. Diplomacy, Bluff, Sense Motive, Knowledge (Law and Publishing), and Profession (Publisher, Author, Artist, Lawyer, Agent) checks (DC 15 to 20) will let the PCs increase their price and get the publishers chasing their own tails for the PC's amusement. PCs who aren't careful about what they sign up for may find themselves the subject of one of the worst books, TV shows, or movies ever. How would a hardcore former vigilante like to be the star of a 1960's "Holy Macaroni!" type show?

TALKING TO THE MOB

One of the guests at the party is Sal Maranzano, consigliere of the Genovese family (use stats for Union Rep, page 93). Sal is on the boat by invitation, and characters who make Spot checks (DC 15) will see him throughout the evening, talking with senators and city councilmen. PCs can make a Knowledge (Mafia, Organized Crime, Underworld) check (DC 18) to recognize him before he approaches them. If they confront him, several politicians including the chief of police, will step in to try and defuse the situation. They'll claim that they do know who Sal is, but that as he isn't currently wanted for any crimes there is no reason for them to arrest him or have him removed from an event he was invited to. If the PCs push the matter Sal will attempt to bow out, offering to leave on his own.

Sal will eventually make his way to the PCs for a little chat. He will make it obvious to the PCs he is there legally, and has no intention of causing trouble or trying to strong-arm them. His purpose in the audience is two-fold. The first is to let the PCs know that the mob did not approve of the actions the

Made Men took, and is grateful that the PCs stopped them. His other job is to see if the PCs might be susceptible to bribery or coercion, talking to them about the way business is done and not done, and suggesting that if everyone was willing to be reasonable there wouldn't be a need for anyone to get hurt or for things to get so far out of control. Sal will then try to use Sense Motive to figure out any moral weaknesses or quirks PCs may have.

How Sal goes about delivering his message and searching for information depends on the Mafia's existing relationship with the PCs. PCs who have worked for the mob in the past will be approached openly and talked with frankly, like old friends. If, on the other hand, the PCs have reps as being untouchable or have a history of conflict with the mob, Sal will be much more circumspect and will use Innuendo to broach the subject, only speaking directly about the matter if he's sure the PCs won't pound him.

HASTY EXITS AND TERRIFIED LOOKS

At some point after Sal approaches the characters but more than an hour before the party ends several important NPCs will make hasty and unexplained departures from the party. The reason is that all get word of a grisly murder involving some of Rock and Mikhael's most trusted followers. PCs have a chance to see these strange goings on and get into the action of the next scene early if they play smart.

Rock makes a very silent exit after his bodyguard Mei-Ling whispers something into his ear (having just gotten a message through her ear-radio that one of his followers is dead). Gracefully disengaging himself from his conversations he then exits to one of the speedboats, pleading an early morning the next day as he's taken to shore. He even uses his powers to dim the sound of the boat's launching so that it will draw less attention. Once he gets to shore he has his bodyguards drive him to the scene of "Film at 11" as fast as their SUV will go. Hearing the message Mei-Ling got would require the PCs to be actively scanning radio frequencies, and then to make a Listen check (DC 15) followed by a fitting skill check (Science: Encryption or Mathematics, Computers if a computer or data link is available, or power check, all DC 30) to decipher the encoded message. Seeing Rock leaving requires a Spot check (DC 15), hearing him leaving is vastly difficult due to his powers, and requires a Listen check (DC 33). He won't stop to talk, but may let PCs he trusts go with him. Reading his mind could also get the story, but will make him mistrust the PC if he notices.

Mikhael will be less subtle about his exit, as fits his idiom. He gets word from a telepathy spell cast by one of the Keeper of the Keys of Solomon (page 87) just a few minutes after Rock gets word from his bodyguard. The message indicates one of his priestly friends was murdered by Rock's agents. Almost immediately the Archangel leaves the yacht, giving curt farewells to anyone he was actively speaking with and ignoring anyone else. He goes to the rear deck before launching into flight, heading directly to the scene in "Film at 11." Noticing him leaving is fairly easy, requiring only a Spot or

Listen check (DC 10), even if the PC isn't paying attention (as it creates light and the sound of heavenly voices when Mikhael flies away). Equally, seeing that something is wrong is a simple Sense Motive check (DC 10), but telling what it is can be far harder, as Mikhael's face is closed down (DC 30). He'll also boost himself as he flies away, making it harder to read his mind.

Ten to fifteen minutes after the two supers have left two aides come to the Chief of Police and take turns whispering to him. (If there is no established Chief in the campaign use Freeman Rumer, Police Detective stats on *M&M* page 154 with Bluff +7 and Sense Motive +5) The chief hands one of them his drink, says goodbye to the mayor, and heads to the speedboats with a mumbling of "Dear God, just when things were getting sane again." He then takes a speedboat to the shore, radios for massive backup, and heads to the scene of "Film at 11." Seeing the aides moving in is fairly easy (Spot DC 12), as they move in a hurry and look worried. Seeing the chief leaving is a little harder (Spot or Listen DC 15), as he's a bit more subtle. The chief may be convinced to share his information, which is sketchy but indicates that several people are dead at a church affiliated with Mikhael Archangel, and that several of them are Rock N Roll's followers.

WHAT NEXT?

The next official scene will probably be "Film at 11." PCs who notice the hastily departing NPCs may be able to get to the scene as soon as (or even before) the others, giving them a leg up. PCs who follow later will have a harder time of it. PCs who don't go can move to "Blessed are the Peacemakers." It is also quite possible that various PCs will have personal sub-plot scenes based on events at the Hangman's Party, dealing with new contacts, significant others, and publishers — but those are left up to the GM and players to handle.

"I am not inflexible, I am simply a servant of the Lord, and his Word is Law. His House is a House of Order, and not a House of Confusion. I know that it is popular, in these lost and fallen times, to believe that humanity is "evolving" into something other than what it has always been — but this is simple arrogance. The Law of God and the Place of Man does not change simply because we wish it to. Do we really think ourselves so high above those who built the glory of Solomon's Temple or the majesty of Hagia Sophia that we can scoff at the Law which made them magnificent? Man may put away tradition, but only a fool would try to put away the Word and the Law. To do so is to plunge us all into Darkness."

Mikhael Archangel, speaking to Senator Andrew Deering.

FILM AT 11:00

In which the PCs find out about a horrible murder and see two former allies become enemies. The PCs must negotiate a maze of anger, lust for revenge, wild accusations, and political landmines to stop more violence from erupting over a fallen priest's body.

THE SITUATION

After leaving the Hangman's Party Mikhael, Rock, and the Chief of Police all arrive at the scene of a murder where one of Mikhael's priestly followers was killed in his own church. Six cops are already there, and they do their best to keep the super-humans out of the crime scene. Mikhael Archangel arrives first and, unless the PCs are there to stop him, forces his way past the cops. The Chief and Rock arrive a few minutes later; Rock accompanied by all his bodyguards and two lawyers, the Chief followed by two dozen cops and a full SWAT team. A few minutes after that the Order of Mikhael shows up along with a handful of the Sworn and several priests who knew the victim. About twenty minutes after that (a little more than half an hour after the first cops arrived at the scene) the media arrives and floods the area with camera lights and questions.

The inside of the church is a mess, blood staining the floors around the door and spattered across two pews. Mikhael will carry the body to the altar and will try to resurrect Father Candella. It won't work, however, and Mikhael falls into a terrible state of grief and rage — both because of the murder and his own feelings of helplessness. (If the PCs stopped him from getting on, then Father Candella's body will still be on the farthest back of the bloody pews.)

Outside Rock and his lawyers start a loud and increasingly angry confrontation with the police, demanding that either Mikhael be removed or they be granted access to the scene also. Around them the Order and Rock's bodyguard start squaring up, eyeing both each other and the SWAT team. Just

beyond those groups is a police cordon, which is holding back the huge mass of reporters who are filming the whole scene while asking loud and repetitious questions.

How bad the situation is, and how far it has progressed when the PCs get there, will depend on how quickly the PCs reacted in "That Whore Babylon." PCs who followed Mikhael immediately and have super speed and/or flight may arrive as soon as he does. Those that follow Rock or the Police Chief can get there after Mikhael has entered the church, but before Rock faces off with the cops and the Order arrives. PCs that wait to act from a source of information like a police band scanner will arrive at the same time as the media. PCs that come when the story goes live on TV will get there late, and the scene will have degenerated — adding +2 to all DCs for checks made to defuse the tension.

THE STORY (WHAT REALLY HAPPENED)

The police initially assume that the murder of Father Candella was an attack by one of Rock's followers against one of the Archangel's, though there is some talk of it being a possible hate crime caused by the Father performing gay marriages. Mikhael assumes much the same, but assigns the guilt to Rock, thinking the other man ordered the killing. Rock, for his part, assumes that Mikhael had his own follower killed to stop him from performing gay marriages.

The truth is that the murder was set into motion by Withem, with the witting cooperation of one of his junior colleagues and the unwitting help of his girlfriend. He hoped to

cause a double (or even triple) murder that would cause Rock and Mikhael to go to war with the PCs stuck in the middle.

Withem did this by using his keen investigative skills, mob connections, and his innate understanding of human weakness and hatred. It started during his investigations of the heroes' backgrounds during the Made Men's trial. He quickly realized that Rock and the Archangel's followers could be their great weakness, especially given that they attract followers whose histories are less than sterling. His lucky break came when his girlfriend Chery Rivenberg told him about some work she was doing, letting him form a chain of prejudice, loss, and rage. Benito "Benny" Everidge had a baby sister named Kendall who was getting married to a Raisa Romine. Raisa had a former lover, Ebonie Gaulden, who was both a follower of the Archangel and obsessed with Raisa. When Withem found out that Kendall and Raisa were going to be married by another of Mikhael's followers, Father Candella, it gave him the final piece of his plan.

While the Hangman's party was swinging Withem had his junior associate Ching Clish send his client Grover Milonas to work Benny into frenzy before sending him to the church where Father Candella was marrying his sister to her lesbian partner. At the same Ching Clish sent another of his clients, Alleen Roadcap, a whore and former friend of Ebonie's, to work Ebonie into a similar frenzy of hate and despair, sending her to the church after Benny. Withem knew that prejudice, hate, feelings of betrayal, and anger would combine with Ebonie and Benny's unstable and violent natures to result in an explosion. While he wasn't sure about who would die, he was confident someone would.

The only reason more people didn't die was that Benny went to the church after his sister had already left, but well before Ebonie got there. Benny then beat Father Candella near the doors to the chapel, leaving the priest semi-conscious and bleeding before he fled to The Studio — where he called Grover to come help him. On the way he passed Gabrielle Hope (page 87) as she was playing basketball with some local children, she noted him at the time but did not think it significant. Once he got to The Studio, Grover helped Benny come up with a story that they'd met up a block up from the Church after Benny left and had seen one of Mikhael's followers, a black woman with a cross, going into the church. They were trying to describe Latisa White (page 87) who they'd seen with the Archangel on the news. It's pure luck that their description also partially matches Ebonie.

Just as Benny was fleeing out the front door Ebonie came in the back, and revived Father Candella, moving him to sit on one of the pews. But rather than going after Benny or asking the priest what had happened, she asked him about Raisa. When he told her that Raisa was married, Ebonie's obsession, anger, and feelings of self-hatred overwhelmed her. She beat her friend's head in against the pew. She then fled the way she had come, running to The Cathedral where she took an hour-long shower and burned her clothes.

Father Candella's body was found an hour later when Deacon Tom Reseim came to lock up for the night. Reseim called

the police and The Cathedral. At the same time agents at The Studio were calling for Rock, thus accidentally playing into Withem's hands by assuring that everyone arrived at the scene at the same time, practically guaranteeing further violence.

THE SETTING

The scene of the crime is the Guardian Angel Church, on Seacrest Road. The church is near the center of a blue-collar neighborhood that is just climbing out of a decade of crime and fear. Though none of Rock or Mikhael's minions (other than Father Candella, obviously) live in the neighborhood, many members of the community are highly sympathetic to one or both of the super-humans, both of whom are largely responsible for helping the neighborhood become a decent place. As a result there is a large amount of agitation around the murder and the appearance of both Rock and Mikhael, and the most vocal and opinionated members of the community are trying to get as near to the church as they can while the calmer or less courageous hide inside and refuse to come out. As a result most of the neighborhood feels deserted, while the streets around Guardian Angel are crowded and hard to navigate.

Police cordons have blocked off the roads directly in front of and behind the church grounds. When the cops first arrive (before Mikhael) they secure the area and block off one lane of the front road with their cars, but tape is only put up when the Chief arrives. Outside the tape the worried public and more aggressive reporters congregate trying to get the best view possible while yelling questions, snipes, or encouragement.

EBONIE GAULDEN IN THE CHAPEL WITH A PEW

The default of the scenario is that Ebonie did, in fact, murder Father Candella. This choice was made because it does not give the players an easy out — though they may find out that Ebonie was set up, she still chose to murder, and it isn't clear how Mikhael will take this news, or what it will mean politically. Finding out the truth can give the players the chance to stop the violence, but it doesn't ensure it. They still have to deal with the ugly face of humanity, hatred, intolerance, and the price that people pay for their faults.

For some games this may be too much and GMs may want to change the scenario a bit in order to keep things more positive and/or to make it easier to defuse the situation between Rock and Mikhael. In this case assume that while Ebonie did confront and start to strangle Father Candella, she regained her senses in the nick of time and fled the scene. Withem knew this might happen, and sent a muscle man (Al Petaccio, page 100) to finish the job. In this case PCs who do very well in their investigation rolls may figure out that there was a 3rd assailant on the scene, and if they figure out that Withem is at the center of the conspiracy it would be fairly easy to track the payment he made to his hitman, catching the real killer and nailing the lawyer at the same time.

Rock comes in an SUV, which is parked on the side of the road opposite the front of the church, with its wheels partway up onto the sidewalk. Another SUV with his lawyers parks outside the cordoned area. The police clog the road with their cars, and the SWAT van parks at the curb in front of the church, making its presence obvious to the super-humans and their minions. For the first part of the scene Rock and the Chief of Police argue back and forth with each other on the steps of the church, surrounded by lawyers, bodyguards, and SWAT. When the Order arrives they join the crowded group, moving in around the gates and bottom of the steps.

Mikhael and three police detectives are the only ones inside the church. The detectives vacillate between aggressively trying to get the Archangel to give them the body and leave the scene and passively letting the angel grieve over his dead friend. Mikhael spends most of his time near the altar, at the very far end of the chapel, trying over and over to bring Father Candella back to life. After others enter, or if violence starts, he finally turns his attention back to the world.

RALLY ROUND THE FAMILY

Everyone on scene has a goal, and everyone is angry and afraid enough that they are not being reasonable nor are they willing to listen. What's more, the current situation is actively making any real investigation harder by the moment, and any PC with investigative skills will know it. Things start off tense and loud, and unless the PCs are able to intervene, the situation quickly will take a turn for the worse. At the very least things will be said that will neither be forgiven, at the worst violence could erupt over the Father's body.

The PCs' best chance for success is to convince Rock to back off long enough for them to talk to Mikhael, and then convince them both to leave the scene while PCs convince the police to let them "help" with the investigation. There are several other ways the PCs could handle the situation, however, and flexibility is paramount. So long as the PCs have a good plan and make their rolls they should be able to defuse the situation without a fight (or at least without too much of a fight). Following is a breakdown of what each faction wants, what they know, and the trouble they can cause.

MIKHAEL ARCHANGEL

Mikhael starts off as the most removed and least urgent of the antagonists, but once he comes out of his trance-like resurrection attempts he will become the worst by far. Initially he is unsure if Rock is involved in the murder, then if Gabrielle gets a chance to talk to him she will tell him she saw one of Rock's followers fleeing the scene. Enraged by this information, he will confront Rock and the Chief of Police, and the level of commotion and disrespect (both towards himself and Father Candella) involved in the discussion will make him furious. If he isn't headed off, his anger will grow until he decides to take the Lord's Vengeance, here and now, upon any who dare oppose him.

SCREW IT, LET THEM KILL EACH OTHER

PCs may not want to get involved in the struggle between Rock and the Archangel, feeling that it is none of their business or that they're in over their heads. GMs should feel free to use community pressure to influence them to get involved, as a fight between the two will affect everyone and everything in The City. Patrons, friends, dependents, the police and government, and even one of the terrible duo may all ask the PCs to get involved, using arguments of civic and moral responsibility, the need for heroes, and the danger the situation presents to get the PCs involved. While the PCs can ignore the situation, at least until it explodes into all-out war, they should feel some pressure to get involved, as they are the only ones that can mediate peace.

PCs who get inside the church can talk to Mikhael before he starts his rage spiral. Assuring him that the PCs will help, counseling him over being unable to raise Candella and suggesting good reasons why it might not work (such as "he is happy in heaven, and God will not send him back to appease our temporary sorrow"), and most importantly assuring him that justice can be done without him having to burn everything in sight, will allow the PCs to help keep him reasonable. Doing so requires a Diplomacy check to be reasonable, a Bluff check if the PCs are lying to keep him calm, a Performance Check if they're acting, or an Intimidation Check if the PCs are trying to back the angel down (in which case he adds his Will Save to the DC on the chart below). PCs can get a synergy bonus for using Knowledge: Theology, Profession: Priest, or similar skills. Also they can get a bonus for good RP as set by the GM (+2 to +8, depending on how compelling their arguments are).

| Check | Mikhael's Attitude |
|-------------|---|
| Less than 5 | The PCs manage to say the wrong thing, angering the angel and convincing him they are lying sinners. -2 to all further actions to calm him or convince him to be reasonable. |
| 5 to 14 | The PCs have no real effect, and the angel is still unreasonable and angry enough to become violent quickly. |
| 15 to 29 | The PCs manage to convince the angel that they are trying to do the right thing. He won't be willing to walk away from the situation unless others do so first, but he won't become violent unless strongly provoked. |
| 30 to 44 | The PCs convince him they are honorable people committed to justice and law, and he is willing to work with them unless he's forced to the edge. +2 to all further checks to work with him for the rest of the scene. |
| 45+ | Mikhael is convinced the PCs are speaking the Lord's Truth, and will be willing to listen to them even if provoked. +5 to all further checks to influence him in this scene and the PCs can get him to stay in the church until Rock leaves with no further effort. |

If the PCs decide to simply take Mikhael they can check for ambush as normal, and may get a chance to take him down before he can get his force shield up. Doing so, however, will vastly harm any hope for future trust, and if the PCs miss or fail to KO Mikhael he will go after them with his full power, quite possibly triggering a riot outside the church as the Order forces its way inside. Similar results will occur in response to other power uses.

Real trouble starts if violence erupts outside, or when Gabrielle speaks to the Archangel. If there is violence outside Mikhael will leave the building immediately, boosting himself as he does so. Seeing him come out of the building obviously boosted will seem like an attack to those outside, and if the PCs don't act quickly someone with an itchy trigger finger will take a shot.

Once Gabrielle is able to speak to Mikhael and tell him she saw Benny coming from the direction of the church, and that she thinks he had blood on his hands, Mikhael will become even angrier and will decide that Rock is a godless anarchist who is no better than the Mafia he pretends to fight. He will start denouncing Rock as a demagogue, and his accusations will rise until he is calling the other man an Anti-Christ and accusing him of setting up the Candella's murder. In order to keep Mikhael from making the situation worse the PCs will need to make another check (DC 25).

If the PCs wait for Mikhael to come outside, or don't go inside to speak with him before Rock enters the building, then they will have a harder time calming him down. PCs can get one check through normal means, but won't have time to build up synergy with extended arguments or knowledge/profession skills or to have extended talks over the screaming. PCs with telepathy or other communication powers may be able to overcome this limitation.

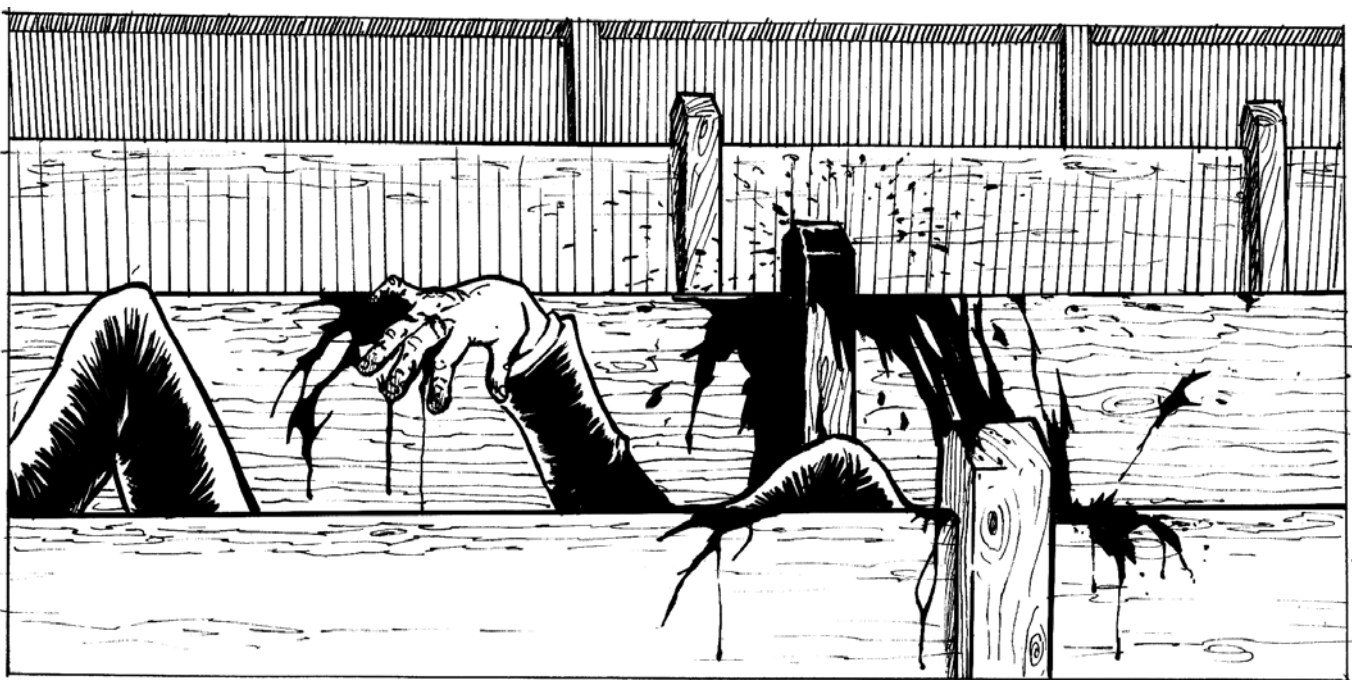
ROCK N ROLL

Rock arrives on the scene after talking to Benny and Grover. Because of their testimony, Rock is convinced that Father Candella was murdered by one of the Archangel's followers and that Benny is being framed for it.

Rock can be forced to admit that Benny probably did beat the priest, but denies that he's a murderer. He also thinks that Mikhael is currently polluting the scene to protect his followers and frame Benny. He wants into the church to stop that, wants his lawyers present during the investigation, and wants Mikhael and all his followers questioned. When the Chief refuses to acquiesce to his demands, Rock starts getting belligerent.

Rock starts off less dangerously unstable than Mikhael, but also less willing to listen. Unless the PCs arrive before or at the same time as him and intercept him before he gets to the church steps, he'll end up in a shouting match with the Chief of Police. He'll use his powers to squash the voices of anyone he doesn't want getting involved in the discussion and to make sure no one can possibly shout him down. The PCs will need to make an initial check (DC 15) just to be able to speak, if they don't make a good enough first impression Rock will shut their voices off. PCs with other methods of communication can get around this — but those without such powers will need to find a non-verbal way to convince Rock to listen and let them talk. (Normal skills can be used, but with a -5 to -10 modifier to reflect the difficulty of getting a yelling person's attention and cooperation when you can't make a sound.)

Once the PCs have Rock's attention, they can make a check to convince him to be reasonable and/or to trust them to mediate/handle the situation. The check works like the one with Mikhael (above), but synergy skills would be Knowledge or Pro-



fessions based around Law or investigation and criminal procedure. Good RP gets the same bonus (+2 to +8 for drawing on previous friendships and alliances, convincing Rock he's making it worse for his followers, reminding him that the cameras are on and that he's making his cause look bad, etc.)

| Check | Rock's Attitude |
|-------------|---|
| Less than 5 | The PCs piss Rock off and he decides they are fascist pigs who are more interested in control than justice. -2 to all further checks with him this scene. |
| 5 to 14 | The PCs don't have any real effect, though Rock won't shut off their voices unless they deliberately do something to anger him. |
| 15 to 24 | The PCs convince Rock they're interested in justice. He won't leave or back off his demands, but he won't become violent unless strongly provoked. |
| 25 to 44 | Rock believes the PCs are honestly trying to do the best thing in a hard situation, and will allow them to help him negotiate a fair settlement. He will not become violent unless actually attacked, but will run his mouth. +2 to all checks when dealing with him this scene. |
| 45+ | Rock believes that the PCs are really honest people, above the corruption of capitalism and the superstition of religion, and trusts them even if he's provoked. +5 to all further checks while dealing with him this scene. He will also agree to leave the scene as soon as Mikhael leaves, and even to cross the street to wait until Mikhael is gone, so long as the PCs watch and make sure nothing funny happens. |

PCs who decide to attack or use powers on Rock face a few challenges. First, they'll face a full resistance by his very alert and keyed up bodyguards, and will have to beat their Spot or Sense Motive in order to have a chance to surprise Rock. Second, Rock is surrounded by supporters and police, and if the PCs come in blasting even the cops may open up on them in response. Still, if the PCs can render Rock unconscious or docile in a single surprise round, they may be able to avoid starting trouble if they follow it with a social skill check or power usage to make his followers back off (DC 20) and a Diplomacy check (DC 20) to convince the cops it had to be done. If the PCs don't drop Rock he'll raise his force shield and then attack with everything he has. Mikhael will then come out blasting as well, and a general melee will result.

If the PCs can't convince Rock to be reasonable, or if any of the Order are allowed to speak to him, Rock loses his temper and accuses Mikhael of murdering Candella because he's a homophobe. He'll then go into a rant about religion being just as wrong-headed as the fascist state that will alienate and offend most of the people listening, and he'll follow it up with promises to kill Mikhael if he comes near him or any of his men. If the Police can't be convinced to let him in, and Mikhael can't be convinced to come out, Rock will then accuse the police of conspiring with Mikhael and the church, call the Chief of Police a bigoted homophobe, and generally provoke the

SWAT team into starting a fight. At that point Mikhael will come out to see what the noise is about, and GMs can proceed with the Face Off (below).

DEALING WITH THE COPS

The situation is an utter disaster for the police. A priest has been murdered in his own church, two super-humans are about to blow up the whole block fighting about who killed him, and the witnesses to the crime are either prejudiced or terrified. The cops know no good can come of the deal, and so they start getting bullheaded, trying to gain control by removing all super-humans from the area and refusing even reasonable requests until they have time to investigate.

Some of this fear can work for the PCs. The Chief knows he's in a horrible situation, and thus can be negotiated with. He cannot simply give in to PC demands, much less those of the NPCs, for fear of looking incompetent and being a puppet to super-humans. He starts off yelling and looking angry, but he can be brought around to reason quickly if the PCs give him a few moments to breathe. He'll complain a lot about anarchy and the rule of law, about respecting jurisdiction, civil disobedience and assaulting officers, but most of it is a screen to hide his fear.

PCs with Knowledges and Professions based around law, police procedure, politics, criminal investigation, and the like can use their expertise to give synergy bonuses when they negotiate with the Chief. Additionally offering him a plan that allows him to remain in at least nominal control of the situation while getting rid of both Mikhael and Rock will give the PCs an RP bonus (+2 to +5). The PCs can use any fitting skill for their check, with the results based on the following table.

| Check | Police Attitude |
|-------------|--|
| Less than 1 | The PCs manage to convince the cops they are doing something illegal and possibly dangerous. -2 to all further rolls to deal with the police this scene. |
| 2 to 18 | The cops don't give the PCs problems, but they don't help either. They can be convinced not to open fire unless fired upon first, and to draw back the SWAT team if Rock's bodyguards and the Order will draw back too. |
| 19 to 32 | The Chief hopes to use the characters to defuse the situation. He'll help them if they want to get both NPC supers out of the scene, and will let the PCs have access to the crime scene to make sure no evidence is planted, but won't be willing to give them rights to do an independent investigation. +2 to all further rolls to deal with the police this scene. |
| 33+ | The Chief is convinced the PCs are his ticket out of this mess. He'll agree to any reasonable plan that isn't illegal, and will do his best to help the PCs, including giving them access to the crime scene and support in their investigation. +5 to all further rolls to deal with the police this scene. |

Attacking the police is guaranteed to start a fight. The SWAT team and street cops will open up on the PCs, Rock, and all of the minions. Rock and Mikhael will both respond with force against anyone that isn't one of their own. The people of the neighborhood will either flee, possibly trampling each other, or riot. The only way the PCs could make it work is to drop the Chief and immediately succeed at either a mass control power or a super-heroic Diplomacy check (DC 40+). Even if the cops are taken out of the picture the PCs will still have to deal with Rock and Mikhael, who won't be any better disposed towards them than they were to the police.

THE FACE OFF

The most likely spot for violence to erupt is when Rock and Mikhael first confront each other. The two will face off in typical alpha-male fashion. If the PCs have convinced them both to be reasonable, they only glare and make their followers twitchy. If one or both are not reasonable, they will start a war of words that escalates quickly. Accusations of prejudice, murder, evil, and fascism will fly while the cops will get more and more nervous. The kind of things each NPC will say to the other are detailed in their respective sections above, but GMs are encouraged to be creative and come up with insults that will get the PCs, as well as the NPCs, riled up. PCs will need to make skill or power checks to get the two to back up enough to let the cops do their work (DC 25). Once the two are separated they can be convinced to leave the scene with another check by PCs who want to let the cops do their job, or who tell the two to let them handle the investigation (DC 20 if the PCs seem on top of things, 30 if they indicate that they're letting the cops handle the investigation).

If the PCs fail a check badly (20 for Diplomacy or the like, 15 if it's Bluff, 10 if it's Intimidate) during the face-off it results in one of the NPCs attacking. If the PCs botched a previous roll when dealing with one of the super-humans it will be that super that attacks. If they hadn't, it will be a follower or SWAT member. PCs can fight or try to convince both supers to take their men and leave the scene. Doing the latter will be easy so long as no one on their side is injured and the PCs convince them that fighting now will get their followers injured or killed (DC 15). If a follower gets hurt it becomes more difficult (DC 25). Similarly the cops will not be willing to let the supers go if any cop is hurt, unless the PCs make an applicable check (DC 20) to convince the Chief it will be worse if the matter gets pressed.

If the PCs can't stop the violence, Rock will retreat after 2 rounds, taking his followers with him and blasting anyone that tries to stop them. Mikhael will not leave unless one of his followers is seriously hurt, in which case he will open a portal and have his forces retreat through it. The Police will try to stop fleeing supers, unless the PCs can convince the Chief as above. If not they will do their best to stop the NPC supers, which could result in many police injuries or deaths, and warrants for the arrest of all involved parties.

PCs who avoid a fight may also be able to set up a controlled negotiation for later, getting Rock and Mikhael to talk under better conditions once they've both cooled down. For more on this see "**Blessed are the Peacemakers**" (page 33).

WHAT NEXT?

PCs who want to try and calm and/or control the terrible duo should go to "**Blessed Are the Peacemakers**." Those who want to move immediately into investigation mode should proceed to "**Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid**." PCs who try to stay out of it may get sucked in when things explode in "**By Pride Cometh Contention**."

PCs who try to take out one or both of Rock and Mikhael and succeed will have to deal with some of the situations presented in "**WAR!**" which could lead them to either "**Into the Lion's Den**" or "**First Against the Wall**." PCs who try to take out the supers and fail may face a super-powered war. Depending on the severity of their actions they may go to either "**The Wrath of Angels**" if everyone is just buckling down for a fight, or even "**WAR!**" if things get bad enough to force an instant response.

"The Rule of Law must be upheld, even in situations where it is dangerous to do so. The para-humans in our midst cannot be allowed to dictate our policy to us. If that happens we've failed at the whole point of democratic civilization — that might does not equal right."

"Of course I'm worried about what would happen if it ever came to a full scale war with someone like Carl "Rock N Roll" Embers or the Angel. Our only real hope to get out of a situation like that without casualties would be a pre-emptive strike with overwhelming force."

"I cannot respond to the suggestions that we have standing plans in place with the Army or Navy in case we were ever to have an uprising. All I can say is that we are not unprepared, and we will not be pushed around. This is our sandbox, damnit, and we will defend it."

Chief of Police Freeman Rumer on "Counter Point" — July 3, 2003

Fascists always have a reason to use force. It doesn't matter if they would find it justified if someone else did it or not — if it's their backyard then it's always justified.

Rock N Roll, on "Counter Point" — July 3, 2003

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

In which the PCs face the task of stopping an angel, a Marxist, and the cops from coming to blows, trying to build truces that will give them enough time to find a way to lasting peace.

THE SITUATION

After the events in “**Film at 11**” and/or “**By Pride Cometh Contention**” things go from bad to worse. While Mikhael and Rock may have left those scenes with good intentions, their followers (not just their minions, but those who identify with them without actually being accountable to them) are still in frenzy. Conflict between groups becomes the center of attention for the media, and large sections of the community get drawn into the troubles. While Rock and Mikhael both stay publicly silent the rhetoric of their followers becomes more and more confrontational, and more and more innocent people start getting sucked into violence.

How bad the situation is depends on what happened at the end of the last scene. If the scene ended with both superhumans leaving peacefully, then the troubles will start off slowly and only gain momentum if the PCs don't intercede in a timely manner. No fatalities will result, but beatings are likely to happen unless the PCs go straight to the negotiating table. The news will carry the story constantly, and everyone on the street will have an opinion. At the other end of the spectrum, if the confrontations ended in violence, the situation will be exponentially worse. Before dawn there will be at least one fatality as the super-NPCs' followers clash. The police will make the situation worse by cracking down with excessive force, causing several injuries and possibly the death of a policeman. The news media becomes hysterical, covering each clash as though it could send the whole City into chaos, and people on the street become frantic. Unless the PCs intercede the situation will end with riots.

THE SETTING

The PCs will decide the setting for this scene, as they will be the ones in charge of the negotiations. It is possible that a contact or politician would suggest a meeting place, but in the end the PCs will have the final call. The primary difficulty is finding a location acceptable to all sides of the negotiation. The most likely places would be:

PC Headquarters: If the PCs have a headquarters in or near the City, then it would make an ideal location for a summit. Unless the PCs have done something to earn the enmity or mistrust of Rock or Mikhael, both would agree to meet at the PCs' stronghold.

City Hall, Police Headquarters, Court: While neither Rock nor Mikhael would be thrilled with meeting in a governmental center, both could be convinced that such locations are secure, public, and have the right kind of space for negotiations. If the police or mayor are involved in the negotiations, they would be thrilled to hold them in their backyard. PCs who want to make a point could even have the negotiations held in the same courtroom that the trial of the Made Men took place in, using it as a reminder of the values of teamwork.

Lawyer's Office: Rock has a small host of lawyers working for him, and Mikhael has contacts through various churches to a good number of lawyers as well. It would not be difficult for the PCs to find a lawyer, or at least a law firm, that both men would find acceptable as intermediaries. This option has the benefit of a location neutral to all parties, rooms specifically designed for this kind of conference, and possibly a small host of lawyers to help the PCs run the negotiations.

Teleconference: In the age of super-science, it wouldn't be difficult to set up a teleconference with full audio and video as a venue for mediation. Both super NPCs and the police have access to all the requisite technology, and the ability to communicate from the safety of their own stronghold will make all sides happy. The big drawback of this venue is that it may hamper PC abilities, as many forms of negotiation are less effective over phone than in person — not to mention that PC super-powers may not work over a fiber optic cable.

PCs will likely come up with several other ideas for locations, and GMs can ask them to fill in the details of their chosen venue.

ALL WE ARE SAYING IS GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Once the PCs have settled the location of the meet, they have to decide who they want to attend. The most likely attendees would be Mikhael, Rock N Roll, and either the Mayor or Chief of Police. In addition, influential members of the local community, politicians, important church officials, and spokesmen for unions may all be invited in order to help give the PCs' position weight.

Once the PCs have decided who should come, they have to get them to the meeting. If they were contacted by someone else to get them to set up the conference then that person will automatically attend. Also, if the PCs managed to convince anyone that they should meet during a previous scene that person will also attend. The difficulty of getting others to attend depends on their relation to the PCs and how far the violence has gone. The PCs will have to contact each individually and convince them to come. This can be done with a combination of RP and rolls, with the most relevant skill being Diplomacy, but clever RP could also allow Bluff or Intimidate, and many powers would be suitable. The following table summarizes the difficulty of bringing folks in:

| DC | Relationship to the situation |
|----|--|
| 1 | Non-violently involved and friendly to PCs |
| 5 | Friendly with the PCs and wanting to be involved |
| 10 | Interested but not yet involved |
| 15 | Non-violently involved but unfriendly to PCs |
| 20 | Threatened, cornered, or in danger but friendly to PCs |
| 25 | Threatened, cornered, or unfriendly to PCs |
| 40 | Has been attacked by PCs or others at the conference |

PCs can gain bonuses for support from influential people. A mildly influential person might give a +2 bonus, while a key figure could give as much as a +10. So the Mayor's support would give the PCs a +5 bonus to get the police involved, an influential professor of Marxism might give a +2 to get Rock involved, and a Cardinal might give them a +10 to get Mikhael involved. PCs can also gain a +2 bonus for guaranteeing the safety and freedom of anyone attending.

NOBODY'S RIGHT, WHEN EVERYBODY'S WRONG

Once the PCs have everyone sitting down they will have to bring the querulous factions to terms. How they do so is up to them, but the most likely (and safe) method is by negotiating with alternating uses of Sense Motive, Diplomacy, Bluff, and even Intimidate backed up with synergy bonuses from various Knowledges. Having backup in these areas can give further bonuses, so if the PCs have lawyers, partisans, and politicians on their side they can get a +2 bonus for each appropriate ally. Synergy bonuses from powers, or replacing the skill rolls with fitting power usage are also possible.

The following list shows the positions of the major players, and how reasonable they find certain requests and positions. That degree of reasonableness determines the DC to convince one of the participants to agree to a proposition. Note that the chart is ranked by how reasonable the NPC perceives the request as being, not how reasonable the PCs may find it. It's also worth noting that everyone at the meeting will be so self-righteous and unreasonable that they will argue over points that even they consider reasonable, thus the reason PCs must argue to convince them of something they already half-believe.

While the PCs negotiate, NPCs will try to bring up points for their desired outcome, and will react angrily if anyone brings up one of the points on their inflammatory list. If the PCs can convince everyone to not bring up new points until they are introduced (a reasonable request in everyone's mind) then they can stop a lot of arguing and keep the meeting focused on the issues they want to address.

MIKHAEL

Mikhael feels that he is in the right because it was one of his friends that was murdered and there are witnesses putting Rock's follower at the scene. As a result he will find most requests that force him to acknowledge any wrong-doing unreasonable.

Desired Outcome: Specific witnesses and followers being allowed to give testimony, being kept informed of every step of the investigation, not having any "innocent" followers jailed.

Reasonable: Keeping his followers separate from Rock's, making public addresses to end the violence, letting the PCs have access to resources such as church histories, giving healing to any innocents hurt in confrontations, having the PCs act as intermediaries between himself and the Police/Rock. (After "By Pride Cometh Contention" add: Giving followers who injured or killed police or civilians into police custody.)

Unreasonable: Letting followers who aren't material witnesses be questioned, apologizing to anyone for anything, leaving the police to investigate without having to report to him, giving restitution for damages or injuries, unless it can be made to seem like charity, in which case it is reasonable. (After "By Pride Cometh Contention" add: Giving followers into custody unless they attacked an innocent.)

Inflammatory: Giving any of his followers into custody, giving himself into custody or being put under house arrest,

leaving the City, being barred from Guardian Angel Church, making any deal about Benny before all the evidence is in, letting Rock near any of his followers.

ROCK N ROLL

Rock does not trust the government, really doesn't trust Mikhael, and believes that his followers were innocent of the murder. While he can reasonably agree that Benny was at the church, he finds it unreasonable to admit guilt (he thinks that admitting Benny beat the priest will condemn him of a murder he didn't commit). Rock doesn't want problems but isn't afraid of a brawl for his rights.

Desired Outcome: Investigation in which Benny is not a suspect and in which the police and other investigators report to his lawyers regularly, immunity for Benny in return for his testimony, ability to question (or have investigators question) all of the Archangel's followers, not having any followers jailed.

Reasonable: Allowing Benny to be questioned with lawyers present and in a safe location, letting the PCs talk to his other followers, making public address to limit the violence, apologizing to the PCs or the public, making restitution for any damages done in brawls involving his followers, having the PCs act as intermediaries between himself and Mikhael/Police. (After "By Pride Cometh Contention" add: Giving any follower who publicly killed an innocent into police custody so long as they have a lawyer and possibility of bail)

Unreasonable: Allowing Benny to be taken into custody with proper legal support and bail, letting the police question his other followers, keeping his followers away from the Archangel's, apologizing to the police, giving the PCs access to resources or information like his records or personal files. (After "By Pride Cometh Contention" add: Letting any of his followers who have injured innocents be taken into police custody.)

Inflammatory: Being taken into custody, allowing Benny or any other follower to be taken into custody without an attorney at their side and possibility of bail, apologizing to Mikhael, letting Mikhael near any of his followers, being put under house arrest.

POLICE / MAYOR

Desired Outcome: Benny is taken into custody, anyone who attacked the police at any time for any reason taken into custody, being allowed to conduct their investigation without outside interference, getting an apology from all parties. (After "By Pride Cometh Contention" add anyone who has injured or killed civilians being taken into custody with no chance of bail.)

Reasonable: Allowing lawyers or PCs to watch the progress of the investigation, questioning followers other than Benny only in the presence of a lawyer at the lawyer's office, Mikhael and Rock let off with an apology (unless they have actively attacked police), making joint statements with the supers to limit the violence. (After "By Pride Cometh Contention" add:

Letting followers who have been publicly violent but not injured or killed civilians plead so they do no jail time.)

Unreasonable: Letting the PCs be actively involved in the investigation (unless the PCs already made this arrangement in "Film at 11"), not being able to question anyone they deem relevant to the investigation, not being able to send police with warrants into the super's headquarters, letting the PCs act as intermediaries between them and Mikhael/Rock (unless they asked the PCs to hold this meeting, in which case it's reasonable). (After "By Pride Cometh Contention" add: Letting anyone who has killed innocent civilians in public view out on bail.)

Inflammatory: Letting Rock or Mikhael be actively involved in the investigation, not getting anyone who injured or killed a cop into custody, letting anyone who has killed a civilian plead or get less than a murder trial, giving up total control of the investigation. (After "By Pride Cometh Contention" add: Letting Rock and the Archangel's followers roam the city freely.)

REASONABLENESS DC CHART

| DC | Perceived Reasonableness |
|----|--------------------------|
| — | Desired outcome |
| 15 | Reasonable |
| 30 | Unreasonable |
| 50 | Inflammatory |

WHAT NEXT?

The PCs actions should determine the next scene. Those starting or continuing investigations should proceed to "Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid." PCs who are getting close to the end of their investigations, or who have gained the ability to push things from very successful negotiations may need to go to "Bullet in the Head." PCs who do nothing will have a day to do whatever miscellaneous actions they want, and then their work will all get undone in "By Pride Cometh Contention." PCs who couldn't bring the sides to any kind of agreement can start other scenes, but will quickly be sucked into "By Pride Cometh Contention."

If "By Pride Cometh Contention" has already happened and the PCs couldn't bring any resolution move to "Wrath of Angels." If the PCs decide to take down the terrible duo, go to "Into the Lion's Den" (for Mikhael) and "First Against the Wall" (For Rock). If the PCs can't, or won't, do anything then it may be off to "WAR!"

Finally, PCs who attack the NPCs when they come to the conference will find that they came prepared — and could end up either in "Into the Lions Den," "First Against the Wall" or even "WAR!"

HINTS, ALLEGATIONS AND THINGS LEFT UNSAID

In which the PCs use keen insight, quick wits, and vast powers of deduction to solve the mystery of the priest's murder.

THE SITUATION

"Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid" is a collection of scenes that covers the investigation of Father Candella's murder. PCs may move in and out of this section as they investigate, deal with other matters, and return to investigation.

Most sections of the scene are divided into two parts, a general investigation phase and an interview phase. The general investigation phase covers PC attempts to learn information from various investigative sources, and summarizes the relevant points that the PCs can learn. The interview phase is a summary of the characters' reactions to PC interviews or interrogations. Most of the information from the general phase can also be learned in the interview phase, but it is often harder to get someone to reveal their past sins than it is to find out about them from others. PCs who go into the interview phase with a solid background from general investigation can get a +2 bonus to all rolls in the interview as they use the knowledge they've gained as leverage. Also, most DCs are given for skills to find relevant information, but this doesn't mean powers can't be used. Using a power follows all the normal rules for doing so, and can be much easier (or harder) than doing it the old-fashioned way.

Some information is labeled as being available only from specific sources or interviews, and while this information gives prime opportunity for detailed scenes, it is not necessary to

RP the scene. PCs only need to state that they are doing the interview, and must have access to the site or person in order to gain the information. Those who do RP the scene could get a bonus to their rolls for good play though.

THE SETTING

This scene has no single setting, as PCs will be going wherever they can find information. The most likely starting point will be the Guardian Angel Church. Other possible locations are The Cathedral (page 82) and The Studio (page 90) as the PCs may go there to interview Rock, Mikhael, or their followers.

INVESTIGATING ROCK N ROLL

PCs will probably want to check into the possibility that Rock was involved with the crime, even if just to clear him. They also might want to investigate the extent of his contacts and followers, which would allow them to have more insight into what Benny was doing that night and who might have pushed him to it.

The most relevant skill for investigating Rock is Gather Information. The following table summarizes the information that can be found.

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|---|
| 15 | Basic information as detailed in Rock's background (page 88) |
| 17 | Rock's police record — which does include a half-dozen violent incidents, many of which he was never prosecuted for. |
| 19 | Listings of Rock's followers in the unions and their positions. (Union Reps, Picketers, Workers, Lawyers) |
| 21 | Listings of Rock's most devoted fans and internet groupies. (Biggest Fans, Musicians) |
| 23 | Bank and financial information showing Rock's holdings and the amount (massive) that he gives to charity. As it turns out he has occasionally given money to several outreach programs running out of Father Candella's church. |
| 25 | List of Rock's followers with ties to terrorist organizations (Radical Agents) |

Some courses of investigation would be: checking banking records, finding lists of causes or individuals Rock has paid money to, getting lists of union members who block vote with him (Computers, Knowledge: Finance, Knowledge: Unions); getting information from police files (Diplomacy, Knowledge: Police Procedure); threatening mobsters and those Rock's busted into telling what they know (Intimidation); getting access to the music industry's files on Rock (Diplomacy, Innuendo); finding out juicy gossip from fans and tabloids (Knowledge: Celebrities or Super-Heroes, Computers); reading Rock's followers to figure out how they feel about various issues (Sense Motive, Intimidate, Innuendo, Knowledge: Marxism).

INVESTIGATING MIKHAEL

PCs are likely to check out Archangel for all the same reasons they want to check out Rock: to see if there is any truth to the conspiracy claims, to see if he would protect the guilty, to find out who his followers are and what they might have gotten up to, and general curiosity.

The more relevant skill for investigating Archangel is Gather Information or Knowledge: Local Religions. The following chart summarizes what can be found:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|---|
| 15 | Basic information as detailed in Archangel's background (page 81) |
| 17 | Since the Pope came out against gay marriage, Archangel has made public statements against it. There are no records of him ever actually removing any of his followers for homosexuality however. |
| 19 | Listings of Archangel's more legal and mundane followers. (Congregationalists, Priests, Confessors) |

| | |
|-----|---|
| 21 | Some of Archangel's followers are gay, and he knows about it. Some say he avoids the issue, others that he doesn't know his own mind on the matter and prays nightly. |
| 23 | Listings of Rock's more controversial followers — significantly including Ebonie Gauden (Sworn, Military Men, Order, Former Criminals) |
| 25* | Knowledge that Archangel is tied to an ancient occult group, claiming relation to the Templars and Masons (the Keepers of the Keys) |

* If the GM has decided that Archangel is something other than a real angel (see "Touchy Matters" page 82) then a result above 30 might allow the PCs to get some hint as to what his life was like before he gained his wings.

Some courses of investigation would be: Finding church membership lists or charitable donation write-offs on taxes to figure out who backs the Archangel (Computers, Knowledge: Local Churches, Knowledge: Finance); talking to the local religious community to see how other priests feel about him (Diplomacy); beating up religious radicals to make them talk (Intimidate); checking old and odd religious and mystical books or talking to mages for hints about the Archangel's origin (Knowledge: Religion, Magic, History, Occult); pretending to be interested in joining the cause to get one of the followers to talk (Perform, Sense Motive).

THE TIES THAT BIND

This section covers the particulars of the crime and its participants. Some of the subsections have information that is contingent on knowledge gained from other sections. If the PCs roll high enough to learn this contingent information in one scene they do not immediately get it. Instead they have to get the linking information in another scene, at which point they can either have an epiphany suddenly remembering a vital clue, or the GM may make them roll again to discover the linked information.

These scenes are presented in no specific order, as it will be up to the PCs where they go and who they talk to first.

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

The Guardian Angel Church on Seacrest Road is a prime source of information, but one that poses significant difficulties to investigators. First, the church is a busy community site and thus is so packed full of fingerprints, hairs, fibers and every kind of physical evidence that finding which belong to the criminal(s) requires skill and patience. Second, unless the PCs beat him to the scene in "Film at 11" Archangel moved Father Candella's body, removing vital clues of position (which may make the PCs suspicious — it certainly makes Rock so). Finally, unless the PCs were able to pull strings, the police will also be on site, and will get in the PCs' way.

PCs investigating the scene will need to make checks with either a Knowledge or Science skill in areas such as Police Pro-

cedure, Investigation, Forensics, or the like. The following chart summarizes the information that can be found:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|---|
| 15 | Father Candella was killed here, his head crushed against a pew. No one from the neighborhood saw or heard anything that made them suspect violence. Benny Everidge was one of the parishioners at the church, and knew Father Candella well. |
| 17 | The last event held at the church was a wedding between Kendall and Raisa Everidge, which ended about an hour before Father Candella was killed — significantly the wedding was not listed on the public schedule, only in the private books the Father kept. |
| 19 | There are some signs of struggle, mostly near the door. |
| 21 | Blood spatters near the door are older than those near the pew, so time passed between his beating and his murder. |
| 23 | From the way the pews were disrupted it looks like Father Candella was sitting down in a pew when he was killed. |
| 25 | The angle that his body would have been at indicates he was talking with, or at least looking at, someone sitting on the pew in front of him. |
| 27 | Benny's fingerprints are on the door and one of the pews near the front, but not the pew Father Candella was sitting in, or the one in front of it. |
| 29+ | The back door sticks a little, and wasn't fully closed after the murder, indicating that someone might have fled out the back. Benny's prints aren't on the door. |
| 31+* | Among the dozens of fingerprints on the pew in front of the one Father Candella was murdered on are Ebonie Gaulden's prints. Of course, her prints are also all over the church as she worked there from time to time.* |

*(Note that the PCs won't be able to recognize her fingerprints as significant unless they've also found out that she is one of Archangel's followers and/or that she was in love with Raisa.)

Some courses of investigation would be: checking the church website for a calendar of events or membership rolls (Computers); speaking to Congregationalists who know the participants or may have noticed something (Diplomacy); canvassing the neighborhood to see if anyone saw or heard anything (Gather Information); figuring out who to talk to in the church community, finding reluctant members, knowing the places in a church where fingerprints would normally be and not be (Knowledge: Religion, Church); finding additional scientific evidence such as cellular evidence, chemical compounds that could be from makeup, boots, beer, or tears, finding soil that fell off someone's boot, figuring out how tall and heavy Father Candella's attacker must have been, etc. (Science);

spotting tiny little bits of evidence others would miss (Spot, Search). Powers such as Data Link, Microscopic Senses, and Super Senses can also all help the PCs sort through the mass of physical evidence to find the relevant points.

FATHER CANDELLA

Investigating Father Candella is a two-part affair. The first part is examining the body, or at least getting the forensic report, to gain knowledge about the particulars of the murder. The second part is checking into his background to see if there is anyone with outstanding grudges, or anyone who would have a good reason to hurt him.

The best skills for investigating the good Father's body are Knowledge: Forensics or Science: Forensics. Medicine could also work, with a +2 to the DC. The following table summarizes what can be found from the body.

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|---|
| 15 | Father Candella was killed by blunt-force trauma to his skull from a large wooden object. |
| 17 | He was beaten before his death, but bruises had started forming before he was killed, which means at least a few minutes had passed between the events. |
| 19 | The beating was not severe enough to have made the Father completely helpless, but the evidence around his skull indicates that he wasn't resisting when his head was smashed. |
| 21 | There is a subtle pattern of subcutaneous bruising in the Father's neck and the side of his face that can be used to create a template for the hands holding him when his skull was crushed. The hand-print is too big for the hands to have been Benny's*, but would fit Ebonie perfectly* |

*To know about the hands of the two suspects the PCs would need to either have met them or at least have complete enough photos to make a model of their hands. In either case the PCs obviously can't match the handprint to Ebonie before they suspect her for other reasons.

Some courses of investigation would be: Using high-tech imaging systems to reconstruct small bits of evidence (Computers); figuring out what kind of training or experience the attacker(s) had (Knowledge: Martial Arts, Fighting Techniques, etc); close examination of fine technical points or figuring out what was going on in the killer's mind (Science: Chemistry, Biology, Sociology, Psychology); checking medical records or doing a full medical history (Medicine, if not used as the primary roll); close examination of details that others might miss (Search). Once again super senses could be of great help.

Finding out information about who the Father was in life is an easy task, as many people are ready to sing the praises of their fallen shepherd. Finding out anything negative about him is nearly impossible, because there isn't anything negative to

find out. PCs may get suspicious, but the truth is the Father was the best of men. The best skill for this check is Gather Information, and the table summarizes what is to be found:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|---|
| 13 | The basic information about Father Candella, as in his background (Page 95). No one can think of anyone that would want to hurt him personally. |
| 15 | The last marriage Father Candella performed was marrying Kendall Everidge, Benny's sister, to Raisa Romine. He'd kept the event mostly secret as he didn't want problems with demonstrators, or with the Archangel. |
| 17+ | The Father used to have long talks with Archangel while the two played chess. The subject was often homosexual rights. |

Some courses of investigation would be: Checking records and public information (Computers); talking to the bereaved (Diplomacy); figuring out if people are speaking honestly or out of respect (Sense Motive).

BENNY EVERIDGE

Doing a background check on Benny is easy as he's just a normal guy. He follows an average routine, and tracking his movements isn't hard. PCs who want to find out what happened that night without talking to Benny (or independently of the interview, so they can check his honesty), can make a Gather Information check against the following table:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|--|
| 10 | Basic information about Benny and his life, as in his background (page 95) |
| 12 | Benny is something of a homophobe, but generally wouldn't actually hurt anyone as he believes in Rock's politics. |
| 14 | On the night in question Benny had at least a half-dozen beers with his friend Grover Milonas, and left the bar looking angry. |
| 16 | Benny was saying something about "that lesbo" and that he'd "teach that fucking Priest to follow God's laws" |

Some courses of investigation would be: Checking old arrest records (Computers, Knowledge: Police Procedure); finding the right bars and people to talk to (Knowledge: Unions, City, Bars); and reading what the closed-lipped union members don't say (Sense Motive).

Interviewing Benny is difficult, as Rock controls access to him. If the PCs can arrange it (either on their own or as part of negotiations in "**Blessed Are the Peacemakers**") they can

get Benny's side of the story, as well as doing a physical examination to compare his prints and body size against evidence from the scene or forensic examination of the body.

Benny will be very remorseful that the Father is dead (Sense Motive DC 10 to know he is sincere), and will insist he didn't kill him. He'll explain about what Grover told him, and how he couldn't have his sister getting married to some "lesbo crack-ho" but insist he would never hurt Father Candella. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) will let the PCs know he is lying, but not about what. A check (DC 20) will let them know he feels guilty about something, but that he really is being honest about not killing the Father.

If confronted with hard evidence that he beat the Father, or if intimidated (DC 15, assuming Rock doesn't or can't stop it) he will admit that he beat Father Candella, but will say that he left the Father lying near the front door and that he fled out said door. All of this is consistent with the physical evidence at the scene and a Sense Motive check (DC 15) will indicate that Benny is telling the truth. He beat Candella badly, but he was not the killer. Unfortunately he has no idea who is, though he can suggest it is one of the "lesbo whore's friends, that's the kind of people they are."

KENDALL EVERIDGE

There is not a lot of relevant information about Kendall, as she is only involved in the murder by unfortunate relation. There are a few details that may help the PCs, however. The most fitting skill is Gather Information, and the following chart summarizes the results:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|---|
| 10 | Basic personal info, as in Kendall's background (page 97) including being Benny's sister. |
| 12 | Kendall used to have fights with her brother over her sexual orientation. |
| 14 | Kendall and Raisa have been going out for a year, and a few of Kendall's friends are worried about how little they know of Raisa's past. |
| 16 | One of Kendall's friends once hired a PI to look into Raisa's background, but Kendall found out and made the investigation stop. She seemed to be afraid of what might happen if Raisa found out. |

Some courses of investigation would be: checking school records, emails, employment records, etc (Computers); talking to friends and coworkers (Diplomacy); knowing or finding people who work with Kendall (Knowledge: Corporations or Pharmaceuticals); finding out where Kendall got her training, talking the talk to make her coworkers more comfortable in spilling their guts (Profession: Scientist or Corporate); figuring out what people won't say, especially about Raisa and the PI (Sense Motive).

If interviewed before Benny, Kendall is difficult and evasive. She is afraid that her brother killed Father Candella, but refuses to say anything that might be used against him. She will insist that he wasn't there, that he was okay with her marriage, and that he had no history of homophobia. Her denial may cause PCs to think she is trying to cover up facts to save Benny (Sense Motive DC 15 to figure that she is trying to protect her brother.) Convincing her that she's making it worse is difficult (Diplomacy check, DC 25).

If she's interviewed after Benny, and the PCs don't think he is the murderer, Kendall will be much more cooperative, even eager to help. She'll go so far as to guess that Grover Milonas probably egged Benny on and suggesting that Grover may have had something against the Father. She had no proof of this; she just dislikes Grover a great deal and thinks he might have mob connections.

The biggest help that Kendall can give the PCs is in convincing Raisa to come clean about her past and her fears about Ebonie. If Kendall can be convinced that it will help her brother and that the PCs only want justice, she will help them convince Raisa, giving a +5 to all Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks the PCs make with Raisa.

RAISA ROMINE-EVERIDGE

Raisa proves much harder to find out about than Kendall, as she's done a lot of work to cover her tracks. She doesn't have many friends and is very private at work, so finding out even basic facts about her can be challenging. This will probably tip off PCs that there is something worth looking into. The best skill for finding information about Raisa is Gather Information. The table below summarizes the results:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|--|
| 15 | Basic information about Raisa's current life, as in her background (page 96). |
| 17 | Raisa's current life only goes back four years, everything before that is sealed by court protections or has been erased completely. |
| 19 | Raisa has been through rehab for serious drug addictions, before that she had a juvenile record. |
| 21 | Raisa used to work as a whore in the area that Archangel's people now do most of their work in. |
| 23 | In her life before Raisa was partners and lovers with a woman named Ebonie Gaulden. |
| 25 | Raisa's lawyer, Chery Rivenberg, recently filed for a restraining order to keep Ebonie Gaulden away from Raisa. |

Some courses of investigation would be: looking into secured or court-sealed files (Computers); forcing old pimps and such to give over information (Intimidate); knowing who to talk to get information on a former junkie (Knowledge: Criminals, Police Procedure or Underworld); breaking into secure files (Open Lock/Move Silently); getting legal access to sealed files

(Profession: Lawyer, Policeman, Doctor); reading what people don't say (Sense Motive).

If the PCs interview Raisa she will try to avoid their questions, saying that she wasn't present and doesn't know anything about the murder (Sense Motive DC 15 indicates this is partly true, but that she has suspicions). If they start asking about her background she becomes aggressive, trying to get away from the PCs or forcing them to leave her house. Convincing her to talk is difficult (DC 25) as she is convinced that her new life will be ruined by her old mistakes. If the PCs can get her to talk she can tell them several things: she suspects that Ebonie may have had something to do with the murder, especially if Benny has been cleared. She can tell the PCs that Ebonie came to her a week ago and was acting obsessive and dangerous, talking about her new religion. Raisa made her leave, and got a restraining order because she was afraid Ebonie would become violent, as she has a history of brutality. If the PCs ask, Raisa can confirm that Ebonie's new church was the Archangel's. Raisa doesn't have any proof that Ebonie was involved, but she does know the woman and is sure she is capable of murdering someone if she felt betrayed.

EBONIE GAULDEN

The biggest problem in finding out about Ebonie is finding her relation to the crime. No one saw her at the church on the night of the murder, and while her fingerprints are on the scene they have reason to be there, as she worked at the church frequently. Ebonie herself will spend much of the time after the murder in The Cathedral, as she tries to regain her stability.

Gather Information is the best skill to use to find out about Ebonie. If the PCs find out about her from Raisa or someone else then they make the check normally. PCs who go asking about all of the Archangel's followers may come to her eventually, but get a +5 to the DCs listed below. Really clever PCs might come up with a plan to do something like run a computer program or have a super-speedy character go through lists collating any of the Archangel's followers with criminal backgrounds with either the married couple or the father — in which case Ebonie's name will come up prominently enough to only give a +2 to the DC on the table below. Similar plans should be rewarded. The table below summarizes the information:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|---|
| 15 | Ebonie is one of the Sworn, a devoted follower of Archangel. |
| 17 | Ebonie used to be a crack junkie and prostitute, who got out of the life with Archangel's help. |
| 19 | In the old days Ebonie had a track record of jealousy and violence, and frequently beat and hospitalized anyone who she perceived as stealing from her. |

| | |
|----|---|
| 21 | Ebonie worked in the area near the Cathedral. *This is the same area Raisa and Alleen worked in. |
| 23 | Ebonie was recently named in a restraining order filed by Raisa Romine. |

*PCs will either need to know about Raisa or Alleen, or go to the area and Gather Info (DC 15) to find out the names of other prostitutes in the area, in order to know this information.

Some courses of investigation would be: finding records, cross-referencing as described above (Computers); talking to former “co-workers” and members of churches or cops (Diplomacy); making street-dwellers talk (Intimidate); figuring out who to talk to and where to look (Knowledge: City, Church, Underworld, Criminals); finding out about the restraining order and who filed it (Knowledge: Law, Profession: Lawyer); figuring out what people won't say (Sense Motive).

Ebonie will not make herself available for an interview, and unless the PCs can come to an arrangement with Mikhael (as in “**Blessed Are the Peacemakers**”) he is unlikely to give them access to her or to The Cathedral. After all, why should his innocent followers be persecuted and a holy church violated?

Even if the PCs can talk to Ebonie getting useful information from her will be a hard row to hoe. She does remember that she learned about the wedding from Alleen Roadcap (She has no idea how Alleen knew about the wedding, and remembers thinking it was odd — as Alleen wasn't much for churches or weddings). She remembers going to the church to talk to Raisa. Past that, however, she's become delusional and managed to convince herself that she did not kill Father Candella, as her mind has come unhinged from the trauma of the action. She will say that she left after the wedding, but before Benny, and stick to that story. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) will indicate that she thinks she is telling the truth, but that she is highly unstable and very upset. Another check, either with Sense Motive or Science: Psychology (DC 25) will show that Ebonie has suffered a psychotic break and that she can't remember the reality of what happened.

Getting Ebonie to remember would require either a mental power (DC 24 to 30, depending on the suitability of the power) or a super-human dose of Psychology or Intimidation (DC 45) which the Archangel will attempt to stop unless the PCs convince him it is for Ebonie's good. If she does remember she will confess, breaking down into horrified and self-loathing tears. At the GM's options good checks that don't quite succeed might be enough to get her to remember flashes, such as taking an hours-long shower or trying to burn her clothes.

If asked about it (Diplomacy DC 10 assuming Archangel hasn't ordered them not to speak to the PCs and 25 if he has), one of the Congregationalists who works full time at The Cathedral will remember that he found some clothes, which match Ebonie's normal dress, partly burned in the furnace the day after the murder. The clothes have been in the trash since then, and if the PCs can recover them (Search DC 15, and possible difficulties if Archangel objects to them garbage diving) they can be taken for examination. A Knowl-

edge/Science: Forensics/Biology check (DC 25) or Spot check (DC 35) can detect minute amounts of blood matching Father Candella's type on the shirt.

ALLEEN ROADCAP

Alleen is hard to link to the murder, but easy to find and find out about after her name has come up. She's a common whore with a long rap sheet, bad habits, and a known address. The only unusual thing about her is that she knows Ebonie and that she happens to have a big name lawyer who recently got her off some serious charges. The most relevant skill to find out about Alleen is either Gather Information or Knowledge: Criminals. The table below summarizes the results:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|--|
| 12 | Alleen is a prostitute, she used to work the area near Cathedral, but left when Archangel's people put an end to most of the prostitution there. * |
| 14 | Alleen was busted for drugs and solicitation a few weeks back, but lucked out and got some big name lawyer to defend her. |
| 16 | Said lawyer was one Ching Clish, who did the work pro bono. |

* PCs who know that Ebonie and/or Raisa used to be prostitutes would know this is the same general area those women worked in when they were hooking.

Some courses of investigation would be: finding records (Computers); talking to former “co-workers” or cops who arrested her (Diplomacy); making street-dwellers talk (Intimidate); figuring out who to talk to and where to look (Knowledge: Criminals, Underworld, Cops, Police Procedure); figuring out what people won't say (Sense Motive).

How Alleen reacts to the characters depends on how much they know and how hard they push. If they seem to be fishing she'll try to play cool, and claim that she'd heard about the wedding from another prostitute (whose name she can't remember) and was just telling Ebonie to make conversation. If the PCs come in talking about Clish, or if they lean on her hard (Intimidation or Bluff DC 12, Diplomacy DC 15), Alleen will admit that Clish put her up to it. She wants Clish's help but she isn't willing to cross super-humans to get it. She doesn't know why Clish wanted her to do it, only that he was very insistent about the timing.

GROVER MILONAS

While Grover has an alibi for the murder (he didn't leave the bar when Benny did and was surrounded by several dozen people until after Benny left the church), he is still someone the PCs will want to look into as he is one of Benny's key witnesses. PCs may also wonder how he knew about Benny's sister's wedding before Benny did, or if he knows anything about Benny

that they should know. The most relevant skill for finding information about Milonas is Gather Information. The following chart summarizes the results:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|---|
| 13 | Milonas is a longshoreman, a good friend of Benny's, but kind of a jerk. |
| 15 | Milonas is a heavy drinker, and has a history of violence. |
| 17 | Milonas is lucky he's a friend of Benny's, cause it keeps Rock's people from busting him — everyone knows he used to take money from the mob. |
| 19 | Old Grover used to do more than take money from the mob, he used to collect it. He was a leg breaker for 10 years, and only stopped after a recent arrest. |
| 21 | Milonas has gotten off on all of his arrests because of the hard work of his lawyer, Ching Clish. If not for Clish, Milonas would be doing at least 10 years in jail. |

Some courses of investigation would be: getting mobsters to think the PCs are friends of Grover's (Bluff); checking arrest and work records, bank statements, etc (Computers); getting people from the hood to talk, talking to cops, union reps and lawyers (Diplomacy); making hoods squeal about Grover's bad habits (Intimidate); figuring who to talk to and knowing pertinent facts (Knowledge: Mafia, Unions, or Police); sensing that people are scared of Grover, or think he's trash (Sense Motive).

Grover won't make himself available for interview, so the PCs will have to force it if they want to talk to him. If he is still under Rock's protection, this could be difficult, and the PCs would have to take similar steps as those to interview Benny (above). If the PCs can interview him, Grover will tell them that Benny went out drunk and mad, but that he didn't kill the priest — and he'll use his Bluff (opposed by Sense Motive) to try and convince the characters that he is lying because he thinks Benny really did kill the priest. If the PCs see through it, or ask how Grover knew about the wedding, Grover will act surprised and say that he found out from his own sister, trying to Bluff again.

If Grover is forced against a wall he will admit that he didn't think that Benny killed the Father. He'll claim that he was just trying to be helpful so he wouldn't get into more trouble (one last Bluff). If the PCs keep after him he'll try to keep his mouth shut, but successful checks (DC 18) can convince him to tell them that Ching Clish, his lawyer, put him up to it. He doesn't know why, just that Clish promised him free representation and "favours from the family" if he'd do it.

CHING CLISH

Clish is a well-known lawyer in a major downtown firm, so finding him is not difficult, though it can take some time if the PCs

don't know which firm. Most of his life is fairly open to public records, with the only specialized information being about his relationship with Withem. The most relevant skills for finding out about Clish are either Gather Information or Profession: Lawyer or Cop. The following table summarizes the results:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|---|
| 13 | Clish is a lawyer for the firm of Bishop, Roby, Nichols, and Withem and deals with mostly small-time criminal defendants. |
| 15 | Clish has gotten in trouble for ethical violations in the past, and was nearly disbarred last year. |
| 17 | The only reason Clish still has a job is because he's a pet project of his senior partner — Joshua Withem. |

Some courses of investigation would be: pretending to be a client or member of the bar association (Bluff); digging up records (Computers); talking to lawyers, judges, cops and defendants (Diplomacy); Gather Information (if not used as the main skill); knowing or finding lawyers and law firms (Knowledge: Law, Profession: Lawyer, Cop), knowing where to look for old case files and the like (Profession: Lawyer, Judge, Cop); and Sense Motive to know when people are covering.

Clish will try to keep away from the characters, and will not willingly grant interviews. He'll have his secretary deflect the PCs as long as possible, and may leave the city if the PCs give him time. (He's also the most likely character to be kidnapped in "**Bullet in the Head**" (page 52) so he might simply up and vanish.) He can be forced to the table either by brute force or intimidation (intimidating the secretary into telling where he is has a DC of 15), or if the PCs can show that they have a lot of evidence against him and that his only hope for leniency is to squeal (Diplomacy DC 15, Intimidate DC 17, Bluff DC 20).

Once Clish gets talking he can tell the PCs that Withem set up the whole thing, and will also claim that Rivenberg was in on the whole thing — doing everything he can to put as much guilt as possible on others. He can prove the Withem claims, as he has signed documents and copies of memos that show that Withem was using Clish's client files and that Withem was clearly manipulating Clish to set up his clients. He has no proof about Rivenberg, but will try to make her sound guilty anyway (Sense Motive vs. his Bluff to figure out his lie).

CHERY RIVENBERG

As with Clish, Rivenberg is a lawyer and has a very public life. Finding her is simple enough, as she has ads in the yellow pages and in several flyers distributed through battered women's shelters and AIDS hospices. Even her engagement to Withem is a matter of public record, as it was in the newspapers a few weeks back. The most relevant skills for finding out about Rivenberg are either Gather Information or Profession: Lawyer or Cop. The following table summarizes the results:

| Check Result | Information |
|--------------|---|
| 10 | Rivenberg is a lawyer, but one of the good ones. She does work for gay and women's rights, and works with shelters and outreach programs. |
| 12 | Rivenberg does a lot of work, as she can't turn away a needy client. As a result she often consults with or farms out work to other lawyers. |
| 14 | The lovely lady Rivenberg also recently announced her engagement to an even more powerful lawyer, one Joshua Withem of Bishop, Roby, Nichols, and Withem. |

Some courses of investigation would be: pretending to be a client or member of the bar association (Bluff); digging up records (Computers); talking to lawyers, judges, cops and defendants (Diplomacy); Gather Information to find newspaper records or office talk (if not used as the main skill); knowing or finding lawyers and law firms (Knowledge: Law, Profession: Lawyer, Cop), knowing where to look for old case files and the like (Profession: Lawyer, Judge, Cop).

Rivenberg will want to meet with the characters if they come looking, especially if there is talk of scandal or impropriety. She thinks she hasn't done anything wrong and so will be more than willing to come face to face with her accusers. She will claim innocence in all things. (Sense Motive vs. her Bluff to know that she thinks she may have done something wrong, but not something criminal.) Even if the PCs have testimony from Clish she will respond with contempt, saying that Clish is a liar. Showing her documents, memos, Clish's testimony, or other hard evidence that Withem has used her is the best way to get her to admit the truth. (DC in that case is 15, if PCs try to overwhelm her or convince her without evidence it becomes 30.)

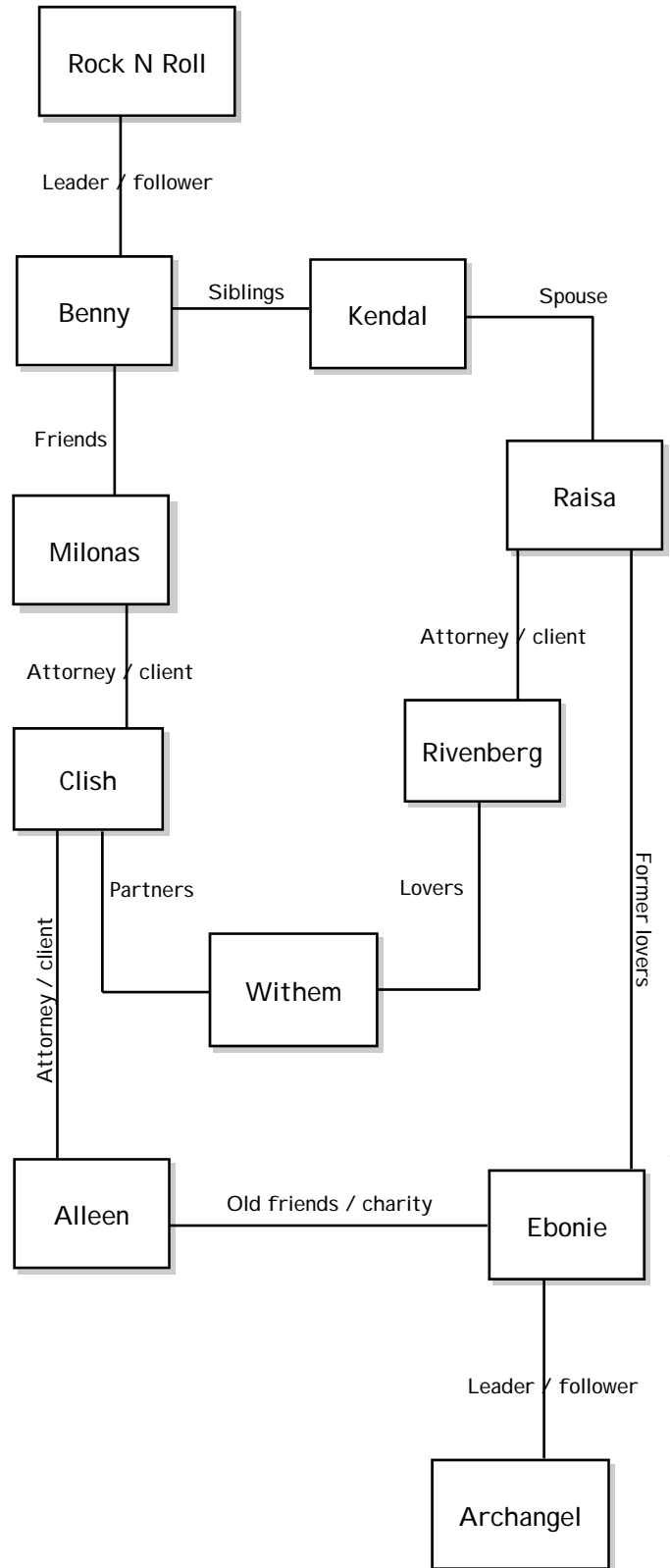
If the PCs can get Rivenberg to talk she can tell them that Withem did know about Raisa and Ebonie, because she had showed him Raisa's files. She did it with the best intentions, wanting to get his excellent legal mind to give her advice and help her client. She had no idea that the man she loved would use the information to harm her clients or get anyone killed. If she really believes he did (as opposed to simply being forced to speak) she will turn on him and will be willing to testify against him in court.

WHAT NEXT?

PCs who are doing well may be able to go to "Bullet in the Head" — especially if they did well in "Blessed are the Peacemakers." However, if "By Pride Cometh Contention" has not already happened GMs may wish to spring it on the PCs to change the pace and give them a taste of what will happen if they can't find the truth. If that scene has been played and things are getting worse rather than better GMs could also spring "Wrath of Angels" on the PCs to force the tension up another notch. PCs who want to skip "Bullet in the Head" and don't care about Clish or Grover ending up dead could go right to "Know Your Enemy."

RELATIONSHIP WEB

The following is a map visually representing the ties between everyone involved in the murder.



BY PRIDE COMETH CONTENTION

In which the PCs get into a four-way brawl between themselves, Rock N Roll, Mikhael Archangel, and half the cops in the City. It is a dark reflection of the fight against the Made Men, as now hero fights hero.

THE SITUATION

Both Rock and the Archangel found themselves in situations in which a leader must respond to the wishes of his followers or risk losing them. Both chose to listen to their egos and fears rather than being true leaders, and so both of them ended up breaking promises and heading on a path they knew was not wise.

For Rock it was centered on Vincent DuBois and the radical agents (page 94). Vincent came to Rock and told him that others were saying Rock was weak, bending down to the dictates of the Man, and that unless he did something to demonstrate that he was still a committed leader they would take matters into their own hands. Afraid of what might happen if the agents went rogue, Rock arranged for a protest march, centered around gay rights and police brutality, to show that he still had juice.

The Archangel's problems came from his followers' faith. Several of the Sworn and the Order, including Taylor Alvarez and Gabrielle Hope (page 86) came to him and asked why he would follow the laws of men, why he was afraid of the consequences of righteous action. Though he tried to explain, in the end Mikhael was swallowed up in his own pride and agreed that something should be done. In order to show his respect for Father Candella, he arranged a funeral march in the old style, allowing people to come and express their remorse.

Both of the supers' organizations forced their plans through the City offices on short notice, obtaining permits that are at best semi-legal. Of course neither bothered to check their routes with the other. So about halfway through

both marches the two groups quite literally ran into each other. Rock's march was swollen by a flash-mob of internet fans who arranged to join the march at the Square, and Mikhael's following was boosted by locals coming out to honor a fallen priest. The sudden influx of people occurred just as the marches intersected, and chaos ensued. Before either Rock or Mikhael could get their followers under control curses, punches, and bottles were thrown. The two rushed to the front and came face to face amid a mob of screaming followers, some of whom were already bleeding.

Blaine Sangiacomo (page 100) had snuck into the crowd of Rock's supporters, and from a position just behind some bangers he took a shot at Archangel. The angel's response was to open up with both barrels. Rock returned fire, and both sets of followers eagerly joined the fray. The police, arriving at the scene and trying to control the marches, called for SWAT. Those on scene had rubber bullets and pepper spray, but knew they were overmatched, which will make them consider using live ammo. SWAT is on its way but may make the situation worse — if the more radical elements of the crowd see heavily armed cops coming they'll open up with RPGs.

Note that if the PCs were able to negotiate well enough in **"Blessed are the Peacemakers"** this scene might not happen at all. To stop it the PCs would have had to arrange for either of the NPC supers to agree to a position close to house arrest. In that case the marches still happen, but the supers won't be present. It is also possible that PCs who got agreements from the terrible two that they would keep their followers well clear of each other may be able to get either or both to change the routes of their march if they can get to the scene

before the clash. If the PCs only get the agreement of the supers, however, some of their followers may mutiny and do the march anyway. (Both the Radical Agents and Keepers of the Keys would be willing to go against the wishes of their leader.) GMs will have to decide if the supers come to aid their followers when violence starts.

THE SETTING

Rock lead his march down Broadstreet, and Archangel up 7th Avenue, and the two meet at the City's Central Square just after 1 in the afternoon. Underneath the neon signs and jumbo-TV screens the two processions came together, blocking up traffic and causing a jam that spills back for several blocks. Now the streets, always busy, are jammed full of people — both followers and supporters of various factions as well as cops, city workers, and thousands of bystanders who were just in the wrong place. Of the latter category many are caught up by the intense charisma of the two supers and are now participants in the brawl. Others are trying desperately to get away, or at least to find a safe vantage to watch the unfolding spectacle.

Those in cars are little better off, as the crowd has gotten thick enough that driving is impossible. Busses, cars, and trucks are trapped against both curbs and in the center of the road, surrounded by throngs of humanity. The busses get special attention, as they make great platforms to climb onto or shelters to seek safety inside, and most of them are swamped with people.

Around the swirling, screaming crowds stand endless shops, restaurants, hotels, theme stores (from WWV Wrestling and Maiden Records to Seduction sex shops and Video TV), and endless brightly lit signs advertising everything from phones to sex to local churches and bus routes. Most of the buildings fronting the road are less than a dozen stories high, but a few reach skyscraper heights, and many of the complexes have 30+ story towers less than 30 feet away from the street. Because of the height of the buildings and the crowded roads, characters with flight, leaping, or swinging will have massive benefits in terms of mobility, and can use the buildings to best advantage. A map of the area can be found in the combat booklet.

LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE!

How bad things are when the PCs get to the scene will depend on how quickly they get there. PCs who have kept tabs on Rock and/or Mikhael will be able to get word of the planned marches before they happen, and may be able to arrive before the two sides meet. Stopping the mobs by any method short of violence may be impossible, as both Rock and Mikhael will not see the PCs until they start marching, and at that point they cannot back down without causing their followers to lose faith. Either would agree to let the PCs accompany them, however,

THINGS TO BREAK, OBJECTS TO THROW

Buildings: Most of the buildings fronting Central Square have exterior walls of thick brick or concrete, giving them an average hardness of 12 to 18. Many of them, however, have large plate glass windows showing the stores or offices on the interior, and those are only hardness 2. Interior walls of the buildings are drywall with metal supports, and so normally have a hardness of 5, but will have spots where it leaps to 10. Desks, shelves, and filing cabinets all have a hardness of 5 to 8. Doorways, windows and the like all make excellent cover.

Vehicles: There are also a large number of cars and pickup trucks parked along the road, or stuck in the surging mobs. The hardnesses for these can be found on *M&M* page 117. In general, a size Large automobile will weigh between 1 ton (VW Bug) and 5 tons (large pickup). There are also two city busses present, which can use the 18-wheeler stats and weigh about 16 tons.

Roadworks: The street itself is about 10 feet thick, under that there are parking garages and sewer lines. Each foot section of road has a hardness of 18. Bus stop benches and canopies have a hardness of 6. Manhole covers have a hardness of 16, and make wonderful weapons. Parking meters have a hardness of 12 and can be used as minimal cover or super-heroic bats. Prying one up from the ground requires a Strength check (DC 25). Streetlights and traffic signals are the same, but hardness 15 and DC 30. Newspaper machines are hardness 8 and weigh about 450 pounds, but are usually bolted down (hardness 8 to break, or Strength DC 25 to rip up). Finally, the jumbo screens at the corners of the intersection weigh half a ton and are hardness 10.

Utilities: Telephone and electric poles have a hardness of 15, and support lots of cables and wires. The wires are generally hardness 10, but can be cut more easily (effective hardness against edged weapons 6). Power lines carry electrical charges equivalent to a lethal energy blast at levels 10 to 15. Waterlines buried under the street have a hardness of 10, as do fire hydrants, and either can be ruptured to cause a PL 10 stunning water blast that will last 1 round, then turn into tripping attack with a bonus of +5 against anyone who crosses through the water.

and PCs in this position may be able to lessen the impact when the two sides clash. PCs trying to stop the violence completely have to deal not just with Rock and Mikhael, but also with the hundreds of people marching with them. Keeping track of everyone and stopping even a single hot-head from throwing a bottle that will start the brawl may not be possible, but PCs who play smart should at least get a chance to clear the streets of innocents and to contain the violence fairly quickly. The big advantage PCs in this situation will have is an ability to control the direction of the fight — using Heroic Oratory or Divide and Contain methods (see below) before violence can even start, as well as a chance to spot Sangiacomo when he takes a shot at Mikhael (Spot check, DC 20).

PCs who hear of the marches once they've already started, such as from the news or with super-senses attuned to the City, will be able to get to the Square at about the same time that the two factions intersect. PCs that move quickly will get there just as the violence is erupting, and will have a chance to see Sangiacomo (Spot DC 25), but will not have time to clear out civilians before the violence starts. They will, however, still have a chance to Divide and Contain (see below) before shooting starts and can use Heroic Oratory against the crowd without being opposed by any of the NPCs.

PCs who come only after the riot has started will be dealing with a mess of epic proportions. Brawls will have broken out up and down the Square, making it difficult to tell one side from the other or from the crowd. The combat-trained members of both groups will be finding cover and sending for heavier weapons and reinforcements (many would be carrying pistols, but rifles, armor, and heavy weapons wouldn't have been carried). The police will be using megaphones, tear gas, riot shields, and guns with rubber bullets to try and disperse the crowd, adding to the confusion rather than clearing it. SWAT teams will be arriving, and will end up in shootouts with the combative followers. Rock and Mikhael will be brawling with each other when possible, stopping only to blast away at anything that looks threatening to their followers (such as SWAT teams with real bullets or PCs knocking them around).

NPC "TACTICS"

It's hard to call most behavior in a massive street-brawl/riot "tactical," but there is some order in the midst of the chaos, and these are the actions various NPCs will take when things get bad:

Rock and Friends: Rock will concentrate most of his firepower on Mikhael. He will occasionally shift his attention to areas where his followers are in trouble, using area blasts to devastate any massed opposition (such as police moving in formation). His less combat-trained followers will stick to unarmed attacks or occasional thrown bricks, brawling in the middle of the street with the Archangel's followers and the police. The combat savvy followers will seek cover, trying to take down opposition leaders and supporting Rock with combined fire attacks against the Archangel or the PCs. The Face Squad will use their abilities to boost Rock and then each other, taking cover then using leadership and oratory to coordinate the other followers and turning bystanders to their side.

Mikhael Archangel and Followers: Mikhael will focus his attention on Rock, but as Rock will have a hard time damaging him he will also have an occasional attack to spare for anyone who uses lethal attacks against his followers, or to use healing a wounded follower. The Order and the Sworn will take cover and support the Archangel with combined fire against tough targets while trying to keep Rock's followers from doing the same. The Keepers of the Keys will teleport to safe locations and use mental blasts against the Face Squad and the Radical Agents, leaving Rock and the PCs to Mikhael's discretion. The

less combative followers brawl with Rock's minions, but try to avoid fighting the police.

Police: The police are desperate and afraid, but trying to do the right thing. They use riot shields (deflection +4), night-sticks (+3S weapon), rubber bullets (+5S weapon), and tear gas (poison, Save DC 20 or become nauseated) to break up the crowd. Once they start taking directed attacks with anything more than bottles they will start using live ammo against anyone actively resisting, and will fire tear gas into the crowd without discretion. Once SWAT arrives they will target anyone using live weapons, and will not hesitate to kill anyone shooting at them. SWAT specialists will use heavy weapons up to and including RPGs (+7 to +10 weapon) against the supers on the scene. They will consider the PCs threats unless the PCs are cops or stop to coordinate actions with them.

The Crowd: The crowd is in a state of panic, and doesn't have any tactical sense or plan at all. Some members of the crowd will join the fights on one side or another of their own will, and others will be sucked in by Rock or Archangel's charismatic appeals. Most of the rest will try to get away, but aren't sure where they are getting away to.

BIG EXPLOSIONS AND COLLATERAL DAMAGE STUNTS

Here is a brief list of cool/explosive things that could happen during the fight.

- One of the live national TV shows shot around the Square could get interrupted when its host gets smacked in the head by a rioter or when its stage is invaded by fighting forces. Just imagine what would happen if "Top Videos of Today" was suddenly invaded by the Religious Right and everyone had weapons...
- Someone getting hit with or through a gigantic neon-sign that sprays sparks in a million colors as it gives the victim electrical shocks.
- A SWAT helicopter getting smashed into the side of a building, causing glass and burning fuel to rain down on the crowd below.
- A bodyguard or PC riding a motorcycle over all the cars stuck in traffic, preferably firing weapons or power while leaping from car-top to car-top.
- Two power-blasts or attacks colliding with such force that they make a thunder-clap that blows out every window in one of the nearby skyscrapers.

ENDING THE MADNESS

The PCs are going to face a tough fight and will start off taking fire from all sides. Following are some of the methods they might use to end the fight. This list covers a wide variety of options, but is not all-inclusive, and clever players may come up with more ideas.

Take Out the Head: Taking down Mikhael or Rock is a certain way to demoralize one of the sides of the fight, possibly causing them to withdraw. The primary problem with this

method is that either super is unlikely to forgive or forget an attack, and will hit any PC attacking them with full power attacks. If the PCs can drop one of the two it will help end the fight. Their followers will rush to get their fallen leader and remove them from the scene, doing everything they can to flee with the body. Revenge can come later. The chief difficulty for the PCs at that point will be convincing the other sides to let the fleeing side get away.

Divide and Contain: If the PCs can use powers or skills to separate the leaders from their factions, the rest of the group will withdraw from the fight to lick their wounds. The leaders for the Archangel's side are the angel himself, the Keepers, and Gabrielle of the Order. Rock's side is led by Rock, the Face Squad, and Vincent of the Radical Agents. The police are led by half a dozen lieutenants, a captain, and possibly (after several rounds have passed) the Chief of Police. While separating the leaders will bring attacks from the factions, and possibly the leaders as well, it will not be with the lethal intensity given to anyone trying to harm or kill the leaders. If this option can be finished before the fighting has a chance to get bad, the situation can be resolved without significant violence.

Let God Sort Them Out: If the PCs don't feel like negotiating or playing nice they can always just start punching. The long-term consequences of this action are going to be severe, but in the short term it may be the only solution. The biggest problem with taking on all comers is that

it will make the PCs the target of attacks from all sides at once. If the PCs make it obvious they are working with one side then they will not be attacked by that side, and may be able to convince the leaders to support them. Doing so will still make the PCs targets for both of the other sides. Once the PCs start to take out a significant number of followers, or attack the leaders, they can also expect Rock and the Archangel to target them personally. If the PCs take out more than half of a group's members the leaders will do their best to withdraw. Mikhael will portal out his followers, where Rock will simply command his to disperse while using large-scale, selec-

tive area attacks to stun anyone who cuts off escape routes. The police would withdraw into the SWAT wagons, but will be replaced with reinforcements in a matter of minutes.

Heroic Oratory: PCs who try to use heroic monologues or charisma skills to stop the fighting will have a rough time of it. Bystanders will have a default attitude of Indifferent, but actions by Rock or the Archangel (or followers like the Face Squad) will move this to Unfriendly or even Hostile with successful rolls. The Police will count as Unfriendly unless the PCs are police or have connections to them, and they too are susceptible to Face Squad or angelic manipulation. Followers of either NPC count as Hostile unless the PCs seem to be actively

supporting their side. Also, if Rock, the Face Squad, the Archangel, or the Order are present they will make opposed rolls to attempt to undo the influence the PCs gain over the crowd. The major NPCs will be Hostile, due to their rage, but may end up being the easiest to convince. If the PCs can bring one of the supers to Friendly or Helpful they can convince that super to have their followers withdraw. If this option can be finished before the fighting has a chance to get bad, then the situation may be resolved without significant violence.



WHAT NEXT?

If the PCs ended the riot before real damage or casualties could be done they may want to take Rock and Mikhael to (or back to) the negotiating table, in which case they should go to **"Blessed are the Peacemakers."** If either of the

NPC supers is now wanted to by the police or feels in danger for either their own life or the life of followers, he will retreat to his stronghold and hole up, which is covered in **"The Wrath of Angels."** PCs who want to take out Rock and/or Archangel before they can do more damage can go to **"Into the Lion's Den"** for Archangel or **"First Against the Wall"** for Rock. PCs who want to return to investigation can go to **"Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid"** or, if they are nearing the end of their investigation, to **"Bullet in the Head."** Finally, if Rock or Archangel were killed or jailed, GMs can look to **"WAR!"** or **"In the End"** for ideas about the consequences.

THE WRATH OF ANGELS

In which Rock and Archangel call for the public to rise up, the Mayor calls in the army, and the PCs take it to the airwaves to urge everyone to stop being so damn stupid.

THE SITUATION

The government and both Rock and Mikhael's people are enraged, afraid, and contemplating doing real violence to each other and anyone in between. As a result all three are pulling back and getting their forces ready. Rock and Mikhael have retreated to their headquarters and are calling their followers in, and the Mayor has taken over from the Chief of Police, called up the National Guard, and is talking about bringing the army to force Rock and Mikhael to surrender.

While the PCs are dealing with their investigations (**"Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid"**) or preparations for other actions, the other facts escalate the situation. It starts with the Archangel making an unprecedented appearance on local television, using his boosted charisma to make a public sermon in which he calls for the faithful to prepare for a day of reckoning. Less than an hour later Rock makes a counter address in which he calls for the people to get ready for revolution. Spurred by these two blatant displays of rebellion, the Mayor and Chief of police come on TV an hour later to announce that the National Guard and the army are on the way to maintain the peace. The Mayor implies that any resistance will be met with a declaration of martial law, followed by swift and violent reprisals against all concerned.

THE SETTING

There is no defined setting for **"Wrath of Angels"** as the scene will mostly take place as a series of television broadcasts. Mikhael will do his sermon from The Cathedral, Rock from The Studio, and the government from the steps of 1 Police Plaza. The PCs will have to decide where they go to respond, and how they will do so. PCs may also try to meet with the various factions, in which case they may go to the settings mentioned.

Another possibility is to have the TV itself be the setting, showing the scene as pictures of the PCs and NPCs speak from the tube to audiences at home, in bars, stores, and standing on the street listening to radios or getting messages from cell phones, PDAs, and other people. GMs who want to try this should let the players set up their TV image and describe how they set the scene, and show people across the City reacting to that image. In that way the whole forum of public opinion becomes the setting, albeit a rather abstract one.

COME UNTO ME MY CHILDREN

Each of the three NPC factions will make an address. The specifics of each are listed below.

ARCHANGEL'S SERMON

The Archangel starts the public accusations. He invites several church-friendly reporters from a half-dozen local television and radio stations to The Cathedral. The reporters have a brief conference with him and then go live. Just as they do so Mikhael boosts his charisma into the super-human range. Standing under the huge dome of The Cathedral, in front of a stained-glass window depicting Jerusalem being saved when angels destroyed the Assyrian army (2 Kgs. 19: 35), he addresses the public.

The gist of Archangel's address is as follows:

- Both the Police and Rock N Roll's "godless rebels" have been conspiring to keep Father Candella's murderer from being brought to justice.
- Rock N Roll has no respect for authority or law, but is a power-mad fool who would rather protect his own following than let them face justice.
- The police have helped Rock in order to strike against the power of churches, hoping to weaken them by showing that they cannot protect people without the permission of the all powerful state.
- Rock uses his control of media and cult of personality to cloud the issue, doing it so that he can cause enough fear and hatred to let him start a revolution to tear down both church and state.
- He ends his speech with the statement, "Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. Do not think that God does not see these sins, for the time of reckoning is at hand. All the children of the Lord should come unto me, for soon his hand will stretch forth and shall make the guilty tremble and weep. I warn you this last time, submit to the Will of God or be destroyed."

After the speech is concluded the Archangel sends a shaken group of reporters home, though a few of them decide that they are "children of the Lord" and stay in The Cathedral, becoming new followers. The rest hurry back to the office to file more extensive stories as the Archangel's message goes out over the airwaves.

ROCK'S MANIFESTO

45 minutes after the Archangel's sermon has aired, local communications are interrupted by pirate signals tapping local television and radio stations, as well as several internet simulcasts. Rock broadcasts from The Studio, using his illegal equipment to hijack signals. He comes on with a charisma boost from the Face Squad, and speaks to the camera against a white background across which the red words "Liberty, Equality, Freedom" are writing in a strong, flowing hand.

The main points of Rock's speech are as follows:

- He never wanted revolution, he wanted to work change through peace and social activism. Archangel is a liar.

- While he never wanted to fight the government, the police have made it impossible for justice to be done, and keep people from looking after each other. The police have become the instruments of fascism.
- "Mickey" is the one using his powers, which are clearly not from whatever God may be, to confuse the issue. He had Father Candella killed because the good Father was in favor of gay marriage. Archangel and his churches are all homophobes, who would rather kill than have their morality questioned.
- It has become clear that there is no justice in this country, and the only way a man can be sure that he will be safe is to take up arms. Unless the government proves itself reasonable there will no choice but to take a stand.
- He ends with: "Why should we be ruled by tyrants and dictators, whether they wear a halo or a police badge? We are told that when the government turns against the People, it is the right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new Government. We are also told that we have the right to life, liberty, equality, and freedom — and no one should have the power to take that away, be he of the church or state. I will not back down, I will not give into fear. It's time that we rallied together, and see that justice is done though the heavens fall."

After Rock's declaration the screen goes blank and regular programming resumes. The reaction that started spreading after the Archangel's address intensifies, and radicals of all types start talking about going and signing up with Rock's "army." Even more moderate people are shaken, and debates, discussions, and fights start to break out across the city.

GOVERNMENT RHETORIC

One hour after Rock's declaration, the Mayor and Chief of Police have an emergency press conference. Behind them on the screen are the statues of Blind Justice and the imposing bulk of either City Hall or Police Headquarters. Surrounded by reporters from every local and most national and even international agencies they give a short, direct speech that makes the following points:

- There has been no government misconduct in the matters that the "rogue super-humans" have discussed. Both speeches are a smokescreen to hide their illegal activities.
- The police (working with the PCs if the PCs are in high public favor) have been trying to investigate Father Candella's murder, but have been obstructed at every turn by the actions of the "heedlessly violent super-humans."
- The police want to protect everyone, equally, and the government of the City, state, and nation supports them fully.
- The Mayor finishes with these words: "The rule of law is just, but to be just it must be absolute. No one can flout the law and go free. I have called up the National Guard

to deal with this situation, and they will keep all citizens who do not rebel against their duly elected government safe. Those that will not abide by the rule of law will be dealt with, even if it means declaring martial law while all those who would oppose our safety and freedom are dealt with in a manner fitting to such terrorists.”

Despite the anger of the statements they will seem pallid compared to the words of the super-charisma boosted orators that came before. Every reporter in the crowd will react to the words “martial law” and “terrorists” but the Mayor will refuse to answer questions, saying that he has too many details to attend to. As the response goes out across every TV in the City it only increases the tension and worry, as the people of the City now face the possibility of tanks running down protesters in the streets outside their homes.

PC OPTIONS

A few likely PC response options are:

Take it to the people: If everyone else can use the mass-media to spread their word, then why shouldn't the PCs? PCs with the ability to hijack the airwaves can do so, and those who want to work through the news media will find the media happy to help. The PCs should have a chance to set up their own set, figure out what they're going to say, and then make their public appeal.

When the PCs finish their speech they should get all bonuses for good RP and setup (+2 to +6), and more bonuses if they kept close to the truth and were able to back it up with strong evidence (+4). The PCs can then make a Diplomacy, Performance (which gets a +2 bonus), or similar check to defuse the effect of the NPC speeches. The following chart summarizes the effects of their speech based on the result of their check.

| Check Result | Effect |
|--------------|--|
| Less than 10 | The panic in the City worsens, forcing the Mayor to call in the Army |
| 10 to 20 | The PCs may reach a few calm souls, but most people ignore their message |
| 20 to 25 | The general public calms down and waits, resulting in less violence on the street and thus less need for martial law |
| 26 to 30 | The PCs gain enough clout to use public opinion to force the Mayor to take either a more moderate or more radical stance, depending on what the PCs want |
| 31 to 35 | The effects of Rock and Mikhael's addresses are nullified, with the result that neither gains more followers or public support. |

| | |
|----------|---|
| 36 to 40 | The PCs can make either or both Rock and Mikhael look bad in the eyes of the general public, resulting in them gaining no new support and losing some of their political clout. |
| 41+ | Not only do Rock and Mikhael lose general public support, ¼ of their followers think about leaving them. |

Any gains the PCs make could be important later, especially in the scene “**The Olive Branch in the Iron Fist**” The shift in public sentiment and the withdrawing of support will make a powerful argument to use against both NPCs. Thus if the PCs got a result of 36 to 40 in this scene they get a +2 bonus to all checks in that scene. If they got a 40+ they gain a +4 to all checks in that scene.

Going over their heads: Mikhael and Rock are loose cannons. They don't answer to anyone, so it isn't really possible to go over their heads. Going over the Mayor's head is an option though. If the PCs have pull with the governor or president, or can get access to them and make social checks (DC 30+), it is possible to get an executive order commanding the mayor not to make his speech until he can “be more fully advised.” Of course the big problem with this is that once the bigger politicians get involved, they will stay involved, and if the governor or president decides to make a similar speech it will be more over the top, with the possibility of naval strike groups moving in off the coast of the City.

Shutting down the broadcasts: PCs with the right powers or connections might be able to shut down the broadcasts as they happen. This could be anything from being able to jam signals to getting the cooperation of news agencies so that they refuse to air the broadcasts.

Stopping Mikhael's broadcast requires that either the PCs have advanced knowledge of it or that they have a way to close down a full dozen local channels at the same time. PCs who want to try to stop reporters from doing the piece will have to make an appropriate skill or power check (DC 35), and will also require an ability to convince multiple reporters (or their bosses) at multiple stations at once. Shutting down the transmission would only require that the PCs be able to jam the signals coming out from the news vans around The Cathedral (DC 15). If the PCs can do that then they'll buy a few hours as the reporters take tape back to their stations. Stopping the Mayor's broadcast works similarly, save that it might also get the PCs in trouble with the law.

Stopping Rock's broadcast is harder, as it comes in over pirate waves and so there is no way to convince the stations not to air it. The PCs could try to jam the signal, but as it's much more powerful and cutting edge it's harder to jam than the news vans' feeds (DC 25).

Peace Summit: By the point of the broadcasts all the factions have their hackles up and their backs against the wall. Bringing negotiations, such as in “**Blessed Are the Peacemakers**” is going to be next to impossible. While all three factions will receive the characters and talk to them (unless the PCs

have attacked them or done something to make the NPCs find them untrustworthy), getting them to change their path with-out evidence that they've been set up would require godlike effort: the PCs could try a Diplomacy or other social check, but it will be godly hard (DC 55 for the city, 65 for Rock or Archangel). Mind control might work, but would be considered an attack and would bring retaliation from the supers and their followers, or the government, the second it was noticed or the moment it wore off.

If the PCs have enough evidence about who the murderer was, especially if they suspect Withem did it and can get enough proof to bluff their way through the rest, they may be able to force the stubborn supers to listen to them. In that case they should go to **"The Olive Branch in the Iron Fist."** If the Mayor or police are presented with such evidence, they will send the PCs to negotiate with the super NPCs, which leads to the same scene.

Do Nothing: The PCs can always choose to ignore the display of public rhetoric. Doing so is dangerous, but might be worth the chance if the PCs are close to making a breakthrough in their investigations. If the PCs do nothing, Rock and Mikhael get increased minions, effectively doubling their lower level followers and gaining a few higher level followers as well. The mayor will bring in the National Guard, sending tanks rolling towards The Studio and The Cathedral. For 24 hours the situation will remain tense, with people arguing and whispering. After that point if the PCs still haven't done anything to change the situation people will start to protest, starting with marches and leading to bottles and bricks being thrown at the National Guard. After that a full scale battle between the Guard, Rock, the Archangel, and a frightened populace under the sway of cults of personality will erupt and the scenario will move to **"War!"**

WHAT NEXT?

If the PCs need to keep investigating they can go to **"Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid."** If they're near the end of the investigation then they should go to **"Bullet in the Head"** or might try to skip following up the last leads to try to make Rock and Mikhael stop the madness in **"The Olive Branch in the Iron Fist."** If the PCs decide it is time to take out Rock go to **"First Against the Wall."** If they want to take out Archangel go to **"Into the Lion's Den."** If they did something that would cause Rock, Archangel, or the cops to go ballistic, they might need to go to **"WAR!"** If they're ready to move against Withem go to **"Know Your Enemy"** and if they're ready to bring peace to **"The Olive Branch in the Iron Fist."**

MEANWHILE...

While the PCs are tied up with Rock and Mikhael, the Made Men, minus Arson, will make a return to their life of crime. While their mob bosses still consider them far too hot to touch, Withem has decided that he can use them to good effect. If the Made Men were jailed, Withem arranges for their escape by the simple expedient of getting Smash and Grab out of his restraints (drugs, mutant nullification collar, whatever else fits the GM's setting) long enough to have him teleport all the other Made Men out of jail during the night. If they weren't jailed he simply brings them back from Sicily, or whatever country the GM had them flee to, and arranges for the return of their gear. The original Arson, however, will be left to rot — replaced by a less insane man with the same suit. Leadership of the team will go to Riot in name, but Withem will be the one with the real power.

While all of this would normally be front page news, Withem is betting that the super-heroic brawls in the center of the City will be enough to divert the press's attention for several days. By then the Made Men will have vanished well enough that tracking them is nearly impossible. If the PCs have close contacts with someone working for the penal system they may get word of it, but even then they shouldn't have time to investigate or go upstate to track the Made Men without leaving Rock and the Archangel to tear the city down around their ears.

"Now is the time of torment! We have seen the signs and ignored them for too long! The great fire was merely an ensign of what is coming now. Repent, sinners, or be burned! Now is the time of His Glory!"

A street-preacher, just after Archangel's address.

"Does your little mind start to comprehend yet, or do I need to flip the letters over for you like a ditzzy blonde in a tight dress? You can't hold us, and when we run no one is going to care because your supposed heroes are busy tearing the City to shreds. The normal human's brain can only hold onto one issue at a time, and so we'll slip right out of their puny cerebellums like Alicia Silverstone's career."

Numbers, to a prison guard just before his jailbreak.

BULLET IN THE HEAD

In which a key witness in the PC's investigation is kidnapped, drawing them into a high-stakes chase and a tense hostage scene.

THE SITUATION

Withem has worked very hard to set up a situation in which the superheroes of the City would tear themselves apart. He's also worked to make sure that it can't be traced back to him. If the PCs' investigations are starting to compromise his plans and his safety he'll dispatch hired thugs Al Petaccio and Blaine Sangiacomo to deal with the situation by removing a witness. The most likely candidates will be Ching Clish and Grover Milonas, as they are the most likely links to Withem. If Grover doesn't leave Rock's protection, or doesn't leave until after he's sung to the PCs, then the target will be Clish. If Grover is stupid enough to pop up his head, or if the PCs force the situation, then he'll be the one in the trunk.

The thugs do things simply and directly, if not with any kind of intelligence. They come in with a gun, tell the target to play nice or die, and put a collar with an explosive device around the victim's neck. If Clish is the target then the thugs also gather up his files for disposal. They bundle the target up so the collar isn't obvious on first glance and hustle him into the back of an armored truck. From there they drive across the state line, where they execute the victim, (leaving the collar as a red-herring, as that type of collar is used by South American terrorists) and burn the files. What two don't know is that Withem has remote detonators for the explosives they

carry, so that if anything goes wrong he won't have more witnesses lined up against him.

The PCs are the only ones with a chance of stopping the plan, hopefully messing everything up and causing excessive collateral damage.

THE SETTING

The streets of the City are the setting for most of this scene. The kidnapping will happen at a busy time of day, and rush-hour gridlock, school busses full of nuns and orphans, road construction, and endless rivers of cars going the wrong way down one-way streets will be the order of the day. If things down between Rock, Mikhael, and the government have gotten bad enough there will be demonstrators with signs, bottles, and bricks as well as with cops in riot gear and transports full of National Guard who react very, very badly to reckless chases.

The armored truck that the thugs are using is a custom job, built off the body of a full conversion van, combined with a super-science engine with an overdrive system that lets the massive monster burn rubber like a stock car. Its stats are:

Armored Truck: Size: Huge (weight 7 tons), Movement: 8 (10 for 5 rounds with overdrive), Hardness: 15, Armor Bonus: 10, Cost: 25.

THE RUNDOWN

When the PCs get involved will depend on how they're handling their investigation. If Clish or Milonas are under PC surveillance the PCs should get a chance to see the thugs coming (Spot DC 15). If the PCs act quickly enough they might be able to get between the target and the thugs before they can get the explosive collar on him. In that case go directly to "Hostage Situation" (below) but remove the references to the collar, as the thugs will only have guns to the head.

If the PCs are just getting to Clish or Milonas and aren't observing them, then they should get a chance to spot the thugs hustling them into the armored truck (DC 15) so that they can start the chase. Once that happens go to "Zoom Zoom and Boom Boom" (below).



If they miss the interaction then someone near-by (such as Clish's secretary or one of Milonas' drinking buddies) will tip the PCs off as soon as the truck is gone. In that case go to "Zoom Zoom and Boom Boom" but give Blaine a +3 on all checks to evade and avoid due to his head-start.

ZOOM ZOOM AND BOOM BOOM

For the chase use the pursuit rules on page 115 to 116 of M&M. GMs may need to spend a Villain Point to keep things interesting, as at least one PC is likely to be able to move faster than the armored truck.

ROADBLOCKS, OBSTACLES, AND BIG EXPLODING CRASHES:

Cool things to happen in the chase include:

- The armored truck comes to a rising drawbridge, hits the overdrive and jumps across. PCs in vehicles or on foot will have to make a Driving check (DC 25) or be able to make a 30' jump in order to keep up.
- Blaine throws a bootlegger turn and then floors it, driving right at one of the PCs in a huge game of chicken. Opposed Will saves may be in order to keep from being the one to flinch. If there is a crash, assume the Van is moving at top tactical speed, resulting in a base crash damage of 14L plus the PCs' movement.
- On an overpass, a civilian car gets sideswiped, sending it speeding directly towards a bus, both of which can end up flying off the overpass for a good long fall. The bus can either be full of innocent school children to save, or full of convicts on way to jail who will have a chance to escape if the bus is hit.
- In an attempt to lose flying pursuit, Blaine drives into and through a mall — going through the glass doors and then down the promenade at full speed. Carts and displays take a splash, including a huge explosion of cotton candy that may douse one or more characters (Reflex save DC 15 to avoid). In addition flying PCs who try to follow closely may be forced to make Reflex saves (DC 10 + movement speed/5) to not ram themselves into walls, stores, or survey ladies.
- In a last, desperate effort, Blaine drives through a security gate and into an armored truck depository, trying to lose the PCs among the many other armored cars. Spot checks (DC 10 to 20, depending on Blaine's lead and the condition of his car) are in order. Failed checks may result in the PCs rousting innocent guards on their way to make deliveries, which won't go over well with said guards.

HOSTAGE SITUATION

Once the PCs end the chase, the thugs will start screaming that they have a hostage and will kill him unless the PCs back

off. They'll take cover in the wreckage, pulling the hostage along with them, and yell that they have bombs, and that one is strapped to the hostage's neck and will go off even if the PCs kill them. This is not an idle threat, as both of them are hard-hearted garbage perfectly willing to put a bullet in the head of a helpless man or stand watching while his head explodes.

Blaine and AI are scared at this point, both sure the PCs will kill them or send them to jail for life (and they know if they roll on Withem he'll have them killed). The two also know they have no chance against the PCs in a fight, so they stick to their guns about the hostage. At first they demand that the PCs let them go with the hostage or they'll kill him and any innocent bystanders they can get to.

PCs who want to take Blaine and AI directly face a few problems. First, both men will spend one round re-focusing their initiative to make sure it is as high as possible. Second, they both manage to get three-quarters to nine-tenths concealment in the wreckage of the truck. Third, it is likely there are injured and confused bystanders around, who may get in the way of attacks. If the PCs don't take both out before they get an action then they will kill the hostage. If they have only guns they'll try to coup de grace him, taking a full action to do so. If they have the explosive collar on him they'll simply detonate it as a half action, doing a minimum of 15L to the target and hitting anyone touching the target with an 8S attack as well. After that they'll both start throwing explosive charges (6L) at any bystanders, vehicles, or power lines, trying to create enough chaos to let them escape.

Even if the PCs manage to drop both thugs, they still have to disarm the collar-bomb. Disarming it requires a Disable Device or Demolitions check (DC 25). If the check fails by more than 10 the bomb goes off. The collar can be broken — it's inch thick steel (hardness 15) — but breaking it will set off the charge as well. PCs that break it can have a Reflex Save (DC 20) to throw it away from the victim before it goes off. Otherwise it hits him for full damage and the breaking PC for half. If the PCs can't do either they have to make a Spot, Disable Device, or Demolitions check (DC 15) to see that the device has a fail-safe so that if a button on the control switch (in Blaine and AI's hands) isn't pushed every 5 turns then the device goes off anyway.

PCs who decide to negotiate with the thugs face difficulties based on the table to the right, depending on what they try to get and give.

| DC | Request |
|----|--|
| 20 | Letting them go with obvious guarantees of safety (such as getting them an escape vehicle, backing off, giving them a gadget as a show of good will), just so long as they leave the hostage behind. |
| 25 | Getting them to flee without the hostage with promises but no proof. |

35 Promising them a way out (such as being exiled to another country) if they'll turn themselves and the hostage over.

50 Forcing them to surrender without harming the hostage or having any guarantees of leniency.

Appropriate skills are Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge: Mafia, and Science: Psychology (Taunt will likely lead to them blowing the victim up, then attacking the PCs). PCs who fail a check by more than 15 may make them kill the hostage.

If the PCs save the victim's life he will be willing to tell them everything he knows (see "**Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid**") in gratitude and for promises of safety and protection. Blaine and AI can be forced to testify, but it won't be easy as they know that talking means death for them. They can be convinced through combinations of intimidation (Bluff, Intimidation DC 20) and promises of safety and reduced (or dismissed) charges (Diplomacy, Knowledge: Law or Police Procedure 25).

WHAT NEXT?

PCs who saved the day and have living witnesses may want to go to "**The Olive Branch in the Iron Fist**" to make Rock and Mikhael realize that they've been played like chumps. PCs who want to go directly after Withem should head to "**Know Your Enemy**." PCs who fail to save the victims may still be able to get the evidence they need in "**Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid**" with a little cleverness (the thugs didn't get all of Clish's files, and so there could still be records left behind, and any other witnesses connected to whoever was murdered will be more than willing to testify in return for protection). PCs who fail and decide to take out Rock, the Archangel, or Withem just to put an end to things can go to either "**Into the Lion's Den**" for Archangel, "**First Against the Wall**" for Rock, and "**Know Your Enemy**" for Withem.

"You don't understand. My whole career I've worked with murders, psychos, and hitmen. I once got a client off after I'd seen him bite out a prison-guard's throat with my own eyes. But I was never scared of them, not really. Not that bone deep kind of scared that makes you lose your manhood.

The only thing that's ever scared me like that is *him*. I can't betray him and expect to live longer than a snowball in Arizona. If I give you what you want, you have to give me more than just protection — you have to give me the ability to defend myself.

Ching Clish, on his knees.

INTO THE LION'S DEN

In which the PCs take on the Archangel, hoping to beard the lion in his den.

THE SITUATION

This scene runs when the PCs decide to beat the snot out of the Archangel. Whether they want him alive but pounded reasonable, or dead so that he can't cause any more problems, they're doing this scene because there isn't any other way to get what they want. Because of this the PCs will be responsible for setting up a lot of the situation of the scene, as it will be up to them how and when they attack.

How ready Mikhael is depends on when the PCs come after him. After **"Film at 11"** Archangel will spend most of his time at The Cathedral, though he will still go about doing good works. Before **"By Pride Cometh Contention"** only Archangel, the Keepers, the Order, and the Sworn will be at The Cathedral full time, though several hundred non-follower civilians will be present in the soup kitchens and shelters. The security systems will be on, and the members of the Order present will be alert, but not actively on patrol or guard duty. After **"By Pride"** Mikhael will call all in and from then on Righteous Military Men and Sworn will be actively patrolling the grounds. Most of the civilians will leave, but there will still be about 100 desperate souls taking shelter. By **"The Wrath of Angels"** all of the followers will be present, and if Mikhael made a public appeal that wasn't countered, another 100 Congregationalists, 8 Righteous Military Men, 6 Sworn, and 5 members of the Order will be present. Everyone will be on high alert, expecting a super-powered attack at any time. Only a couple dozen civilians will be present, having no place else to go.

GMs may want to use the setup for this scene to play up any uncertainty about the Archangel's status. Supporting characters may be nervous attacking an Angel of God and may try to talk the PCs out of it. Of course, other supporting cast members may be fanatical in their denial that Mikhael is an angel, and will encourage the PCs to take him down, proving that he's only a dangerous hoax. If nothing else, the PCs should be sure that Archangel is a very powerful foe and if they aren't careful in their attack they may end up meeting God.

THE SETTING

The most likely setting for the scene is The Cathedral, which is detailed on page 85 and a map of which is in the combat booklet. Unfortunately for the PCs, this is also hardest place to take on Mikhael, as he will be on ground he controls and surrounded by loyal followers. The building is also set up so that the Archangel can use flight and transmutation powers to full effect, giving him the upper hand on less versatile opponents.

If the PCs take Mikhael outside The Cathedral they will get to choose the location, and the GM will either have to improvise or encourage them to describe the setting. PCs looking for tactical advice should be encouraged to find a location where Mikhael will be grounded, as he's more powerful in the air.

THE CUP OF HIS FURY

The battle between the Archangel and the PCs will be epic, no matter when or where it happens. The Archangel is a dangerous foe, and not just because of his powers or followers (though both of those are formidable). The real danger is due to his fanatical outlook, his absolute certainty that he is right leading him to unflinchingly do things most super-heroes would never consider. GM's should play up the biblical nature of the Archangel's methods, his willingness to sacrifice, his unhesitating sense of moral certainty, and the effect of fighting a being that radiates power and authority, choiring angels, and heavenly light every time he uses his powers. Getting a little purple with the description wouldn't hurt, nor would excessive references to the Old Testament (think of the opening scene of Pulp Fiction...).

BE VERY VERY QUIET, WE'RE HUNTING SERAPHIM

PCs wanting to take Mikhael outside The Cathedral will need to bring him out. If they strike early enough in the adventure they may be able to ambush him while he is still out in the world doing work for the needy. (Though that may force the PCs to face the moral choice of shooting a man in the head while he's healing a sick child or giving soup to the starving.) After **"By Pride Cometh Contention"** the PCs will have to lure Mikhael out of The Cathedral. PCs could do so by pretending to stage a meeting, which would work similarly to the setup for negotiations in **"Blessed Are the Peacemakers"** (page 33). They might also stage a disaster or follower in trouble to lure the Archangel out, which would work as an opposed roll between the PCs' Bluff and the Archangel's Sense Motive.

If Mikhael is attacked outside The Cathedral his tactics will follow those in his write-up (page 83). He will stand and fight until he takes 5+ hits, at which point he will use either flight or a portal to retreat from combat. It is possible to use Taunt to stop him from doing so, and any taunt that focuses on angels running and God losing gets a +2 bonus. Once he escapes Mikhael will move to his headquarters and hole up, making public appeals, as in **"Wrath of Angels"**, if he has not already done so. After that the only time he will come out is to ambush the PCs or Rock, bringing all the Keepers, Order, Sworn, and Righteous Military Men he has access to.

SANCTUARY!

PCs attacking The Cathedral will have their work cut out for them. In addition to all the normal tricks, the PCs will have to face the defenses of the base and the home-turf knowledge of the defenders. Members of the Order and the Sworn will use the building's reinforced structures to turn the rooms in the residence wing into traps with only one entrance. They'll lure the PCs into those rooms and open fire on them through murder-holes while tossing grenades into the confined spaces.

The Archangel will use the huge vaulted ceilings to his advantage, flying high and out of reach of ground-based PCs while using hangings and pillars as cover. The Keepers will hide themselves in difficult to access nooks, such as confessionals and the choir loft, and attack from hiding when the PCs are dealing with another target. Congregationalists will deliberately throw themselves into the line of fire, taking hits to keep the combatants in the fight.

The fight should be hard and brutal, and the PCs should be more than a little horrified at the fanatical, suicidal zeal of the defenders.

BIBLICAL BANGS AND DESECRATION STUNTS

Some ideas for cool things to happen in the fight are:

- Using the chandeliers and hanging censers to swing up and attack a flying opponent, or dropping them on a target on the ground.
- Being smashed through stained-glass so that blood and bits of costume fly in a cloud with thousands of shards of colored crystal.
- Beating someone with one of the heavy religious icons filling the room. (Cross to the head?)
- One of the Keepers using Elemental Control (Earth) to make a giant Fist of God come out of the wall to grapple/smash one of the PCs
- A strength-boosted member of the Order using one of the huge bronze doors as a weapon.
- An 8 year old child stepping between two combatants and demanding that they not hurt her mommy, who is bleeding on the ground nearby. If the PC stops, the mommy and the child try to taser him while he's flat footed.

PULLING A SAMSON

If it becomes obvious that the Archangel is going to be killed he will pull one last Biblical trick out of his sleeve. An alarm will sound, causing all of his followers to abandon the building. Once they are gone, Mikhael will draw the PCs into the center of The Cathedral, where he will use his transmutation on the pillars holding up the building and blow them all out in an extra-effort induced area blast. The result will be that the whole headquarters comes down in a massive 25L area attack. PCs with enough movement to clear the building in one action get a Reflex save (DC 35) to clear the doors before a thousand tons of steel and cement come down upon their heads. Those who can't make it out can make a Reflex save (DC 30) to halve the damage (12L) as they dodge between falling I-beams and slabs of concrete the size of a truck. Characters with powers that allow them to defend against or deflect physical attacks should be allowed to use them, though Hero Point usage or extra-effort may be required in order to deal with the sheer scale of material falling on them. Characters that do not make either save are not only damaged, they will likely be

caught under several hundred tons of rubble, and will have to be dug out.

Mikhael will be at the center of the carnage, defiant until the end. He will not run nor attempt to flee and will vanish under the falling building. GMs who have a Villain Point may spend it for an "Escape Death" if they want Mikhael to return in future adventures (he's gone for the rest of this one). If no point is spent then the angel is dead and gone — though no body will ever be found. In either case the Archangel's followers will not believe he is dead, and may start to make preparations as described in "WAR!" (page 66) if the GM wants to set up the return of Mikhael at some point in the future.

SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES

If the PCs are not trying to kill Mikhael, he will fight until he is reduced to unconsciousness. He will not submit while he can still fight — even if he could save some of his followers by doing so.

If Mikhael is rendered senseless or incapacitated the PCs can do with him as they will. If they try to talk to him on his waking, they may be able to reason with him. A Diplomacy check (DC 30, synergy from Knowledge: Theology, Religion, Angels, etc.) can convince him that the fact that he lost the fight is a sign that he has gone against the Will of God and that he must repent. Even if the check is failed the PCs may be able to RP well enough to force the Archangel to admit that he has made mistakes. Once convinced, Mikhael can be cajoled to make reparations, though even then he will not bend on the matter of Father Candella's murderer being brought to justice. So long as he lives he will not let that cause die — he may, however, be convinced to finally step back and let the PCs deal with it. PCs can negotiate as in "Blessed Are the Peacemakers" (page 33) but all unreasonable requests become reasonable and even inflammatory requests only count as unreasonable — and good RP or Diplomacy/Intimidate checks may make them reasonable as well.

If PCs blow their checks or are overly aggressive, have murdered the Archangel's followers, or shown callous disregard for human life, then Mikhael may decide that they are devils, and will try to break free and kill them again. Similarly,

PCs who give the Archangel to the police, or who try to hold him in their own base, will find themselves having the difficulties described in "In the End" with holding Archangel against his will. If the PCs don't think it through and give the cops some options, Mikhael may simply break out of jail and go to "WAR!"

BURN THE HEATHENS

If the PCs lose the fight their situation will be grim indeed. How they are treated will depend on how they have acted towards Mikhael and whether or not they killed any of his followers. PCs who have been friendly and who have not killed anyone will be stripped of all gear, given to the police, and will have priests and homeless alike pressing charges for assault, breaking and entering, and every other crime they can think of. At the other end of the spectrum, hostile and insulting PCs who killed followers will probably not live to see the next dawn unless they spend Hero Points, in which case they may have a chance to escape or be freed by a concerned member of the Order before the Archangel executes them. PCs who fall in between these two extremes will be treated on a case by case basis, with the most common punishments being teleportation to distant locations (Antarctica and the Brazilian rainforest being popular), being stripped of all gear and beaten, being branded, or being publicly humiliated before being set free.



WHAT NEXT?

PCs who have removed Mikhael as a threat may be able to go to "In the End" or "The Olive Branch in the Iron Fist" if they have the juice to convince Rock and the Police that all is well. Those still investigating the murders can go to "Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid" or "Bullet in the Head" depending on how far along they are. PCs who want to take out Rock next can proceed to "First Against the Wall" while those who may want to finally get to Withem should head to "Know Your Enemy."

If the PCs attacked Archangel and failed, or if they put him in an unsecured prison, things are likely to head rapidly towards "WAR!"

FIRST AGAINST THE WALL

In which the PCs blast it out with Rock N Roll, hoping to stop the revolution with a good butt kicking.

THE SITUATION

This scene runs when the PCs decide to unplug Rock and kick him to the curb. Whether they want him alive but pounded reasonable, or dead so that he can't cause any more problems, they're doing this scene because there isn't any other way to get what they want. Because of this the PCs will be responsible for setting up a lot of the situation of the scene, as it will be up to them how and when they attack.

How ready Rock N Roll is for attack depends on when the PCs come after him. After **"Film at 11"** but before **"By Pride Cometh Contention"** Rock will spend most of his time away from home, touring with a full complement of bodyguards in SUVs, seeing people and shaking hands, pushing his nose where it isn't wanted, and being a nuisance for the police. Even if he's agreed to stay out of the investigation he'll still be out crusading for one cause or another, and can be tracked down with some difficulty. After **"By Pride Cometh Contention"** Rock will hole up for several days, calling all his PL 4+ followers to The Studio. All the other followers will be left in place, in case he needs to use them to control or shut down essential services. Rock will venture out occasionally, unless he's wanted by the police, but will only do so with full escort. Finally, by the time of **"The Wrath of Angels"**, Rock feels that he's against the wall, and will call all his combat oriented followers to The Studio, where they will start revolutionary training. If he made a

public appeal that wasn't countered by the PCs he'll have added 20 bangers, 4 bodyguards, and 3 Radical Agents to his forces. Rock will also shut down public access to The Studio, removing all innocents from the premises.

GMs may want to use the setup for this scene for political discussions between PCs and supporting characters. Despite the fact that Rock is an unreasonable ass, he has done a lot of good for the workers and blue-collar segment of the population, and is a robin-hood who crusades against the recording industry and supports file-sharing. PCs with politically naive dependents may get yelled at for being fascists and tools of the Man, and even reasonable NPCs may see the PCs' actions as having similarities to the days when unions got their heads busted by the proto-FBI.

THE SETTING

The most likely setting for the scene is The Studio, which is detailed on page 90, and has maps in the combat booklet. Unfortunately for the PCs, this is also the place where it will be hardest to take Rock on, as he will be on ground he controls and surrounded by loyal followers. The building is not as hard to attack as Archangel's Cathedral, but it does have more exit points if Rock decides to run, making it very hard to pin him in for a capture.

If the PCs take Rock outside the Studio then they will get to choose the location, and the GM will either have to improvise or encourage them to describe the setting. PCs looking for tactical advice should be encouraged to find a location where they can spread out to avoid area attacks and where they can keep track of bodyguards and Radical Agents. Rock's most exploitable weakness is that he has no movement powers, and can be isolated and prevented from escape if he's kept away from vehicles.

DAMN THE MAN

The battle with Rock should have both an epic scope as well as a sense of desperation and loss. Rock is a dangerous man, but he is also a visionary who wanted to change the world for the better, who wanted to follow a balanced path, and is now being hunted while his anger and pride burn out of control. At the start of the fight he will play nice, using stun attacks and being careful about collateral damage. But as things go on, and as the fight turns against him, he becomes sloppier and more brutal. Rock will use his powers to talk to the PCs through the scene, and his rhetoric will shift along with his actions. Where he'll start off talking about freedom and the will of the people, he'll end up ranting about the Man having to be burnt to the ground.

COUNTER-TERROR HIT

PCs wanting to take Rock outside The Studio will need to either track him down or lure him out. Before **"By Pride Cometh Contention"** Rock will be out and about, pressing the flesh in high political form. Tracking him can be accomplished by trailing him from The Studio, which faces the difficulty of opposed rolls between a relevant PC power or skill and Rock's Listen and/or his bodyguards' Spot. Finding out where he is going to be can be done with several powers (Telepathy on a follower being the easiest), or with a Gather Information check (DC 20). Once tracked Rock can be ambushed, but he will be actively listening for attackers and will keep his force shield up any time he feels vulnerable. After **"By Pride Cometh Contention"** Rock won't leave The Studio without good reason, though PCs could get him to come to a meeting using the methods from **"Blessed Are the Peacemakers."** After **"Wrath of Angels"** nothing will draw him out, and the PCs will have to go in after him.

If attacked outside The Studio, Rock will fight using the tactics from his write-up (page 90) and will be accompanied by all his bodyguards, Radical Agents, and the Face Squad. He has nothing to prove by fighting, however, and unless taunted or driven to rage he will not stick around. He'll retreat to The Studio where he can lock down and force the PCs to come after him. He'll start by using the SUVs, driven by his bodyguards, but won't hesitate to use any method of transportation that is available.

AMERICAN IDOL

Attacking The Studio is a tough job. It is nearly impossible to sneak in because of the security system, reinforced walls, and Rock's power-boosted Listen skill. The windows are all heavy bulletproof glass, and they and the walls are hardness 14. The doors are just as hard, and can be locked instantly from the security control station. PCs stuck outside the building will come under fire from Rock's powers while he stays inside under full cover. Once the PCs get into the building they'll face a room to room running battle in which Rock will use all his powers to distort sounds, trying to make PCs attack each other and giving all his followers a +13 bonus to all Move Silently rolls as he nulls out the sounds of their movement. Rock and his followers will fight hard, and the Radical Agents will take any risk to hurt the PCs. If others are forced to flee the Agents will stay behind and start using high-explosives to set traps for the PCs, luring them into hallways and then setting off area attack explosions (12L blasts).

BIG RIFFS AND REVOLUTIONARY DAMAGE

Some cool things that could happen in the fight are:

- All the windows in Rock's loft apartment are just begging to be blown out with one massive attack.
- The pool is directly above the center of the apartment, and a cracked roof could end up dousing everyone in the room. (Rock will do this deliberately if he's being harassed by fire wielding opponents or anyone who has a known vulnerability to water.)
- Someone getting slammed into the recording studio gear could make it malfunction and start playing bad, loud country western music for the rest of the fight, or it could fill the room with loud thrash-metal to form a real time soundtrack.
- One of the radical agents may crash a helicopter into the PCs in a big ramming suicide attack of death, trying to take their heads off with the prop before ramming the whole vehicle into them at 90 mph. (A +16L attack)
- Mei-Ling Zhao (page 94) may try to distract the PCs by playing the "hapless maiden in her underwear" card, boosted by a Charisma shot from the Face Squad, and blast them in the back when they lower their guard. Other PCs may get the same treatment from Sean Patrick O'Malley (page 94).

FLEEING THE JURISDICTION

If Rock is forced to flee he'll head for the dock, the most protected vehicle bay. He'll board one of three cigarette boats (use Speedboat, M&M page 117 but with movement 8) with as many of his followers as remain and will fit (about 6 will fit on each boat) and then they'll blow down the long, narrow series of pitch-black tunnels that lead to the ocean. Rock will navigate by sound and use his powers to muffle the sound

of the boat that will be driven by any remaining bodyguard. Other followers will array themselves at the back of the boat and fire on anyone in range. If there are fewer than 12 followers left there will be a boat left that PCs can use.

Chasing the boat through the tunnels is no easy task. PCs will first have to be able to track it, which will require Spot checks (DC 25) to notice the waves following the boat through the maze of tunnels, or Listen checks opposed by Rock's Sonic Control at +10 (due to the already difficult job of tracking a boat through a series of tunnels by sound alone). Characters with movement speeds greater than the boat can catch up without rolls once they know where the boats went. Those with movement equal to the boat must beat the pilot in a contested roll of the boaters Drive vs. the fitting skill, attribute, or power of the PC. Those whose movement is less by up to two can catch up if they can outmaneuver the pilot by beating her in a contested roll against the pilot's Drive+10. Once the PCs get close enough those on the boat will open fire. Every round characters move at their full speed, including the boat, they must make Reflex saving throws or Drive checks (DC 25) to avoid ramming into one of the walls (characters with increased mobility should get a +2 bonus per level of mobility). Ramming into the wall hits the character with a stun attack equal to the level of their movement. If the boat crashes and breaks then Rock and his followers will be reduced to swimming.

Rock will not surrender unless his followers are promised freedom. If that condition is met he will give himself up — unless he thinks the PCs will kill him. In that case he will do everything he can to flee. If he gets away the PCs may face the consequences from **"In the End"** in future adventures, though sadistic GMs could have Rock come back for **"WAR!"**

GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY

If Rock is captured he can be negotiated with. It will be nearly impossible to convince him that he's done wrong as he'll have gone into full fanatic mode. However, it may be possible to convince him to be pragmatic enough to make a deal to keep his cause and followers from going up in flames. Social skills checks (DC 25+, depending on how brutal the PCs were to his followers) or successful uses of mental powers can convince him that he has to surrender in the short term and give up violence in order to get his long term goals. PCs that don't

make the rolls may still be able to convince him with good RP. PCs can negotiate as in **"Blessed Are the Peacemakers"** (page 33) but all unreasonable requests become reasonable and even inflammatory requests only count as unreasonable — and good RP or Diplomacy/Intimidate checks may make them reasonable as well.

If the PCs offer Rock good terms, up to and including turning him over to the police for a fair trial and letting his innocent followers go, he will stick to his end of the deal. Of course his trained army of lawyers may get him off (covered in **"In the End"**). If the PCs humiliate him too much or kill his followers, however, he will only cooperate in the short term and will either flee or attack the PCs when they are in a vulnerable position. Some tactics that might develop in this situation are detailed in **"WAR!"**



A RIGHT TO KILL

PCs who get beaten will be in for a rough time of it. If they have murdered any of Rock's innocent followers he will give them to the Radical Agents, who will murder any PC that they have the weapons and abilities to harm. Hero Point expenditure may be necessary to keep the PCs alive, giving them a chance to wake up and escape or get aid from one of Rock's bodyguards or Face Squad who can't deal with killing in cold blood. Unless the PCs have killed someone, he'll publicly humiliate them, have them put into a reinforced superhero containment cell on a steamer headed for Africa, or strip all

their gear and leave them lying naked in the road. At that point Rock will start gearing up for revolution, as described in **"WAR!"**

WHAT NEXT?

PCs who removed Rock as a threat may be able to go to **"In the End"** or **"The Olive Branch in the Iron Fist"** if they have the juice to convince Mikhael and the Police that all is well. Those still investigating the murders can go to **"Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid"** or **"Bullet in the Head"** depending on how far along they are. PCs who want to take out the Archangel next can proceed to **"Into the Lion's Den"** while those who want to get Withem should head to **"Know Your Enemy."** PCs who attack Rock and fail, or fail to hold him, will almost certainly trip off his revolution, which makes everything head for **"WAR!"**

THE OLIVE BRANCH IN THE IRON FIST

In which the PCs use the results of their investigation and their mad negotiating skills to talk Rock and Mikhael down from their gun-towers.

THE SITUATION

Once the PCs have enough information to either prove the what and why of Father Candella's murder, or to bluff their way through to a story that will bring peace between the Marxist and the Angel, they can call a meeting to see if the truth will set them free (or at least put the correct people in jail).

How difficult it is for the PCs to get Rock and Archangel to sit down and listen will depend on how well they've maintained relationships with the two through the adventure. If the PCs have played their cards well and not offended anyone to the point of rage then the two should be willing to listen without coercion. If, on the other hand, the PCs have attacked, insulted, or otherwise pissed off the hotheads then they'll face a much harder challenge.

GMs who want to play out the setup can use a system similar to that in **"Blessed are the Peacemakers"** (page 34). However by this point in the game it's possible that the PCs will be tired of such scenes and it may be dramatically appropriate to simply assume that everyone shows up, with appropriate degrees of willingness and cooperation, so that the PCs can get to the meat of the scene.

THE SETTING

The PCs may choose their setting for the final reveal. For a more dramatic setup the GM could also suggest that the PCs

have the meeting at the Guardian Angel Church, walking through the events of the night in the place where they actually happened. Doing so would lead to powerful reactions from everyone present, as the unfolding murder of a good man is reconstructed before their eyes.

Similarly, very ambitious players might force the meeting to be held at Withem's offices (possibly with the permission of another partner, possibly by forcing their way in). In that case Withem would try desperately to undo the PCs work, behaving as described in **"Know Your Enemy."** In this case the moment the PCs convince Rock and Mikhael, Withem will call out the Made Men and try to flee — leading directly into **"Know Your Enemy."**

SIT DOWN, SHUT UP, AND LISTEN

The key to making this scene interesting is for Rock and the Archangel walk a fine line between displaying the stubbornness that has brought them to the point of war and the ability to think and accept their mistakes that once made them heroes. By this point in the adventure it's likely that the PCs are sick to death of their antics, and so showing that the PCs' actions have made a difference, are solely responsible for avoiding war and returning reason, should justify their sacrifices.

What skills and methods the PCs use will have a great impact on the scene. PCs who are trying to create a story will need to use extensive Bluff checks opposed by Rock and Mikhael's Sense Motive. It's possible that they could get one of

the supers to believe them but not the other, which could lead to more trouble.

PCs who decide to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth may not have to roll to convince the NPCs of their story depending on how well they roleplay it. If the GM wants to give drama to the dice, then PCs may need to make Performance, Diplomacy, or similar rolls to convince the NPCs of the truth of the truth (DC 20 to 35, depending on how much info the PCs have collected).

The biggest problem facing those who tell the truth is convincing the Archangel and Rock that neither has reason to fight the other anymore. The matter is a tangled one, after all: neither's followers were innocent, and both made mistakes that harmed the other's reputation and life. How well the PCs are able to bring resolution depends on how much they know and how they present their post-reveal arguments. Below are summaries of how each NPC will react to various levels of knowledge and how they are most likely to be talked around to doing the right thing.

ROCK

If the PCs frame Benny and manage to convince Rock of the truth of their story he will be crushed. He will put up some resistance to the idea of Benny being arrested, and will insist that he be given a fair trial with full legal representation. Beyond that he can be convinced to publicly apologize to Mikhael and pay reparations for any damage with a little work (DC 15).

If the PCs tell the truth about the murder and trace it to Ebonie, but not to Withem, Rock's reaction will depend on how the PCs spin it. If they make it seem like Mikhael's dogma about homosexual marriage led to the killing then Rock will remain unreasonable, angrily accusing the Archangel of being a bigot. PCs will need to defuse the situation, convincing Rock to let it go for now (DC 15). If, on the other hand, the PCs portray the murder as being about jealousy, confusion, and a very sick woman, Rock can be reasonable. Reminding him that homophobia is a problem among his own followers can be a good method of shutting him up, as can pointing out that Mikhael has openly gay followers (such as Gabrielle Hope) who are not subject to prejudice (DC 15).

Finally, if the PCs manage to trace the murder's planning back to Withem, Rock will go ballistic. PCs building a sense of fraternity between Rock and Mikhael, based on the fact that both were used and harmed by Withem, will find Rock willing to accept it with only mild persuasion (DC 15). Rock will still hold to his political differences with the Archangel, but he'll agree to let go of the past until they can beat Withem to death. It will be massively difficult to keep Rock from going after Withem right away (DC 30), but convincing him to simply beat the man and turn him over to the authorities is easier (DC 20).

MIKHAEL

If the PCs frame one of the Archangel's followers and manage to convince Mikhael of her guilt the angel will be crushed. Something inside him will snap and much of his glory will depart. He questions how he could have been so fooled, how he could have not heard the Voice of God telling him the truth. At that point convincing him to turn his follower over to justice will be simple, as will getting an apology and reparations out of him (DC 10). PCs who offer him explanations ("the devil can cloud the hearts of men even from angels") that help him save some of his dignity will gain his gratitude and close support in the future. PCs might even be able to convince Rock to give him a break, as he was obviously trapped by powerful forces (DC 20).

If the PCs trace the murder back to Ebonie, but not to Withem, Mikhael will react much as above. He will be stunned that he could not see the truth of the matter, and his heart will break over the harm that he has caused to Ebonie and the City. In most ways this works as framing one of his followers, above, but Rock will not take it so well. Rock will start to get angry about the homophobia of the Archangel's position, and unless he is headed off at the pass, could well make matters worse. PCs who want to press Archangel on the matter may be able to get him to change his mind about gay marriage, but even now doing so is difficult (DC 30). If Mikhael is convinced on that matter Rock will retract any insults and will congratulate the Archangel and then commiserate with him on the loss of his followers.

If the PCs manage to trace the matter back to Withem, Archangel will go mad. He will become convinced (possibly correctly) that Withem is an agent of Satan and must be destroyed. He will willingly team up with Rock to do this, and with a little persuasion (DC 20) may even see Rock as another agent of God. The biggest difficulty the PCs will have is stopping him from immediately going to kill Withem. Convincing him not to go after Withem at all may not be possible (DC 50), but it may be possible to convince him not to kill the man (DC 25, 20 if Rock supports the PCs).

WHAT NEXT?

If the PCs brought Rock and the Archangel to an understanding and now want to go after Withem they should head to either "**Bullet in the Head**" if they're still investigating or "**Know Your Enemy**" if they've got enough evidence to hang him. If the PCs have already dealt with Withem, or don't intend to do so, then head to "**In The End**."

PCs that failed to bring a resolution can go to "**Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid**" to get more information — or "**Bullet in the Head**" if they're near the end of the investigations. If the PCs have had it and think it's time to take Rock down go to "**First Against the Wall**", or if they want to nail Mikhael to the wall go to "**Into the Lion's Den**." If they not only didn't bring peace, but made the terrible duo angrier then they might be headed for "**WAR!**"

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

In which the PCs confront the wicked lawyer with evidence of his wrongdoing, leading to a final showdown with the Made Men in the heart of the City's Legal District.

THE SITUATION

Either the PCs have gotten enough evidence of Withem's guilt that even he knows that he's in trouble, or Withem suspects that the PCs might come after him despite their lack of hard evidence. As a result he has called up the Made Men and arranged for them to become his semi-permanent bodyguards, waiting for a chance to ambush the PCs and pay them back.

The PCs may, at this point, have testimony and hard evidence that Withem set up the murders, which could result in his conviction for manslaughter for being criminally negligent, or they may only have strong hunches and unreliable accounts, which might get Withem disbarred, but won't get him any jail time. The PCs should look carefully at what they know and what kind of case they can build, more detail on this is given in **"Twenty Five to Life in the Penalty Box"** below.

What the PCs do with the information is entirely up to them. If they want to give Withem to the authorities they can do so, and if they have enough evidence there will be several DAs willing and eager to prosecute. Or the PCs may want to deal with Withem themselves, especially if they don't feel their information is strong enough to get him convicted. In either case the PCs will have to set up their own plans to take Withem out whatever door they find fitting.

Finally, the PCs may have other parties who want to help out — either with convicting Withem or pounding the snot out of him. If Mikhael and Rock are still standing then they'll want a piece of Withem, as will any number of supporters of Father Candella, Ebonie and Benny, or common people caught up in the

destruction caused by Withem's evil. If the PCs can spin it right even the Chief of Police would be eager to jump on Withem, as it gives him a way to show that the rule of law triumphed.

THE SETTING

The most likely setting is Withem's office. Withem arrives there early in the morning, and unless he has a court date, stays there until late at night. Located on the 64th floor of the Lindroos Building in the legal district, Withem's office takes up nearly a quarter of the top floor of the offices of Bishop, Roby, Nichols, and Withem. Spacious and gloriously decorated with heavy leather furniture, oak tables, and thick Persian rugs, accented with Victorian lamps and shelves full of books the room is an image of old money taste and power. The focus of the office is not on what is inside though; it's on the view out the floor to ceiling windows that look down upon the court buildings spread out below. On the south side of the office proper there is a conference room and two secretaries have desks near the entrance. A map of the office is in the combat booklet.

If the PCs hit Withem elsewhere, they will chose the setting and the GM will either need to improvise or encourage the PCs to describe it. As Withem has no powers or dangerous attacks the PCs may be careless and not account for the fact that he has super-villain backup. The Made Men will be waiting nearby, finding locations where they can watch Withem without being seen.



TWENTY FIVE TO LIFE IN THE PENALTY BOX

If the PCs decide to confront or attempt to arrest Withem he will mock them with his usual arrogance. He will demand proof to back up the PCs' accusations, turning his legal mind to explaining away anything they present. Under his arrogant demeanor, however, Withem will be worried because he knows that if the PCs dug deep enough they have him on several crimes. How strong the case is will determine Withem's reaction, and his likelihood of doing jail-time will influence how willing he is to throw his hand and call in the Made Men.

No Real Proof: If the PCs come in with hunches, information gained through telepathy, or other evidence that would never be allowed in court, Withem will be vastly arrogant, telling the PCs off before showing them the door. His chances of doing jail time are minimal, and he knows it. The biggest mistake Withem could make at this point is taunting the PCs to the point of attacking him. If the PCs don't attack him, don't have any proof, but insist on arresting him and giving him to the authorities, he'll let them arrest him knowing that he'll be back on the street within 2 hours.

If the PCs seem ready to dish out their own justice he'll try to call the police first, then try to stall the PCs and convince them that he's not guilty. If they persist then he'll call the Made Men out.

If the PCs have to fight the Made Men, they might be able to prove a connection between him and any Made Men who fled from jail, but Withem can probably get off from that after being disbarred, as he'll claim they were there as clients and he was advising them to turn themselves over to the police.

Some Proof: If the PCs have managed to link Alleen, Grover, and Raisa to Withem and his firm, but don't have any

testimony or documentary evidence from Clish or Rivenberg then Withem will do his best to poke holes in the PCs case. He knows that he could be in trouble, but also knows that without testimony or direct evidence the worst that he'll be found guilty of is conspiracy. Because of this he may let the PCs arrest him, if they seem unlikely to harm him, and hope to fight it out in court.

The PCs' biggest chance to force Withem to crisis is to Bluff (opposed by his Sense Motive) him into thinking the PCs have more than they are letting on. Sense Motive checks (opposed by Withem's Bluff) can reveal that Withem really is panicked, and a good result (beating him by more than 5) will reveal that he is panicked about the possibility of Clish and Rivenberg turning on him. If the PCs don't press that issue Withem will still let them take him in. If the PCs do press the issue, and it seems likely they will be able to get the evidence, Withem will realize that he's screwed, call in the Made Men, and try to escape.

Strong Proof: If the PCs have testimony and/or documentary evidence from Clish and Rivenberg along with testimony from either Alleen or Grover then Withem knows he's toast. The PCs can build a very tight case that'll get Withem at least Manslaughter One, and put him in jail from 15 to 25 years. As the PCs present the evidence he'll start to get a little frantic, and will sit down slowly as he realizes he is caught. He'll try to bargain with the PCs, offering them money and legal favors and connections. If they won't accept he manages to keep his cool long enough to give the signal to the Made Men, and as soon as they attack he tries to flee.

If the PCs can also link him to Al and Blaine, Withem will panic immediately. With that evidence the PCs can get him for attempted murder and conspiracy to commit murder, which combined with the other crimes could result in him spending

the rest of his life behind bars. Withem will go wide eyed, scan the evidence once, and then instantly give the signal to the Made Men in a manner that is so obviously artificial that unless the PCs blow a Spot check (DC 10) the Made Men have no chance of ambush as the PCs will know something is coming.

JUMP HIM!

If the PCs forgo the niceties they can always just jump Withem. If they seem to be arresting him or taking him to the authorities, Withem will try and get them to let him go, or at least to get a rise out of them. He'll use Taunt, Bluff, and Diplomacy to try and force the characters to talk, using what he knows about them to get a rise. So long as the PCs talk to him he'll talk back, arrogant enough to think he can get something out of them to give him a way out. The moment violence starts or it looks like he's about to lose his freedom, Withem will call in the Made Men. If Rock and/or Mikhael are there he'll try to Taunt them in hopes that he can cause a rift between them and the PCs.

ONE GOOD DEFENSE DESERVES ANOTHER

The Made Men have learned their lesson from their first fight with the PCs, and are under strict orders to attack only when Withem signals, and then to make their attacks precise and surgical. Withem's signal is to stand up and hold his arms out towards the PCs and ask them if they'd like to handcuff him. When that happens, the Made Men strike. Of course, if the PCs go to attack Withem then the Made Men will jump out before the signal, as they don't want their boss dead.

The Made Men will fight hard, as they know that if the PCs capture them they're unlikely to live to see freedom again (assuming they live at all). The assault will start with Battery smashing through a wall, door, or anything between himself and the PCs. Arson 2 will then use his surprise strike while the other Made Men open up. All of the Made Men will be present, but Hitman will be hidden someplace within line of sight. (If the fight takes place at Withem's office, Hitman will be in an empty office in the building across the street, firing through a half-open window at the PCs.) After that point the Made Men will fight using their normal tactics, save that Numbers will have researched and found out about any vulnerabilities or weaknesses the PCs have, and will use them to best advantage. Battery and Smash and Grab will make use of the setting if the fight is in the office, using Bull Rushes and Fusillades to knock characters without flight out the windows. Smash and Grab will also be alert for any of his companions going out the window, and will catch anyone the PCs toss out.

If Rock and/or Mikhael are present they will fight along side the PCs and will follow the PCs' orders. The one difficulty is that both Rock and Mikhael will try to kill the Made Men, not just render them senseless or capture them. Stopping them from destroying the Made Men won't be easy, and may

end up costing the PCs more effort than fighting alone would have.

Any normals present will do their best to get out of the way of the fight. Cops and combative types will get out of the middle, find cover, and then open fire. The Made Men are not above capitalizing on the presence of bystanders, and may take human shields. Riot will use his powers to drive panicking bystanders to leap out windows (or in front of cars, or any other dangerous situation in the setting), forcing PCs to catch them or watch them plummet to their deaths.

Withem, in the meanwhile, will do everything he can to escape. He will get out of the office, or wherever the PCs confronted him, and get to his car. He then drives to the nearest subway, ditches the car and his coat, and makes his way out of town via public transit. Once gone he'll get to another city, go to the airport, and leave the States for Switzerland and his massive secret bank accounts. The one thing he won't do is attack the PCs, unless they're trying to kill him, as he knows he can't fight them. If the Made Men are defeated and the PCs corner him he will surrender immediately.

BIG EXPLOSIONS AND LAWYER KICKING

Some cool things that could happen during the fight are:

- Two combatants grappling each other as they fall 64 stories, each trying to make the other be at the bottom when they hit the ground.
- Beating someone into submission with a shelf full of law books.
- Doing an area trip attack by yanking one of the huge Persian rugs out from underneath everyone's feet.
- Numbers will use a stapler as an annoying weapon, stapling peoples eyelids closed.
- If the violence is heavy and Withem can't escape he could be intimidated badly enough to make a display of his fear by losing control of his bodily functions.

WHAT NEXT?

If the PCs have not yet brought peace between Rock and Mikhael, or beaten them both into submission, then the PCs should go to **"The Olive Branch in the Iron Fist"** if they want to force them to deal with the situation diplomatically or **"Into the Lion's Den"/"First Against the Wall"** if they want to beat the truth into them. If Rock and Archangel have been taken care of go to **"In the End"** for the conclusion. If the PCs have let things get too far out of hand it may be time for **"WAR!"** though the PCs might be able to bring things back from the brink if they bring Rock and Mikhael the head of Joshua Withem.

WAR!

In which the world goes mad and super-heroes war with the army through the streets of the City.

THE SITUATION

“WAR!” starts at the point in which the super-humans of the adventure decide that the law no longer applies to them, that they will do whatever they must to triumph over the wicked, fascist, hostile world. Whether this is because they’ve been attacked, because others urged them to do it, or because they’ve become convinced there could be no justice, the result is the same: the City becomes the first front of a war.

How bad things are depends on what the PCs have done. If they have managed to retain ties with either Rock or Mikhael they may be able to rein in the worst of the violence — or to increase it and drive it on. If the PCs have managed to alienate the two then there will be nothing holding them back as they take their fight to the street. Similarly how much pull the PCs have with the government will determine how fast and hard the powers that be strike back. PCs who have proven themselves to have level heads and have government connections may be able to bring about a reasonable response. PCs that have alienated the government, however, may be unable to stop tanks and bombers from blasting NPCs’ headquarters into oblivion.

THE SETTING

There is no set location for “WAR!” The first fights will most likely be held either in the streets of the City, or in and around The Studio and The Cathedral.

THE END OF HISTORY

The PCs’ actions determine who strikes the first blow. Failed raids on The Studio or The Cathedral, direct assaults or threats against the government, or joining with one side and trying to violently stop another will all result in events escalating out of control. The point at which these things go from standard super-hero muscle flexing to a full out war is a hazy thing. In general it will start when one of the sides realizes that they’ve gone too far, and there isn’t a way to go back. The extremity of the NPC supers’ actions will make them into super-villains, their potential to do good wasted and turned to harm by their inability to compromise or to be humble. The GM will have to decide if it is possible for them to be redeemed or saved, and what that says about the themes of the game.

Following is a rundown of how this could happen to the NPC factions, and how they will respond. Included in each section are ideas for how the war could be ended, and what the faction will do afterwards.

ROCK N ROLL REVOLUTION

Rock is the most likely character to bring out the sledgehammer. He hasn’t been a proponent of revolution or trying to take out the government by force, but the events in *Church and State* could easily change that. If Rock believes that his life and the lives of his followers are in danger because they refuse to step down or accept “fascist” control then he will decide that the current system is beyond redemption. Threats of military force will certainly start him in that direction. If the PCs attack him, or bring him word that he or his followers

will be harmed if they don't stop their activities (which the PCs might see as being reasonable, but Rock will see as a threat against freedom), Rock may snap. Any hint that the PCs are backing or backed by either Mikhael or the government will hasten his decision to rebel. If he is arrested he will gather his lawyers to make a huge media/legal distraction while his militant followers spring him and head straight into revolution mode.

Once he hits the point of no return, Rock will withdraw into his stronghold or may (if The Studio has been compromised) disappear into the poorest sections of the City where he has friends and family. After that he will arrange for his followers to spread the word that time has come for the Revolution. Twelve hours after he makes the declaration they will go into action. Those working in services and utilities will strike, using everything from knowledge of bugs in the system to dynamite to render phones, electricity, transportation, food distribution, shipping, and law-enforcement useless. While the city is in turmoil Rock will use his powers to make announcements, explaining the reasons for what is happening and the reasons that things have to change. He will do this constantly for the duration of the conflict, using his Face Squad-boosted Charisma to try to win the hearts and minds of the people.

As everything is being shut down Rock and the Radical Agents will make precision strikes against particularly dangerous targets. These targets will almost assuredly include the Archangel and any army or National Guard units in the City, and may include the PCs if they've threatened Rock. After that Rock will focus on governmental control centers, corporate offices, and banks — destroying records, blocking communications, and trying to make capitalism short-circuit. Rock may use the money he captures to hire mercenaries and super-villains.

While Rock is making strikes, his other followers will take to the streets, forming mass protests. They'll use propaganda, violence, and the thrill of looting to get others to join them, resulting in huge riots through the center of the City. The mobs that form will attack police, National Guard, and possibly even army units. They'll further disrupt communications and transport, effectively shutting down whole sections of the City. At first most will break under any threat of violence, but as the Face Squad has time to work many members of the mob will risk life and limb, attacking tanks and superheroes alike in mass waves.

Though the rebellion will start with Rock's minions, he will gain more followers as every dissident member of the disenfranchised rallies round his flag. Also, while most of Rock's minions live in the City, there are Marxists and revolutionaries in most major urban centers who will listen to him, and Rock will use his communications systems to keep in touch with them. If the revolution in the City is not stopped in short order, it may go national (and even international) within as little as a week.

Defeating Rock should be difficult, as he will not commit to a stand-up fight, and as long as he has followers he will continue the rebellion. If his followers can be neutralized or if

he is badly injured he will withdraw to regroup. While he is out of touch the masses of people can be dealt with, as lacking Rock's propaganda and support they will soon soften. If it becomes obvious that the revolution has failed Rock will fade into the shadows. He'll make noises off and on, appearing in India, Brazil and other countries with active radical Marxist fronts, and will gather a new and more radical powerbase as time goes on. Eventually he will return to the City, this time with a small army of his own. That, however, is an adventure for another day.

ANGEL OF THE APOCALYPSE

The Archangel is less likely to start a revolution that Rock is, but because of his inflexible and stubborn nature he may end up being forced into it anyway. Mikhael believes that he is above the laws of men, as he serves the law of God, and will violently reject any attempt by the government to arrest him, remove his influence, or try him (and killing him is right out, of course). He will respond to any force used against him with one step up on the escalation scale. So if cops come to arrest him peacefully he will eject them from his presence with bruises, if the PCs come to beat him into submission he will pound them senseless and cast them naked into the street, if the army sends tanks against his church he will destroy them and then go after the base they were sent from. If he is successfully arrested he will break out with the aid of his followers and destroy whatever agency held him and who ever captured him.

Mikhael's starting mindset will be "I must stand firm, and they will come to their senses and let me serve God as I must." Eventually that will change. As things get worse, especially if any of his followers are killed or if Rock starts his revolution, the Archangel will decide that it is time for the City to be scourged clean. (He will also not react well to the observation that he is behaving exactly the same as Rock.) At that point he will go on full offensive, hitting all enemies with full force.

The Archangel's scourge will be much like Rock's rebellion, with the primary difference being degree. Rock wants to shut down the system, give power to the people, and allow a new and better system to be built from the revolution. Archangel, however, wants to destroy everything and everyone that is wicked. He will lift his prohibition against killing, and tell all of his followers that it is time for the City to be cleansed as Sodom, and that the Whore of Babylon — the government — must be brought low. Leaders in the government, army officers, mobsters, pimps, drug dealers, members of Rock's revolution, and possibly the PCs will all be targeted with lethal force. The Keepers of the Keys will use teleportation to bring Sworn and members of the Order into places of power, hideouts, bases, and even homes. There will be mercy for any who repent, recant, and join the Army of God. For everyone else there will be the cleansing fire.

As with Rock, Archangel will make public appeals, spreading the word of his mini-apocalypse through the channels of churches, internet sites, and public appearances. While much

of the religious community will react with horror, there will be many people who will come to war when called by an angel. The Archangel's army will grow quickly unless there is decisive action taken by church leaders, PCs, and members of congregations who know that Mikhael's path is the wrong one. The PCs may even have to go to the Vatican to get the Pope to make an official statement on the matter....

Unlike Rock, Archangel will be willing to take on standing battles. If the army is involved he will attack tanks and fighter planes alike, using all of his powers at full scale and with the backing of all of his followers to take down the heaviest modern weapons. (One of his addresses may end up being him standing atop the flaming wreckage of an F-15 in Central Park, telling the horrified onlookers that even these warplanes are as nothing before the might of the Lord.) He'll also duke it out with PCs, doing his best to kill them if they will not repent.

Mikhael will not retreat from the City, and will have to be "killed" in order to be removed. He should suffer a flaming death when he is taken out, such as being hit by multiple smart bombs at once, or being buried under a hundred thousand tons of collapsing building, flaming tank, or other vast collateral damage disaster. GMs who want him to return in the future may want to spend a Villain Point to make sure that there is no body found.

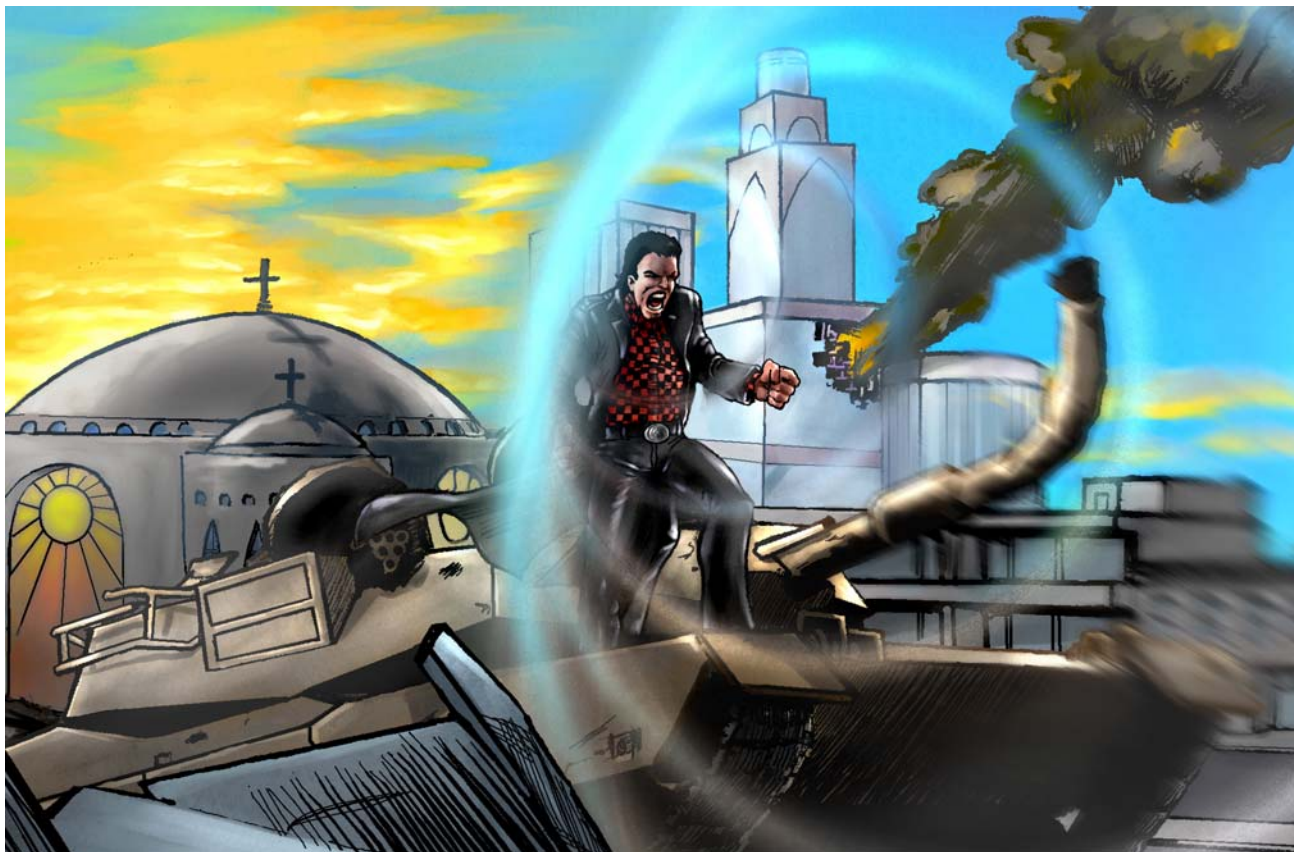
THE RULE OF LAW

Of all factions, the government wants a war the least. In fact, many of the higher ups are absolutely terrified of it, as it

represents every failing and every political nightmare. With one swoop they could permanently lose the support of the religious right, the socialist left, and the political middle, who will demand to know how the hell they let this happen in the first place. No few will also have to face their own faith and beliefs, and decide what it is they support the most. But in the end the government cannot sit by while dangerous radicals, no matter how popular or powerful, flout the law and engage in rebellion, sedition, and treason. In order to protect the law, the people, and their own careers (not necessarily in that order) the government must respond to Mikhael, Rock, and the PCs' actions.

The government's first step will be to call in the National Guard and possibly the army (see **"Wrath of Angels"** page 49). Once called in the National Guard will attempt to surround and contain the trouble makers and key areas, and will attempt to either detain or help police arrest anyone against whom there are standing charges (which will likely be both Rock and Mikhael). At the same time the FBI and local police will start looking for known followers of both factions, as they have had both under surveillance for some time. How aggressive they become in this search depends on the situation — if it's only talk they will only observe, if there has been violence they will detain, and if they suspect terrorist actions they will go in guns blazing.

Once real violence starts the military comes in and the FBI starts cracking skulls. If Rock and Archangel are attacking government centers, blowing up National Guard tanks, and raising riots in the streets then the government will see no



choice but to respond with overwhelming force. Most of the force will be focused on the super-humans, as no one wants to see tanks running over student protesters in Central Park. However both Rock and Archangel are very smart, very powerful, and very nasty, and will play on the military's hesitation. The Archangel is perfectly capable of taking on and defeating F-15s and Abrams Main Battle Tanks, and Rock is too smart to get into a fight with firepower on that scale unless he's assured victory. Thus the military will start taking losses, which will make them afraid, which will result in a loss of discretion, which may lead to violence against human followers and even attacks on non-participating civilians.

As violence escalates there will be a large push for internment camps for anyone so much as suspected to have a connection to the Archangel and Rock's forces — which means that Christian mothers, Islamic fathers, radical socialists, and naive students getting the "Marxist Times" could end up in cells. The Studio and The Cathedral will be precision bombed, pounded into the ground as the City faces the terror of aerial bombardment. Tanks and Delta Squad agents will be sent into residential areas where rebels and dissidents are hiding, and soon the City will look more like Baghdad than the center of prosperity it was a week before.

Getting the government to back off completely is probably not possible: it's too big and too committed. However, PCs who have kept in good with the powers that be may have a chance to stop the worst excesses. Things like internment camps and aerial bombardment can be called off if the PCs get in touch with army leaders, senators, or the president himself (all of

which could be facilitated by starting with the mayor and chief of police). If the PCs can convince the higher ups of a better plan that does not involve the government looking weak or endangering more lives, they may be able to broker a withdrawal to give them time and wiggle room. At this point that better way may involve the PCs leading Delta Force against Rock and Mikhael personally, but there may yet be a peaceful solution.

Finally, if the PCs join forces with either of the supers, then you've got a whole campaign of super-heroics against the Man ready to go. It can be a great thing, full of government-backed supers coming after the heroes, political and religious protest and reform, mass movements and media wars — but it's also out of the scope of *Church and State*. Examples of what can be done with this kind of campaign would be the "Ultimate War" series for "Ultimate X-Men" or series such as "Stormwatch" or "The Authority."

WHAT NEXT?

There is no specific scene to follow "WAR!" PCs may still be trying to find out the truth around Father Candella's murder in "Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid" but the truth is that it's probably too late for that to work without significant achievement and sacrifice on the part of the PCs. If the PC manage to stop or drive off Rock and Mikhael then go to "In the End" for ideas on what might happen next.



IN THE END

Tying up loose ends and starting up new stories.

Because *Church and State* is a flexible story there is no single closing scene. The most likely scenes to end the adventure are “**Know Your Enemy**” if the PCs caught Withem, “**The Olive Branch in the Iron Fist**” if the PCs brought peace to Rock and Archangel without catching Withem (or did so after catching him), “**Into the Lion’s Den**” or “**First Against the Wall**” if the PCs took out the two supers, and possibly “**WARI!**” if everything went to hell. Which actually becomes the terminal scene should be obvious, as it will tie up loose ends and bring the PCs to a natural ending point. Once that scene is done there may still be a few other threads to tie up, and there will certainly be lots of material to be used in the future. This section summarizes, character by character, what those threads may be and what the future may hold.

MIKHAEL

If the PCs reconciled Rock and Mikhael by convincing the Archangel that one of his followers was responsible for the murder, the angel will lose much of his arrogance and will start to become a more truly heroic personage. He will still be self-righteous, upright, and painfully formal and correct — he is after all an angel — but he will be worlds better. His organization will become more interested in mercy and aid than violent justice. This is a rather ideal solution, and the results should

be in direct contrast to the fanaticism seen in “**WARI!**” Mikhael could also become a close ally of the PCs.

If the PCs frame up one of Rock’s followers as the murderer then the Archangel won’t change. He won’t become a fanatic murderer as in “**WARI!**” but he will remain arrogant, megalomaniacal, and utterly convinced of his own unassailable righteousness. His organization will help people, but will show a grimmer face and will start murdering drug dealers and mob enforcers rather than simply turning them over to the police. While he could still be a hero, Mikhael will be a problematic and grim figure. He may help the PCs, but will also butt heads with them hard enough to leave bruises.

If the PCs took down the Archangel in either “**Into the Lion’s Den**” or “**WARI!**” then Mikhael will most likely appear to be dead, but with no body found. If he was captured and given to the police they will have to face the difficulty of keeping a teleporting being whose powers are difficult to suppress in jail. His followers will also mount political and legal pressure to have him freed, and are not above staging raids to help him break out of jail. The Archangel’s return as a villain is almost assured by comic book convention. When he comes back he will be stripped of mercy and compassion, a living instrument of the vengeance of an angry God. The other tragedy of this outcome is that the good work that Mikhael did will be washed away. Those he saved will either become terrorists or sink back into the gutters, the neighborhoods he cleaned up will be

slowly reclaimed by garbage, and the world will get a little darker.

EBONIE

Ebonie is a woman in trouble. If she gets help, such as dedicated psychiatric care in prison, she may be able to repent for her sins and find peace. She could become a good source of information for the PCs as she knows lots of people in the street life and religious community.

If Ebonie is not caught or treated the guilt and rage filling her heart will lead her to lash out explosively. She will seek out Benny or Kendall, possibly both, and kill them before killing herself. She won't hesitate to splash anyone that gets in her way either. GMs with a sadistic streak could have her gain superpowers along the line, either from her mental anguish or from making a devil's deal.

ROCK

A Rock who has seen the Archangel admit to weakness and/or seen Ebonie's torment over her actions will be a Rock who has gained a new understanding of the dangers of fanaticism. He will be rededicated to the idea that killing, lawlessness, and rebellion are not the keys to making a new world. He may, with PC prompting, go so far as to set up shelters with joint funding from his organization and the Archangel's. In this situation Rock will tone down and cut out the more radical elements of his organization, and though he'll remain committed to political change, he'll no longer be constantly on the edge of revolution. His organization will be politically radical and make the powers that be uncomfortable, but they won't be violent.

If Rock is convinced one of his followers was responsible for the murder, he'll go into a period of introspection, questioning whether or not his ideals are flawed. In the end he'll decide that it wasn't the fault of the cause; it was a fault of his for assuming everyone was a true believer. He will then redouble his efforts to instill people with Marxist ideals, getting rid of their "programming." In the long term he won't change except to be more dedicated to the Marxist cause — after all, when it fails people kill each other. In this situation Rock will remain a problematic hero, at odds with the government and an inch away from coming to blows with the police. While working with him may not be impossible, the PCs should always have a sense that he's getting ready to put them against the wall when the revolution comes.

Finally, if the PCs took Rock down in "**First Against the Wall**" or "**WAR!**" then Rock will become a true rebel, seeking to bring down the government by any means necessary. If the PCs gave him to the authorities there will be a huge trial in which his trained attack lawyers will buy him enough time to slip out of custody and vanish. If the PCs detain him themselves then his followers will wait until the PCs are occupied elsewhere and strike hard to free him. If it seems that he's dead then there should be no body — so that he can make the inevitable villain's

comeback. In the time that he's gone the PCs may occasionally get word of him blowing things up in places like India, Italy, and Argentina. A radical super-human terrorist of international scope will have been born.

BENNY

If Benny is set up as the murderer he'll spend the rest of his life trying to get back at the characters. While in jail he might make super-powered friends, dig up dirt on the PCs backgrounds, or even get powers of his own. In any case he'll be a bitter, vicious alcoholic, determined to ruin himself and everyone around him.

If the PCs prove Benny innocent then he'll be willing to do his time for the beating. He'll still become a bitter alcoholic wondering where his life went wrong, unless the PCs intervene. In this case, however, he won't be a dangerous bitter alcoholic. His sister will never speak to him again, destroying what was left of his family. He also may have Ebonie coming after him with a gun....

WITHEM

If Withem doesn't get caught the City is in for a rough time of it. Aside from whatever damage Rock and Mikhael caused, Withem will parlay his success into real power and pull with the Mafia. Combined with his smarts, legal position, and ability to bend, fold, and mutilate the law he'll be able to start a nearly unstoppable crime wave. The work the supers have done will be slowly undone, using subtle and devious means that makes the graft and corruption almost impossible to weed out. Withem will make the mob into a 21st century force, backed by legal power, corrupt lawyers, cops, and politicians.

If Withem was discovered, but managed to escape, he'll stay well away from the City — he knows better than to go up against angry supers. However, he still has pull, and the PCs will find themselves surrounded with legal motions, hassles from companies for everything from utilities to overdue bills, and possibly as the targets of some high-class assassination. The same goes for a Withem caught and jailed.

Withem dead could always return as a diabolical supervillain, a tempting devil with Super Charisma and the ability to make wishes come true for a price. If there can be angels walking the streets, why not devils? Or he may actually just be dead.

CHING CLISH

If Withem isn't taken down, Clish will ride his coat-tails all the way to the top. He'll be rich, successful, and utterly miserable. Eventually he'll try to make a break from Withem, possibly going to the PCs with evidence of Withem's perfidy. At that point Withem will have him killed, giving the PCs another investigation.

If Withem is taken down and Clish isn't given protective custody he'll end up dead in the near future. If he is kept alive he could become a good (if hidden) source of legal advice in the future — as he's not nearly as incompetent as he thinks he is.

CHERY RIVENBERG

If Withem isn't caught, Rivenberg will marry him. They'll have a couple years of bliss, then a couple years that are okay, then Rivenberg will find out about what Withem really is. At that point she'll become either a battered woman or a corpse, unless she can get the PCs' help.

If Withem is caught and the case is damning, Rivenberg will boldly testify against him, not want protective custody, and may well end up dead because of it. PCs who protect her can gain a courageous and skillful ally in the law. If Withem ends up dead Rivenberg will be traumatized, but with help can eventually get over him — quite possibly becoming a love interest for one of the PCs.

THE MADE MEN

If the Made Men have been busted twice, the mob will wash their hands of their current group of psychos. However, Arson II proved the gear and training programs are still in place, and so the Made Men may return with different faces running similar powers. Even if the current heads of the Five Families won't bring them back, they could be brought back into play by an ambitious underling looking to take over the Don's seat. The resulting mob war would light up the City, and give the PCs a chance to jump into a situation where everyone involved deserves to be pounded.

If the Made Men escaped at the end of **"Know Your Enemy"** or if the PCs never got there, then the current squad of psychos will still be out there, possibly led by Withem. It will only be a matter of time before he decides to use them again, after giving them an upgrade to their gear of course. With Withem's help they'll turn into the crew from *Die Hard* — taking over secure complexes with cunning plans. Without him they'll be petty thugs robbing armored cars.

OTHERS

A few miscellaneous plot players are included below, but GMs should make note of any other minor character the PCs took special note of (such as one of the Keepers, a Bodyguard, or even a grade-school teacher), as they could become important in future adventures.

RAISA AND KENDALL EVERIDGE

Raisa and Kendall are in love, but they have a lot stacked against them. If the PCs discovered the truth behind the mur-

der then they both have guilt and ache every day from it. If the PCs didn't discover the truth they will still have guilt, but this time without knowing for sure if it was "their fault" or not, never able to trust the person they once knew. In either case the two have a whole host of other issues stacked against them, including the civil status of gay marriage, dealing with Raisa's past, and all the normal traumas of a newlywed couple.

GMs can use Raisa and Kendall as an example of the ways the world gets changed for the better or worse, keeping them together or splitting them apart based on the consequences of PC actions. It is also possible that both will become attached to the PCs, possibly "adopting" a young PC either as a surrogate child or sibling, replacing their lost family and past with a PC family.

ALLEEN ROADCAP

Unless the PCs intervene and get Alleen immediate, drastic help, she's going to end up dead of a drug overdose. She'll be found face down under a tree in a park downtown. If the PCs do help her she could become a source of information about street life, the sex and drug trades, and it will turn out she's an excellent cook.

GROVER MILONAS

Grover is headed down the same road as Benny, the big difference is that Grover won't blame anyone else for it; he knows he brought everything down on himself. Even if the PCs don't catch him, his guilt at helping cause the murder of a priest will eat him alive. Unless someone intervenes he'll end up eating his gun. If he is saved he proves to be an excellent source of information and contacts on the docks, in the unions, and even with the mob.

"After all that men can do there must be something more. We have seen time and time again that humanity cannot save itself. It is only when we touch upon God, or more precisely when he touches upon us with his Mercy, that we can know peace."

Mikhael Archangel, in an address to his followers, May 1, 2004

"In the end there isn't anyone else gonna save us. If we want to survive, we have to learn to stand with each other and hold our heads high. You are the secret to humanity overcoming its history, and so is everyone living standing shoulder to shoulder with you."

Rock N Roll, in an address to his followers, May 1, 2004

ROGUES' GALLERY

The Divine and the Despicable, the Rebellious and the Religious, the human and super-human with stats, notes, and portraits.

Stats, history, and personality for the major NPCs of *Church and State*.

All PL 3 and lower archetypes can also be used as generic supporting cast. Simply modify the description and use the stats as you see fit. The Jesuit Confessor, for example, would also work well as a high-level IRS auditor if you changed the Knowledge (Religion) to Knowledge (Tax Law) and Profession (Priest) to Profession (Accountant). Examples are given for each of the bystander archetypes that GMs can use to give specific faces to the generic types. They also make great quick NPCs for use with the Investigation Montage rules (page 102).

All listed bonuses include all ranks for skill, attributes, base attack or defense, super attributes, and synergy. Temporary or situational bonuses, such as those from Boost or Point Blank Shot, are not included.

Powers are listed like this: Chemical Pump (Super Strength) +10 [Extras: Amazing Save (Dmg & Fort); Shockwave, Thunderclap; Stunts: Lethal Damage; Source: Chemical Pumps (super-science); Cost 7pp.]

The Underlined Section "Chemical Pump (Super Strength) +10" is the whole power. The italicized portion is what the power is called in the setting or by the character, the section in parenthesis is the game-stat power that forms the basis for the ability, and the number is (obviously) the level of the power.

Finally, a few of the NPCs (Mikhael and Rock specifically) have a few points over the starting default for a character of their PL. This is represented with an XP notation, showing how many points over base they are.

SO WE'RE FIGHTING A KINDERGARTEN TEACHER?

Mikhael and Rock N Roll have large numbers of minions that are a far cry from stormtrooper thugs. Among the ranks of their followers are teachers, priests, and den mothers. While these characters may not seem as powerful or useful, the truth is far from it. Though many of their minions lack combat power, they have significant political and real world power. Rock N Roll, for example, could arrange for the power to most of the city to be shut down, or to have the telecommunications system reduced to chaos, because he has minions that legitimately and legally work in places where such systems are controlled.

Also, these minions make great tools to let GMs demonstrate the nature of the world and the NPCs. That the Archangel has den mothers who are willing to bake cookies or rush into combat for him indicates that either he really is doing something right to earn such love, or that he's doing something very wrong to create that kind of fanaticism. Of course, it also means that the world is in a rather sad state when such a woman would feel the need to give such unquestioning devotion to a single person.

Finally, though their combat utility isn't always obvious, such minions can make an unexpectedly potent force. The fact that PCs may be reluctant to punch a grandmother out, or may not see a sweet little candy-striper as a threat until she puts the taser against their neck, makes the minions great blockers, surprise attackers, and "invisibles." Not to mention that beating up on a Girl Scout troop may get the PCs to stop and consider that there might be a better course to fixing their problems. (Unless the PCs really hate cookies.)

THE MADE MEN

Background: For years the mob has been taking it on the chin from the super-hero brigade. La Casa Nostra has suddenly had to deal with a bunch of noisy freaks with more power than sense, and it's been very bad for business. So bad, in fact, that the heads of the Five Families decided to take an unprecedented joint action and not just hire outsider muscle (which they'd done in the past) but to make a group of proven and loyal made men into supers.

It's taken three years, millions of dollars, and several fatalities along the way, but the Mafia finally has its own set of homegrown super-villains. Every one of these Made Men has years of proven service and loyalty to the family, and all of them have sworn to serve the Five Families equally. The Made Men are now operational, trained, mutated, super-equipped and ready to take back the streets for the drug runners, pimps, and leg-breakers.

The biggest problem the Made Men face is that their leader, Jimmy "Arson" DeSuchi, is a certified grade A nutjob. He has no sense of teamwork, restraint, or control, and he constantly leads the Made Men into one terrible situation after another — often with such massive collateral damage that even the most hardened don shudders. On the Made Men's very first mission Arson turns what was supposed to be a simple little burn and hit job into a disaster of international proportions.

General Tactics: The Made Men were created to function as a super-team, and so as long as Arson isn't too busy setting fire to everything in sight they do it well. While Arson is in charge the Made Men each fills a role that helps and supports the others, making them more effective as a group than the sum of their rather limp parts.

Whenever Arson does lose it the rest fall to bickering about who should lead, giving orders that no one follows, and even running away without further notice. GMs can use this to give PCs who are on the ropes a break.

Battery takes a forward position, using his shockwave to knock down and disrupt the mobility of enemies and using his super-human endurance to shrug off blows. He'll follow up with thunderclaps to hurt any evaders or speedsters, and try to grapple them while stunned or downed so that Hitman can put a bullet in them, or Smash and Grab can disorient them. In crises he uses extra effort to gain Super-breath, which he uses to fan Arson's flames, making them do extra damage.

Arson stays behind Battery, opening fire on anyone flat-footed or helpless with a Power Attack. He likes to keep at close range to use his Point Blank Shot feat and Energy Field. He uses the environment to his advantage, using fire and super-strength to drop things on enemies or to cause avalanches, cave-ins, and other traps. In enclosed spaces he uses extra effort to fire large blasts of flame that use up all the local oxygen, causing non-immune characters to suffocate. If he gets anywhere near a leaky gas main, then God help everyone in the range of the blast that follows, as Arson will set it off so that he can absorb the blast to boost his Super-Strength.

Hitman stays far from the main conflict, hidden and under cover, sniping at all enemies. He never directly engages the enemy, and will flee if they move in on him. He often uses his All-Out and Power Attacks to make devastating hits to the head (he likes to shoot people in the eye), and will also use his Ricochet attacks, stealth abilities, and actions of his teammates (especially Battery's grapples and knockdowns) to hit enemies while they can't dodge.

Riot hangs back, using as much cover and concealment as he can, and concentrates on causing disruption. He loves to cause riots (no, really) and whips bystanders into a frenzy of total panic before steering them into the PCs' path. After that he'll do his best to instill fear in the PCs, trying to break them up and force them into error. If that fails he will use his fatigue attack, focusing first on anyone who is already fatigued.

Numbers poses as a bystander, using his Bluff and Disguise to pass himself off as a stockbroker or other likely passer through. From there he uses his Luck power to support his teammates. His favorite trick is to Jinx enemies trying to resist Riot's fear powers, making them look like cowards, or to do the same to those resisting Battery's shockwave so they look like klutzes. He also uses his Knowledge: Super Heroes and radio to give the other teammates information about the enemies' weaknesses.

Smash and Grab focuses on gadgets, weapons, gear and their removal. Anything that he can teleport in, disarm, and teleport out with using his Turnabout will fall victim to his greedy hands. After a snatch he has no greater joy than using the gadget on the person he took it from. He also will focus on any dematerialized foes, using his stunning attack to keep them out of the fight. Lacking such options he most often combines his Taunt skill and Blink feat to boost his defense while forcing enemies to attack him — leaving them vulnerable to attacks from Hitman, Battery, or Arson. He also loves to Stun Attack Fusillade against groups that clump up. Finally, he has a fondness for Disorienting mentalists and then leaving them in front of a large moving vehicle.

Headquarters: The Made Men's headquarters is a former subway station, abandoned since 1954 and long since paved over at the surface level. Now it only exists as a dead-end off an abandoned tunnel, and can only be accessed through the tunnels or through a small hidden door (Spot DC 20) in the subbasement of the shopping complex above. The tunnels leading to it are in poor shape, clogged with debris and rubble and large warning signs telling everyone to stay out because of possible cave-ins. The actual base itself is another matter. Once through the small metal door separating it from the tunnels it widens into a large main room with several small side rooms for sleeping, eating, and general recreation, all decorated in a 30's art nouveau style combined with big screen TVs, hot-tubs, and all the luxuries of gangster life as depicted in pop culture. The Made Men's base is a PL 10 headquarters with communications, concealment, gym, infirmary, living space, reinforced structure, security system, and workshop. A map can be found in the combat booklet.

ARSON

Real Name: James "Jimmy" DeISuchi

Height: 5' 10"

Weight: 205 lbs.

Eyes: Brown and bugnuts

Hair: Sandy

Quote: "Calm like a bomb! Calm like a bomb!"

Background: The son of an important capo, brought up without punishment or consequence, Jimmy became a sociopath at a young age. Still, he was a controllable sociopath, and his father managed to keep him in line long enough that he was chosen for the Made Men program. It would have been hard for the mob to have made a worse mistake, as the boon of super-powers has only turned Jimmy's already unhinged self into a full-out psychopathic megalomaniac in the worst tradition of cackling comic-book villains.

Image: Jimmy is a sandy-blond man of Italian heritage, rather unremarkable save for the gleaming psychosis that dances madly through his smile. As Arson he's a mass of titanium and tungsten cables, plates, and nozzles spewing an advanced napalm formula that slides over the suit with flames flickering blue-hot. The armor he wears blocks off his whole face save where the view slits show his eyes, which are almost always bugging out, rolling, and burning with a foul exhilaration that borders on rapture.

Personality: Take a child that would feed firecrackers to cats, bring him up as part of an organized crime family, give him a history of violence without consequence, and add super-powers on top of it all. Gleefully, wantonly destructive, without morals, compunction, or control Arson is a total whack job with no purpose other than destruction, mayhem, and terror.

RPing Tips: Arson's eyes are always bugging out, he smiles way too widely and shows both sets of his teeth, speaks with a shrill, and cackles like the mad super-villain.

Powers and Abilities: As leader of the Made Men, Arson is quite good at bullying his team to increase their effectiveness. Most of his powers focus on his Arson Suit, a huge work of layers of polymers and high-density metals along with an advanced flame-control system. The suit allows him to sheet himself in flames, fire flames and control the intensity of fire around him by distributing different chemical sprays. It also lets him absorb heat and fire, which the suit can use to power itself, and boost its hydro system's strength. The suit also features internal seals that offer total life-support for up to 4 hours. The advanced hydros of the system give him super-strength, and allow him to leap vast distances. Finally the suit also contains an advanced encrypted radio that allows him to monitor police channels and to communicate with the other Made Men.

Take Two: After the atrocity in the subway no one, not even the mob, will want anything to do with James DeISuchi. However, there will still be a need for Arson, so Jimmy will be replaced by Russell Crocco, another mob man with fewer mental problems. Russell will have the same stats as Arson, but replacing Quirk: Psychotic pyromaniac with Unlucky and the

Arson: PL 12; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 19/16 (+6 Base, +3 Dex); Spd 30ft run or leap; Atk +9 melee (+8L punch), +11 ranged or +9/+9 ranged rapid fire (+12L, fire blast); SV Dmg +2 (and +6 armor), Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 8, Chr 14.

Skills: Bluff +6, Demolitions +10, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Mafia) +10, Repair +7.

Feats: Attack Focus: Fire, Connected, Heroic Surge, Infamy, Leadership, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot.

Equipment: *Arson Suit* (Energy Control: Fire) +12 [Extras: Energy Absorption (Boost Super Strength), Energy Field; Feats: Immunity to Fire and Suffocation, Radio Broadcast and Hearing; Flaws: Device; Source: Super Science; Cost 4pp], *(Super-Strength)* +6 [Extras: Protection, Leaping [Extra: Super Leap]; Flaws: Device; Source: Super Science; Cost 5pp].

Weaknesses: *Psychotic pyromaniac megalomaniac nut job in search of a flaming death* (Quirk).

Leadership feat with Surprise Strike. His tactics will be similar to the first Arson, but he'll be more careful about blowing up large parts of the city and will try to avoid killing too many bystanders.



BATTERY

Real Name: Mario Calero

Height: 6' 3"

Weight: 265 lbs.

Eyes: Hazel

Hair: Brown

Quote: "You want I should hit him some more?"

Background: Mario was always slow, and Mario always knew he was slow. That was okay though, cause he had his friends Jimmy and Anthony to tell him what to do. So long as he did what they said things stayed okay. Sure, sometimes he'd end up at the police station, but he never stayed there long. And yeah, sometimes he had to hurt people he didn't have anything against, but that didn't bother him much after a couple years. The only time Mario ever had problems is when Jimmy and Anthony told him to do different things, or when they had fights. Then Mario would just put his head in his hands and shut down, waiting for his friends to figure it out. Since becoming one of the Made Men nothing's really changed for Mario, save that as Battery he can hit things harder, which he likes, and that he has to have drugs running through his body and making him burn from the inside all the time, which he doesn't like at all.

Image: Battery is a big man, looking like a large but pleasant fellow in a nice suit until he turns on the drug-pumps. Once the large cylinders attached to his heart and central nervous system start to go he swells up obscenely, seeming set to rip his skin open from the inside. He turns a violent shade of red and, of course, destroys all his clothes. In this form Battery looks like a grotesque, semi-obese demon, lacking only horns and a tail.

Personality: A little slow, totally dependent on Arson and Riot, Battery has willingly given his life over into the hands of others. He doesn't have so much as a streak of rebellion or self-will left, and is basically a big puppet for his supposed friends. The only times he does anything other than what they tell him is when they fight, in which case he leaves, or when they are injured, in which case he goes berserk. The rest of the time he seems slightly apologetic, smiling shyly before beating someone to death.

RPing Tips: Battery is somewhat hunchbacked, his arms don't lie flat against his sides, and he always looks to others for his directions with an ox-like and befuddled stare.

Powers and Abilities: Battery has implanted chemical reservoirs near his heart and brain, along with several back up pumps in his thighs, biceps, and stomach. These pumps allow instantaneous injection of an advanced super-growth hormone, steroid, and adrenaline mix into Battery's system, resulting in massive increases in strength and aggressiveness. While he is pumped Battery is able to lift over 200

Battery: PL 10; I nit +2 (Dex); Defense 17/15 (+5 Base, +2 Dex); Spd 30ft run; Atk +11 melee (+15L, punch), +8 ranged (+15L, thrown object); SV Dmg +17, Fort +15, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 8, Chr 10.

Skills: Intimidate +8

Feats: Durability, Power Attack, Startle, Toughness.

Powers: Chemical Pump (Super Strength) +10 [Extras: Amazing Save (Dmg & Fort); Shockwave, Thunderclap; Stunts: Lethal Damage; Source: Chemical Pumps; Cost 7pp.]

Equipment: Micro-ear radio: Radio Listen & Transmit.

tons, clap his hands hard enough to create a sonic wave, or pound the ground hard enough to cause a mini-earthquake. He also gains massive resistance to injury and pain: his muscles becoming so super dense that bullets cannot penetrate them and the chemical pumps work to keep his system stable and clean. A side effect of the process is to make him bloat and turn red, his face taking on a demonic aspect, which makes him almost unidentifiable as his non-pumped self.



HITMAN

Real Name: Alexi Vespuchi

Height: 5' 3"

Weight: 125 lbs.

Eyes: Black

Hair: Black

Quote: (whispered) "Bang."

Background: Alexi was born good with a gun. It wasn't something he learned, it was just something he could do. It was also the only thing he could do. He was short, ugly, tongue-tied, shy, and a total coward. The only time he was happy was the summers he spent at his uncle's Texas ranch, where he could hunt deer and boar, even lions and ostriches a couple of times. He hunted people for the first time in the city after a couple of gang members beat his sister to death. The whole gang was dead within a week, and then others that had bullied, hurt, or just ignored Alexi started turning up dead as well — all shot directly through the eye.

Cops, not being stupid folk, were soon hot on Alexi's tail. That's when the mob offered him an out, and soon he was working on their payroll with a new name and face. For 25 years he's done what the dons wanted, and when they offered him army sniper training and the highest-tech sniping rifle in the world, why on earth would he have said no?

Image: Short, rumped, and with a nose that always seems to be running, Alexi looks more like Dustin Hoffman in Rainman than like the world's deadliest sniper. Small and ratlike, he's able to squirm and work his way into little places, and he usually looks and smells like he's been hiding inside a closet for most of his life. The only thing that makes him stand out is his Rail Rifle — a gigantic weapon twice again as long as Hitman is tall, made of sleek black steel, the massive barrel wrapped round with python-like coils.

Personality: Hitman doesn't have much in the way of personality. He's quiet, he doesn't care about anything but killing and reading Soap Opera Digest (he doesn't watch soaps, he just reads the digest), and he generally blends into the walls whenever possible. The distinctive features he does have are that he's a total coward who will run the second he thinks he might actually get hurt and he hates complications to his plans with a seething rage that will lead him to make unauthorized kills as soon as he is sure he can get away with it.

RPing Tips: Hitman curls into himself, speaks only in a whisper, whimpers when threatened, and caresses his gun like his most beloved mannequin.

Powers and Abilities: Hitman is a master of stealth, able to padfoot past alert guards in well lit areas. He also has eagle-sharp eyes and dog-keen ears, bordering on the preternatural with his senses. There is no doubt, however, that his defining skill is his ability with a gun. In his whole life Hitman has missed his target 3 times — and that is only because

Hitman: PL 11; Init +5 (Dex); Defense 17/12 (+2 Base, +5 Dex); Spd 30ft run; Atk +12 melee (+3L, knife), +17 ranged (+11L penetrating, rail rifle); SV Dmg +4, Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Chr 8.

Skills: Climb +5, Concentration +12, Escape Artist +11, Hide +18, Knowledge (the City) +8, Move Silently +18, Search +11, Spot +12.

Feats: Accurate Attack, All-Out Attack, Attack Focus: Rifle, Far Shot, Improve Critical: Rifle, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Ricochet Attack.

Powers: Luck of the Devil (Amazing Save (All)) +3 [Source: Training; Cost: 4pp.]

Equipment: Rail Rifle (Weapon) +11 [Stunts: Increased Range (double), Penetrating; Source: Equipment; Cost 1pp.]; Micro-ear radio: Radio Listen & Transmit.

Weaknesses: *Coward* (Quirk).

he was once drunk enough to take a shot at the moon. Combining his skill with weapons is his rail rifle, a high tech mini rail-gun that the mob purchased at great cost and expense. Capable of putting a bullet through the armor of a main battle tank, the gun is an awesome work of high-tech precision and is Hitman's natural companion.



NUMBERS

Real Name: Lenny Noth

Height: 5' 11"

Weight: 175 lbs.

Eyes: Brown

Hair: Salt and Pepper

Quote: "You do know the odds against that are 7,435,321 to 1, don't you? Why are you laughing?"

Background: Starting out with three card monte and working his way up to high-stakes poker and blackjack in Vegas, Lenny was a natural gambler. Partially it was because he had the innate ability to take measured risks and the willingness to lose short term to profit long, but mostly it was because he was a card-counter without peer. Unfortunately for him he spent one too many nights winning one too many dollars from the house the mob built, and he ended up at the wrong end of a gun. Rather than killing him, however, the mob offered him the choice for a life of wealth and prestige — working for them, of course. Lenny took the smart gamble, and was in like Flynn.

Image: Lenny looks like a stuffy British librarian most of the time, dressed in tightly tailored tweed suits and wearing horn rimmed glasses. He is, however, quite good at disguising himself to look like various other distinguished yet unremarkable middle aged men, and will often dye his hair and wear various types of suits in order to give the impression of being a lawyer, an accountant, an investigator, or the like.

Personality: The word "anal" has a special application to Numbers, because not only is he tight, he's a total ass. Smug, superior, and willing to go to great and dangerous lengths to prove the superiority of his intellect, he's the worst possible combination of traits of an arrogant college student and closed-minded internet flamer. The only reason he "allows" Arson to lead the Made Men is that he's seen quite clearly that the odds of Arson killing him should he attempt a coup are 1 in 1.

RPing Tips: Numbers is always stiff, upright, and painfully formal — like the rod up his butt had a stick up its butt. He speaks in formal phrases, clipping the words carefully apart and enunciating every syllable with careful precision. His speech is peppered with precise sounding odds and mathematical equations, even when they are clearly inappropriate.

Powers and Abilities: When Lenny was chosen for project Made Men he was given experimental augmentations and training meant to turn him into a mentalist. What happened was something rather different, Lenny's natural ability to count cards turned into something wholly beyond the pale. He became able to crunch numbers at an insane rate, figuring the chance of success for any action he observed, essentially becoming able to card-count the universe. His mentalist abilities manifested in the ability to tweak a number here and there, to figure the odds then twist them just at the right point to make fate slide his way. This ability is especially magnified when he throws small objects, which he is a master of causing to hit eyeballs, go into throats to cause choking, or setting off

Numbers: PL 12; Int +9 (+5 Dex, +4 feat); Defense 21/16 (+6 Base, +5 Dex); Spd 30ft run; Atk +6 melee (+3L, knife), +10 ranged (+6L, random thrown object); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 14, Chr 10.

Skills: Bluff +5, Disguise +5, Disable Device +11, Forgery +11, Knowledge (The City) +11, Knowledge (Super-heroes) +11, Repair +11, Science (Chaos Math) +13, Search +11.

Feats: Assessment, Improved Initiative, Photographic Memory, Throwing Mastery.

Powers: Card Count the Universe (Luck) +12 [Extras: Jinx, Fortune, Subtle; Source: Training; Cost 8pp.];

Things Your Feeble Mind Cannot Comprehend (Super-Intelligence) +5 [Source: Mutation; Cost 2pp.]

Equipment: Micro-ear radio: Radio Listen & Transmit.

chain reactions that cause wild events from cave-ins to traffic accidents. Numbers once killed five men by throwing a chocolate chip into one's mouth as he sped by in his car with the window down, causing the man to choke and crash into the other four men standing outside a bank. He's also gifted with super-human intelligence, and has recently turned to studying everything he can find about the weaknesses, lives, and habits of super-heroes.



RIOT

Real Name: Anthony Amato

Height: 5' 9"

Weight: 178 lbs.

Eyes: Green

Hair: Blond

Quote: "God, I love it when they piss themselves."

Background: Growing up in Jimmy's shadow wasn't an easy thing, as the older and more psychotic boy got all the attention, girls, and money. Anthony always wanted to bring his friend down, and to bring all the other arrogant jerks crashing down with him, but was always too afraid to do so. Over the years Anthony became more and more obsessed with fear, both his own and that of others, and decided that if he could control fear he could control everything. He became a decent intimidator in his own right by studying methods of controlling and projecting his voice and hypnotism. He often got used as a mouthpiece when his bosses realized that his "magic voice" could get more money than a broken thumb would. However it was his friendship with Jimmy and Mario that got him on the Made Men project, not his own abilities, and he knows it and resents it.

Image: Of all the Made Men it is Riot that looks the most like a Hollywood stereotype on legs. He dresses, grooms himself, and walks to project an image that is a combined Joe Pesci from *Goodfellas* and Al Pacino from the last half of *The Godfather*. He dresses in fine suits, wears massive numbers of rings (including a massive and beastly thumb ring on each hand), and speaks with an obvious Bronx-Italian accent.

Personality: Petty, obsessive, driven by fear and covetousness, Riot is a very small man. He revels in his abilities to create fear, as it allows him to make others behave the way he hates himself for behaving, and reassures him that he is braver than they are. While not a complete coward, Riot is well enough acquainted with fear to know that he doesn't have much of a spine.

RP Tips: Riot is an over the top, full bore Al Pacino impersonation, with equal measures of puffed up pigeon, out thrust chest, lapel gripping hands, and prince-of-darkness smirks.

Powers and Abilities: Riot has undergone extensive surgery and training procedures in order to modulate his voice so it can cause an instinctive panic response in anyone who hears it. By simply making sound, any sound, he can cause a creeping horror to overwhelm the conscious mind, resulting in irrational panic and terror. Those who've undergone the experience say it feels like the sudden and absolute knowledge that some horrid thing from the deep old days of human evolution is pouncing at you, knowing that you are going to die while being eaten alive. The panic this sensation creates also spreads, and anyone looking into

Riot: PL 10; Init +4 (Dex); Defense 20/16 (+6 Base, +4 Dex); Spd 30ft run; Atk +2 melee (+2S, punch w rings), +6 ranged (+10 Fatigue attack); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +11, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16, Chr 18.

Skills: Intimidate +13, Sense Motive +11.

Feats: Dodge, Evasion, Lightning Reflexes.

Powers: Voice of Terror (Mind Control) +10 [Extras: Area, Contagious, Duration, Selective, Subtle; Stunts: Works regardless of language; Flaws: Emotions Only, Fear Only; Source: Training/Super-Science; Cost 5pp.];

Draining Voice (Fatigue) +10 [Source: Training/Super-Science; Cost 2pp.];

Squirrely Reflexes (Amazing Save (Ref)) +5 [Source: Training; Cost: 1pp.]

Equipment: Micro-ear radio: Radio Listen & Transmit

the eyes or speaking with someone under its effects will also succumb to the fear. Riot can also pitch his voice to cause fatigue and weakness in a target, but its effects are limited and localized.



SMASH AND GRAB

Real Name: Paulie Amato

Height: 5' 11"

Weight: 165 lbs.

Eyes: Green

Hair: Sandy

Quote: "That is a kick-ass weapon! Mind if I keep it?"

Background: A kid cousin of Anthony's, Paulie was the last addition to the Made Men. A natural-born mutant, Paulie has faced troubles and trials all his life and as a result racked up an impressive record of street crime, vandalism, and burglary. He also had a power that the mob couldn't find any way to duplicate — teleportation. So when Riot assured the bosses that his cousin was loyal — he was family after all — they decided to give him a trial period. The kid's gratitude knew no bounds, and for the last year he's been proving himself with insane jobs and total loyalty. Mostly, however, his loyalty is to his cousin Anthony — which is just how Riot wanted it.

Image: Smash and Grab looks the part of a comic book super-villain. His hair is crazy cut, spiked and dyed, his ears are pierced full of skull earrings and studs, he has a wicked goatee, and a grin full of childish glee at his own wickedness. He even goes so far as to wear a full body biking suit, done in garish colors with patterns of dragons and flames spilling across his body, completed with a set of massive armored gauntlets. When he teleports a massive wind blows up around him in a vortex, throwing his hair into a wild torrent which he often accompanies with cackling laughter.

Personality: Smash and Grab isn't a complicated guy. He wants to be accepted, to be part of a team, and to be able to take any pretty thing he desires. He's deeply devoted to his cousin Anthony (Riot), whom he considers solely responsible for his being accepted into the mob. He's also convinced that Riot is just as devoted to him, and could be in for a hard fall when he finally sees his cousin's real face. The one spin that he hasn't bothered to mention to the other members of the Made Men is that he's a huge fan of Rock N Roll, and admires the man as a mutant, loves his message (which he does, admittedly, misinterpret rather badly), and always wanted to play in his band — and Smash and Grab isn't sure what he'll do if he ever has to face killing his idol.

RP Tips: Smash and Grab fidgets and fiddles with whatever is in his hands. He speaks in short, sharp sentences and cackles in a horrid imitation of Vincent Price whenever he talks about his powers. He also uses gangster slang in lame and ill-fitting ways.

Powers and Abilities: Smash and Grab is a teleporter, specialized in quick, short jumps with a large amount of action between pops. He can make extended leaps, but generally he only does them to get into or out of a situation, once there he isn't quite smart enough to use his powers to run away. He's also got a mouth that could drive a nun to homicide, and he excels at using stupid, juvenile taunts to drive even the most level headed folks to a state of madness. Since joining the

Smash and Grab: PL 11; Init +5 (Dex); Defense 23/18 (+8 Base, +5 Dex); Spd 30ft run (55 ft Teleport); Atk +11 melee (+11 Stun Attack, shock glove punch); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +12, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 20, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 10, Chr 14.

Skills: Bluff +10, Perform +7, Taunt +15.

Feats: Attack Finesse, Dodge, Evasion, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Instant Stand, Lightning Reflexes.

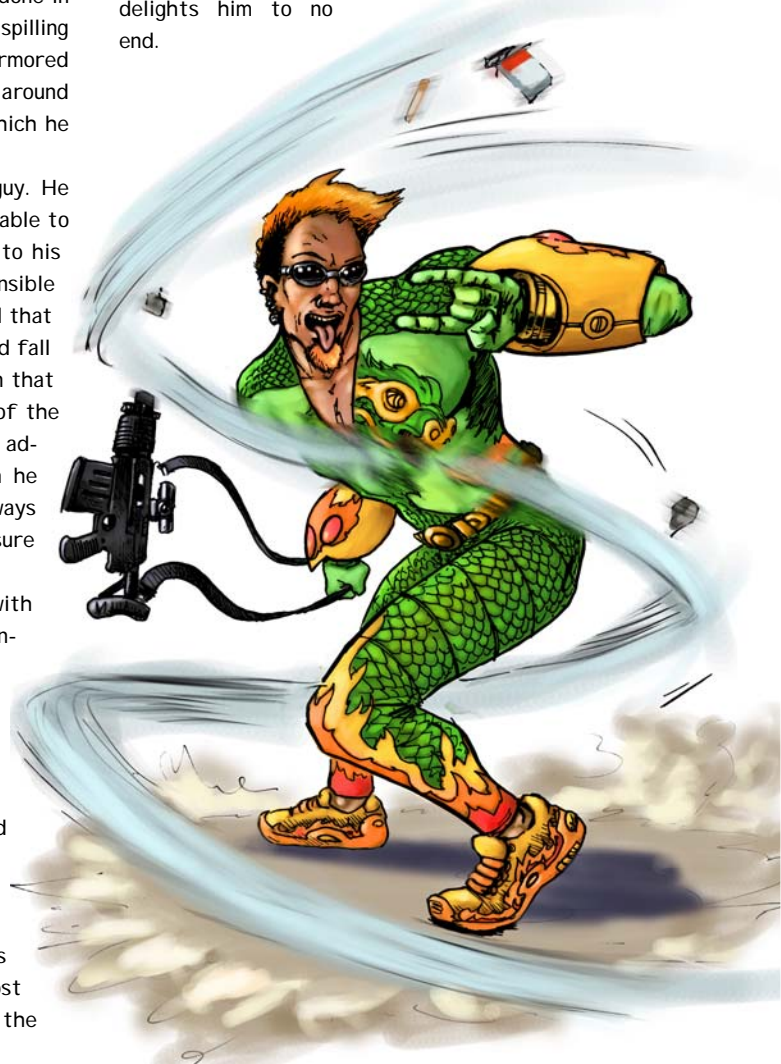
Powers: Here, There, and Everywhere (Teleportation) +11 [Extras: Blink, Disorient, Extended; Stunts: Fusillade, Turn-about; Source: Mutation; Cost 5pp.];

Fast as Fast Can Be (Amazing Save (Ref)) +5 [Source: Training; Cost: 1pp.]

Equipment: Shock Gloves (Stun Weapon) +11 [Extras: Ghost Touch; Flaws: Device, Range; Source: Equipment; Cost 1pp.];

Micro-ear radio: Radio Listen & Transmit.

Made Men he's also been given a pair of neural disruption gauntlets that use a variable phase plasma system to disrupt the neural signals of anyone he hits. Smash and Grab has since discovered that these gauntlets work even on phased or dematerialized foes, which delights him to no end.



MIKHAEL ARCHANGEL

Real Name: The Archangel Mikhael (or unknown)

Height: 6' 8"

Weight: 245 lbs.

Eyes: Silver Blue

Hair: Gold

Quote: "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

Background: There is a great deal of speculation about where the being called Mikhael Archangel comes from, but no one has any hard facts on the matter. Even the angel himself can only remember the feeling of falling, of fear, and then an epiphany that he could fly. Stretching forth his wings he took to the air, and the voice of God spoke to him, telling him to do His mighty work. On that day an angel came to earth, and Mik-

hael became a scourge to the wicked and a bulwark for the meek.

Within two days of his first appearance, Mikhael Archangel had broken up a dozen drug-rings, offering forgiveness and a second chance to addicts and ponies, and a choice between life in jail or burning death to the pushers and bosses. Several super villains, mob enforcers, and even corrupt politicians fell under his gaze, and all followed the same fate.

Meanwhile, Mikhael was contacted by the Keepers of the Keys of Solomon, an ancient group of magi who had been awaiting his coming. With their political and financial backing he was able to start safe houses and rehabilitation centers, clean up parks and make local churches safe havens for families and children, and to start successful soup kitchens and welfare programs for those outside the attention of normal channels.

TOUCHY MATTERS

The issue of whether or not Mikhael really is the Archangel is one of the most debated matters in The City, right along with whether or not he is proof of a real and present God. While this debate is one thing in the game world, it might make some players uncomfortable if it were to turn into a real-world debate about religion and what it means if Mikhael says something asinine or politically incorrect in game. GMs should think about their game and their players and decide what they want the truth of the Mikhael's position to be in their world. Below are some suggested options, and how they might affect Mikhael's powers.

Angel of the Lord: The Archangel Mikhael really is the Archangel, agent of God on earth. However, in a world where Norse thunder-gods walk among mortals and devils hide in the sewers, an angel doesn't always win. The world is a troubled place, and so it is possible that even an agent of God could become confused, or be forced to take extreme action in order to fulfill his mission — in the Bible angels did slaughter whole armies, after all. If Mikhael really is an angel then his inability to harm the innocent or help the guilty is an absolute thing, and is a sure sign of God's judgment upon a person. However, PCs may be harmed by the power without it indicating that God has judged them as evil as the simple fact they are fighting with an angel means that they are not currently innocent. This Archangel's Power Source can be considered to be "Divine" — which is like Mystic, but which cannot be targeted by powers that work specifically against Mystic power sources.

Product of Faith: Mikhael isn't a "real" angel, he is a human who climbed up the mystical ladder by the power of faith. Such a feat is possible for others, and is the goal of many religious mystics. This Mikhael is a being higher on his own spiritual path than the majority of humanity, and thus is powerful and a force of enlightenment, but he is not necessarily right nor does he always see the Will of God. He may, in fact, be a former member of the Keepers of the Keys who followed the path farther than his brothers were able to. His power limitations are based less on absolute moral judg-

ments from above, and more on the "karma" of his targets. Those really trying to make themselves better people spiritually will be innocents, but those willingly betraying their own humanity will be guilty. Most people, who aren't actively working themselves up or down the spiritual ladder, are neither and can be targeted by either power. In this case his Power Source is Mystic and follows all the normal rules for such a power source.

Power of the Mind: As with the Product of Faith possibility, this means that Mikhael has become something more than human, but by the power of his mind rather than a mystical process of enlightenment. This position takes no stance on the Good or Evil of Mikhael and his person or spirit, but assumes that his powerful Will allowed him to take on the guise of an angel. This Mikhael's powers rely on his subjective definition to determine guilt and innocence — anyone he thinks is evil can be harmed, anyone he thinks is good can be healed. However, because absolute belief is required to make his powers function, he cannot willingly change his definition of guilt or innocence; it is all a subconscious process. In this case his Power Source is Psionic/Mental Power.

Dirty Mutant: The whole angelic shtick is just coincidence, Mikhael is not angel, he's just a deluded mutant who coped with his powers by casting them into a religious guise so that he could avoid the self-loathing and fear of mutation. This Mikhael's powers work as "Power of the Mind" (above), but the Power Source is Mutation.

GM's might want to use these categories to spur discussion between players. The news media will do a lot of speculation about the Archangel's origins and powers, and someone in the world will argue for each of the above positions. The players might also come up with theories of their own, such as that angels in the Bible are really just records of early super-humans. RPing out these discussions can be a good source of RP — if the group is comfortable with it. If not, however, the GM can simply let the players know Mikhael isn't really an angel, much less the Archangel, and move on with the rest of the adventure without having to worry about theological difficulties.

Mikhael's work brought him many followers, some casual workers of good and others who have devoted their lives to him with fanatical intensity. Many churches in the city owe a debt to his work, even if his presence makes many of them uncomfortable. He has inadvertently become a source of tension in the religious community, as priests debate how he should be dealt with, or even if he should be dealt with at all. For most theological debates matter far less than the fact that he looks and acts like an angel, and has saved and blessed lives they know and care about. Furthermore many local priests and rabbis have endorsed him as the Archangel, leading many to accept him as the literal Voice Of God.

Mikhael does not have any ties to the leadership of any church, nor does he publicly support any Christian, Jewish, or Islamic sect above others. However, sharp eyes have noted that Mikhael does seem to be influenced by the Pope and Papal edicts. Before the edict about gay marriage Mikhael took no stance on the issue, after the edict he went publicly against it, and even turned out several of his followers who had supported it.

The government too is in a pickle with Mikhael Archangel. He has massive power, a large and political following, and as he has not killed anyone or committed any chargeable felonies (yet), he is left alone. Many in the halls of power would be reluctant to stand in his way even if he took extreme measures, because they too remember the stories they read in the holy books as children.

Several organized crime rings have it out for Mikhael, as he has personally caused more damage to the mob and the cartel's drug and prostitution business than the police have over the past 30 years. However, many of the members are unwilling to stand against an angel, religion and superstition being what it is, so they generally look for outside help to fight him.

Mikhael is becoming frustrated with the imperfect and sinful world he lives in. Too many of those he helped get off drugs are pulled back in. Too many of those he hands to the police are let back onto the streets. Too many of the innocent are harmed. There is too much sex, violence, depravity, and

lawlessness. People no longer respect any authority, not even that of God, and the Archangel is starting to wonder if the time of Judgment is at hand. After all in Daniel it does say about the end of the world and the Antichrist, "At that time shall Michael rise up, the great prince, who standeth for the children of thy people."

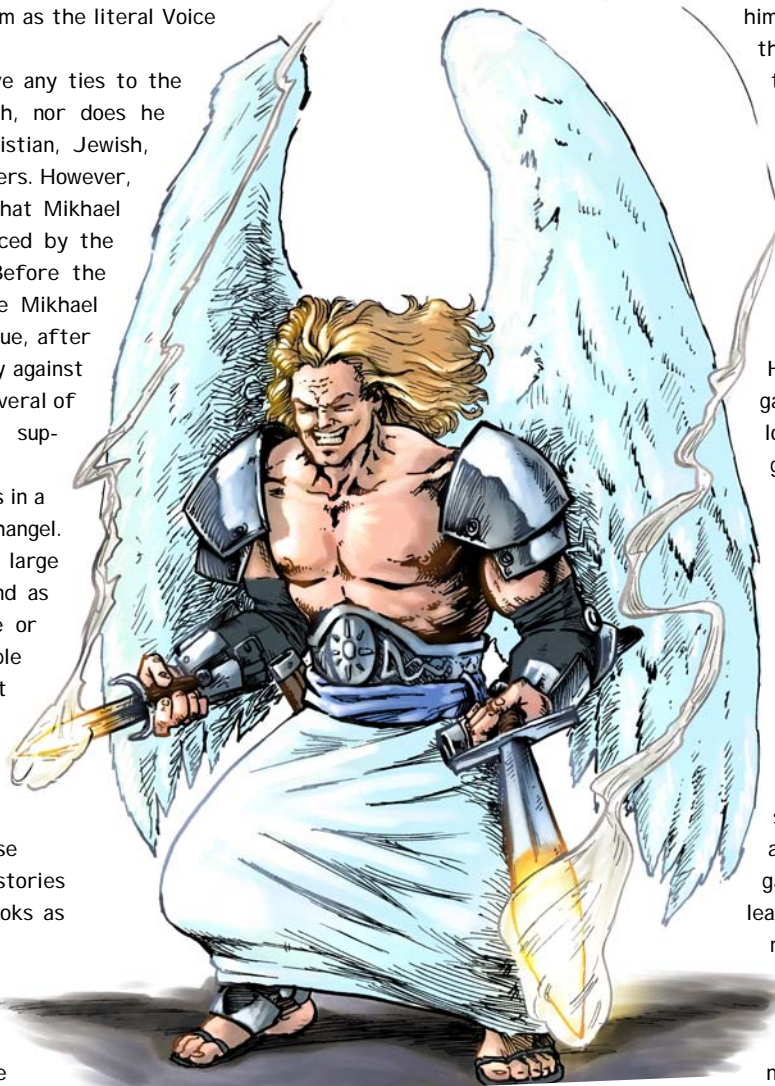
Image: The iconic image of the angel of battle, Mikhael Archangel is the amalgam of millennia of dreams of perfection and power. A towering humanoid male with vast white wings edged in silver, his hair is gold, his skin alabaster, both without flaw or blemish. Every inch of

him radiates majesty, an authority that strikes love or terror into the hearts of all who hear his deep, trumpeting voice. When angry holy fire crackles about his eyes and thunder sounds in his wings, and when he is happy a tranquil and holy light fills radiates from his smile. His uniform is a flowing garment of silver and white, loose about his torso, but gathered into tighter pants and sleeves.

Personality: Mikhael Archangel is a force of holy war and righteous anger, a burning ensign to the nations that calls with loud voice and rapturous glory that the wicked be punished and sin be cast out. Towards those who show humility, purity, courage, and temperance he is a gallant friend or mild leader, the power of his voice muted in companionship and mercy. Towards the wicked he is a scourge, a burning terror that will not listen to reason, that

cannot be bribed, tricked, or stopped until justice has been meted out in full measure. At first this justice is generally just, but as the Archangel's powers and following grow he becomes more and more the instrument of anger, and even after the ruin of his target his hand will stay stretched forth in fury.

RPing Tips: Mikhael speaks slowly, his voice low and powerful. He blinks only rarely and looks people directly in the eyes at all times. He neither moves his head nor fidgets when speaking, never uses contractions, and every word he speaks sounds like THE LAW OF GOD.



Powers and Abilities: Believers see the might of Heaven in Mikhael's abilities, while skeptics attribute them to magic of a less divine type. What is certain is that he has a wide range of abilities, including the ability to fire holy fire from his hands or eyes, to make a shield of light, to make himself inhumanly strong, fast, smart, and magnetic, to fly (he does have wings, but does not need them to fly), to heal and raise the dead, to transmute materials to other forms, and to make a portal gate to a realm that seems like Heaven to all who have been lucky enough to visit. All of these manifestations are accompanied by bright displays of light and the sound of angelic voices singing. Mikhael cannot harm anyone who is truly righteous, nor help or heal someone who is truly wicked.

In addition Mikhael is a master of aerial combat, able to use his mobility and speed to greatest advantage. His charisma and magnetism make him a natural battlefield leader, able to effectively coordinate and control troops as well as to inspire even cowards to greatness. Finally he is well known for using his intimidating appearance to startle or intimidate foes so that he can incapacitate them quickly.

Headquarters: The Cathedral stands in the middle of well tended grounds that serve as a semi-public park, surrounded by a low brick wall that separates it from the surrounding neighborhood. The Cathedral itself is a massive complex that looks like a super-heroic version of a gothic cathedral with deep grey stone walls, towering spires covered with images of trumpeting angels with flaming swords, flying buttresses that soar ten stories into the air, and stained glass that gleams with an inner light. The interior of the building is only one story, despite its vast height (140'). Through the massive bronze covered front doors is the Chapel, heart of the building. A single massive room with flying vault ceilings and thousands of arched columns and supports done in a fashion similar to St. Sophia's Basilica in Istanbul, the whole of the Chapel is decorated with beautiful murals of saints and angels. The east and west wings are more modest and less tall (60') and are comprised of smaller rooms used for a variety of purposes. Most of the west wing is housing, libraries, and armories for the Archangel's followers, while the east wing is taken up with soup kitchens, a hospice, and other rooms devoted to charity and community outreach work. (A map of The Cathedral can be found in the combat booklet.)

The Cathedral is a PL 15 Headquarters. The base's features start with a magical defense system set up by the Keepers of the Keys. This system is a series of spells that will do a 15S mental attack against anyone entering the building with intent to harm or steal. In addition the Keepers have set up several places where murder holes can be opened in walls with a command word, allowing fire from nine-tenths cover at targets on the other side. The Keepers have also put up a ward that acts as a level 15 Neutralize vs. Teleportation that affects anyone other than the Keepers or Mikhael trying to teleport in, out, or around the grounds. The walls, windows, floors, and ceilings have all been reinforced with Mikhael's transmutation, turning bronze and oak doors stronger than steel and making glass a crystal so that every major structure in the

Mikhael Archangel: PL 15; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 21/18 (+8 Base, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft (75 ft flight); Atk +8 melee (+7L, flaming sword), +9 ranged (+15s, holy blast); SV Dmg +2 (and Force Field 15), Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5 (and Mental Protection 5); Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 16, Chr 20. XP: 7

Skills: Diplomacy +12/+20 (3), Intimidate +10/+18 (3), Knowledge: Religion +8/+16 (3), Sense Motive +9/+17 (5).

Feats: Aerial Combat, Attractive, Fame, Headquarters, Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Inspire, Leadership, Minions, Power Attack, Startle, Talented (all listed skills).

Powers: *Might of God (Cosmic Power)* +15 [Immunities: Aging, Cold, Critical Hits, Darkness, Disease, Electricity, Exhaustion, Heat, Nausea, Poison, Radiation, Sonics, Starvation, Suffocation; Extras: Boost All Attributes +8, Mental Protection +5; Stunts: Dimensional Travel (Extra: Portal; Flaw: One Dimension Only), Healing (Extra: Resurrection; Flaw: Others Only), Super-Flight; Flaws: Ineffective, Obvious; Source: (See "**Touchy Matters**") ; Cost 11/10/6 pp.]

Equipment: *Flaming Swords (Weapon)* +5 [Source: (See "**Touchy Matters**") ; Cost 1pp.]

Weaknesses: *Law of the Lord* (Quirk): a strict code of conduct that combines the militant vows of a holy knight and the code of humility and poverty of a monk.

building has a hardness of 22. The Cathedral also has a fire prevention system, two infirmaries, a library, four blocks of living space, an independent power system, a mundane security system, a dedicated staff and a workshop.

General Tactics: Mikhael always boosts himself before battle, maxing out all his attributes. He will fight from the air to gain the benefit of his aerial combat feat, and uses ranged attacks, staying away from places where super speedsters or acrobats can leap onto him. Against those he has difficulty hitting he'll use his Startle, and then hit them as hard as he can, using a Power Attack to try to put them out of the fight. He will sometimes use Transmutation on potent gadgets or artifacts, turning them to salt.

Mikhael rarely uses his minions in battle, as he sees them as little brothers and sisters to be protected, not agents to work his will. However, the Keepers of the Keys will sometimes shadow him into important battles, using their abilities from hiding, and in any all out fight the Sworn and the Order of Mikhael will be present. The Keepers will use mental blasts, especially against bricks and speedsters that Mikhael's attacks are less effective against. The Order and the Sworn will fight in groups, using the combined fire rules (*M&M* page 135).

If for some reason the majority of Mikhael's followers are forced into battle (such as by an attack on The Cathedral), the Archangel will use Extra Effort to apply his Boost to either one of the Keepers or Order members, making them a battlefield commander. Minions will act like innocents, using bluff skills to lure the characters in by faking injury or fear, then attacking with group fire or gang attacks while the PC is flat footed. Mikhael will alternate between going offensive and healing followers.

MIKHAEL'S MINIONS

Breakdown by PL: 1st — 220 (180 Congregationalists, 40 Reformed Prostitutes); 2nd — 22 (12 Priests, 10 Former Pimps); 3rd — 12 (4 Jesuit Confessors, 8 Righteous Military Men); 4th — 6 (The Sworn); 5th — 5 (Order of Mikhael); 6th — 4 (Keepers of the Keys).

CONGREGATIONALIST

The folks who go to a church for community, support, and spiritual fulfillment. The Archangel's followers are a particularly dedicated, some would say fanatical, breed of this normally harmless species.

Congregationalist: PL 1; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+0S, punch); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Chr 10.

Skills: Profession (choose one) +5, Knowledge (Religion) +1; *plus one package from:* **Professional:** Computers +3, Knowledge (Business) +3; **Den Mother:** Crafts (Cooking or choose one) +4, Sense Motive +3; **Jock for Jesus:** Climb +2, Jump +2, Swim +2; **Caring Nurturer:** Diplomacy +2, Medicine +3, Sense Motive +3.

Feats: Take the Fall

Examples

Lezlie Tainter: Mother of 4, all under 4 years of age, Lezlie nearly had a mental breakdown when her husband died of cancer. The doctor and funeral bills destroyed her financially, and life seemed bleak without her man. It was a chance glimpse of the Archangel flying past her house that brought her to church, and then to The Cathedral. Now she runs a daycare program for local families, helping take care of all their children along with her own.

Emilio Scroggie: Passed over from promotion 6 times in a row, dumped by 3 girlfriends in 2 months, and wondering if he would ever fit in, Emilio found hope, acceptance, and friendship within the halls of The Cathedral. He's since rediscovered his lost Judaism, and works hard to remind the rest of Mikhael's followers that Christianity isn't the only religion that the angel supports and encourages.

Ramón Panosian: Ramón used to make his living drawing cute little angels, super-heroes and such things, selling them cheap for comic books, church fliers, backgrounds for cheesy religious poetry, and random orders from the internet. The pay was lousy, the respect non-existent, and everyone knew Ramón could do better. He didn't try, because every angel and super-hero he drew was an expression of the true dream in his heart. Now he works with a living angel, he is changing the world, and all his drawings no longer seem silly. Currently he is working on *The Archangel #1*, a comic book that tells the true story of Mikhael Archangel and his quest for justice in the world.

Dane Switcher: Dane never had a crisis of faith. He was born Methodist, he'll die Methodist, and nothing else in the

world could ever possibly interest him. He became a follower of the Archangel when he prayed to God that an angel be sent to minister to him and five minutes later Mikhael threw a local drug-dealer through his bedroom window. Since then he's been convinced that Mikhael is an angel, to his parents' despair, and he uses his popularity at school as head of the soccer team to try to get other kids to see the light as well.

Ludivina Breakell: Six months ago Ludivina was the stereotype of the burnt-out social worker, believing that nothing would ever change and that she'd spend her whole life dealing with wasted human trash, never touching a single heart. That was before she became involved with Mikhael's outreach program. Now she sees the world around her changing, and can attribute it to nothing other than God and the Archangel, and she knows that his word and work is good.

REFORMED PROSTITUTE

A former street walker, drug pony, or general victim of the street life. Though they're walking on the straight and narrow now they retain their street skills, and have seen enough of the bad side of life that most carry protection.

Reformed Prostitute: PL 1; Init +0; Defense 11 (+1 base); Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+4 Stun attack, taser); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 11, Chr 12.

Skills: Bluff +3, Gather Information +3, Sleight of Hand +3, Search +2.

Equipment: Taser (+4 Stun attack).

Examples

Nenita Standefer: Nenita was a crack addict, a whore, and a mother of two children taken away by the state. She'd overdosed and died when the Archangel came to her. He gave her back her life, her free will, and her self respect. Now he is helping her get in touch with her children while she helps others like her old self find a new path.

Kristopher Gudaitis: The story of Kris's fall is sadly common: He had a sick mother, a dead father, no schooling, no hope of getting a job, a pretty face and a victim's temperament. Turning tricks led to being a drug pony, back and forth from Columbia with intestines full of coke-condoms. He was less than a month from death or prison when Ludivina Breakell (above) found him and brought him to The Cathedral. When the Archangel healed his mother, he pledged his life and heart to the cause.

PRIEST

The father of the congregation, responsible for the spiritual life of the parishioners, often called upon to negotiate more mundane and trivial matters, the priest is a master of getting people to get along, and is very familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of his congregation.

Priest: PL 2; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+0S, punch); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 16, Chr 13.

Skills: Diplomacy +8 (+12 on Church matters), Gather Information +5, Knowledge (Religion) +6, Language (Latin, Hebrew, or Arabic & 1 Other), Profession (Priest) +8, Sense Motive +9.

Feats: Connected, Indomitable Will, Talented (Diplomacy, Sense Motive).

Equipment: Religious vestments, holy scriptures, Palm Pilot with names and addresses of parishioners.

Weakness: *Priest's Vows* (Quirk).

Examples

Father Gilberto Loughridge: It isn't only the poor that need saving, and Father Loughridge knows it well. He presides over a congregation made of wealthy West Enders, people with vast money and equally vast misery and loneliness. He first met Mikhael when the child of a parishioner became involved with the angel. Father Loughridge went to prove him a hoax, and returned a believer. He is now invaluable, convincing his wealthy parishioners to donate generously to the Archangel's work.

Mullah Mohamed Schuyleman: Long-suffering and dedicated to proving that Islam is not a religion of terror, Mullah Schuyleman worries daily about the direction in which the Archangel is heading. He believes with his whole heart that Mikhael is an agent of Allah, but he is not sure what sort of agent. He may soon find his faith tested, and even he does not know what he will say if called to the lesser Jihad by the voice of an angel.

Bishop Ritchie Christerson: Mormon bishop of a small branch in a bad part of Harlem, Bishop Christerson has had to deal with racial prejudices and divisions his whole life. Since the Archangel came, however, he has seen former racists become brothers, gang members become missionaries, and the world change for the better. He believes that Mikhael is a real angel, and preaches such from the pulpit. The only question now is whether or not he'll be excommunicated when word of his activities is passed along to Salt Lake.

FORMER PIMP

A pimp, drug dealer, or other street predator who has tried to leave the past behind, this type tend to have problems with rage and violence, and are often willing to do questionable ethical deeds if someone in spiritual authority assures them that they will be forgiven.

Former Pimp: PL 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 12/11 (+1 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30ft; Atk +2 melee (+3S, club), +3 ranged (+3L, light pistol); SV: Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Chr 10.

Skills: Bluff +3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (Gangs) +3, Knowledge (Religion) +1, Sense Motive +3, Taunt +3.

Feats: Attack Focus (pistol).

Equipment: Light Pistol, holy book.

Examples

Dane Csaszar: Dane spent his whole life looking for respect, and found himself chasing down one wrong dream after another. Getting money for selling drugs didn't work, and killing a member of a rival gang didn't work either. One got him leeches, the other got him fear, and it took him a long time to realize neither was what he wanted. He found religion in jail, and when he got out the Archangel found him. Now he has respect, and a community, and he is doing his level best to become worthy to be one of the Sworn.

Gustavo Sellen: There aren't many opportunities for an illegal immigrant who speaks little English and has a record in his home country. The ones that do exist are questionable, but when you have to eat you find your morals less important than when you're full. Gustavo had become a small time thug, hitting people and breaking thumbs for the Russian mob when he ran afoul of Mikhael and the Sworn. It surprised even the Archangel when Gustavo came to him after getting out of the hospital and asked for forgiveness. Now Gustavo works as a mole, getting information on his former employers for his new savior.

JESUIT CONFESSOR

The theological frontline, defenders of the faith, and fervent protectors of the innocent, the Jesuit Confessor represents a priest who is willing and able to go beyond the normal duties of the cloth and take on a call of a higher order.

Jesuit Confessor: PL 3; Init +0; Defense 11 (+1 base); Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+0S, punch); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16, Chr 16.

Skills: Diplomacy +6 (+10 on Church matters), Gather Information +6, Innuendo +6, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Profession (Priest) +8, Sense Motive +8, Spot +5.

Feats: Connected, Detect Evil, Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Talented (Intimidate, Sense Motive).

Equipment: Religious vestments, Holy Scriptures.

Weakness: *Priest's Vows* (Quirk).

Examples

Father Wilfred Decambra: Father Decambra is a logical man, an orderly man who likes everything to have a place and to have everything in its place. Many of his pen pals around the world are surprised when they find out he is a priest, as most envision him as a scientist or accountant. They would be even more shocked to find out that this somber, serious, rational man believes that Mikhael's coming was foretold in the Book of Revelations, and that it is the duty of every son of God to follow behind their general towards the Apocalypse.

Al Irelan: Though he has neither official title nor position in any church, Irelan holds a great sway with the mystics in New York due to his keen vision and great wisdom. He is not a man who moves quickly, but one that studies and ponders. He is also a poet and artist of great talent, if small repute. He has

recently turned his talents towards praising the work of the Archangel, encouraging those of sensitive spirit to listen well, for the Archangel can lead the soul to Paradise.

RIGHTEOUS MILITARY MAN

Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition, these men are the true believers with military background and experience who have decided that enough is enough. They have seen their cities and their families ripped apart by drugs, gambling, and all manner of vice, and now they are ready and willing to use force to reclaim the right.

Righteous Military Man: PL 3; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 12/11 (+1 Base, +1 Dex); Spd 30ft; Atk +3 base, +4 melee (+3L, knife), +4 ranged (+7L, rifle); SV: Dmg +4 (and +4 armor), Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Chr 10.

Skills: Listen +3, Knowledge (Religion) +2, Profession (Soldier) +4, Search +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Toughness.

Equipment: Rifle, grenades (concussion) flak jacket, binoculars, holy book, religious symbol.

Examples

Peter Bineto: Peter joined the army to get out of the Bronx, joined the Rangers to get out of the grunt pool, and joined the church when he realized that what he was looking for couldn't be found by running. Now he's back in the Bronx, out of the army, and willing and ready to use his skills to make a difference. His biggest worry these days is that his older brother Rocky (page 93) has joined up with Rock N Roll — and Peter knows that godless anarchist can't be doing his brother's soul any good.

Anthony Spiegel: Anthony always wanted to join the Mosad, ever since he was a little kid getting his head stuffed in a toilet. He didn't really want to become Israeli, however, and so ended up "settling" for becoming a United States Marine. He did well at it, though some of his experiences left him uncertain about his faith. When he came home to help his little brother, who was under fire by a local gang, he found himself fighting at the side of the Archangel. In that moment all his questions were answered, and he knew that there could be no higher military calling than fighting for the Lord of Battle.

THE SWORN

A few of those saved by the Archangel's works have taken it upon themselves to join him in the good fight, not just as a part time calling but as their new way of life. The Sworn are those who have given their lives, religious fanatics and soldiers who have been trained by the militant members, indoctrinated by the religious members, and filled with fervor by a vision.

Sworn: PL 4; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 15/12 (+2 Base, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge); Spd 30ft; Atk +3 base, +4 melee (+3L, knife), +5 ranged (+7L, rifle); SV: Dmg +3 (and +4 armor), Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 14, Chr 12.

Skills: Bluff +3, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +3, Hide +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (Religion) +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Search +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Detect Evil, Dodge, Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Toughness.

Equipment: Bible, cross. When ready for combat: Rifle, flak jacket.

Weakness: *Fanatic* (Quirk).

Examples

Taylor Alvarez: There are depths to which the human soul can sink that human lips cannot bear to speak of, things that leave nothing but regret and pain in their wake, and Taylor had done them all. She will not speak, ever, of what she once was or the cult that the Mikhael pulled her from. All she will say is that she has no life save the life he gives her. Normally soft spoken, humble, and shy, if the will of the Archangel is questioned in her presence her eyes take a fanatical gleam and her hand goes towards either the Bible or her gun.

Eric Upchurch: Fond of the sauce, portly, 40, and with the bitterly cynical air of a 40s hard-boiled detective, Eric is not the common image of the Sworn. He used to be a PI, tried to make himself into Phil Marlowe, but mostly took pictures of husbands cheating on their wives. When he got hired by concerned parents to investigate the Archangel it looked like the big chance, a story not even Chandler could have cranked out. It did turn out to be Eric's big chance — to change his life and find his faith.

ORDER OF MIKHAEL

The cream of the Sworn, the Order of Mikhael is open only to men and women who have proven their devotion and love of God in the most extreme of circumstances. This could be in battle, by self sacrifice, giving away all worldly possessions, and so on. The Order are given even more training than the normal Sworn, and are fierce combatants also capable of organizing and running public and charity works or military level fire-fights.

The members of the Order all can be identified by a tattoo that goes across their shoulders and central back. The tattoo is an image of great white wings, masterfully worked, that seem to be slowly unfurling from the back of the Order member. These tattoos appear magically when someone swears their allegiance to the order, and no one from Mikhael to the Keepers of the Keys seems to know where they come from. All the members of the Order simply take it as a sign that they will be saved so long as they fight well and keep a pure heart.

Mikhaelite: PL 5; Init +2 (Dex); Defense 16/13 (+3 Base, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge); Spd 30ft; Atk +4 base, +6 melee (+5L, sword), +7 ranged (+7L, rifle); SV: Dmg +4 (and +4 armor), Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Chr 12.

Skills: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +4, Drive +4, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Religion) +4, Medicine +3, Sense Motive +4, Spot +5.

Feats: All-Out Attack, Attack Focus (rifle), Detect Evil, Dodge, Heroic Surge, Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Startle, Toughness.

Equipment: Holy Books, religious symbol. When ready for combat: short sword, rifle, grenades (concussion, +6S area) flak jacket, SUV (Size: Large, Movement 7, Hardness 11, Armor Bonus 7) or muscle car (Size: Large, Movement 8, Hardness 10, Armor Bonus 5).

Weakness: *Crusader* (Quirk).

Examples

Gabrielle Hope: Yes, that is her real name. Yes, even she finds it amusing. Especially amusing since she became the head of the Order, and one of the Archangel's closest advisors. Gabrielle is a quiet woman with a softly ironic sense of humor, a quick eye, and an innate understanding of men's hearts that borders on the supernatural. So far she has died and been resurrected in Mikhael's service 5 times, and has visited heaven with him on several occasions. To her believing in him is not an act of faith, it is just a joyful embracing of fact.

Latisia White: Latisia's brother killed her. When Mikhael brought her back she tracked the drug dealing swine down, forgave him, and ended up being there when Father Candella baptized him. She was invited into the Sworn after that, and within two months had earned her place in the Order. Fearless, brave, compassionate and pitiless in battle, she has emulated the Archangel almost perfectly. Her one secret is that she is madly in love with Gabriel, but as Mikhael has recently come out against gay marriage she believes that her feelings are sin, and so daily she flogs herself to try and be rid of them.

KEEPER OF THE KEYS OF SOLOMON

Unlike the lower orders, the Keepers of the Keys were called and chosen before Mikhael made his first appearance. Sorcerers and mystics following an ancient tradition of magical lore, said to be past down from the days of the Temple of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, these few men possess subtle yet potent powers that allow them to stand in battle against super-villains, or to lead the Order into combat.

Though the Keepers are loyal to Mikhael, they are not mindless followers. A few of them see it as their job to help balance the angel's divine purity with their human compassion, and so try to act as a voice of reason. Others wish to become as he is, and so emulate him a bit too closely, losing something of their humanity in the process.

Keeper of the Keys: PL 6; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 13/12 (+2 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30ft run/teleport; Atk +3 base, +7 ranged (6S, sorcery: mental blast); SV: Dmg +0 (and +6 force field), Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16, Chr 13.

Skills: Concentration +8, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (Sacred Magic) +9, Sense Motive +8, Spot +7.

Feats: Attack Focus (sorcery), Detect Evil, Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Leadership, Mental Link, Point Blank Shot, True Sight.

Powers: *Sacred Magic (Sorcery)* +6 [Element Control, Force Field, Telepathy or Comprehend, Mental Blast, Healing, Teleportation; Flaws: Excluded Group, Rote; Source: Mystic; Cost: 5pp.]

Equipment: Sacred Magical Tomes, Bible, Koran, or Talmud; Cross or Star of David.

Weakness: *Code of Solomon* (Quirk).

Examples

Rabbi Jonas Solomon: Master of the Keys, Rabbi Solomon is an elderly orthodox Jew with some very unorthodox ideas. For the last 40 years he worked towards spiritual enlightenment and fought good fight. Stern, strong, and solid as a rock, he also manages to be merciful, kind, and temperate towards those who seek mercy and justice. If he has a weakness it is that he believes too much in the Archangel, and sometimes forgets that the holy texts say that it is his place to act as the guiding voice of human compassion to temper the wrath of the angel.

Elijah Smith: Excommunicated from the Catholic Church for his ideas about Christ living "only in so far as he is actualized in the human heart," Elijah is a fierce theologian who sees super-humans as proof that faith elevates the soul. To him Mikhael is not an agent of a heaven far away, but an example of the heights that each and every human can achieve if they become perfect in their own heart. This leads him to excess at times, as he tries to purge his own wickedness through acts of self flagellation and extreme ascetics.

BOOKS AND SPELLS OF THE KEEPERS

Secrets of Creation by Apollonius of Tyana — contains the Tabula smaragdina, the Emerald Tablet, which is the basis for the Keepers' Elemental Control.

Cabbalistic Texts by Johannes Pistorius — a large compilation of important medieval and renaissance texts linking Jewish and Christian mysticism. Basis for the Keepers' Force Field, and Healing.

On the God of Socrates by Apuleius — contains a great amount of information about the gods and daemons of the ancient world and ordering of the universe. Basis for the Keeper's Teleportation and Mental Blast.

Commentary on the Dreams of Scipio by Macrobius — on dreams and philosophy. Basis for the Keeper's Telepathy, Mindlink, and Comprehend.

ROCK N ROLL

Real Name: Carl Embers

Height: 6' 1"

Weight: 195 lbs.

Eyes: Emotive Prismatic (change colors to match emotions)

Hair: Black (often with blond highlights)

Quote: "We've lived under the Iron Glove's Hegemony too long. Now it's time to tear it down, light it up, scream it out."

Background: Child of a teamster and a nurse, Carl Embers grew up a normal working class kid. He was, in fact, something of a geek and wasn't terribly popular in school, nor was he all that successful academically. He spent most of his time with his loser friends, planning a band that would never happen and playing at his friend's parties. His break at fame came when he manifested his powers at the age of 17, at a graduation party. Leading all the geeks, nerds, and outcasts in a rousing and very off key chorus of "I Will Survive," Carl suddenly felt the music rise up through him, become him. It warped and wrapped to his will, and every subtle sound and dreadful din fell into line for him, making him a master of music at the same time he became a master of sonics.

It wasn't long before Carl was picked up by a major record label, Ultra, which used his mastery of sound to make him a star. To be fair to Ultra their intentions were not all mercenary, as it was obvious that Carl was a mutant, and they did want to use him as a figure to help fight against anti-mutant prejudice. Within six months Carl was remade into one of the hugest Rock Gods on earth, given the semi-eponymous handle "Rock N Roll." Trained in every aspect of being cool, groomed into a living fashion doll and self-propelled merchandise machine, the old Carl was soon gone, replaced by the cool, confident, and utterly ungeeky Rock. Divorcing his old life, he and his publicists came up with a persona for him that was never a nerd, was always in control, and lived only for the purity of music. He lived the high life, dated models, took baths in champagne, and all the other sad stereotypes of sudden fame, power, and wealth.

For two years the train went on, and Rock overcame initial reactions of anti-mutant prejudice and critical statements of his shallow flashiness by giving hard rocking concerts that were as musically innovative as they were utterly, super-humanly cool. It could have gone on forever, but Rock finally had a breakdown. Separated from his past, realizing that he really wasn't doing anything meaningful, and with a massive crisis of identity, he entered the second stage of rock star cliché and retired from music.

He went to school, he went back home, and he remembered the world he had come from. Seeing all his childhood friends drunk, in jail, or desperately trying to get out of the dead end jobs they were stuck in brought him falling back to reality. It combined with the classes on culture theory and Marxism that he was taking to make him realize that his career had been a joke. He'd been nothing more than the token poor kid, taken out of the ghetto to make it seem like everyone really could become rich and famous. First Rock got depressed, then he got mad, and then he got active.

Two years after his retirement, Rock returned to music. This time, however, he was back with a vengeance, a message, and a political stance that he backed with his wealth, fame, and influence to an unprecedented degree. Gathering up like-minded folks from his blue-collar upbringing and his days of wealth and fame, he put together teams of lawyers, image consultants, union reps, and Marxist professors who were determined to use the system against itself, to get out the message of equality, freedom, of workers' rights, and rebellion by doing the unthinkable -- making it popular without diluting it down to meaninglessness.

The troubles started immediately and never have died down. Record labels, including his former label, sued Rock for every possible offense, including some they made up just for him. The government banned his first single, until he fought through the Supreme Court and had the ban lifted. Parents forbade their children to listen to his music, and formed action groups to try and block his concerts and messages. The mob even got into the action as he started using his superpowers and charisma to weed out mob influence in the unions, giving support and protection to those who snitched, and blasting mob enforcers who wouldn't take the hint and move along.

All of this infamy, combined with his personal charisma and the endless work of his facemen, meant that Rock's pull with teenagers, the disenfranchised, radical union members, and normal folks who wanted a change grew to juggernaut levels. His records constantly hit number 1 until he started giving them away for free. Fans, devotees, followers, and political radicals started to rally round him, and Rock's face became the image of social rebellion and strident demands for change.

Rock's battle with the recording industry heightened when he started MARX, a peer to peer file sharing network to replace the fallen Napster. Because he put his own work on it (including that made under contract with various companies), and the work of artists who were willing while their managers and labels were not, the program turned into a huge legal battle. When Rock used his powers to supplement the program -- delivering the music straight to people in New York without even the need for a computer, the battle hit fever pitch. Several recording industry corporations banded together and actually hired private stormtroopers to try and bust Rock N Roll, resulting in a large number of hospitalizations and battery suits on the part of the rent-a-cops that Rock beat senseless. At the same time his battles with the mob exploded as he broke up the mob's illegal media ring, and then he and a group of "friends" who happened to be disaffected former government agents personally busted mob boss Antonio Aragazzi and hospitalized most of his men.

Now Rock lives at the center of an endless whirlwind of lawsuits, government actions, and attacks from the mob, enraged parents, militia groups, the recording industry (who has now hired assassins) and even conservative union members. His crew of lawyers, facemen, bodyguards, and agents work around the clock to keep him safe and out of jail, and the focus on just maintaining ground means that the progressive work Rock wants to do has taken a backseat to survival. Every day this

situation frustrates him more and more, and drives him closer to the edge. He's always claimed he didn't want a violent revolution, that he wanted society to change from within, but these days he's starting to wonder if it is possible, and what to do if it isn't.

Image: Tall and well built, Rock is a very good looking man. There's a cockiness about him that combines Jagger's strut with the self-importance of a college student on a righteous mission. In other words, he looks, poses, and talks like the Avatar of Rock, and very few people have (recently) mocked his use of the name. Rock's clothes, style, and image change vastly depending on the venue and the audience. When he's working a crowd or playing the Rock Star he wears the newest, flashiest, most surreal outfits that bizarre Parisian minds can come up with. In court or when trying to cast a serious image he'll have the best three piece suit a private tailor can make, but set off with shades and studs to keep the urban chill look. When he's on his own time or working with individuals he generally defaults to a leather bomber jacket, white T-shirt, faded jeans, and non-brand name cross-training shoes (not made in a sweat-shop, thank you). Whatever he wears he

makes it look good, and style tends to follow him rather than the other way around.

Personality: A rocker, a rebel, a lover, and a fighter, Rock N Roll is the living avatar of the hyper-sexed, hyper-angry, in your face street attitude of rock n roll. Every emotion he has is larger than life: every love is true, every slight is a vendetta, and every injustice will bring a revolution to rock the heavens. Rock does nothing in half-measures, and has little in the way of subtlety or restraint. The one constant in his chaotic zest is the desire to change the world. He's committed to making a world in which there are no poor and no rich, in which everyone has a chance to do what they love, and in which there is no need for the state, police, or militaries because there is no need to compete for resources, time, or hope. For years now he's seen his best chance at this being by backing Marxist movements, but for someone as mercurial as Rock, even that could change.

RPing Tips: Rock talks big, he talks loud, he uses a lot of jargon and Marxist trash talk combined with hip-hop slang. He talks with his arms (not just the hand, the whole arm gets moving), wears shades in the dark, and throws down insults at

MARXISM FOR THE GAMING DUMMY

Rock n Roll is a trash talking college boy who's gotten more education than was good for him, and promptly started spouting things about how the "dominant hegemony imposes consumer fetishes through the pseudo-individualism of post-modernist para-texts." Now that's all well and good for people who spent too much time in culture theory classes sucking up to the teacher, but for those who want to make Rock speak intelligently without having to take a class on Neo-Marxism, this section presents a few names and terms that you can drop into Rock's dialogue to give it that authentic pseudo-intellectual stink. By dropping the following names and terms into his ranting, you can make your players think you too are one of the Marxist I33t.

Cultural Determination: The basis of most of Rock's arguments is that there is no inherent human nature. Rather man creates the world he lives in, and that world in turn shapes the nature of man. So if we create a society based on greed, then people will be greedy. But if we can break the vicious circle and make a culture based on cooperation, then people will become cooperative.

Marx: The grandfather of Marxist theory (bet you couldn't guess), Marx argued that our culture is driven by greed and the desire for material wealth and that the dominant society makes an ideology to legitimate their domination. In other words, everyone wants lots of stuff, just for themselves, and the rich make up rules that let them have the most stuff.

Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove: The iron fist is the obvious methods of physical control -- the police, military, and the courts. The velvet glove is the more subtle methods of mind control -- such as media, education, and the church.

Althusser is the name most associated with the use of this term.

Culture Industry: This theory says that mass-media (movies, radio, television) are all part of the velvet glove, which make the masses (that's us) stay happy, sappy, and pliable while bilking us of all our money. So every time you go to the movies The Man programs you, makes sure you stay happy and in control, and takes your money at the same time. This leads to pseudo-individualism, which is what happens when people start defining themselves by the mass market. So if you think you've got a real personality because you like Eminem and not The Backstreet Boys, then you're really just a pseudo-individual. Adorno is the name to toss when talking this talk.

Hegemony: The process of control and education that makes people see the current power structure as not only right, but as a matter of common sense. So people not only think that Bill Gates really deserves to have 32 billion dollars, but that there is no other possible way the world could work if people couldn't get that rich. Gramsci is the name that Rock will drop to give this word some theoretical respectability.

Structuration: Theory that the repeated acts of individuals are what create social structure, and that social structure then reinforces the acts of individuals. This stance also says individuals can make a change simply by not repeating the actions that shape society. So if you want to change the world, you start by changing yourself and your relation to the culture around you and it will inevitably lead to social change. Giddens, who isn't really a Marxist, is the big name behind this little theory.

the drop of a hat. Basically he acts like an intelligent pro-wrestler trying to get across an important message.

Powers and Abilities: A mutant with near total control over sound and sonics, Rock is able to manipulate sound in nearly any conceivable way. He can raise or lower volume, make audio illusions, create blasts of concentrated sound capable of punching a hole in a battleship, deafen whole city blocks, create walls of sound, and to play any music he's ever heard at will, and to create "music bubbles" that allow anyone sticking their head inside to hear whatever song the bubble was set to play. He is also a tremendous natural leader, and is able to stir up crowds and inspire his followers to great heights of performance. As a musician he has few equals, and his wealth and fame attest to how far he went before turning to the life of a political revolutionary who gives it away for free.

Headquarters: The Studio is a four story building with two underground levels, based off a converted warehouse in one of the uglier sections of the shipping district. The roof has a helipad and a pool in the center of a small garden (local children will be in the pool at all hours during summer months). The top level is Rock's living quarters, huge loft apartment with wrap-around floor to ceiling windows (tinted so you can't see in), decorated in a shabby-chic style that manages to show power and influence without being lordly or overbearing. The third floor is taken up with housing for Rock's bodyguards and the Radical Agents, and also has a gym and the central hub for the security and monitoring system. The second floor is a huge sound-studio that Rock uses to make records for his independent artists. The ground floor is a public open house that has a large halls used for free concerts, union meetings, and parties. It also has a small public clinic that is open weekdays. The basement levels are taken up with a garage and an underground dock that connects to the harbor through a long series of tunnels.

The Studio is a PL 14 headquarters. It has a state of the art security system that includes cameras, motion and heat

sensors, and the most sophisticated sound sensors in the world along with amazing locks on all doors and windows (though the doors to the lower level and stairwell to the pool are generally left open so the neighborhood kids can get in). The sound studio counts as a laboratory for sonics and music recording, and also has a large range of illegal gear that lets it double as a communications center, able to tap local cable and broadcast channels. There are state of the art computers in several of the rooms, running off a mainframe in the security

hub on the third floor. There is a garage, dock, and hangar (the heliport). The public clinic can be used as an infirmary, and there are two sets of living quarters, pool, gym, and backup power systems. Finally the walls are filled with a state-of-the-art polymer that stops Incorporeal passage. A map of The Studio is in the combat booklet.

General Tactics: Rock fights running battles, using sonic illusions to confuse and distract, and to allow himself and his minions to more easily sneak up and ambush targets. Due to his ability to "see" with hearing, he does not have to have line of sight to characters in order to effect them -- they just have to be in the radius of his hearing (about 15 miles) or range of his blasts (130 feet base, 1300 feet max), and so he will often attack from behind full cover. He uses faked commands, in the voice of the enemy in charge, to disrupt communications and cause confusion. When opponents start to get wise to these methods he will hit them with area effect dazzles. His most common attack is the "Heavy Metal Thunder" blast, an auto-fire, selective area attack that will target bricks and tough characters as the center of each blast, and overlap the area across the

other targets -- often hitting them multiple times in difficult to avoid area attacks. (Note that Rock, while he is reckless, has enough control of his blasts that he will not actually hit innocents -- however, he may bluff the PCs into thinking he will.) Powerful gadgets of materials vulnerable to sonics will be targeted for disintegration. Generally he tries to keep his distance in a fight, but if pressed by other energy-blasters



Rock N Roll: PL 14; Init +4 (Dex); Defense 19/15 (+5 Base, +4 Dex); Spd 30 ft run; Atk +6 Melee (+1S punch), +10 ranged (+13S, energy blast), +6/+6/+6 multifire ranged (+13S, energy blast); SV Dmg +3 (and +13 Force Field), Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Chr 20. XP 8

Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Innuendo +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Music) +8, Listen +19, Perform +16, Sense Motive +7, Taunt +9.

Feats: Attack Focus (Energy Blasts), Attractive, Fame, Headquarters, Inspire, Iron Will, Leadership, Minions, Skill Focus (Perform), Toughness, Wealth. Detect (Targeting Sense: Hearing), Immunity (Own Powers), Ultra-Hearing.

Powers: *Ghetto-Blaster* (Energy Control: Sound) +13 [Extras: Area, Energy Blast, Force Field [Extras: Affects Others, Impenetrable], Multi-Fire, Selective, Super-Senses [Extra: Telescopic; Flaw: Hearing Only]; Power Stunts: Create Sound Bubble, Disintegrate, Multi Shot, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot; Source: Mutation; Cost: 8pp.];

Revolutionary Fervor (Amazing Save (Will & Fort)) +2 [Source: Training; Cost 2pp.]

Weaknesses: *Revolutionary Hard Head* (Quirk); *Empathic Vulnerability* (Vulnerability).

he'll move in close to get the benefit of his point blank shot feat. If he's in trouble, he will use extra effort to make his Heavy Metal Thunder blast become sustained; creating an endless squeal of high decibel white noise that can turn brains to jelly.

Rock is always accompanied by his combat-oriented minions when a confrontation is a possibility, and a couple members of the Face Squad will almost always be with him as well. Rock will extend his force-field to cover as many of them as possible. The radical agents strike from ambush then retreat. They use the RPGs against the toughest looking characters, usually with an all out or power attack, and then retreat. Against less brick-like characters they make judicious use of auto-fire, staying at a distance from bricks, but moving in on energy blasters to make use of their point blank shot bonus. They will always use all available cover, and usually make use of group combined fire, sometimes combining it with a power attack.

The Face Squad leads the rockers, gangers, and punks in combat, and use their powers to disorient and distract -- rarely trying to do real damage. They generally try to keep their "troops" out of trouble, but the troops don't always cooperate. In desperate situations they will also use super charisma boosts on each other, and then use Diplomacy and Bluff to work any bystanders into frenzy -- quite possibly causing a riot, or even making the crowd turn into a mob howling for the PCs' blood. They also frequently use Taunts to give victims a -4 to all rolls for the next round. The Gangers often use Taunt as well, but generally to make their victims go flat footed for a follow up attack.

ROCK'S MINIONS

Breakdown by PL: 1st — 220 (120 Union Workers, 60 Biggest Fans, 40 Musicians); 2nd — 22 (14 Picketers, 8 Bangers); 3rd — 12 (5 Union Reps, 7 Lawyers); 4th — 6 (Bodyguards); 5th — 5 (Radical Agents); 6th — 4 (The Face Squad).

UNION WORKER

One of the hard-working folks who make sure the work of the world gets done.

Union Worker: PL 1; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30ft; Atk +0 base, +1 melee (+2S, wrench); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 10.

Skills: Bluff +1, Knowledge (by Union) +4, Profession (by Union) +4, Spot +1, Taunt +1.

Equipment: Professional tools and gear, including a really big wrench, pipe, or stack of report cards +1S.

Examples

Miriam Dowahare: a 3rd grade teacher from the Bronx, Miriam is a dedicated teacher who worries about the devaluation of education in America, and the consequences of teaching to testing standards rather than critical thinking.

Tyler Crane: A stereotypical dock worker in a hardhat, flannel shirt, and steel toed boots, Tyler is less worried about Marxist ideology than about keeping his kids fed and happy. He sees Rock and the movement as a way to get his kids a better life, and idolizes Rock for the way he treated his children during a visit to their home years ago.

L'tishia King: A ticket taker for the Department of Transit, L'tishia is tired of seeing hard workers pushed around and denied advancement opportunities. She has no problem with hard, long work, but she's reached the boiling point on issues of racial inequality, nepotism, and corruption.

Shiva Bupati: A soft-spoken man with a self-effacing demeanor, Shiva works as a newspaper delivery man. Recent changes in the centralization of media, pay cuts, and automated systems have nearly rendered his job obsolete, and have made him angry that "they won't let us publish truth, not now, not ever maybe."

MUSICIAN

One of the lazy reprobates who make sure that the work of the world is done to music.

Musician: PL 1; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+2S, musical instrument smack); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 12.

Skills: Bluff +2, Perform +8, Profession (Musician) +4, Taunt +3.

Feats: Skill Focus (Perform).

Equipment: Musical gear, cell phone, cool clothes.

Examples

Mychau Black: 20, feminist, and pissed with the whole world, Mychau is the front, heart, and spine of the political rock-rap band "Out Of the Gravity Well." Her angry, stirring songs are musically simple, but delve into complex political issues. She also is a proponent of music sharing and peer to peer file sharing networks, seeing them as the last best way to avoid corporate control of music.

Jesus Gutierrez: Head drummer of the percussion group "Timpan Pavement," Jesus is a heavysset Hispanic in his late 30's. Not much of a revolutionary, he none the less believes that music should come out of and be part of a community, and so fights strongly to give local talent a chance to shine, and to stay local.

Bass: Part-time backup guitar and full-time roadie, Bass is a huge man, bald, covered in tattoos, and with more attitude than sense. A brawler, drunk, and lecher, he's also one of Rock's oldest friends. Rock goes out of his way to get Bass good jobs and keep him solvent, and Bass goes out of his way to exploit this largesse.

BIGGEST FAN

A fanatical fan of a hero, star, or musician who engages in long debates about why their hero is the best and others suck, who insults, derides, and annoys anyone who does not share their opinion. Their greatest talent is for making flash mobs — when they use the power of the internet to get together at a pre-determined spot to do something of dubious value. Some media figures love this type, but most view them with a subtle existential horror.

Biggest Fan: PL 1; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+0S, punch), +1 ranged (+1S, thrown brick); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Chr 10.

Skills: Gather Information +1, Knowledge (Picky fanatic details about life and career of hero) +4, Knowledge (picky and fanatic details about why other heroes suck) +3, Taunt +4.

Feats: Take the Fall.

Examples

Brandon Dagan: 18 years old, on scholarship to NYU, smarter than you are, and without a social bone in his body, Brandon is the scourge of internet bulletin boards and news-groups. He's unusually feared and hated because he's been known to send people who disagree with him viruses as proof of his devotion to the "People's Revolution."

Rachel "Patches" O'Flannigan: 15 and totally in love with Rock, who is just the most gorgeous, intelligent, handsome, sensitive, angelic man ever ever ever in the whole entire world, Patches is a fluffy, happy girl who is popular in school and with a solid family life. The fact that she's never really been hurt in her whole life makes her reckless in her passionate moments.

UNION PICKETER

A hard-bitten union true-believer who is willing to risk ridicule, assault by police, private security, trained attack lawyers, and scabs in order to make sure that a strike means something and gets noticed. Some are willing to go the extra mile and commit minor assault and battery on those trying to cross union lines, or at least vandalize their cars.

Picketer: PL 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 12/11 (+1 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30ft; Atk +1 base, +3 melee (+4S, club), +2 ranged (+4S Thrown Brick); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Chr 10.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Profession (Teamster or Longshoreman) +5, Spot +4.

Feats: Endurance, Iron Will.

Equipment: Placards and picket signs, clubs (baseball bats, pipes, sticks of rebar).

Examples

Edwin Cole: When Ed was young his dad came back from a picket line with a broken jaw, blood and teeth on his shirt. He sat Edwin down and told him, "The only way the world gets better is if you're willing to bleed for it." For the last 30 years that's been Edwin's motto and guide. Officially a teamster, he often gets "loaned out" to help other unions picket or to go into situations where the union needs a hard man who isn't afraid of a fight.

D.T. Bulmer: Bulmer (no one calls her D.T., much less Deborah Tilly) is a longshoreman, and no she does not like to be called a longshorewoman or longshoreperson. A thick, slow woman — both physically and mentally — Bulmer has the heavy callused hands and knotted muscles of any manual worker, and the foul blue collar mouth that gave rise to the term "cuss like a sailor." She's tired of hearing about how good the longshoremen have it, tired of the President shutting down strikes, and tired of being treated differently. Though she's not looking for a fight she isn't going to run from one, and Rock's message of worker's rights has put a bee in her britches.

BANGER

Either a real gang member or a wannabe, the Banger is willing to throw down for face and reputation. Often times the rich wannabes can be worse than the real number, as they're stupider and more used to getting anything they want.

Banger: PL 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 12/11 (+1 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30ft; Atk +1 base, +2 melee (+3S, club or +3L, knife), +3 ranged (+3L, light pistol); SV: Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 10.

Skills: Bluff +4, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (Gangs) +4, Taunt +4.

Feats: Attack Focus (pistol).

Equipment: Light Pistol, gang colors.

Examples

Ricky Green: Ricky would be pretty fly for a white guy if it wasn't for the fact that he's a psycho-moron. He likes to flash trash and talk about "bling bling" without knowing exactly what the words mean, but no one razzes him because he has cash and a gun and is willing to use both — as well as a team of lawyers on his daddy's bill. Though he's not one of Rock's true believers, he's talked himself into the following and couldn't stand to lose the face it would take to back out now. So for stupidity and pride he's willing to throw down and go down.

LL Jr.: LL (Louis Lamont — but don't ever, ever call him that unless you're bad and ass) is a cool guy, a hard guy, and a guy who doesn't exactly run with gangs since the business with the Black Peace Stones — but who doesn't exactly have nothing to do with gangs either. LL is a negotiator, a middle man, and a facilitator. He's mightily impressed with Rock's money, but is more impressed with his will and his skill, and has decided that the boy is a winner, and to be backed even when it looks bad.

UNION REPRESENTATIVE

Professional negotiators, blackmailers, and hard-asses, the Union Rep makes her money by going face to face with the worst the corporations, the mob, and their own Union has to offer and making them all sit down, shut up, and come to an agreement.

Union Rep: PL 3; Init +0; Defense 11 (+1 base); Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+0S, punch); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 14, Chr 14.

Skills: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +9 (+11 on Union matters), Gather Information +6, Intimidate +6, Innuendo +5, Profession (by Union) +7, Sense Motive +8.

Feats: Connected, Iron Will, Talented (Diplomacy, Sense Motive).

Equipment: Cell phone, laptop, rolodex with a million numbers and blackmail info.

Examples

Rocky Benito: Italian and proud, as hardcore anti-mob as it comes, Rocky has been on Rock's side ever since the blaster-boy took down the thugs who were trying to force him to sell out the men of his union. It was a hard thing to stand against the mob when no one would back him, but he did that. Now that he's got a super-human with money, lawyers, and an attitude at his back, Rocky has become an absolute graft-killing machine. He doesn't even sweat the threats anymore, as the last three thugs that came after him are now either in the hospital or the general pop at Attica. His only worry is for his kid brother Peter (page 86), who's fallen in with the weird cult surrounding Mikhael Archangel, and he worries that his brother may be being brainwashed.

Sunita Clark: Clark the Shark, the Mini-Skirt Murder, and a thousand other sexist titles, is one of the best union reps that the local telecommunications workers have ever had. Not

only does she actually know what she's talking about, she's careful not to screw one faction of the union over to get a better deal for another. Those things alone would make her popular, but the fact that she has legs that go to her neck and a winning smile makes her something a little more than most union reps. Her propensity for breaking managers' balls is just icing on the cake.

LAWYER

Despite all the jokes, this species comes in all breeds, from the corporate attack lawyer to the rabid civil rights attorney to the ever noble champion of TV Drama: the trial attorney. The types hired by Rock tend to be civil rights, workers' rights, and copyright lawyers, with a focus on those that can get around copyrights, and trial lawyers to keep his butt out of jail.

Lawyer: PL 3; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+0S, punch); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Chr 14.

Skills: Bluff +7, Diplomacy +11 (+15 on the Law), Gather Information +5, Innuendo +4 (+6 to send), Knowledge (Law) +9, Profession (Lawyer) +8, Sense Motive +7, Taunt +8.

Feats: Talented (Diplomacy, Sense Motive), Talented (Profession: Lawyer, Knowledge: Law).

Equipment: Cell phone, laptop, schedule with court dates and obscure legal references.

Examples

Maureen Kington: A Martha Stewart look-alike with a nice home in Greektown and a partnership in a small law firm, Maureen is also a secret speed-metal devotee and openly one of the most radical workers' rights lawyers in all of the United States. She may bake the opposing council cookies, and treat everyone with a handshake and a smile, but there is absolutely no give in her on matters of morality — which is what she sees pretty much everything having to do with labor disputes as being. Smart, implacable, and with a perfectionist's touch, she is the lawyer every worker dreams of getting.

Jason Blackwelder: Jason used to believe in copyright and trademark as being great spurs to innovation and creation — if one can make money off a creation, one has incentive to create. But years of work as a copyright attorney jaundiced him, and after he won a case in front of the Supreme Court on behalf of Disney he walked away in disgust. "Copyright law in the United States can be summed up as: If it is convenient for Disney it is legal, if it isn't then it isn't" was the quote in the paper. Rock saw that and immediately went to talk to Blackwelder. After almost a week of talks and negotiations, Blackwelder became Rock's chief council in the ongoing and endless suits over rights, and has so far shown all his old skill and enthusiasm, but this time on the other side.

ELITE BODYGUARD

The best of the best at keeping their charge alive, these men and women are trained to put the life of their charge ahead of their own, and can be remarkably ruthless when it comes to seeing their duty done. Rock's guards are well paid, well equipped, and well trained — and they also are fanatically loyal both to him and his vision.

Elite Bodyguard: PL 4; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Feat); Defense 14/12 (+2 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30ft; Atk +2 base, +4 melee (+4S, club), +5 ranged (+5L, heavy pistol); SV Dmg +2 (and +4 Armor), Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 11; Wis 12; Chr 10.

Skills: Drive +8, Intimidate +3, Listen +6, Medicine +4, Search +5, Spot +12.

Feats: Attack Focus (Pistol), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Spot), Talented (Spot, Search).

Equipment: Heavy Pistol, Kevlar body armor, ear radios, sunglasses, sports car with armored windows (Size: large, Movement 8, Hardness 12, Armor Bonus 7).

Examples

Mei-Ling Zhao: Drop dead gorgeous, slinky, sexy, and decked to the nines, Mei-Ling normally poses as her ward's girlfriend in order to have a reason to always be close to him. In Rock's case it works out well, as she actually is his girlfriend. Despite the fact that she looks like something out of Playboy she's a hardcore professional and devoted to her job.

Mercer: The leader of Rock's bodyguards, Mercer has a genius for organization and teamwork and the ability to keep others cool in a crisis. While the rest of the team typically stays close to Rock, Mercer hangs back, taking up a good vantage point from which to observe the whole scene and surroundings, letting him get the total picture of events.

RADICAL AGENT

Dedicated to the cause, trained by organizations made up of all capital letters, willing to give their life to change the world, the Radical Agent is the best and worst face of human will. Rock's agents are generally stable, but they do disagree with him over the levels of violence needed to start the revolution.

Examples

Sean Patrick O'Malley: A pretty boy member of the IRA Sean spent a year in jail when his former comrades in arms turned against him during peace talks. In that year he spent a lot of time reading, and came to realize that it wasn't the British he hated, but the capitalist Man — the Big Brother who tries to control all our lives. On his release he moved to America, thinking to take up the fight there. Luckily for everyone he was scooped up by Rock before he could start blowing things up. Now Rock keeps him on a short leash, trying to convince him that violence isn't the answer all the time, and never against random innocents. The message seems to be sinking in, but slowly.

Radical Agent: PL 5; Init +3 (Dex); Defense 15/12 (+2 base, +3 Dex); Spd 30ft; Atk +3 base, +5 melee (+4L, knife), +6 ranged (+10L, RPG), +3/+3/+3 autofire ranged (+5L, assault rifle); SV Dmg +2 (and +5 armor); Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Chr 11.

Skills: Climb +5, Demolitions +6, Disable Device +6, Jump +5, Hide +8, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +6, Profession (Special Ops) +4, Swim +5, Survival +5.

Feats: All-Out Attack, Attack Focus (assault rifle), Iron Will, Multi Shot, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Sneak Attack, Talented (Hide, Move Silently)

Equipment: Rocket Propelled Grenade launcher, assault rifle, body armor, combat radio, demolitions kits, pick locks, commando camouflage, armored Hummer (Size: Large, Movement 8, Hardness 15, Armor Bonus 10).

Weakness: *Fanatic* (Quirk).

Vincent DuBois: One time DELTA force, one time Black Panther, and now full time revolutionary, Vincent heads up the agents, working closely with Rock — whom he respects a large amount, considering the other is a rich white boy. Vincent is professional, dedicated, and able to make clear and logical choices even at the most stressful of times. However, he also believes that the things he did for the USA in other countries were all legitimate actions, and that there is thus no reason not for them to be done inside the USA if the situation warrants it.

THE FACE SQUAD

Rock's top advisors and publicity managers, the Face Squad all toe the line between human and super-human, their mastery of advertising, propaganda, and media control being just a little too good to be normal, but not quite so spectacular as to make them obviously super. Dedicated to bringing about revolution by using the media machine of the Man against itself, the Face Squad are the god-kings of subversion, political activism, and flash and trash.

Face Squad: PL 6; Init +0; Defense 12 (+2 base); Spd 30ft; Atk +1 base; +1 ranged (+4 stun attack, taser); SV: Dmg +0 (+4 armor), Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Chr 20.

Skills: Bluff +13, Diplomacy +17 (+21 on Media matters), Gather Information +14, Innuendo +12, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (Media) +8, Language (1 extra), Perform +11, Profession (Image Consultant) +7, Sense Motive +7, Taunt +13;

Feats: Attractive, Leadership, Startle, Talented: Bluff and Diplomacy.

Powers: *Instant Demographics Boost* (Boost Charisma) +5 [Extra: Affects Others, Flaws: Cannot Affect Self; Source: Training; Cost 2pp]; *Definition of Cool* (Super-Charisma) +1 [Extra: Intimidating Presence; Source: Training; Cost 3pp].

Equipment: Cell phones, laptop computers with cell modems, PDAs, makeup kits, taser.

Examples

Valerie Christerson: Valerie's parents wanted her to become a mother and have eight good Mormon children. Valerie wanted to become a superstar. She likes to say that she found a happy medium, as she makes other people superstars and treats them like her children. Mrs. Christerson is a very handsome woman, always immaculately dressed and coiffed, and she radiates an aura of correct and formal properness that is hard for even the most rebellious punk to puncture. She's the one that takes charge when Rock needs to present a respectable and formal face, and she often despairs that he doesn't realize how much good he could do if he would wear such a face more often.

SISTERS, LAWYERS, LOVERS, AND PRIESTS

The cast of the murder, including its architect and victim. All of these folks are normal, non-super-heroic mortals. None the less they are as important, and possibly more dangerous, than the super-powered NPCs in the scenario because they will give the PCs challenges they are not expecting.

FATHER YON CANDELLA

Real Name: Yon Jesus Candella

Height: 5' 8"

Weight: 183 lbs.

Eyes: Brown

Hair: Black fringe around the edge of a bald pate.

Background: Shepherd of a small flock, Father Candella was good folk. He was compassionate yet strong, forgiving yet just, and everything else priestly save only orthodox. Father Candella knew the love of Christ, but he always felt that too much junk had been piled up around the core teachings of his Savior. So he kept an open mind, he accepted homosexuality and gay marriage despite what the Church said. He accepted the Archangel as a real force of God despite the skepticism and fear of many of his peers. In all things he did his best.

The night that he married Kendall and Raisa Everidge was one of the best and most frightening nights of his life. He knew that he was breaking both the laws of the land and the Church, but felt that he was doing so for the greater laws of love and joy. When the brides left he was in an ecstasy of hope and fear, unable to sit or be calm. He walked the rectory, the church, and the grounds, trying to settle his heart and mind enough that he could rest.

Then Benito came asking, and Father Candella told him the truth. He was beaten by one of his own sheep, a boy he'd known since confirmation, and left bleeding on the floor of his church. When Ebonie came in he was relieved, feeling that one of Mikhael's followers had come to protect him. He died still confused, his heart breaking as it struggled to understand the reason that one of his friends, his allies and comrades in the Lord's work would hate him so much.

Father Candella cannot be resurrected by Mikhael, and probably not by any other power. The default reason for this is because the good Father is resting in heaven and has attained true peace. He has run a good race, kept the faith, and finished his course. His time is over, and not even angels can overturn the judgment of God. GMs who wish for a less blatantly religious reason should feel free to come up with their own justification — perhaps the damage to the brain precludes any resurrection, or perhaps Mikhael's own prejudices keep him from believing in the Father's purity.

Image: Alive, Father Candella was a pleasantly portly man with a smiling face and sincere, if often troubled, eyes. His corpse is a mess of bruises, wounds, matted hair, and blood. His face is almost unrecognizable from the swelling and broken bones, including the fatal crushing of his skull, his neck is dis-tended, his ribs broken and every one of his fingers is broken.

BENITO "BENNY" EVERIDGE

Real Name: Benito Jonathan Everidge

Height: 6'

Weight: 212 lbs.

Eyes: Hazel

Hair: Dark and cropped close to the head.

Quote: "I didn't kill nobody, and my sister ain't no damn fag!"

Background: Benito was a good big-brother, and he always took care of his little sisters. It was a big point of pride for him because he wasn't good at much else. Benny couldn't hold a job, couldn't keep a woman, couldn't stay off the sauce, and couldn't even stay out of jail with any great regularity. So Benny protected his own and worked hard when he wasn't drunk, fought for his rights, and generally collapsed into life.

A big part of that changed when he went to a Union meeting about getting rid of some of the current leaders because they were linked to the mob. That night he met a super-hero, a guy with everything in the world, who stopped and shook his hand and talked to him like he was worth something — like he really mattered and people really cared about him. Benny was so emboldened by this that he contacted Rock N Roll later that week and told him about some iffy things he'd been told to do by the union. Rock brought him in, got him hooked up with lawyers, and protected his family when some heavies tried to shake them down. From that moment on Benny was Rock's man, and to hell with anyone that didn't like it. Benny's life was going good for the first time ever.

It was a bomb to this new happiness when Benny's best old friend, Grover Milonas, told him that his sister was a lesbian. At first Benny didn't believe it, and Grover got his ass kicked hard. But Grover kept talking, kept telling him that Kendall's "roommate" was a lot more than just someone she shared a pad with. He convinced Benny he was telling the truth, and that he was only telling him so that Benny could do what he'd always done — protect his sister, even from herself. Grover got Benny good and drunk, to help him deal with things, and then told him that the reason he was telling now was that this

"lesbo" was a former crack-whore, and she was trying to marry Kendall. Benny snapped, and Grover pointed the way to the priest who was marrying them.

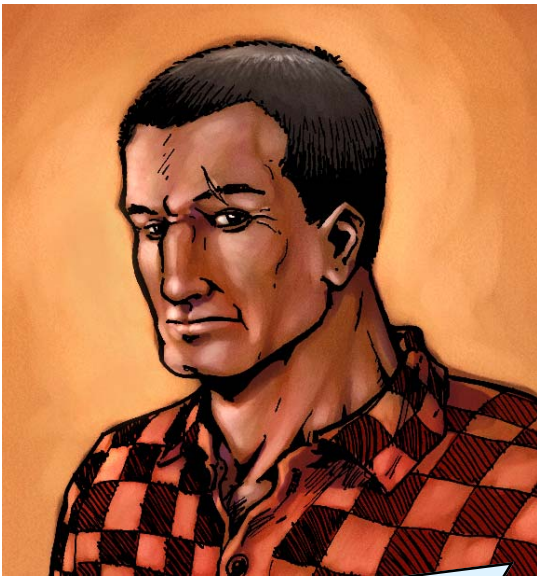
Benny went to save his sister, and when he found out he'd gotten there too late his feelings of disgust and betrayal were so horrible that he beat the priest he'd known since he was a kid, beat him until he couldn't stand. He left the poor Father lying on the ground, and was drunk enough that he really didn't remember whether or not he'd left him alive or not. He thinks he didn't kill him, but he isn't really sure.

Now Benny is in a panic. He's swearing up and down he didn't do it — that he didn't touch the priest, or that he did but that he only hit him once or twice. He's still angry about his sister, and part of him blames her for it, he even has nightmares about his sister and her lover killing Father Candella.

Image: Benny's a big boy, with big hard hands and a big hard head. His face is an odd combination of innocent high-school jock and gin-blossom bar brawl survivor. He dresses simply, in flannel shirts, tough jeans, and work boots. He keeps his hair short and close to his skull, just long enough that no one will mistake him for one of those loser skinheads.

Personality: Benny is a simple guy and an angry guy. He loves meat and potatoes, wrestling, rock n roll and Rock N Roll. He hates "fags," politicians, skin heads, and lawyers. To him right is right and wrong is wrong, and examining what makes one or the other is just "intellectual crap" or "PC bull."

RP Tips: After the murder Benny talks in a panicked voice all the time, even when he isn't being confronted directly. He wipes sweat off his forehead and rubs the palms of his hands against his thighs, always trying to get them dry.



Benny: PL 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 12/11 (+1 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30ft; Atk +1 base, +4 melee (+5S, club), +2 ranged (+4S Thrown Brick); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 10.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Profession (Longshoreman) +4, Spot +3.

Feats: Endurance, Iron Will.

BENNY'S ASSOCIATES

Grover Milonas: Grover's story isn't much different than Benny's, the only things missing are a little sister and a heart that kept a spark of hope alive. Grover gave up on doing the right thing a long time ago, and started selling his votes and his thumb-breaking services to the Mob. Of course this got him into trouble several times over the years, but nothing ever came of it because he had a really good lawyer — Ching Clish. So when his really good lawyer and one of his mob friends came to him and told him they needed him to do something, what was he going to say? He didn't take any joy in setting up his friend, and he consoled himself by telling himself that he was really doing it for Benny's good — it was all true, and the guy should know the truth about his sister. But now that Benny may be looking at a murder rap, Grover isn't so sure anymore. Still, he's too smart and in too deep to open his mouth now, and so he's planning on getting drunk and staying that way until the whole matter goes away. Grover is a heavy set man with a wicked widow's peak and a face so wind-beaten it should be used to advertise cigarettes.

Grover: PL 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 11 (+1 base); Spd 30ft; Atk +1 base, +3 melee (+4S, club), +2 ranged (+4S Thrown Brick); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 12.

Skills: Bluff +5, Intimidate +5, Profession (Longshoreman) +4, Spot +3.

Feats: Endurance.

RAISA EVERIDGE

Real Name: Raisa Romine-Everidge

Height: 5' 5"

Weight: 114 lbs.

Eyes: Green

Hair: Brown with ash blond highlights.

Quote: "I won't let you punish me for the mistakes of my past."

Background: Born in poverty, raised in despair, Raisa had as hard a life as anyone ever born on the streets. She left all of that life behind, even Ebonie who she really and truly loved, and has closed the door on the whore and crack addict she used to be. She spent years getting off drugs, getting and keeping a real job, and getting all her records and arrests expunged or sealed with the help of her lawyer: Chery Rivenberg.

Now Raisa is a senior on the floor at a Bell call center, respected for her hard work and cool head. She may even make manager in another year or two, and end up having lunches with people in business suits who think she is and always has been one of theirs. She's also getting married to a lovely woman, a scientist who cares about her and doesn't ask too many questions about her past. Raisa had everything she ever wanted, and was happy.

Then Ebonie Gaulden showed up one day, out of the blue. Raisa saw the woman she'd once loved for less than a second, and after that all she could see was the specter of her past life coming to crush everything she'd worked and sacrificed for. Raisa crushed Ebonie's hopes as hard as she could, rejected her, told her to leave before she called the cops, and then went to her lawyer to file for a restraining order. Ebonie hadn't done anything worthy of such measures, but Raisa knew the old Ebonie and her obsessive and violent streak, and wanted the woman gone and gone for sure.

Once the paperwork was done and Ebonie made no move to come back, Raisa started to relax. She got married and was really and truly happy for about six hours. Then the news came that Father Candella had been murdered and Raisa's old paranoia and fear bubbled up. She suspects that Ebonie might have been involved, worries over Benny, and hides her panic and horror behind her calm and strong façade.

Image: Raisa is a pretty girl despite years of hard living and a kicked drug habit. She's very skinny, with elbows thicker than the rest of her arm, but she dresses in flowing garments with shoulder pads and flared hips that make her look like she actually has a figure. She takes perfect care of herself and her clothes are always pristine, pressed, and in good fashion. Her hair is worn long and is her big vanity, and she can be irrational about it.

Personality: Raisa is a tough woman, a street survivor and product of her own will. She dragged herself out of the sewer by her own bootstraps, and now turns all of that massive energy towards making sure she never goes back. No one in her new life knows what she was, and she is desperate to keep it that way. She feels for Father Candella and is very worried about what Benny being arrested would do to Kendall, but she will not willingly reveal her suspicions or worries about Ebonie, as that would force her to acknowledge her past and ruin her present.

RP Tips: Raisa speaks slowly and carefully, tightening up her face when confronted with anything that could lead to talking about her past. Whenever she talks about the murder she breathes slowly and deeply to help her stay calm. If forced to admit her past, she crumples, giving puppy-dog eyes to her interrogator and hiding her face from everyone else.

Raisa: PL 2; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30ft; Atk +0 base, +1 melee (+2S, wrench); SV Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Chr 13.

Skills: Bluff +5, Knowledge (Telecom) +4, Profession (Telecom) +6, Spot +3, Taunt +1.

Feats: Attractive, Iron Will

RAISA'S ASSOCIATES

Kendall Everidge: Kendall did well in school; her brother always encouraged her and helped her as much as he could. She got a scholarship and what it didn't cover Benny did. She got an MA in Biomedical Laboratory Operations and an MBA, the two of which got her a very good job at the prestigious

pharmaceutical company HealthTech. She was successful but lonely when she met Raisa at a singles mixer, and promptly fell in love. Though Raisa has never told her about her past, Kendall has some ideas about what it must have been — but she doesn't like to think about it closely. She loves both Raisa and Benny very much, and is worried about both. Though she is consumed with guilt over Father Candella's murder she will be very reluctant to reveal anything that she thinks could get her brother convicted, or bring up her wife's horrid past. She wants to do the right thing, but doesn't see a way to do it without hurting someone she loves. Kendall is tall and dark-haired, but rather plain and with an unfortunate resemblance to her brother.

Kendall: Use Scientist (M&M page 155). Science is Bio-Chemistry.

EBONIE GAULDEN

Real Name: Ebonie Sue Gaulden

Height: 6'1"

Weight: 201 lbs.

Eyes: Brown

Hair: Black, usually worn in long, thick braids.

Quote: "My sins are between myself and God. He may damn me, but I'll be damned if I'll let you judge me."

Background: In the hole that's been Ebonie Gaulden's life there have only ever been two good things: the Archangel and Raisa, and Raisa was first. For almost a decade Ebonie and Raisa clung to each other, each the other's only source of hope and comfort in a world of pain and fear. They were the ones that pulled each other out of the gutter, that arranged for bail, that dealt with johns who got rough, and took each other to the hospital after their pimps worked them over. The thing that finally took Raisa away from Ebonie was Ebonie herself. After her last overdose Raisa walked out, unable to take it anymore, unable to watch both of them die.

That was when Ebonie hit rock bottom. She gave herself to more and more brutal pimps, let her body be used in the most disgusting and degrading ways, and hit harder and harder on the pipe and the needle. She was already in hell and an inch away from death when the Archangel came to her, filled her with hope and light, and gave her faith in herself and in the world again. He looked into the foulest recesses of her heart and raised her up. Through him she saw God. From that moment to the present she gave her life to work, to sacrifice, to making right the things she had done wrong. Of all the Sworn she was one of the most dedicated, daily working herself to exhaustion, so dedicated that even Gabrielle worried and tried to get her to slow down. Ebonie couldn't slow, couldn't stop, couldn't let go because there was one thing she couldn't get back — Raisa.

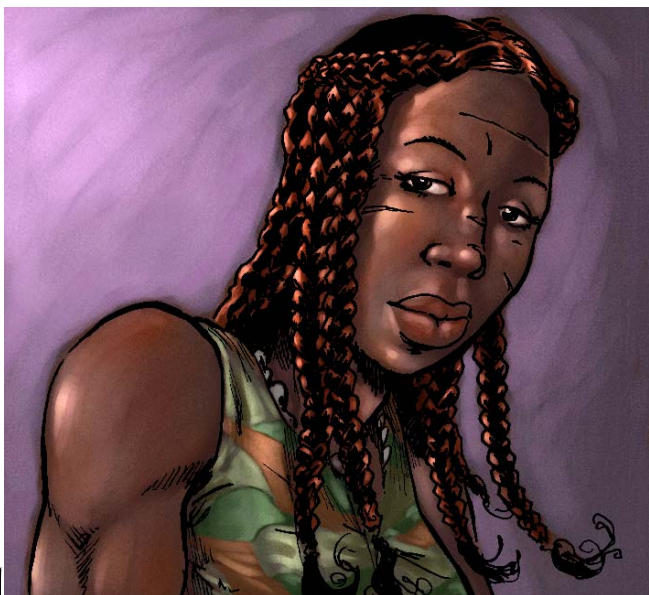
One week before the murder, Ebonie found Raisa again. Alleen Roadcap, a streetwalker she'd been trying to get out of the life, told her she'd seen her old partner and told her

where to find her. Ebonie ran all the way from the slums to Downtown, to frantic to take a taxi or transit. When she found Raisa again, however, things went poorly. To Raisa, off drugs and with a lovely woman, Ebonie was a reminder of all the pain and horror she'd left behind. Whatever she might once have felt was gone, and she rebuffed Ebonie harshly. Ebonie was crushed, confused, and unable to understand that the woman she still loved did not love her anymore. She wanted to talk to Mikhael, but he had recently announced that homosexuality was a sin, and she felt he would throw her from the fold if she admitted her sexuality. So she went to Alleen for advice.

Alleen told her that Raisa was getting married to another woman. Alleen told her that Raisa was the sinner. Alleen told her that Raisa was still in love with her, but Kendall was controlling her. Alleen told her that she should get Raisa back. Alleen told her that she had to hurry, because the two were getting married and once that happened it would be too late forever. So it was that Ebonie went to Father Candella's church. There she found out that the priest she and Mikhael had trusted was a sinner who married homosexuals, there she found out that her one love was married to another woman, and there she went mad.

Ebonie does not remember the murder. She has suppressed it so hard that even she is convinced that she left Father Candella alive, and has even made up a fantasy wherein he forgave her for the sin of homosexuality just before she left. Evidence to the contrary will make her increasingly irrational, angry, and ultimately violent. Ebonie is trapped, and if backed into a corner with evidence of her own sins she may break.

Image: At just over 6 feet and 200 pounds Ebonie is a big woman, Amazonian and street-tough. Her pleasant face is covered with the scars of beatings and bottle-fights, her broad nose is pierced in four places, and her knuckles show calluses and scars to tell that she gave as good as she got. She wears black on black, T-shirts and cargo pants tucked into combat boots. Her hair is worn in wrist thick dreadlocks that hang down to her waist.



Personality: Ebonie has the kind of self-righteous, intolerant, fanaticism that only comes from a soul at war with itself. She drives herself beyond the limits of her body, propelled by guilt and self-hatred to do penance with her own suffering. To her every fight is the last fight, every hope the last hope, and every sin an evil that must be burned from the earth with holy fire. At the same time she is increasingly fragile, her self image and ego slowly coming unraveled by the events after the murder. Explosion is inevitable.

RPing Tips: Ebonie talks aggressively, mixing street-talk with biblical references, gets up in the face of anyone that dares accuse of her sin, and clenches her fists whenever she talks.

Ebonie Gauden: PL 4; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 15/12 (+2 Base, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge); Spd 30ft; Atk +3 base, +4 melee (+3L, knife), +5 ranged (+7L, rifle); SV: Dmg +3 (and +4 armor), Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Chr 14.

Skills: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Religion) +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Search +3, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Detect Evil, Dodge, Indomitable Will, Iron Will, Toughness.

Powers: *Mind In Turmoil* (Amazing Save (Will)) +4

Equipment: Bible, cross. When ready for combat: Rifle, flak jacket.

Weakness: *Fanatic* (Quirk).

Notes: If Ebonie can be lead to redemption/revelation she will lose her "Mind in Turmoil" powers, as they're a reflection of the extreme state of her mind.

EBONIE'S ASSOCIATES

Alleen Roadcap: Alleen is a bitter woman, a woman in trouble. A few months ago she was picked up, charged with possession with intent to sell, and was an inch away from being locked up for good. It was her luck to get a good lawyer who was slumming, doing some pro-bono work to impress people at his firm. It was her bad luck that the lawyer was Ching Clish, and that he gave her files to Withem. Withem sent Ching back to give her an offer just after she'd been released on bail — if she'd go find one of her former friends and push her buttons in the way she was told she'd get off the charges, if she didn't she'd spend the rest of her life in jail. Alleen didn't really have a problem with this, as she used to work with Ebonie and Raisa, and hates them both for the fact that they got out of the life and she didn't. So she found her old coworker and pretended to be a lost soul needing help. Once Ebonie started opening up Alleen did more than Ching, or even Withem, expected and got Ebonie worked up to a frenzy of hate and fear, taking glee in the other woman's pain and loneliness. The only regrets she's had have come since the murder, as she thinks she might somehow be held responsible if the whole truth comes out.

Allen used to be a real looker, but time and drugs and degradation have left very little of her former beauty intact. These days she's strung out, dirty and hungry and dressed in the worst trailer-park-trash-chic.

Aleen: PL 1; Init +0; Defense 11 (+1 base); Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+4 Stun attack, taser); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 11, Chr 12.
Skills: Bluff +3, Gather Information +3, Sleight of Hand +3, Search +2.
Equipment: Taser (+4 Stun attack).

JOSHUA WITHEM

Real Name: Johan Boyajian
Height: 6'
Weight: 183 lbs.
Eyes: Hazy blue-grey
Hair: Driftwood blond, always slickly styled.
Quote: "That information is protected by attorney-client privilege, even if you are a demi-god."

Background: Johan Boyajian wanted everyone to think he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, that his whole life had been the kind of glittering success that he's shown since moving to the City from up the coast. The truth, however, is that he was born in the City, just in a poor neighborhood to an Armenian immigrant father and a Czech mother. His childhood was poor, often desperate, and he was always the smallest kid in a rough neighborhood. Once he got a scholarship to college, however, he saw his chance. Withem changed his name from Johan Boyajian to Joshua Withem, and projected an aura of forceful normalcy that denied every bit of his heritage and background. By the time he got to Harvard Law he had convinced everyone that he was the son of a Connecticut insurance company CEO.

When Withem got out of school at the top of his class he joined a small but prestigious firm in the City. His utter ruthlessness, lack of a life outside the office, and well concealed lack of ethics lead him to a meteoric rise and he became one of the youngest partners in the firm's history. Even then it wasn't enough, as Withem was still hungry for more power, more respect. It was when he took a case defending a mob enforcer that he finally found his niche, as he soon was not just getting Mafia men out of trouble, but was actively helping them commit crimes — using his position as an officer of the court to help them gather information and circumvent the law.

Image: Tall without being towering, well built without being overly muscled, and with a winning smile and smart, sharp eyes Withem is the poster child for Harvard education and breeding. His suits always obviously cost more than a couple grand, yet have an elegant simplicity that removes any hint of pretension or flash.

Personality: Outwardly Withem is always poised, witty, and only ever becomes sharp when cross-examining a slippery witness or when caught in a situation that he has to fight his way out of. Inwardly he is an ego-centric criminal who has no re-

gard for life, freedom, or honesty. To him everything is a game in which he is the master and everyone else a pawn to be sacrificed. He may not be as crazy as Arson, but he is a full blown sociopath with no regard for humanity.

RPing Tips: Withem smiles with just the corners of his lips, grinning while looking someone right in the eyes and raking their soul over the coals. He combines a proper posture with a casual slouch that makes him look like a spoiled prince. In court he keeps his hands in his pockets or behind his back, only speaking with them to make the most telling of points.



Joshua Withem: PL 5; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+0S, punch); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Chr 16.
Skills: Bluff +11, Diplomacy +12 (+16 on the Law), Gather Information +14, Innuendo +14, Knowledge (Law) +8, Profession (Lawyer) +7, Sense Motive +9, Taunt +12.
Feats: Assessment, Connected, Iron Will, Talented (Gather Information, Sense Motive), Talented (Bluff, Innuendo).
Equipment: Cell phone, armored and locked briefcase, lots of legal forms and documents, multiple thousand dollar suits.

WITHEM'S ASSOCIATES

Chery Rivenberg: A bright and vivacious young lawyer, Chery believes whole-heartedly in the judicial system and in the merits of being a defense lawyer and advocate. She works for a small firm and does pro-bono work for the queer community and women's shelters, which has garnered her respect and praise from many quarters. She's also stupidly in love with Withem, nearly idolizing him as a legal genius and perfect lover. Her infatuation with the man has led her to let him make unethical and illegal use of her work product and clients background information several times, as she thinks he's doing it to help her help them. If forced to confront evidence of how Withem has used and betrayed her, and how she has inadvertently betrayed her own clients, it may well break her spirit and drive her over the edge. Chery is a gorgeous woman with flowing red hair and fair, freckled skin. She always dresses perfectly for the occasion, be it jeans and a hockey jersey for a game or a tailored power-suit for court.

Chery Rivenberg: PL 3; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+0S, punch); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Chr 16.

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +12 (+15 on the Law), Gather Information +6, Innuendo +5 (+7 to send), Knowledge (Law) +9, Knowledge (Sports) +5, Profession (Lawyer) +8, Sense Motive +7, Taunt +9.

Feats: Assessment, Attractive, Connected, Talented (Diplomacy, Sense Motive), Talented (Profession: Lawyer, Knowledge: Law).

Equipment: Cell phone, laptop, schedule with court dates and obscure legal references.

Weakness: *Stupid in Love* (Quirk)

Ching Clish: Clish is a decent lawyer, but he'll never be a great one and he knows it. On his own his fate would be to spend the rest of his life as an associate at a succession of minor law firms. However, he has one real talent: seeing power in others. He met Withem several years ago and firmly hitched his wagon to the rising star of the younger man. Since then he's knowingly violated ethical standards, client privilege, and even his own shaky moral code for Withem. In return he is set to become a partner in the firm "any day now" (a promise Withem will keep only if forced). Clish does know that Withem "cheats" but he doesn't understand how corrupt his honcho is, and would be shaken to learn that he had helped arrange a murder. But he also knows that Withem is his only chance, not just to be a partner, but to stay out of jail, and so will do his best to hide and cover-up all evidence of either's involvement while he starts drinking himself silly. Clish is a middle-aged man of mixed Vietnamese/Chinese ancestry whose gone towards bald and heavy. He dresses nicely and has good taste in clothes, but it tends to be overshadowed by the fact that he's often rumpled, crumpled, and looks like he's just come off a week-long bender. (Which all too often actually is the case.)

Ching Clish: PL 3; Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 30ft; Atk +0 melee (+0S, punch); SV Dmg +0, Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Chr 14.

Skills: Bluff +7, Diplomacy +11 (+15 on the Law), Gather Information +10, Innuendo +9 (+11 to send), Knowledge (Law) +9, Profession (Lawyer) +8, Sense Motive +7, Taunt +8.

Feats: Connected, Talented (Diplomacy, Sense Motive), Talented (Profession: Lawyer, Knowledge: Law).

Equipment: Cell phone, laptop, schedule with court dates and obscure legal references.

Weakness: Unlucky

Al Petaccio and Blaine Sangiacomo: The two heavies that Withem has direct control over, Al and Blaine are one part his bodyguards and one part his muscle. Withem is smart enough to keep them out of the public eye, as both have rap sheets that link them to the mob (no convictions, just arrests). He often uses them in inconspicuous roles such as office security or chauffeur, and saves their real services for when legal channels just won't get the results he requires. Al and Blaine have been friends for years, and are more brothers than friends. Both of them are rather easygoing for part-time killers, and would rather do everything clean and rational than have to bury a lot of bodies. Of course if one of them gets hurt the other will go ballistic, and that's when the corpses tend to need bags to be carried out in.

Al is a big man, heavy shouldered and hulking — he generally looks like a gorilla in a monkey-suit, bulging out of his double-breasted business suits. Blaine is tall and rangy, sandy haired and smiling, and looks the far less imposing and dangerous of the two in his dress-casual attire.

Blaine Sangiacomo: PL 4; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Feat); Defense 14/12 (+2 base, +2 Dex); Spd 30ft; Atk +2 base, +4 melee (+4S, club), +5 ranged (+5L, heavy pistol); SV Dmg +2 (and +4 Armor), Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12; Wis 12; Chr 14.

Skills: Bluff +7, Drive +12, Intimidate +7, Listen +6, Search +6, Spot +7.

Feats: Attack Focus (Pistol), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Bluff), Talented (Drive, Intimidate).

Equipment: Heavy Pistol, Kevlar body armor, ear radios, sunglasses, sports car with armored windows (Size: large, Movement 8, Hardness 12, Armor Bonus 7).

Al Petaccio: PL 2; Init +1 (Dex); Defense 12/11 (+1 base, +1 Dex); Spd 30ft; Atk +1 base, +2 melee (+3S, club or +3L, knife), +3 ranged (+4L, pistol); SV: Dmg +1, Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 10.

Skills: Bluff +4, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (Gangs) +4, Taunt +4.

Feats: Attack Focus (pistol).

Equipment: Pistol, nice suit that's too small.

APPENDIX

Optional rules, extra crunchy-bits, and general fun stuff.

This is a collection of optional rules that GMs are free to use or ignore at their whim. Church and State was play-tested both with and without these rules, and will work equally well either way.

GENRE POINTS

Genre Points are a way for the GMs and players to use the M&M rules to help them reinforce the tone and feeling of the comics the game is emulating. A PC gains a Genre Point anytime they do something that particularly reinforces and sustains the feel, theme, and tone of the genre the game is emulating. Once awarded a Genre Point works in all ways as a normal Hero Point except that it can carry across sessions (but not across adventures). It is recommended that groups using Genre Points have characters start an adventure with half the Hero Points they would have from their level, plus any purchased with Hero's Luck — this keeps the PCs from having an excessive number of Hero Points per adventure. The combination of lower starting Hero Points with Genre Points that accumulate during adventures also means that the PCs will start off an adventure with less power and end with more oomph.

Example: Lucky Strike is a 10th Level PC who has taken Hero's Luck 3 times. Normally he would have 8 Hero Points. Because the GM is using Genre Points he has 6 Hero Points ($5/2 = 2.5$ round up to 3, + 3 from Hero's Luck). Lucky Strike

does exceptionally well one session, gaining 3 Genre Points and only using 2 of them, so the extra point carries over to the next part of the adventure. In that game he gains 3 Genre Points and spends 2 — leaving him with 2 unspent. As the adventure ends, however, he does not get to carry them to the next session.

Exactly what actions earn Genre Points should be established by the GM and the Players before the game starts. The list can either be set for the whole campaign (for greater constancy between adventures) or differentiated for each storyline (for those who want each “comic” to feel a little different, for greater experimentation and versatility). It is recommended that the basic list remain consistent, however, with a few additions or deletions being the only changes between adventures.

The following is a list of actions and activities that would be suitable for gaining Genre Points in *Church and State* or other Bronze Age games. Some of these will work at any time, but some work best specifically following others — such as using an Epiphany only after having done something No Matter the Cost. In *Church and State* it will be easier to get Genre Points for being a jerk early on, and then as the adventure goes and the PCs see the mistakes of others they can start more easily acquiring Genre Points for being better and fixing the problems.

ACTIONS THAT EARN GENRE POINTS

- **Life Sucks:** When something from the character's normal life causes them difficulties with their heroic life (or vice versa). This is what happens when you miss a date with your girlfriend because you were saving the world, and so she breaks up with you, or where you find yourself caught between a rock and a hard place because your devoutly religious mother will disown you if you get in a fight with an angel..
- **Saving the Mundanes:** Letting a goal or objective be endangered in order to save an innocent or to stop collateral damage. This can include stopping to help a mundane-seeming minion that you know is going to clock you one.
- **Excellent Description:** A really inspired stunt, original and creative idea, or beautiful description that really gets the kinetic impact of comics across.
- **No matter the cost!** PCs who take big risks and refuse to let vendettas go, who chase after villains even when innocents are in danger, or who harm themselves in order to stop an enemy get a Genre point for being the kind of obsessive jerks that we all love.
 - ◊ **Epiphany:** Realizing that an earlier act was foolish, ignorant, and/or self-righteous and deliberately not making the same mistake again in a similar situation, or putting oneself in grave danger to fix the problems caused by the earlier mistake.
- **No, You're Stupid:** When a character does something that makes the situation worse because they assume that their way is the correct way, or because they won't negotiate with someone simply because the other person has a different political/ethical stance. Basically, if the PCs start fights with other heroes because they're committing the same sins of pride that lead to the fight in the first place.
 - ◊ **Heroic Monologue:** Whether a stirring oration, well placed quip, or heart-felt confessional, a speech extolling the virtues of cooperation, tolerance, and reasonability in the face of provocation, or about the human spirit's ability to overcome the past to build a better future.

INVESTIGATION MONTAGES

Investigation montages are designed for when a group wants to play investigations as more than a single roll but with less than a full scene given over to every aspect of the inquiry. In essence the montage is a scene filled with quick glimpses of action in which the PCs collect information and do footwork. The technique is used in movies and comics, showing the hero speaking to a variety of sources, hanging informants from their heels, and then quickly moving on until at the end of the sequence the hero reveals all the information they have learned. Montages work well in cases where PCs want to strut their skills, or to be able to find out information they might not be able to with a simple roll, or even when they roll badly when trying to find a critical bit of information.

Running an investigation montage starts with the GM deciding what the core skill for the investigation will be. In many cases this will be Gather Information, but it could also be a Science for forensic investigations, or a Knowledge for academic investigations. The PCs then check against that skill. (Other skills can be used for the base roll if the GM wants. They get a modifier equal to the level of extra difficulty the GM thinks using the skill would incur. In general a close skill will give a +2 to all result levels, while a skill that is only tangentially relevant might be a +10 or more.) If they get all the information in a single roll then they don't need to do a montage — as the character already has access to all the information through their super-human coolness. (PCs or GMs could still have a very brief description of how the PC gathers the information in montage style, it just doesn't follow the rest of the rules for montages, as the PC already has everything they need to know.) If the PC gets a failure of more than 10 under the DC then not only don't they have the information, they don't even know enough to figure out where to start and can't do a montage. It's when the PC gets a partial success or minor failure that the montage comes into play, letting them learn more quickly.

In the montage sequence the PCs make checks with skills related to the primary investigation skill in order to improve their initial investigation check result. Each related skill check the PC makes gives them a +2 bonus to the result of their initial check, and possibly access to new information. (This system is the reason all investigation tables in Church and State work with 2 point differences in DCs, each successful related roll will get the PCs some level of new information.) GMs who feel adventurous could have badly failed rolls result in wrong information or red herrings, but this should only be done when the GM is sure it will make the adventure more fun rather than more frustrating.

The GM then works with the players to create a brief scene of the PCs using the skills to get the information. A character who makes a Computers roll, for example, might be seen hanging upside down from a rope harness while hacking into the CIA mainframe before escaping with a disk. How long or detailed the scene is depends on the needs of the story and what feels right to everyone involved. A Computers roll might just be the shot above if the information is interesting but not vital, or it could involve a full scene of sneaking in, tricking the guards, moving through the ventilation, and then swinging down to access the computer. All of it, however, is covered by the one roll, as the point is to let the character be super-human cool and to move the plot by gaining information — not to make a whole new scene that everyone else has to sit through.

Each related skill can only be rolled against once (no retries — these aren't full skill rolls, they are bonus rolls), and no more than five related skills can be rolled against. What skills are considered related is up to the GM, but the following skills are generally good for any investigation montage.

Bluff: In any situation in which someone can be tricked into revealing more information than they want to give away,

Bluff can be a related skill. If no one knows the information (such as it only being found on lost scrolls of Atlantis) it cannot be bluffed out of them. DC for Bluff checks as part of a montage should be between 15 and 25.

Computers: In the information age large amounts of data can be found on computers, either by going online or hacking into a secure computer. The only limitation here is that the information must have been entered into a computer. Something known only to illiterate morlocks, for example, won't be in a database. DCs for Computers checks should be between 10 (for going online and using Google) to 25 (for breaking into a secure computer).

Diplomacy: The fine art of making friends and making them tell you things is always a good idea for investigators. Diplomacy is an especially fine choice when working with cops, lawyers, or powerful individuals who might object (with weapons) to being bluffed or intimidated. It's also ideal for talking to people who may have been witnesses and getting reluctant folks to tell you things. DC for Diplomacy checks is normally between 10 and 20.

Disguise: Disguise works much as Bluff does, getting people to tell you things they shouldn't. It works just like Bluff, but looks different when you describe the results.

Gather Information: When this isn't the primary skill it can almost always be a related skill, because it is entirely based on knowing how to find information. DCs will generally be around 15.

Innuendo: This skill works best when there is someone that wants to give you information, but is afraid to. Giving them a way to tell you without telling you may just be the key to getting them to open up. DCs are around 20.

Intimidate: Scaring, or beating, the snot out of people is one of the oldest methods of gaining information known to humankind. The only limit on Intimidation is that you can't intimidate some people without consequences, and people with high Will saves may be immune. DCs will generally be between 15 and 20.

Knowledge: Any knowledge that is tightly related to the investigation in question (like City knowledge for finding a hidden base, or Occult knowledge for finding a sorcerer's weakness) can be a related skill. Area Knowledges are often appropriate, as they can be used to figure out who the important folks to talk to are, as well as whom likely witnesses would be. Not every knowledge works for everything and only one knowledge can be used per montage, no matter how many may be relevant. DCs are around 20.

Read Lips: A great skill for finding things out from just about anyone, because all you have to do is be able to see them. Of course, if no one is talking about the information you need, you can't use this skill to get it. DC is usually 15.

Science: Works exactly the way knowledge does. Forensic sciences are often of use in murder cases, psychology sciences are wonderful for building profiles, and sciences like chemistry, metallurgy, and geology are often good for tracking people through fibers, dirt, or metal shavings left on their clothes or in their tracks. DC is usually 20.

Sense Motive: The best skill for getting information people don't even know they're giving you, this one can be used for everything from reading body language to seeing through lies and understanding complex social relationships. As with the other social skills it can't give you information no living person, or person you can get close to, has to give. DC is usually 15 to 20.

Search: Sometimes the ability to comb over a scene for details others have missed is what separates the Holmes from the Watsons. Unfortunately finding things you missed the first time can be difficult, and DCs tend to be up around 20 to 25.

Powers: There are many ways that powers can be used as related skills, and many of them might not even need a roll. GMs should be flexible in their arbitration, as it is powers that make super-heroes what they are. Powers such as Telepathy, Precognition or Postcognition, Datalink, ESP, and super-skills are almost always appropriate.

If PCs have a good justification other skills can be used as related skills, GMs just need to be sure that what is being done makes sense in the situation. If the PC can think of a cool and super-heroic way to use a skill or power then they should be allowed to do it. Someone using Move Silently to sneak into a secure location and overhear a conversation, for example, could work — even though Move Silently isn't normally an information gathering skill.

GMs can also use a montage to lead players to a specific scene as the culmination of the montage. When the PCs have gotten as much information as they can from the montage or the general roll the montage comes to an end with the start of a scene in which the PCs face the person holding the final clue or key to the information they have collected. Thus the montage can be a tool to get the players where they need to be with the information they need to have. This should be used to help players who get stuck, not to railroad them into making decisions. GMs can help them get the information, but what they do with it must remain up to them.

Example: *In "Through the Tunnels Darkly" the PCs are trying to track down the Made Men's headquarters. The PCs roll a 21 on their Gather Information check (see page 13 for details). The PCs don't find the information to be enough, so they start an investigation montage. One PC uses his Diplomacy to work with a cop who is also investigation the case. The PC makes his Diplomacy check and the GM describes him smooth-talking the cop into letting him see his notes. He adds 2 to the initial roll, making the total result a 23 and learning that the suspects have cars parked in a garage on 19th street. Another PC uses Intimidation, and describes his character hanging a mob snitch out a window by his feet until the man starts to babble. He tries an Intimidation check, but fails it, and learns nothing new as the GM tells him he just makes the poor snitch faint. The first PC then uses Bluff, describing his character tricking a morlock into helping him, and makes his Bluff check. This brings the total to a 25, and gives the PCs the location of the headquarters. At that point the PCs stop, not knowing they could find out more information.*

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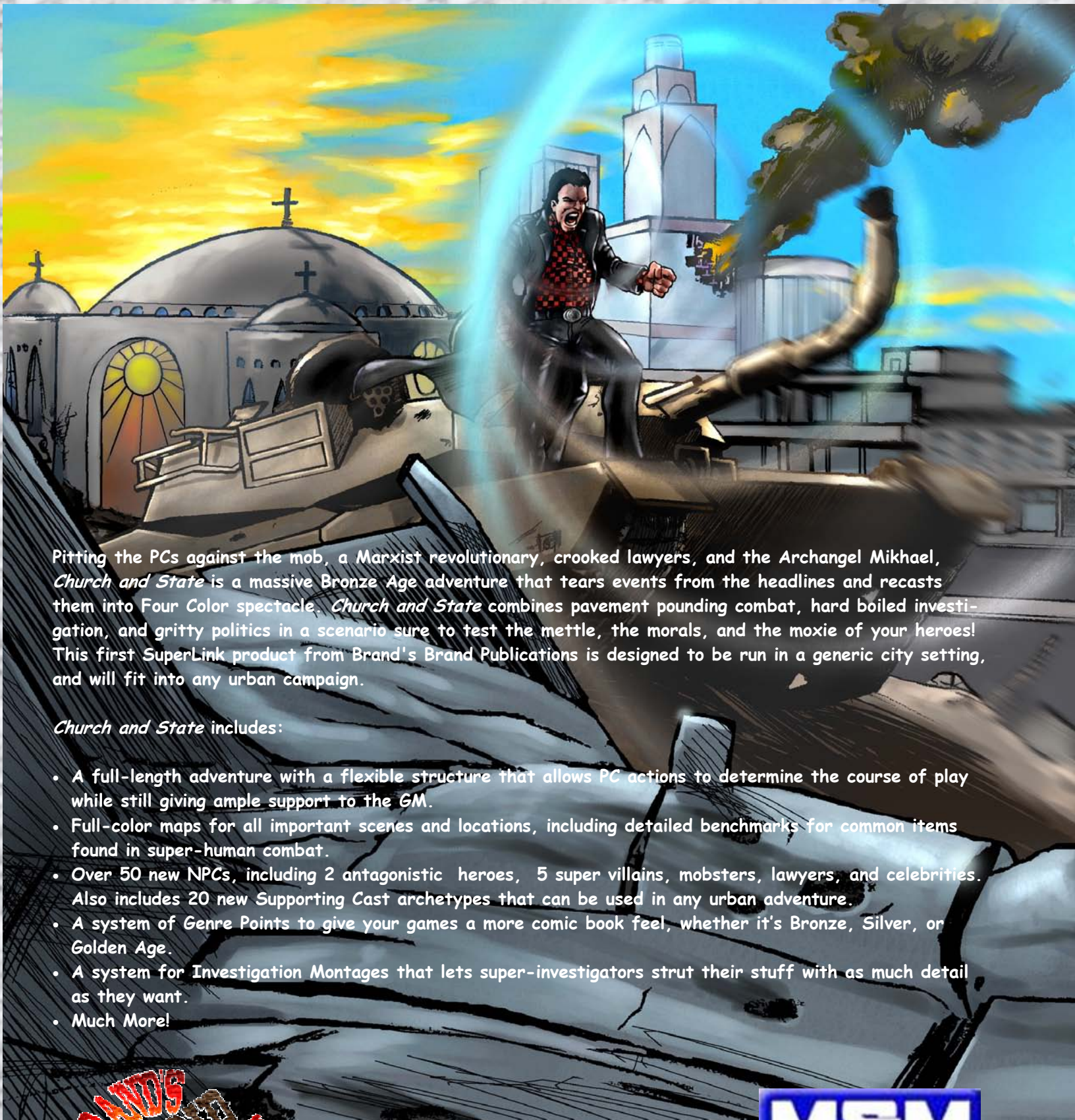
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Pitting the PCs against the mob, a Marxist revolutionary, crooked lawyers, and the Archangel Mikhael, *Church and State* is a massive Bronze Age adventure that tears events from the headlines and recasts them into Four Color spectacle. *Church and State* combines pavement pounding combat, hard boiled investigation, and gritty politics in a scenario sure to test the mettle, the morals, and the moxie of your heroes! This first SuperLink product from Brand's Brand Publications is designed to be run in a generic city setting, and will fit into any urban campaign.

Church and State includes:

- A full-length adventure with a flexible structure that allows PC actions to determine the course of play while still giving ample support to the GM.
- Full-color maps for all important scenes and locations, including detailed benchmarks for common items found in super-human combat.
- Over 50 new NPCs, including 2 antagonistic heroes, 5 super villains, mobsters, lawyers, and celebrities. Also includes 20 new Supporting Cast archetypes that can be used in any urban adventure.
- A system of Genre Points to give your games a more comic book feel, whether it's Bronze, Silver, or Golden Age.
- A system for Investigation Montages that lets super-investigators strut their stuff with as much detail as they want.
- Much More!

