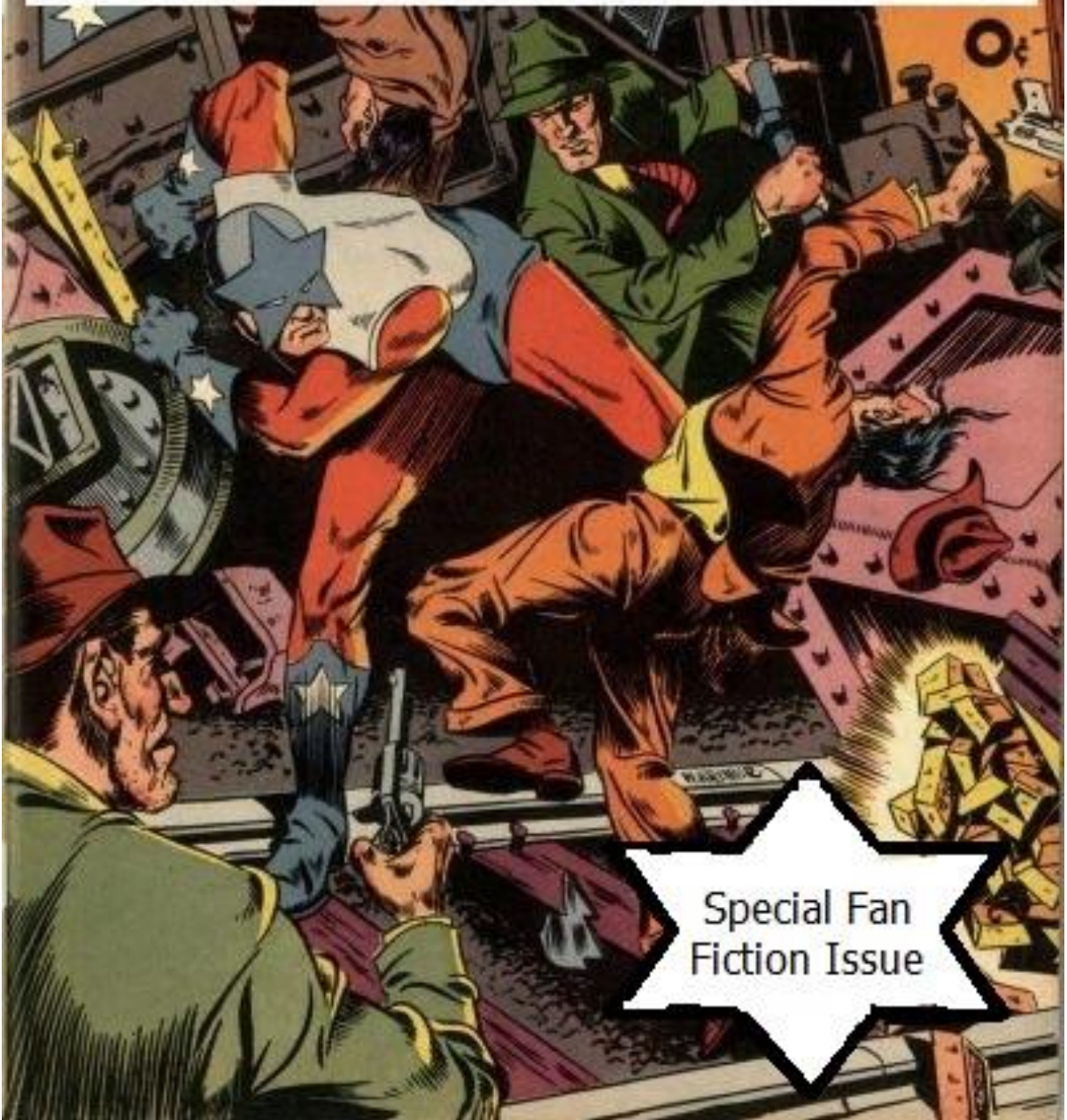


The Trophy Case

Vol. 2, No. 2

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Special Fan
Fiction Issue

In the Hideout...

--Scott Casper--



Welcome to the biggest, oldest 'zine dedicated to Golden Age of Comics role-playing that there is. Yes, when you're the only one, you get all the superlatives to yourself!

Last issue was a particularly big issue that we're extra proud of, but you wouldn't know

anyone shared my sentiment by the lack of feedback. Now, I know plenty of people saw the last issue. It hit the 100 downloads milestone in a record six days! So, I have three theories as to why I don't get feedback. One, people are collecting superhero RPG products, but not reading them all. Two, people are reading TTC, but too lazy to write. Three, people like how it is and trust me to do a good job on it. Of the three, I like the last one best, but it still begs the question, what material should we concentrate on?

This Editor has been reading an awful lot of Golden Age comics lately in preparation for Supplement IV: Captains, Magicians, and Incredible Men. Some have been a pleasure, like the early Samson stories. Some have been welcome surprises, like Kay McKay, Airline Stewardess. Some have just been ...educational about the amount of plagiarism that went on in the Golden Age, especially among the smaller companies. Ace Magazines' Banner Comics featured Captain Courageous, which stole story elements from diverse sources, and Lone Warrior, an amazingly obvious Captain America rip-off!

This Editor has also been thinking a lot about where to take H&H next after Supplement IV. I think I've got some great ideas that I can hardly wait to share. Actually, if you know where to look, I've already leaked my plans online, but maybe I'll make them official 'zine announcements in the coming issues. In the meanwhile, enjoy this issue, which is heavy on a lot of fanfiction. Is this something you would like to see more of in future issues? Oh, there's that need for feedback again!

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Table of Contents

Blocking in One-on-One Melee Combat....	2
Reuter Mansion Fiction, pt. 3....	5
Lone Marshal Fiction....	6
Hints for H&H Editors....	9
Madam Fatal Fiction by David Brashear...	9
Mobster Spotlight...	12
Special Insert: "Daredevil" Barry Finn, Preview of Supplement IV...	12
Comic World....	13
Green Mask...	14

Blocking in One-on-One Melee Combat

Games like H&H benefit from abstract combat rules. It is certainly possible to account for more variables or go into greater detail, and some game systems do, but this slows game play, particularly when there are more than two combatants and a mix of different kinds of attacks going on. But what about when there *are* only two combatants, mixing it up in a fisticuff? What could, optionally, be done to add more realism to that?

One of the most abstract concepts in H&H-like games is Armor Class. It takes only certain values into account, favoring armor more than anything else in terms of one's ability to hit and damage. Realistically, though, wearing a flak jacket would be less of a factor if the attacker was making a head shot or going for a leg injury, but

abstract combat requires all hits be generic attacks. Again, for the most part, to the betterment of the game in terms of ease and speed of play. And yet...

It should always be the Editor's call if and when the below mechanic is to be used. He may wish to reserve it for important battles, such as a Batman-Joker fight, but refuse to use it when a lone thug decides to tackle Batman with his fists.

Armor Class: Since this mechanic does not factor in armor at all, it should only be used when the two combatants' AC is no more than two apart, e.g., AC 9 vs. AC 7, but not AC 6 vs. AC 3.

Attacks per Turn: Since this mechanic is only for two combatants engaging only in melee fighting, it is not as necessary to use turn-based combat. If either combatant decides to use a power or spell or something else that falls outside the purview of a fisticuff, the rest of the battle should be refereed as ordinary turn-based combat. If, for some reason, time still needs to be kept track of during the combat for other reasons, assume each "round" of attack and defend modes takes 30 seconds, with extra feints and dodges thrown in between.

Calling Modes: The attacker and defender both choose their modes in secret, recording the chosen mode on paper and then comparing notes. By keeping it secret, neither side can tailor their chosen modes to an obvious advantage.

However, a higher-level combatant can "tell" moves made by lower-level opponents. A Fighter, or one of its sub-classes, need only be one level or higher to "tell" moves. A Superhero, Mysteryman, or one of their sub-classes need to be two or more levels higher, while a Magic-User needs to be three levels higher. The attacker/defender with this advantage can move his mode one over in either direction on the matrix below, after learning what his opponent's mode is, to try to get a better advantage.

Damage: Still roll for damage normally. Some attacks may have additional effects, outlined below.

Initiative: This is still left to random chance, with each combatant rolling 1d6. The winner is the first attacker in that turn and the loser is the first defender. Re-roll ties.

Surprise: If one combatant has surprise over the other, the surprise is automatically the attacker and the surprised gains no defense mode.

Withdrawing: Instead of attacking, the combatant whose turn it is can opt to withdraw from the one-on-one combat. Return to normal rules.

Attack Modes: Attacks are grouped into high

blows, middle blows, and low blows.



A. High Blows

1. Chin Blow (HCB). The classic comic book pose of the bad guy taking it on the chin. A mouth punch would also count as a HCB. A slap is a HCB that only does half damage.

2. Neck Strike (HNS). This could be an Adam's apple gouge, a side blow to the neck, a throat strike or, from behind, a rabbit punch to the nape of the neck.

3. Face Punch (HFP). This could be an eye gouge, an upper lip strike, a bridge of the nose strike, or a temple strike.

4. Back-of-the-Head Blow (HBB). Bad guys are always managing to get behind good guys and landing one of these right on the skull.

B. Middle Blows

1. Gut Punch (MGP). A punch to either the stomach or the ribs.

2. Kidney Punch (MKP). A punch to the lower back, delivered from behind or even from in front if in very close quarters.

3. Solar plexus (MSP). A nerve strike delivered open palmed, with a fist, or even the knee, which causes the diaphragm to spasm and can disrupt breathing.

C. Low Blows

1. Groin Blow (LGB). Bane of men everywhere. This could be done with a knee or a kick, in some circumstances also a punch.

2. Sweep (LS). An attempt to trip, delivered with the leg. - knockdown?

3. Instep Stamp (LIS). Kick to the foot, toes, or even shin.

Defense Modes:

1. Extra High Block (EHB). Defends vs. high blows.

2. High Block (HB). Defends vs. high and middle blows.

3. Middle Block (MB). Defends vs. middle blows.

4. Low Block (LB). Defends vs. middle and

low blows.

5. Extra Low Block (ELB). Defends vs. low blows.

6. Dodge (D). Ducks or otherwise avoids blow altogether.

Hand-to-Hand Combat Matrix

	EHB	HB	MB	LB	ELB	D
HCB	M	1-5M	1-2M	H	H	1-2M
HNS	M	M	H	St	St	1-2M
HFP	M	M	H	B	St	1-2M
HBB	R	M	H	St	St	1-2M
MGP	H	1M	M	1-3M	H	1-2M
MKP	St	H	R	1-4M	St	1-2M
MSP	K	R	M	K	St	1-2M
LGB	St	K	1-3M	M	M	1-2M
LS	K	H	1-3M	M	R	1-2M
LIS	SI	H	H	1-5M	M	1-2M

Result Explanations

M = Missing. The attack automatically misses, unless there is a number range in front of it. Then the attacker rolls 1d6 and misses only if a number in that range is rolled.

H = Hit. Attack does normal hp damage.

St = Stun. In addition to normal damage, the defender is stunned and can do nothing else in this exchange and automatically loses initiative in the next exchange.

B = Blind. The blinded defender literally sees stars in front of his eyes and will have to roll randomly for his next defense mode.

R = Reverse. The attack not only misses, the defender gets a bonus attack out of sequence.

K = Knockdown. In addition to normal damage, the defender is knocked off his feet. The defender can only use defense modes 4-6 without standing back up, which gives the attacker a free attack with no defense.

SI = Slow. No immediate bonus other than normal damage, though after the combat the victim will move at half speed for 1-6 turns.

Example of Play #1: Batman vs. Joker. Batman's AC is significantly better than the Joker's, so combat occurs using normal rules.

Example of Play #2: A 1st-level Fighter vs. a cowardly hoodlum. The ACs and HD are enough of a match to qualify for the one-on-one hand-to-hand combat rules.

The two sides roll initiative, with the Fighter

getting a 2 and the hoodlum getting a 6. The hoodlum chooses a gut punch and the Fighter counters with a low block. There is a 1-3 chance of missing and the hoodlum rolls a 3, so the Fighter blocked. The Fighter then chooses a face punch and the hoodlum chooses a low block. The Fighter punches the hoodlum hard enough that he sees stars - and takes 3 points of damage after rolling.

In the second exchange, the two sides roll initiative, with the Fighter getting a 6 and the hoodlum getting a 1. The Fighter picks a back-of-the-head blow (Editor-approved flavor text can establish that the blinded hoodlum spun around while disoriented). The hoodlum has to roll randomly for his defense mode on 1d6 and gets a 5. The extra low block does not block the back-of-the-head blow at all and the hoodlum takes another d6 of damage - 2 more points rolled - and is now stunned. The hoodlum loses his follow-up attack.

Because of the stun, the Fighter wins initiative in the next exchange automatically. He follows up with a sweep and the hoodlum chooses an extra high block. The unlucky hoodlum is knocked down - but also takes 3 more points of damage and falls unconscious anyway.

Example of Play #3: Robin vs. the Cat. They meet the AC requirement for using these rules. So long as the battle stays between them, it can be played out this way, though the moment Batman shows up and joins in the fight, there become too many variables in play and combat switches back to normal rules.

Because Robin is significantly higher in level than the Cat (He is! Wait until you see them in

Supplement IV), Robin will be able to “tell” moves and react better.

The two sides roll initiative, with Robin getting a 4 and the Cat getting a 2. The Cat chooses to dodge. It seems like a smart move because dodge always stays the same against everything and Robin can only shift in one direction, left. However, Robin chooses a sweep. He doesn't dare shift to the left because that would give the Cat a reversal, but he rolls a 4, so it does not miss and causes normal damage. Robin's player rolls a 4. Ouch! The Cat is down to 5 hp already.

In the second half of the exchange, the Cat gets to try to attack back. She tries to end it quickly with a kidney punch, hoping for a stun. Robin counters with a low block, but moves it one over to middle block after learning her mode so he can get the reversal. Now he has a free attack and chooses the classic chin blow. The Cat decided to play it safe with a middle block. Robin moves the result one to the right for the hit. He rolls damage and gets a 1.

For the next exchange, they roll initiative again. Robin gets a 1 and the Cat gets a 5. She goes for the instep strike, but Robin's player was expecting a high blow and used a high block. Now he cannot shift the result off of a hit. The Cat rolls damage and gets a 2. Robin, on his turn, goes for a sweep again, but the Cat went for a low block. The best shift Robin can do is one to the left for a 1-3 chance of missing. He rolls a 1 and misses.

For the next exchange, the Cat wins initiative 3 to 2. Feeling her chances of winning are slim, she opts to withdraw from the combat. Robin can chase her down and, if he gains on her, engage her in one-on-one combat again.



Reuter Mansion, pt. 3

[This continuing serial is intended to be instructional in how to distinguish running a H&H hideout from running a D&D dungeon.]

Down one of many corridors on the first level of Reuter Mansion's hideout was a door that was so scratched up, so shot up, so torn away at the bottom that it barely looked like a door anymore. For only a moment the door resisted when Amazing Man pushed on it.

Inside was a big barracks in an oddly-shaped, trapezoidal chamber. The room was wired for electricity and two overhead bulbs lit the room in a yellowish glow that was diffused in a smoky haze. The source of the smoke was the cigarettes of seven men in casual attire of shirts with rolled-up sleeves and jeans. Three men were standing, watching four men sitting around a table playing poker - or were playing poker until Wonder Man walked in.

Everyone paused silently, gawking at the audacity of this stranger who walked so briskly and calmly into their midst that he reached the table before anyone even thought to pull a weapon. Two of them soon had semi-automatic rifles in their hands and pointed them at Wonder Man.

“What do you think you are?” one of them asked Wonder Man.

“Who, me?” Wonder Man asked with feigned innocence. “Why, I'm just the guy who got to keep all your eyes on me so no one noticed I'm not alone.”

As that sunk in, the brigands began to look around. But it was too late. The Arrow had already slipped into the room and fired an arrow into the chest of the closest armed gunman. That man started to pivot to meet the attack and it made him fire his rifle wild into the wall of the room before he dropped it. The other rifleman raised his weapon to aim at the archer, but Wonder Man snatched the rifle out of his hands and bent the barrel into a 'V' shape.

The other brigands were not idle. They tipped over the table as they dove for the rifles on their bunks. Half-empty bottles of booze went flying and glasses broke or bounced off the dirty woven mat under where the table had stood. Amazing Man charged from the open doorway, tackling one of the brigands from behind and bringing him down hard on one spot where the concrete floor was not covered with a mat.

Four of the brigands still managed to reach their weapons. Three of them only had bolt-action Winchester hunting rifles to fend off three superheroes and looked appropriately unconfident, but one of them produced a Colt .45 machine pistol with a 25-round magazine loaded into the butt, and this weapon gave the man confidence. “You'll never take me, costumed freaks!” he shouted as he opened fire.

The first person taken down by the burst of

gunfire was one of his own, a rifleman who got in the way and inadvertently saved Wonder Man from being hit. Wonder Man stepped on one of the legs of the overturned table and flipped it up into the air. As it hovered there for a split-second, the table became a handy shield until it was chewed to pieces by bullets.

Amazing Man tried to use his proximity to the disadvantage of the riflemen, moving in too close to be shot, but as he deflected one rifle barrel away from him with a swat of his hand, he left himself open for a sudden reversal in the hands of his other opponent and a rifle butt crashing down on his forehead.

The first of the two riflemen took an arrow from the corner of the room and dropped his rifle in pain. Amazing Man caught the rifle butt of the second rifleman in his left hand before it could strike him again and popped the man in the face with a hard right. Wonder Man, for his part, leaped to the bunk beds flanking the brigand with the machine pistol. While it at first looked like Wonder Man was just using it for cover, he actually pulled it over so that it crashed down on his assailant and knocked the man off his feet, pinning him down on the floor.

There were already only three injured, unarmed brigands left on their feet and Amazing Man was making short work of the two closest to him with his fists. But there was still the one closest to the exit that Wonder Man had disarmed first. That brigand glanced at Wonder Man, busy kicking the machine pistol away from their leader who was still pinned. He glanced at the Arrow, who was watching Amazing Man's fight. This man was not about to hang around for someone to notice him. He backed up to the door and tried to bolt out - only to find his way blocked by Zanzibar.

"Tell your boss that we're coming for him," Zanzibar said coolly.

The brigand was so shaken at this point that he did not even notice that Zanzibar was unarmed. He merely turned and ran because the opportunity presented itself to him.

Zanzibar leaned into the room and announced, "We've got a runner."

"Good," Amazing Man said. "Maybe this one will lead us to whoever is in charge down here. Let's head out and follow him."

The Lone Marshal

It was a cool, breezy evening on the Cordell Ranch. Tim Crawford, the ranch's best hand, stepped out of the barn for a rest. He would have to move the cattle back into the barn for the night soon, but first he leisurely rolled himself a

cigarette. He cupped his hand around a lit match and lit the rolled cigarette before turning his gaze out onto the prairie and the two figures riding towards the ranch. Out here on the prairie, Tim had spotted them from a half-mile off even in this light, but it took longer before he could make out that they were strangers.

The rider in front wore a dark red vest over a brown shirt and a ten-gallon hat that matched the shirt. The second rider was an Indian, covered in fringed leather clothes that looked Apache in design. As they drew closer, Tim realized they were not heading straight to the ranch house, but out here, towards the north horse pens. At 100 yards, Tim realized they were heading for him personally. That did make sense, since he was the only one out here on this side of the ranch.

"Who might you be?" Tim asked loudly, but cordially. Despite his amiable tone, he had his hand ready to reach for the pistol at his side, should it become necessary.

"I'm the Marshal!" the rider in front said back as he closed more distance between them. The horses beneath both riders just shuffled along slowly, as if tired and needing a rest after a good long ride. The Apache was looking around, particularly at the horses.

"What's a lone marshal doing out here?" Tim asked. "Anything I can help you with?"

"Maybe you can," The Lone Marshal responded. "We're hot on the trail of some rustlers. Had any trouble in these parts yet?"

"Can't say we have," Tim said, "but I don't much like that part about 'yet'."

"Yeah...well, that's what I'm trying to do something about," The Lone Marshal said with a tired sigh. He looked back to his Indian companion. "I don't know, Vajo...maybe we followed the wrong tracks back there when the rustlers' tracks crossed those from the cattle drive. Would those have been your cattle?" he asked, turning back to Tim.

"No, sir. That would have been our neighbors' drive, two weeks ago. Our 300 head are still here for another week 'afore we head out."

"Yeah, I see that..." The Lone Marshal said, looking around. "What's the next town up ahead here?" he added, tipping his hat westward. "Prairie Gulch?"

"Yep."

"That might be where they were headed, either way," Vajo said with a shrug.

"Reckon so...but you keep an eye open, y'hear?" The Lone Marshal told Tim with a long look at the young ranch hand.

"Yes, sir," Tim said, and he watched them go. He tossed his cigarette on the ground when he was done with it. Then he heard some horses whiny at the barn. He moseyed over to take a look.

Tim had a feeling something was wrong when he came to the open barn door. He heard a step by the corner of the building and went for his gun, stepping inside for cover. That was when he took a hard blow to the back of the head and everything went black.

When Tim came around, his hand immediately went for the knot he felt on the back of his skull. It was sensitive to the touch. Then he felt someone touch his arm and realized Mary, the rancher's daughter was talking to him.

"Tim, can you hear me?" she was saying.

"Yeah, I hear you, Mary..." Tim said weakly. It was dark, but not inside-a-barn dark. He was outside again. "How did I get here...?"

"Maybe you'd like to tell us *what* you were doin'." The stern voice belonged to the rancher, Harry Cordell.

Harry Cordell, Mary's father, looked fit to be tied. His face was screwed up so tight it looked like only his mustache was the only thing still holding it in place. "We found you out here lying by the corral gate, with one hand still on the gate, and all our horses missing. It looks to me like you might have had a hand in helping the horse thieves, then there was a falling out, and they let you have it."

"Mr. Cordell, you can't really think that..." Tim said, rubbing his sore head.

"Oh, Tim, Pappa's just saying it looks bad..." Mary offered apologetically.

"What with you not having tried to call out or nothing," Harry interjected.

"But they bushwhacked me!" Tim whined as Mary helped him to his feet. "You gotta' believe me!"

"I do, Tim," Mary said quietly.

"That's enough, Mary," Harry said. "Now go back to the house!"

Two other ranch hands were at Harry's back. Both Jim and Bert started to step around their boss. Tim knew what they planned to do. They were going to hold him until the sheriff could come to pick him up.

"I would never betray you," Tim said, stumbling back, "and I'll prove it even if I have to catch the rustlers myself!" He turned and ran, hoping that no one suspected him enough to shoot him. Luck was with him, for no one did and

he disappeared into the night.

Prairie Gulch was a one-night stay on the way to somewhere better. The only place worth spending any time in was the Little A Saloon, so named because some neglectful sign maker had once made a sign that read "SaLOON" and hung it out in front.

Bill Stoney was enjoying winning the occasional game of poker with the locals and nursing some strong liquor - at least until the Lone Marshal sat across from him.

"Want to deal me a hand, Bill Stoney?" the Lone Marshal asked with good humor.

"You!" was all Bill got out. He almost fell backwards in his chair, but caught his balance and went for his gun under the table. He stopped when he heard a gun cock right next to his head. He glanced over far enough to tell it was Vajo who had flanked him so effortlessly.

"I'll be honest with you, Bill," the Lone Marshal said, leaning forward and tipping up his hat. "When I last saw you in Tombstone, I was hoping it was the last time I was ever gonna' have to see yer' yellow, ugly belly. But you were riding with the Russel Gang back then an' I think you rode with them here."

"You know what I think? That you can go to -"

The Lone Marshal saw Bill's right arm tense and, figuring Bill was making a move with his gun again, kicked the table into Bill's stomach. Vajo followed suite, grabbed Bill's chair, and tipped it over at the same time s that Bill tumbled out onto the floor.

Not a soul in the saloon moved to stop the marshal as he dove over the prone rustler, raised him up a little by one arm bent behind Bill's back, and then slammed him back down onto the wooden floorboards.

"I don't think you understood me," the Lone Marshal said. "Let me rephrase myself. Where is the Russel Gang?"

"Aarr...up on Vulture Ridge!" Bill blurted out to make the pain in his arm stop.

The Lone Marshal eased up on the man, while sharing a look of concern with Vajo. The Marshal banged Bill's head into the floor one more time for good measure and then stood up to leave. Before they reached the door, though, the Marshal turned towards the bar and tossed a silver dollar its way. "That's for any damage to the table."

Once outside, though, the Lone Marshal and Vajo were less charitable to each other.

"We passed Vulture Ridge just before we

reached the Cordell Ranch! Your tracking skills let me down, Vajo."

"Hey, we were both tired from an all-day ride! Who do you think I am? Tonto?"

"In'jun."

"Jerk."

Both men smiled. The familiar patter took the place of apologies or displays of respect. The implications were understood and they unhitched their horses for the ride back to Vulture Ridge.

"Hold it, Marshal!" came a familiar, pained voice behind them.

The Lone Marshal turned around slowly as Bill Stoney stepped out into the street.

"I think I see where this is heading, Bill. You don't want to do this."

"What, be the man who shot the Lone Marshal? Dan Russel will turn over his gang to me when they hear."

The Lone Marshal stepped out into the street, regretting having left Bill's pistol with him but, like Vajo had said, they were tired after a long, hard ride and had made mistakes.

"Ready to slap leather, Marshal?" Bill said, as he assumed the stance, even though his face looked like he was still screwing up the courage to do this.

"There's no way you're outdrawing me, B—" The Lone Marshal stopped when he saw the familiar tell of Bill's shoulder tense. The Marshal went for his gun and reached his holster just as Bill did. The Marshal was faster freeing his gun from the holster and had it aimed a fraction of a second before Bill. Bill was still aiming at the Marshal's leg and rising higher when there was a sharp cry from the Marshal's Colt as it discharged into Bill's shooting arm.

Bill clutched the bloody wound with his left hand, his gun sliding out of his right hand. He stared blankly at The Lone Marshal, then down at his gun.

"Don't even think it, Bill. You've got enough lead in you for one night." The Lone Marshal sounded grim and tired, dreading the odious task of finding the local sheriff and dragging Bill in. But luck was finally with him, because the sheriff had been roused after the fight in the saloon and was finally on his way down the street.

Tim Crawford thought luck was with him as he neared the top of Vulture Ridge without trouble. He had no way of knowing if the rustlers were up here or not, but Vulture Ridge was locally infamous for harboring criminals and

malcontents. If the rustlers were not here, Tim figured he would find someone who might know.

But Tim was too deep in thought as he climbed over a rock at the edge of the ridge and heard a gun cocking nearby.

"Well, look'ee what we got here, Jose," a black-bearded man in a faded yellow shirt and black vest said as he stepped into view.

"*Si*, an intruder," Jose said, as a Mexican in a *sombrero* and leather vest stepped out of concealment, wielding a knife in his hand.

"I'm not looking for trouble," Tim said as he put up his hands slowly. "I'm just looking for some rustlers."

The other two men just laughed. "Well, you found us!" the bearded man said. "Now what are you gonna' do about us?"

"Nothin'," Tim said, a revision of his original plan forming in his frantic mind. "Except come here to join you."

"I don't trust 'heem. Keel' heem," Jose said with a wicked grin and several turns of his knife in his dexterous fingers.

"I don't know..." the other one said. "We've been one shy ever since the Marshal shot Morgan back in Tombstone. Maybe we should take this greenhorn to Dan first. Start walking, mister." The bearded man gestured to the east end of the ridge with his revolver.

To the east, the ridge rounded a corner of the mountain before sloping down onto a wider ledge that looked inaccessible on all other sides. Here was a large camp with the missing cattle packed tight inside a fence. There was one small wooden cabin with a fire pit out front, and several tents set up around it.

"Dan! Dan, we've caught us a prisoner!" the bearded man shouted. "Come out and see!"

A man emerged from the cabin to investigate. He was an older man, with a long, jowly face under his ten-gallon hat. He wore a purple shirt and a red handkerchief around his neck. He walked slowly up to meet the group of three approaching him, looked from man to man, took off his hat, and hit the bearded man with it.

"Klem, you idiot, didn't you recognize this kid? He's the ranch hand you clubbed back there when we took all his cattle!"

Jose burst out laughing, which only made Klem seethe with embarrassment and anger.

"Well, how was I supposed to know?" Klem blustered in his defense. "He had his back to me when I hit him!"

"It don't make no difference why you didn't

recognize him," Ned said, putting his hat back on. "The point is that he's no use to us. Go ahead and kill him."

"Wait!" Tim shouted. He was relieved to see them pause. Even Ned looked quizzically, as if eager for a use to keep Tim alive. "You've got it all wrong," Tim said, his mind racing to come up with yet another new plan. "I wasn't the ranch hand, I'm the owner! Those are my cattle!"

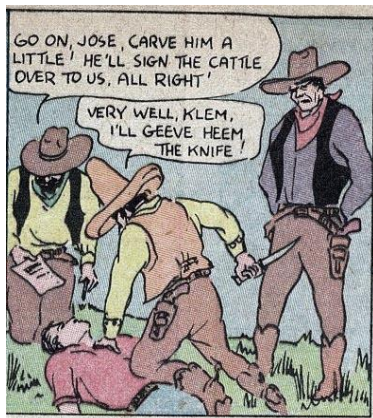
"Well, that's different then..." Tim said. "Hold him, boys..."

Jose kicked Tim's legs out from underneath him and drove him hard to the rocky ground. Then he fell on top of Tim and pinned him to the spot without losing his grip on his ever-present knife.

"Boss never said we had to hold you gentle-like," Klem joked with a sinister laugh.

They all waited there for what seemed like ten minutes before Ned came back out of the cabin holding a pen and paper. "If these are your cattle, boy, then why don't you make this a nice and legal transfer of property? Just sign your name on this contract, and we'll let you go alive..."

WILL TIM GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE? WILL THE LONE MARSHAL SHOW UP IN TIME?



Go to <http://www.digitalcomicmuseum.com/index.php?d lid=5888>, read Dell Comics' The Comics #3 and the serial installment of "The Lone Marshal" to find out!

Hints for H&H Editors: New Traps

No H&H player is likely to admit it, but there are times when fighting mobsters has become too routine, or too lacking in danger. Heroes are virtually un-killable by most mobsters, but traps can be viciously lethal. This serves to keep even veteran players on their toes.

Unusual for H&H, the examples of traps found in Book III were culled from comic strips. At the

time, it seemed to this author that some adventure comic strips were better known for diabolical deathtraps than any particular comic book he could think of. Yet, as a whole, comic books of the Golden Age were also rife with traps. What follows are short descriptions of some of them.

How about a little fire?

Crude, but possibly effective. The Heroes are doused with lighter fluid, while a lit fire moves closer to them. If it reaches them, it could cause 1d8 damage per turn. Can they break their bonds and move out of the way in time? Or endure the pain long enough for the ropes binding them to burn?

Or, to trap Heroes with fire, lure them to something valuable that is on fire. Hopefully, they will rush up to save it so fast they will not notice the ring of gasoline surrounding the site (which is going to be almost impossible to notice outdoors, in the grass). Once the Heroes are within the ring of gasoline, lit it ablaze and trap the Heroes between the two fires!

Try wrecking your way out now!

Superheroes' wrecking ability is a sure-fire escape from many traps and comic book writers were aware of this too. So make traps designed to weaken the Hero's ability to wreck their way out.

The Hero, or Heroes, falls into a pit lined with gas nozzles. The pit fills with gas that weakens Superheroes so that they wreck as if several levels lower. Then cement starts to pour into the pit.

Or...

The old poisoned spiked pit trap, but the poison on the spikes weakens, so that anyone else is rendered immobile and Superheroes wreck as much lower level.

It doesn't have to make sense

The mobsters lock the doors on the Heroes, trapping them in a room with all steel walls. The room grows gradually hotter as the walls are heated. In a few turns, the walls grow hot enough to burst into flame. How did steel burst into flame? Ask Samson; it happened to Samson in Fantastic Comics! Just remind your players, "It's only a comic book", and not to worry so much about physics.

"Collapse" By David Brashear

Richard Stanton took another bow as the audience continued its applause and standing ovation. Stanton waved as the curtains closed

again.

"Great show tonight," a stagehand said as Stanton walked past.

"Thanks," Stanton said with a smile that just wouldn't leave his face. He stopped before a mirror and looked into it. An old woman looked back. Stanton smiled wider as he saw how perfect the makeup was.

It had been an uphill battle to play this role. He'd read long ago of how for centuries men had portrayed all women's roles on the stage. Stanton laid his small pince-nez glasses on the makeup table and followed them with his gray wig. He started scrubbing makeup from his face as his memories continued to roll.

Stanton had decided that this would be the crowning role of his stage career. To be able to convincingly portray an elderly woman on the stage would be a different challenge than he'd ever attempted before. He'd spent months observing elderly women and learning their mannerisms and perfected a different way of speaking with a higher-pitched, shaky voice.

Finally he was ready. The director had refused to even consider him for the role so Stanton had simply dressed up as a woman using the makeup tips he'd acquired over his career, and he'd walked into the office and gave a convincing reading. The director loved it and offered him the part on the spot.

Stanton laughed to himself. The director had gone white when Stanton had thanked him for the part using his natural voice. "Stanton?" the director had stammered. "Is that you?"

The argument was over. They'd even agreed to leave his part uncredited in the program so that the revelation of the little old lady would be a surprise to the audience. It had worked like a charm. The star of the play had introduced him to the audience at the end of the show and it had taken several moments for the stunned crowd to begin applauding him. That had prompted Hollywood to begin pursuing him. He'd been receiving an avalanche of film scripts for what seemed like years.

Stanton inspected himself in the mirror again and the unwrinkled blond-haired reflection he was used to stared back. Stanton smiled and quickly changed into his street clothes.

His one regret was the fact that his beloved Edith hadn't seen his triumph. It seemed like they had only been married such a short time when she had been attacked and killed on the streets of Manhattan. At least he still had his beloved Mary, his two-year-old daughter.

He checked his tie and made sure it was straight before buttoning his suit jacket. He

picked his fedora up off the coat rack and placed it on his head. He made sure it was at the proper angle and headed out of the dressing room.

As always, Stanton stopped outside the back door of the theater and graciously signed a few programs while accepting congratulations on his performance.

"What you got planned next?"

Stanton turned to look into a familiar face: Daniel Dyce, the local DA. Stanton quickly made his farewells to the crowd and the two climbed into the back of Stanton's car. "Have you learned anything?" Stanton asked as the car pulled away.

"Nothing, I'm afraid," Dyce replied as he leaned back in the seat. "Richard, I appreciate all you've done for my campaign, and we've been friends a long time." He paused and considered his next words carefully. "I think you need to begin to accept the fact that we may never learn who killed Edith. The police have got no witnesses and no leads. Unless something comes up, the investigation's at a standstill."

Stanton stared straight ahead with a stony look on his face. Dyce took a deep breath. "You're not listening to a word I'm saying, are you?" he asked.

"I'm not willing to accept that I'll never know who murdered my wife," Stanton said firmly. "I'm not willing to accept that this person will never be punished. I refuse."

Dyce rubbed his eyes. "That's what I thought." He looked out the window as the car slowed at City Hall. "I've got to go, I have a lot of paperwork to review before a case tomorrow." He opened the car door and stepped out onto the curb before he leaned back into the car. "Just think about what I said. Go home, get some rest, play with your daughter and we'll talk again soon."

Stanton didn't flinch as the car door slammed shut. Dyce hurried into the building as the car pulled away from the curb.

Stanton sighed as he closed the door to his home behind him. He took off his coat and hat, placing them on his hall tree. He loosened his tie, trying to move quietly in case Mary was asleep.

He walked into his living room and smiled as he saw Hamlet, his pet parrot, was still awake. "Hello," he said softly as he slid a cracker between the bars of Hamlet's cage. He watched as Hamlet made short work of the treat. "How are you doing tonight, Hamlet?"

Hamlet squawked and said, "Beware the Ides of March."

"Julius Caesar tonight?" Stanton asked. He chuckled. "Let me look in on Mary. Then we may

read a while.”

Hamlet squawked again but remained quiet otherwise. Stanton had just turned to head toward the upstairs bedrooms when he heard a floorboard squeak behind him.

A blackjack slammed into his head and Stanton collapsed as pain filled his world.

Stanton groaned as he returned to consciousness. He was seated in a chair and his hands were tied behind him. He snapped to awareness as he heard Mary scream. His eyes opened and he started struggling to free himself. He heard a laugh as someone stepped in front of him.

“John Carver,” he growled as his tormentor knelt so he could see him plainly.

“It’s been a long time, Stanton,” Carver said. He was dressed as impeccably as ever and could have passed for a film star except for a scar on his face that gave him a permanent smirk. “How long has it been since you stole Edith from me?”

“Is that what this is about?” Stanton asked. “You’re mad because my dead wife loved me instead of you?”

Carver backhanded Stanton, drawing blood from his lip. A thug caught the chair and kept him from tipping over. “She loved me!” Carver hissed. “She only married you because of your money.”

Stanton smirked despite himself. “Maybe she chose me because she didn’t want to marry some two-bit thug like you.”

Carver’s fist balled again but he restrained himself. “You always could set my blood to boiling,” Carver admitted. “But that’s all over now.” He smiled and motioned with one hand and a thug stepped in front of Stanton, carrying the screaming Mary.

“Mary!” Stanton yelled as he tried to free himself again.

“Take a good look,” Carver said. “This is the last time you’ll ever see her.”

As Stanton yelled, the thug behind him cracked him in the head again and the world went black.

Shortly after Stanton woke up again the house was swarmed with police. He’d managed to free himself and call them. As the police swarmed through the house, Stanton sat quietly on a couch. He’d given his statement and the police were now more interested in collecting what evidence they could.

His only bit of satisfaction had occurred shortly

after he’d discovered Hamlet’s cage was empty. Worried that Carver’s men had killed his beloved bird as well, he’d sighed with relief when Hamlet had flown down from a hiding place in the rafters in response to Stanton’s call. He’d gotten a start when he discovered blood on Hamlet’s beak, but a quick check of the bird turned up no wounds. He’d sat quietly, stroking the shaking bird while waiting for the police.

The couch groaned as Dyce sat down beside him. “I came as soon as I heard,” Dyce said. “Are you all right?”

“Tell me you’ll catch them and get Mary back,” Stanton replied in a dull voice.

“We’ve got all cars searching for Carver and his boys,” Dyce said. “We’ll catch them.” He stood and walked across to the bar, where he poured whiskey from a crystal decanter into a glass. He returned and pressed the glass into Stanton’s hand. “Drink this.” Stanton obeyed without complaint. “I’m here to get you out of here,” Dyce said. “I’m taking you and your bird to a hotel. Let the police do their job.” Stanton moved as if in a daze and packed a suitcase before following Dyce to his car.

The daze continued until he was bedded down in the strange bed with Hamlet dozing on a perch he’d brought with him. Suddenly the daze broke and he lay in the bed clutching the bedclothes, racked with sobs.

Days turned to weeks with no results. Carver, Mary and his gang had simply vanished as if they had never existed. Stanton had returned home and fell into a bottle. He’d gotten fired from the theater and his future prospects were drying up, if he would have noticed.

The only thing he cared for was Hamlet. While Stanton stopped caring about his own personal appearance, the bird received the best of care.

One night Stanton finished another bottle and he threw it across the room and sat up. He rubbed his unshaven face and looked at Hamlet to discover the bird looking back at him.

“And what are you thinking?” he slurred.

“Towards die many times before their deaths. The valiant taste of death but once,” Hamlet replied.

“Julius Caesar again?” Stanton asked. “I wish I knew what your fascination with him is.”

“Danger knows full well that Caesar is more dangerous than he,” Hamlet said. Stanton looked down and saw a theater photo that had been taken of him in his guise as the old woman and Hamlet’s words began to sink into his brain,

forcing him out of his alcoholic haze.

Stanton walked out of the room and quickly packed suitcases with clothes. One in particular he filled with some of Edith's simpler clothes. A hatbox was filled with his gray wig and the old woman's glasses. He quickly filled the trunk of his car with the clothes and indulged himself by grabbing a box of books as well.

He returned to the room and picked up Hamlet's cage. "I think you're right, old friend," Stanton said. "And you've given me an idea, but first we need to go away." He gently placed the cage in the back seat and it was soon joined by Hamlet's food.

Stanton emptied his safe of money and papers, then grabbed one picture of himself with his family. With that under his arm, he grabbed bottles of alcohol from his bar and soaked the house's carpets with it.

Stanton walked out to the front porch and pulled out his lighter and a book of matches. He used the Zippo to light the matches and threw them into the house. The matches landed on the carpet and fire bloomed. Stanton climbed into his car and drove away as flames spread through the house.



The first stage of his plan was finished. Now he could move on to stage two. From the backseat, Hamlet affirmed him in his own way. "Cry havoc...and let slip the dogs of war."

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Mobster Spotlight

Comic Sidekicks

Armor Class: 5 [14]
Hit Dice: 1-1
Attacks: 1 weapon (rarely)
Special: Cannot be harmed
Move: 55

HDE/XP: 1/40

While Batman's Robin or Magno's Davey can be really handy to have around, sometimes you might just get stuck with a sidekick like Plastic Man's 'Woozy' Winks or Samson's J. Rembrandt Speedball. These sidekicks can seldom be counted on in a pinch, failing at anything they are asked to do 90% of the time.

However, they do have one clear advantage. The comic sidekick is invulnerable to harm. Bullets never hit them, they can escape any deathtrap, and explosions only send them flying through the air to safety. They may have a magical explanation, like Woozy, or just be the result of lazy writing, like Speedball.

But know Hero can know for sure that his comic sidekick is really invulnerable. So if one is captured and threatened, his Hero must save vs. plot to act as if his sidekick is not in mortal danger.

Comic sidekicks are a selfish lot and are always Neutral.

Coppers

Armor Class: 9 [10]
Hit Dice: ½
Attacks: 1 weapon
Special: none
Move: 55
HDE/XP: >1/20

Police officers normally advance as Fighters, and coppers typically share the stats of beat cops, but when a Hero is within 200 ft. of a copper, the copper becomes a bumbling incompetent. A copper's chance of noticing things or searching for secret doors drops to 1 in 8. The copper has a +1 morale save bonus, making him more likely to stick around when there is trouble and get in the way.

Worst of all, whenever a copper is within 30 ft. of a Hero, the Hero must save vs. plot each turn or the copper somehow gets in his way. If the Hero is trying to run, he trips over or bumps into the copper. If the Hero is trying to shoot a zombie, the copper gets in his way and gets his hat shot off instead. The effects should always be comical. No shooting the copper!

Coppers are always Lawful, well-meaning law enforcement officers.

SPECIAL INSERT "DAREDEVIL" BARRY FINN PREVIEW OF SUPPLEMENT IV

By Scott Casper

Because Barry did well in the early polls to determine who would go into Supplement IV, I did

write an entry for him. Ultimately, though, I have decided I should pull him from the roster because most of the issues he appeared in are not available for reading online (that I could find) and this, then, broke my rule of chiefly working from original sources. Enjoy this entry as a sampling of what you will be getting with Supp. IV.

"Daredevil" Barry Finn

First appearance: Amazing Mystery Funnies v. 2 #4 (April 1939)

Appearances to date: Amazing Mystery Funnies v. 2 #4-6, 9, 10, 12, v. 3 #1

Globetrotting explorer Barry Finn comes to prominence in the spring of 1939 when he and his young friend, Tommy Grey, stumbled onto the spy ring of mad scientist Dr. Ignatio Zaroff. During this time, Barry rescues Dr. Zaroff's greatest creation - an android merman named Frogga. More precisely a synthetic amphibious man, Frogga possesses great strength, but also low intelligence, and becomes Barry's loyal follower. Frogga can pass for a tall, well-built, bald human -- except for the yellowish cast of his skin; his big, round eyes; pointy, serrated ears; and (presumably) gills. Frogga cannot stomach alcohol and prefers lemon soda.

Dr. Zaroff is presumed dead after his submarine takes on water in the late fall of '39.

Barry is also adventuresome with the ladies. He has two love interests, the American Dorian West and a European woman named Joan. Dorian is also a globetrotter, though usually in the company of her father, the scientist Dr. West. By the end of 1939, Joan leaves the field open to Dorian, feeling Barry loves Dorian more.



By the end of 1939, Barry has a femme fatale in the form of Dr. Zaroff's adult daughter, Dacia. Dacia is contacted by the Japanese military, who want to use her to help sabotage the U.S. fleet stationed at Hawaii. Luckily, Barry and friends stumble across the plot and stop it in time. Dacia then goes to the Germans and offers them her services in exchange for revenge on Barry Finn, but even having her own U-boat is not enough to stop Barry and Frogga.

Barry's published adventures lasted less than a year, though. One could assume that domestic

bliss with Dorian West ended his adventures more successfully than Dacia Zaroff's murderous schemes ever could.

Supporting Cast Members:

Tommy Grey, kid sidekick
Dorian West, girlfriend

Dr. West, Dorian's father and 1st level Scientist
Frogga, android/merman 3rd level Fighter

"Daredevil" Barry Finn, human fighter: AL N; AC [AAC] 9 [10]; F 2; hp 11; S 14, I 12, W 12, C 15, D 13, Ch 13. SA: Keen senses, hide in shadows, combat machine. Items: Nice clothes, plane.

Comic World Superman's Draft History

[The following is reprinted from the Superland Yahoo!Group and includes material that would be inappropriate for Supplement IV, as it includes too much supposition unsupported by the original stories. Still, there is a good amount of material here that does not contradict the original stories and is worth further consideration.]

In 1917, John and Mary Kent found an alien rocket with an infant in it, on their farm in Smallville, Ohio. The Kents buried the rocket and adopted the baby, naming him Clark. As Clark grew up, he began displaying tremendous -- and later superhuman -- strength. His loving parents taught him to be humble about his abilities, and use them to help others.

In high school and college, Clark was inspired by the top crimefighters of the 30's -- Doc Savage and the Shadow. He wished to help people openly, like Doc Savage, yet anonymously, like the Shadow. Finally, Clark was inspired by a local comic strip called Doctor Occult, in which the magician-hero wore a colorful, caped costume.

Clark's parents died while he was in college pursuing a degree in journalism. He returned to his hometown to deal with family matters and sewed his first Superman costume. Clark's epiphany had been to make his crime-fighting persona so larger than life, so outrageous, that no one would suspect he led a double life at all.

In 1934, as Clark Kent, he got a job at the Daily Star in Cleveland, Ohio and promptly fell in love with fellow reporter, Lois Lane. His first public appearance as Superman, though, occurs in February of 1935 at the Governor's Mansion in Columbus.

The defining evidence of when Superman's adventures began, for me, is the story in Action Comics #1 and 2 and the war it describes in South America. Although called San Monte, the country is clearly either Bolivia or Paraguay and the war described is the Chaco War of 1928-

1935. Since Superman is showed ending the war in the original story, this has to have happened at the end of the Chaco War, and forms the first conclusive date in the chronology. Other early Siegel stories were also topical. A bad mine collapse really happened in Ohio in July 1937, similar to the event in Action Comics #3.

When Lois was hired away by Perry White, editor of the Daily Planet, Clark arranged to follow suit. A young photographer named Jimmy Olsen often worked with Clark and Lois, and the trio would soon get into nearly as many scrapes as Clark did alone as Superman. In fact, the number of times Superman had to rescue Lois when Clark was not around eventually led her to suspect the two were the same man.

By 1938, Superman could lift 18 tons, his skin could deflect .44 caliber bullets at short range, he could clear 900 feet in a jump, and run at 75 MPH. His earliest enemies included, not one, but two mad scientists - the Ultra-Humanite and Lex Luthor. The elderly Ultra-Humanite had invented a mind transferring machine and intended to use it on his protégé, Luthor, but Luthor double-crossed the Ultra-Humanite and trapped his mind in the body of an actress, Dolores Claborne, whom they were using as a hostage against Superman.

Green Mask



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