

# ASCENDANT

## ROGUES GALLERY



*July Coronado*  
2012

The logo for 'Ascendant' features the word 'ASCENDANT' in a bold, black, sans-serif font with a yellow outline. A red, curved swoosh arches over the letters, and a bright white starburst is positioned above the 'D'.

# ASCENDANT

**Ascendant Rogues Gallery™**

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MONTGOMERY MONSTER • Published September 2010

# “Montgomery Monster” Sentenced to Death

By [Sasha Carter](#) and [Tyler Dennis](#) | [Rox News](#)

MONTGOMERY, AL – One of the most prolific serial killers in Alabama history, a 43-year-old man dubbed the “Montgomery Monster,” is headed to the death row.

Alabama Circuit Court Judge Henry Hippogriff upheld the jury’s recommendation of the death penalty for Robert Ward Britain, who once worked as a butcher at Renfield’s Market in East Montgomery. Britain was convicted on 18 counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted murder. Hippogriff imposed the death penalty on all counts of first degree murder.

The gory details revealed at the trial have shocked and horrified the residents of Montgomery, Alabama. From June 2001 to October 2007, Britain abducted 18 women, mostly college-aged, and carried them back to his lair at an abandoned slaughterhouse on Selma Highway where he used to work. There he ritualistically killed and butchered his victims for sale at his butcher counter.

His killing spree came to an end in October 2007, when one of Britain’s victims, 20-year-old Dancy Winehouse, escaped from captivity and reported him to the police. According to Winehouse, she only survived because she experienced a flare-up of lupus, whose characteristic rash made her “unsuitable” to her would-be killer. Following her report, Britain was arrested on October 31st. He confessed to his crimes under police interrogation.

Despite the brutal nature of his crimes, Dr. Felicia Rich, a psychiatrist employed by the Alabama Department of Corrections, told the court that Britain was legally sane and capable of distinguishing right from wrong.

Britain plead guilty to all charges, testifying that he had slain his victims as a sacrifice to the “shadow people,” so that he could “join them” after he died. When the death sentence was pronounced, Britain told Judge Hippogriff, “I’m ready to die. My work is done.”

Britain has said he does not plan to appeal the verdict.

The convicted killer has been moved to the William C. Holman Correctional Facility in Escambia County, Alabama, where he waits on Death Row pending his execution.



## Anti-nuclear activist caught in Fukushima meltdown suffers life-threatening radiation poisoning

64 Daily Tōhoku | 3.13.2011

The young woman found floating in the Pacific Ocean a mile from Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor plant has been identified as Alice Breyer, a 21-year-old exchange student at Fukushima University and self-professed anti-nuclear activist. To protest Japan's use of nuclear power, Ms. Breyer had chained herself to the Fukushima plant's border fence two days ago. Her brave but tragic protest led to her enduring a dose of over 600 rads when the reactor melted down on March 11. Doctors at Iwase General Hospital have refused to comment on her prognosis, but a nurse familiar with her condition said, "Survival is unlikely at this time."



## Shock and horror as prominent local businessman and wife found dead in East End penthouse

300+ Capital City Times | 5.9.2012

Residents of Capital City's tony East End district are grieving the loss of two prominent local citizens killed in a double homicide authorities are calling "shocking and savage." Charles and Valentina Knight were found dead in their penthouse apartment by the family maid, the apparent victims of a home intruder who slew the pair with close-range gunfire before looting their home for valuables. Mr. Knight, a private banker and wealth manager, has long been a fixture of Capital City society. His wife, a former runway model, was known for her philanthropic work for the city's underprivileged. They are survived by their daughter, Angelyne Knight, an aspiring model and socialite.



## Roll Tide with a full ride! Blue Devils' Frank Pendleton joining the Crimson Tide as a defensive lineman

142 Columbus Ledger | 8.14.2012

The hard-hitting heroics of Columbus High School varsity football defensive lineman Frank Pendleton made the Blue Devils' defense the most feared force in Class AAA this year. Though Columbus lost the state title to a fourth quarter field goal by rival Cedar Grove, it wasn't for lack of QB sacks. Now Frank is bringing his 6'4" 270 lbs of power to the University of Alabama, where he'll join the Crimson Tide as a defensive lineman while enjoying a full athletic scholarship.



## Whistleblower warns: Large Hadron Collider has NOT been shut down and we are ALL in danger

300+ Vault51.com | 12.17.2012

CERN's celebrated Large Hadron Collider has shut down after a successful three-year run that saw it discover the elusive Higgs Boson. That's the official story, anyway, announced today by Stephen Mayer, CERN's Director for Accelerators and Technology. But a source inside CERN told Vault51.com that the LHC will remain in operation through December 22, 2012, to conduct secret experiments away from the public eye. According to this whistleblower, "the real mission of LHC was never about finding a 'God Particle' – it was about playing God."



## Blinded by the light! Air Defense officer left sightless after eye-witnessing Chelyabinsk meteor crash

200+ New Moscow Daily News | 2.16.2013

When Valeriya Vavilova put on her parka yesterday morning, she expected to spend the day cross-country skiing at Lake Chebarkul. But when the Chelyabinsk meteor made its final impact into the lake, everything changed. The explosion left Vavilova, a meteorologist in the 8th Military Space Defense Brigade, flash blinded in both eyes. Fortunately, the damage is only temporary. Doctors at the Chelyabinsk Regional Clinical Hospital have assured the young officer she'll make a full recovery.

## Project Ascension Files

Today, August 8, 2020, WikiFree publishes a searchable archive of 2,150 unique verified files and emails associated with the classified DARPA program Project Ascension.

From: r.anderson@mail.darpa.mil  
To: g.hawkins@us.army.mil  
Subject: Update on #3  
Date: Tue, 26 Mar 2013 13:13 +0000 (GMT)  
Cc: t.coffey@natlab.alamos.gov, r.kingsley@us.army.mil

General:

I hope your flight to D.C. made good time and that the meetings with the DSO have gone well. I wanted to update you on the progress of test subject #3 since you left.

The results of #3's biopsy came back, and they show the highest levels of metaplasts active in his cells that we've yet recorded. Unlike the two other ascendants we have tested, #3 seems to be able to \*directly\* control energy. Granted, it's not a lot of energy, not yet anyway, but Tige thinks #3 will become more adept with time.

Major Kingsley completed the psychological profile and background check you ordered. He'll be sending the complete report later this week. I've read the first draft and the only point of possible concern is that #3's father is a retired Swedish general who served as minister of defense in 2004.

Assuming the tie to a non-NATO power isn't a dealbreaker for DC, I recommend we remove subject #3 from the test phase and shift him into an internal position.

I know you would have preferred that our first viable ascendant be a result of our program. I think you can make a case to DSO that #3 was just that. In his intake interview, #3 told Kingsley that his ascension occurred on the evening of 12/22/2012. Adjusting for the difference in time zone, that puts it nearly simultaneous with #1's ascension during the Leavenworth Incident. It could be coincidental, but it probably isn't. We're still pondering what it means. But we may as well take credit for it.

V/r,

Col A

// SIGNED //

ROBERT T. ANDERSON, Col, US ARMY

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## Quantum Physicist Henry Stapp Says Existence of Parallel Universes, Universal Mind Cannot be Discounted

300+ Science Pioneer | 3.22.2014

A colleague of Wolfgang Pauli, Werner Heisenberg, and J.A. Wheeler, Dr. Henry Stapp is highly respected for his work in the development of axiomatic S-matrix theory and proofs of strong nonlocality properties. But the 86-year-old quantum physicist has drawn sharp criticism for his heterodox views of mind, matter, and the collapse of the quantum wave function. Most recently, Stapp has been open about his belief in the possibility of parallel universes as well as the necessity of a universal mind that observes reality even when no one else is looking.



## Three Unit 2012 Soldiers Killed, Fifteen Wounded by Hamas IED in Booby-Trapped Tunnel

300+ Jerusalem Gazette | 7.31.2014

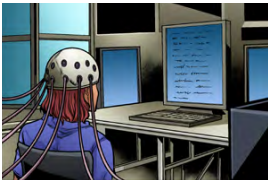
Unit 212, under the brilliant leadership of Major Martin van Lindt, its highly-decorated commander, has devastated Hamas forces throughout Operation Protective Edge. Now, tragedy has struck the renowned fighting force, with three soldiers killed and fifteen wounded by an IED explosion in a booby-trapped tunnel. Among the casualties are Major Lindt himself, who was leading the operation personally. He is said to be in critical condition in an undisclosed military hospital. Five other soldiers from the unit remain in critical condition.



## Firefighting Hero Saves Two Children as Firestorm Engulfs Elementary School

121 Omaha World Herald | 10.20.2014

It was a firestorm no one should have survived – but two children did, thanks to the incredible bravery of the third survivor, local area firefighter Bill Goddard. Rescue workers found Goddard on his hands and knees inside the wreckage of Medicine Valley Elementary, with two schoolchildren sheltering beneath his back. The children were unharmed and so, miraculously, was Mr. Goddard, a man that authorities are calling a “true hero” who was willing to “sacrifice his life to save others.” The cause of the Medicine Valley Elementary fire is still under investigation, but evidence points to ignition of an undetected gas leak.



## Parapsychology Researcher Claims Russia is Pioneering “Psychotronic Weapons”

208 Vault51.com | 12.12.2014

Dr. Peter Lamarck, a professor at the University of Edinburgh, recently appeared on the Vault51 podcast to discuss his work at the Koestler Parapsychology Unit, part of Edinburgh’s School of Philosophy, Psychology, and Language. During our 48-minute talk, Lamarck revealed that Russia was now the world’s leader in parapsychology research. “Scientists at the L.L. Vashilev Research Center, in Siberia, have reportedly replicated Robert Pavlita’s famous work on psychotronic energy generators, sometimes called ‘cerpans,’” Dr. Lamarck said. The full interview with Dr. Lamarck is available now for subscribers to our premium channel.

## THE GIRL WITH THE GOLDEN GUN: Japanese-American Air Force Star Wins Gold!

[Garrett Spears](#)

11 Aug 2016 17:01 | Updated 11 Aug 2016 18:31



2 COMMENTS

**Four years ago, she'd NEVER EVEN HELD a rifle. Today she's one of the best shooters in the world.**

Some people train their whole lives to win the gold medal. U.S. Air Force Sergeant Arisa Takeda trained for just three years. Today, the 22-year-old Japanese-American prodigy won the gold medal in women's three-position rifle at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics. She is only the second woman in American history to claim that prize.

Takeda's victory today marks the culmination of her meteoric rise in the shooting world. When she enlisted in the United States Air Force in 2012, she had never held a rifle before, but she soon proved a natural born triggerpuller, earning perfect scores at every visit to the range. A year later, she became one of the few women to ever complete the USAF's 11-day Advanced Designated Marksman course at Ft Bliss, TX.

In August 2014, Takeda caught the attention of the US Air Force World Class Athlete Program, and she was transferred to Colorado Springs to train with the USA Shooting Team at the National Training Center's U.S. Olympic Shooting Center. In April 2015 she competed with the USA Shooting Team in Women's Three Position Rifle at the ISSF World Cup in Changwon, South Korea, taking home the silver medal. She tried again six months later at the 6th CISM World Military Games in Seoul, South Korea, but again gold eluded her. In Rio, she finally hit the bullseye.

"I won my victory today on behalf of every girl out there who wants to be a hero, a soldier, a pilot, but thinks they can't," Takeda told reporters in an interview on Rox News. "You can, girl, you can!"

Takeda has received dozens of offers for endorsement contracts and promotional appearances, but says she has no plans to leave the Air Force anytime soon. "I'm going to head home to join the Phoenix Raven counter-sniper team," the sergeant explained. "The Air Force gifted me with the opportunity to discover my talent and I'm going to continue to use those talents to help protect our country."



Credit: Associated Media

# A Soldier, Not a Viking: SEC Player of the Year Frank Pendleton Turns Down \$20M Contract to Enlist in US Army



Mike Dough  
ESPC Writer

August 23, 2016



The 6'6" 310-lb crimson-clad figure of Frank "Fireball" Pendleton has terrorized quarterbacks in the Southeast Conference throughout the 2015 – 2016 season. As defensive lineman for the Alabama Crimson Tide, Pendleton led all of Division I in QB pressure (QB knockdowns + hurries + sacks). In five separate games, quarterbacks fumbled the ball just from fear of being sacked by the player dubbed "Fireball" – a moniker earned because, per ESPN's own Brian Wakulik, "any football near him is too hot to handle." When Pendleton earned the title of SEC Player of the Year and won the Chuck Bednarik Award for best defensive player in college football, his place at the top of the 2016 NFL draft seemed assured.

The only question on every sports fan's mind was: Which team would Frank play for? Both the Denver Broncos and Minnesota Vikings publicly expressed interest in adding him to their defensive lines, while sources within the NFL tell ESPN that six other teams were also interested.

But Pendleton decided to join a different team with a different purpose. The 21-year-old announced this morning that he had joined the US Army, with plans for a career in the Infantry branch. Although as a college graduate, he could have sought a commission, Pendleton enlisted as a private. He told reporters, "I want to fight at the front lines, not manage the paperwork." Pendleton's father, Richard "Dick" Pendleton, was a ranger in the 75th Ranger Regiment, and the son aims to be the same.

Fans are calling Pendleton a patriot the likes of which we haven't seen since Patrick Tillman, but Pendleton's critics have been quick to slam the athlete for the decision. Former Texas A&M quarterback Charles Manning, who suffered a career-ending knee injury when Pendleton sacked him last fall, told ESPN "Pendleton is a psychopath on the playing field and off. Just ask his last two girlfriends. The last thing anyone should do is teach him to use a gun."

Two University of Alabama cheerleaders came forward at the start of the season with allegations that they had suffered domestic abuse while dating Pendleton, but both claims were quietly dropped the following month.

WORLD NEWS FEBRUARY 4, 2017 / 3:12 PM

# Hypersonic Weapons Used in Eastern Ukraine to Defeat Separatist Forces

Radina Georgina, Dennis Lapis, and Victor Butane



AVDIIVKA (Roysters) – Ukrainian forces suffered a shocking defeat in the battle for Avdiivka today when the separatist forces deployed a hypersonic weapon to destroy a number of Ukrainian T-72s. Video footage from the battle shows a fast-moving blur moving across the battlefield and then impacting a tank with destructive force.

Avdiivka has been besieged since 2014 by Russian-backed separatists from the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic. The town is the furthest Ukrainian stronghold in the embattled Donetsk territory. Its eastern industrial zone, Promzona, controls the Donetsk-Horlivka highway, which serves as the line of communication between two DRP army corps. From Promzona, Ukrainian troops have been able to interdict separatist supplies.



The most recent separatist assault began on January 28 when 5 Ukrainian soldiers were killed by shelling. Ukraine's elite 72nd Mechanized Brigade successfully defended the town from incursions on January 29, February 1, and February 3, but the Ukrainian troops were helpless against today's super-speed onslaught.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko called on the global community to condemn Russia's intervention into the conflict with hypersonic weapons. "The use of experimental hypersonic missiles against our forces by Russia must be seen as a war crime on par with the use of chemical or nuclear weapons," he said in a speech this morning.

Andrei Novikov, a spokesperson for the Russian Ministry of Defense, denied charges that Russia had deployed hypersonic weapons in Ukraine. "While we have hypersonic weapons under development, they are not being field-tested at this time. The glorious victory at Avdiivka was brought about by the courage and sacrifice of the soldiers of the Donetsk People's Republic," he said.

Western defense analysts claim that Russia has a number of highly advanced weapons research programs in active development, including hypersonic missiles, earthquake torpedoes, powered exoskeletons, and psychotronic devices.



## No, Army Ranger Jack Roland didn't fall a mile in the sky, land on his feet, and keep fighting

300+ SNOOPS | 5.8.2017

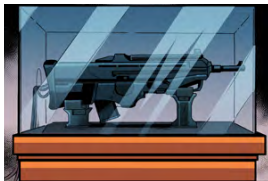
A rumor circulating online claims that, during last month's successful raid on ISIS-K's Abdul Hasib, enemy fire knocked US Army Ranger Jack Roland out of a helicopter troop bay and into thin air at a mile high. The ranger allegedly landed on his feet, ran through heavy machinegun fire, and rejoined his unit in time to single-handedly capture Hasib. Snoop's has investigated this claim and rates it FALSE. While a ranger was knocked out of a helicopter during the raid, official sources have clarified that the altitude had been mis-reported and the actual fall was 5 feet, not 5,000 feet.



## Well-respected husband and wife archaeologists missing and feared dead in expedition to Yellow Mountains

300+ Xinhau | 6.26.2017

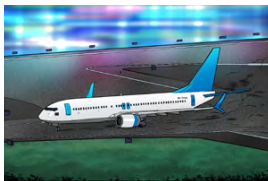
Liáng Xù and Zhù Yuè are not just two of China's finest archeologists. They are also an inseparable husband-and-wife team who tackle every expedition together. But now the pair are missing and feared dead after they failed to return on schedule from an expedition in the historic Yellow Mountains. The Ministry of Culture has ordered a search and rescue but because of the perilous terrain, the families have been cautioned to prepare for the worst.



## New technology by arms biz whiz promises a revolution in military affairs – but is it in the wrong hands?

192 USMilitary.com | 10.14.2017

After a three month hiatus from the public eye, controversial Dark Emerald CEO Ryland Praetorius has stunned the defense industry with a number of patent filings for arms-related technologies, including spidersilk ballistic armor and caseless firearm mechanisms that could revolutionize light infantry warfare. But critics argue that Dark Emerald's history of private military contracting to authoritarian regimes should preclude it from patent protection for its technology.



## Sudden climate change blamed for near-crash of Russian jetliner

140 UKBC | 10.28.2017

Pobeda Airlines Flight DP6811 was scheduled to land at Petrozavodsk, Karelia when freezing rain suddenly coated its control surfaces with ice. Just as suddenly the rain halted and temperatures rose by 4° C, melting the ice and enabling the plane to land. Passengers were in a state of panic, with one unfortunate flyer "white eyed" and "catatonic" with terror. Weather experts warn that incidents like these will become more common due to climate change. "We may only have a few years left where we can safely fly," said climatologist Graham Mercy.



## Tragic Helicopter Crash Claims the Lives of American Heroes

300+ USMilitary.com | 11.11.2017

G Squadron of the US Army's 1st Special Operational Detachment was on a routine training mission in South Korea when its Blackhawk helicopter suffered a rotor malfunction yesterday, causing the aircraft to crash. Pentagon officials have confirmed today that all of the personnel on board have been lost and the bodies are irrecoverable. A Chinese Communist Party spokesperson claimed the accident actually took place during an illegal test of high-tech weapons on Chinese territory, but Secretary of Defense Esperanto called the allegations baseless.

## Project Ascension Files

Today, August 8, 2020, WikFree publishes a searchable archive of 2,150 unique verified files and emails associated with the classified DARPA program Project Ascension.

### SECOND REPORT ON PSYCHOENERGETIC PHENOMENON PROJECT ASCENSION

PREPARED BY DEFENSE ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY  
ENHANCED HUMAN PERFORMANCE INVESTIGATION GROUP

SUBJECT: PROGRESS UPDATE 4-19-2017

TO: RECIPIENTS OF DST-1810S-202-78

copy 1082

This report summarizes the current state of understanding of the psychoenergetic phenomenon.

1. There are four genes, ASKC-6, KAH-R2, CYF11, and SKRA, known to be correlated with ascension. They are known as QAP genes, for Quantitative Assessment of Power (QAP). Not every human being has all of these genes in his genome. There is some evidence that these genes may have been introduced artificially by [REDACTED]
2. If a subject has any of the genes, each can be unexpressed, expressed, or overexpressed. By default, most people with the QAP genes have historically had unexpressed genes (e.g. they are introns).
3. QAP gene expression can be changed epigenetically in several ways:
  - RF Fields: Long-term exposure to electromagnetic radiation in the radio frequency range (100 kHz to 300 GHz), including television, mobile phones, microwave ovens, radar, radio, and magnetic resonance imaging causes epigenetic change to QAP gene expression. RF power density on Earth was one thousand times higher than natural levels by the 1950s, one billion times natural levels by the 1980s, and a quadrillion times natural levels by the 2010s. This is the primary reason ascendants have proliferated in the last decade. **wow!**
  - Chemicals: Exposure to chemical agents may modify multiple biological processes that affect epigenetic mechanisms, including DNA methylation, histone codes, and miRNA expression. These changes may, in turn, modify gene expression of QAP genes. Increasing rates of background exposure to environmental chemicals have contributed to the increase in ascension, although the effects are dwarfed by the increase in RF fields. Deliberate exposure to chemicals (e.g. the Project Ascension serum) in conjunction with electromagnetic stimulation can rapidly trigger QAP gene expression. [Manticore]
  - Focused Meditation: Meditation, which modulates the body's electromagnetic fields, can cause QAP genes to become expressed, or partially expressed genes to become fully or even over-expressed.
  - Stress: Exposure to stress hormones such as glucocorticoids and corticosterone has been proven to alter the expression of the four QAP genes. The results can be triggered by both chronic low-level exposure and acute high-level exposure.
  - These causes of epigenetic change can work in tandem on one, some, or all four genes.
4. Once one or more QAP genes are expressed, they instruct the body's cells to create metaplasts. Metaplasts are organelles that extract energy from the Zero-Point Field (vacuum energy) and make it available for bio-energetic processes, analogous to how chloroplasts in plant cells extract solar energy for the plant's use. The number of metaplasts a subject produces is correlated with the extent of the expression of their QAP genes.
5. Ascension occurs when a subject begins to exploit the zero-point energy that their metaplasts have made available. Some ascension occurs as a result of conscious effort. Other ascension occurs spontaneously under stress, often resulting in injury to the ascendant and their environment.
  - Self-directed ascension is analogous to muscle fiber recruitment during strength training. An untrained human can recruit only 20% - 30% of their muscle fiber during exertion, while a trained athlete can recruit 50% of their muscle fibers and an elite weightlifter can recruit 80% of them. Thus for a given muscle mass, some individuals can be three to five times stronger than others. Similarly, ascendants can train to recruit zero-point energy. They can vary in the amount of zero-point energy they can use given the level of metaplasts in their cells.
  - Spontaneous ascension is analogous to muscle fiber recruitment during episodes of "hysterical strength." In emergency situations, human beings exceed the protective limits placed on muscle recruitment and display seemingly super-human strength. In the absence of training this can cause grave damage to bones, ligaments, tendons, and muscles.

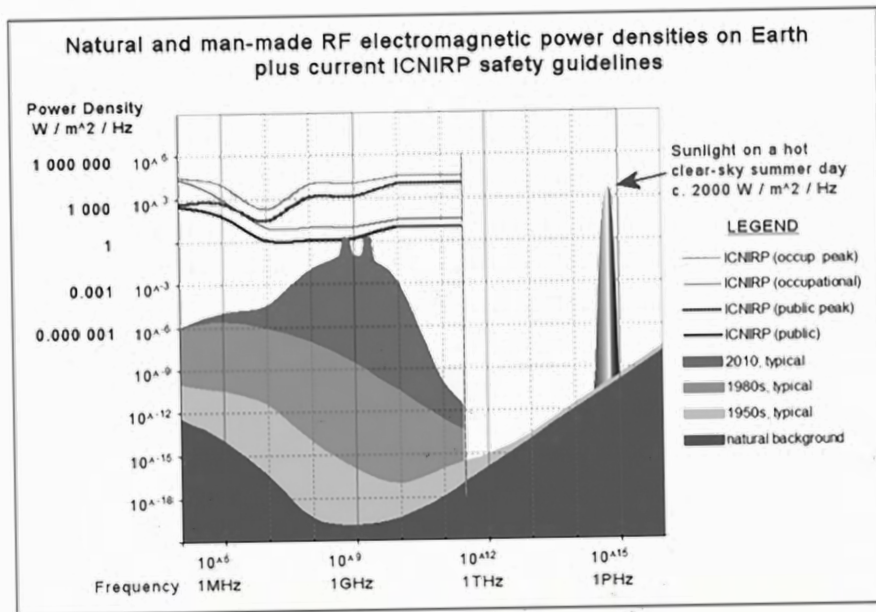


# Project Ascension Files

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- 6. Like other bodily functions, use of zero-point energy is ultimately directed by the subject's nervous system. Some ascendants make use of zero-point energy consciously through the central nervous system (CNS). Other ascendants make use of zero-point energy through the peripheral nervous system (PNS), including somatic and autonomic functions.
- 7. Zero-point energy can be directed towards physiological modification of the ascendant, including changes in mass. Additional mass can be formed out of the air in a manner similar to that used by growing trees. Zero-point energy is used to split atmospheric carbon dioxide and other gaseous molecules into their constituent elements, such as carbon, which can form the basis of organic matter.
- 8. In several cases, subjects have experienced a compression of the precession, with expression of QAP genes followed by an almost immediate ascension. We theorize that the subjects exploit the limited amount of zero-point energy made available by the expression of their QAP genes to fuel the body's creation of additional metaplasts, in turn making more zero-point energy available to create more metaplasts, in a runaway process.

[SANITIZED // RDP96]



ADDITIONAL RESEARCH NEEDED ON EMF FIELDS --  
 IS THIS WHY INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS HAVE MORE SUPERS?  
 CAN WE INDUCE ASCENSION USING EMF?  
 IMPLICATIONS OF 5G ROLLOUT?  
 COULD EMP EFFECTS CAUSE "DE-ASCENSION?"

**NOT APPROVED**

~~Approved for Release : CIA-RDP90-00780R000200020001-5~~

## Project Ascension Files

Today, August 8, 2020, WikiFree publishes a searchable archive of 2,150 unique verified files and emails associated with the classified DARPA program Project Ascension.

10 June 2017

SUBJECT: Analysis and Assessment of Psychoenergetic Technology

TO: Commander

Project Ascension

Defense Advanced Research Project Agency

You tasked me to provide an assessment of how psychoenergetic technology could and should be used to augment and/or support America's ascended and conventional warfighters. I have attempted to fulfill that tasking, but this memorandum must be understood as only a summary of a complex field. Supporting research and analysis will be necessary to confirm the best way forward.

1. Inventions versus Devices. In discussing psychoenergetic technology we must distinguish between two different categories of technology, which we have labeled as "inventions" and "devices." By inventions, we refer to any technologies developed or manufactured by an ascendant using their psychoenergetic abilities. The invention itself need not be psychoenergetic in its operation. By devices we refer to technologies developed specifically for ascendants to augment or support their psychoenergetic capabilities. The device need not have been invented by an ascendant but always involves psychoenergetic phenomena in operation.

2. Source of Inventions. We now have 94 test subjects expressing some combination of the QAP-correlated genes. Of these, [REDACTED] display some level of psychoenergetically-induced hypercognition - what AI researchers deem "superintelligence." The application of superintelligence to theoretical or engineering problems insoluble to conventional science can and will pioneer new technologies that far exceed the current state of the art. In a military context, it will achieve battlespace domination across the full spectrum of warfighting even when facing nonconventional or ascendant opposition.

3. The Manufacturing Challenge. Ascendant-led theoretical breakthroughs have not, to date, yielded any systems that can be manufactured at scale. Our conventional scientists often struggle to even understand the theoretical basis of the groundbreaking technology. Even when they do understand the technology, they cannot replicate it, because the most advanced inventions require psychoenergetic phenomenon to manufacture. The only inventions which seem viable for mass production are those that have incrementally improved upon existing technology, such as the [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

An analogy may help explain the challenge. Imagine that Leonardo Da Vinci was visited by time travelers who gave him an atomic bomb along with an explanation of the science behind it. Even if he grasped the science, Da Vinci could still not manufacture more atomic bombs because the materials and processes to do so wouldn't be available. On the other hand, if Da Vinci was given the schematics for a belt-fed machinegun he likely could build it.

4. Current Research. In the US, the Improved Warfighter Technology (IMWAR) program is leveraging a small team of hypercognitive ascendants to develop advanced tactical gear for American warfighters. They have prototypes of an advanced ballistic armor suit and a man-portable weapon system in testing already. The program's funding was increased last year in light of revelations about Chinese interest in this area. In 2015 DIA translated a paper published by Hân Jīnlóng, a

## Project Ascension Files

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researcher at the PLA Academy of Military Science, called "Theoretical Foundations of Military Strategy with Chinese Characteristics." About one-third of the paper discusses the need for warfighting gear developed with "qigong somatic science."

5. Categories of Devices. With regard to psychoenergetic technology proper, that is devices which augment or support ascendants, they can be categorized into three classes:

A. Devices for ascendants able to produce substantial amounts of zero-point energy (ZPE) but unable to adequately control or usefully direct it. These ascendants can benefit from a weapon or tool that uses the ascendant's own zero-point energy as its power supply. Effectively, the ascendant serves as a living "battery" for the device. In theory, the scope of any ascendant's powers could be broadened by wielding a number of such devices, though at a cost in total energy available for use. The Second Law of Thermodynamics guarantees some of the generated energy gets lost at each stage.

B. Devices for ascendants with useful psychoenergetic abilities who are unable to produce or channel enough zero-point energy to fully exploit those abilities. These ascendants can benefit from technology that accumulates or generates zero-point energy for their use. During the Cold War, Russian psychotronicists labeled such devices "cerpans" and developing them was a top priority for their research. Psychotronic research largely ceased when the Soviet Union collapsed, but in August 2010 the Russian scientist Ilarion Kapustin released a pre-print claiming that he was able to create functioning cerpans. In September 2010, Kapustin withdrew his pre-print, apparently under orders from the Russian government, and a month later he relocated to head a classified research program at the newly-formed L.L. Vasilev Research Facility (LLVRF) at Akademgorodok, Siberia. We project that by 2020, the Russian Federation will be fielding military-grade ascendants equipped with cerpans. The United States is a full two generations behind Russia in cerpan research, although Kapustin's paper will aid in reverse-engineering the devices.

C. Extraordinary devices that can accumulate or generate zero-point energy and control and direct that energy. They may serve as conduits for zero-point energy generated and transformed elsewhere. Since at present we do not understand how cerpans are able to generate zero-point energy, and we do not understand how ascendants are able to consciously direct that energy, these devices are essentially inexplicable to us. Dr. Sven Kolbow, one of the world's leading experts in Heim Theory, has suggested that extraordinary devices may actually be Type A or Type B devices in synchrony to ascendants operating in parallel dimensions to our own. If true, this would suggest that ascendants using Type C devices may be operating as conduits to or even possessed by extradimensional intelligences with unknown motives. Due to security concerns investigation into this topic has been compartmented, [REDACTED] for a further discussion of this possibility with regard to the [REDACTED]

6. Conclusions. Inventions developed by psychoenergetic intelligences will improve the state of the art gradually but will not radically transform society in the near term. Psychoenergetic devices can be developed to broaden the scope of a narrow-focused or unfocused ascendant's abilities or to increase the total of ZPE available to an ascendant with limited metaplastic supply. Further research is needed to assess the extraordinary devices that seem to serve as conduits for ZPE generated elsewhere.

## Project Ascension Files

Today, August 8, 2020, WikFree publishes a searchable archive of 2,150 unique verified files and emails associated with the classified DARPA program Project Ascension.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON PSYCHOENERGETIC PHENOMENON PROJECT ASCENSION**

PREPARED BY DEFENSE ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY  
ENHANCED HUMAN PERFORMANCE INVESTIGATION GROUP

SUBJECT: CHRONOLOGICAL ANOMALY 6-5-2018  
TO: RECIPIENTS OF DST-1810S-202-78

copy 1082

We previously identified the chronological anomaly relating to the synchronous ascension of Project Ascension Subject #1 and Subject #3 on 22 December 2012. This mystery has deepened as our ongoing testing has not found any subjects who ascended prior to that date. However, a classified memo circulating at the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility may provide the answer – but not a happy one. In the memo, Dr Vasilii Serebryannikov, a particle physicist, writes:

Theorists have accepted the possibility that energy emissions from Large Hadron Collider at CERN could generate quantum micro-black holes (Alberghi, Casadio, and Tronconi 2007). It is possible that these micro-black holes would emit tachyons (Srivastava 1983; Suyama et. Al. 2006). As tachyons are faster-than-light particles, their worldlines are spacelike rather than timelike. If one assumes that tachyons have an invariant direction of travel, it follows that in certain frames of reference, tachyons travel backwards in time (Arntzenius 1990).

Therefore, during its operational run in December 2012, LHC may have generated unobserved micro-black holes from which tachyons escaped and traveled backward into the past. As these tachyons decayed, they could release energy which could interact with other particles in the past. Such interactions, though microscopic, could cause “butterfly effects” (Lorenz 1963) that materialized as retrocausal macroscopic changes in those worldlines associated with the interactions.

We theorize that among these changes were mutations in human genome that made expression of QAP-correlated genes possible. That is, prior to LHC’s run in December 2012, we existed on a worldline where ascension could not occur. After the LHC’s run, we existed on a worldline where it could. However, this possibility leaves unsettled the question of why, if these changes were retrocausal, they would become apparent only after precipitating event. That is, why didn’t worldline change such that ascendants appeared earlier in human history?

If the introduction of ascension leads to the LHC becoming non-operational, then the analysis of Echverria, Klinkhammer, and Thorne (EKT) provides the answer. Retrocausation cannot lead to paradoxes because any self-contradictory event sequence will be replaced in reality by a closely related but noncontradictory sequence (Dobyns 2011).

What event might the introduction of ascendants cause that would make it impossible to operate LHC? Although a number of possibilities exist, we draw attention to the well-established phenomenon by which contact between a technologically superior civilization and an indigenous population results in genocide of the indigenous population (Woolford 2009). If the introduction of ascendants into the population quickly causes enough civilizational damage that LHC becomes inoperable, then the EKT mechanism guarantees that ascendants could not arise until around the time LHC made their existence possible in December 2012.

Orthodox physicists have rejected the possibility that LHC is creating micro-black holes and there is no empirical evidence of the EKT mechanism. However, mainstream scientists also rejected the possibility of ascension until it occurred, so we must take seriously heterodox theories such as Dr. Serebryannikov. The strategic implications are immense. If the introduction of ascension is likely to lead to catastrophic civilizational damage, we should consider what the appropriate steps are for national security, and what steps the Russians may be taking. Unfortunately, this Russian report was secured covertly by SIGINT, and we do not have full access to the underlying data. We are investigating if there are any international conferences in the next 6 months at which we might be able to assetize Dr. Serebryannikov or at least gain additional information.

## *Thousands Killed in Alleged Terror Attack at Secretive Russian Research Institute*

By Maria Antonio

Nov 3, 2018, 9:10 p.m. ET

AKADEMGORODOK, SIBERIA – Surrounded by a birch forest on the shore of the Orb Sea, Akademgorodok (“Science City”) is the educational and scientific center of Siberia. During the Cold War, Akademgorodok had been home to a secret psychotronic research program run out of Special Department 8 of the Institute for Automation and Electrometry. In 2010, the abandoned offices of Special Department 8 were re-occupied by the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility, established by Dr. Ilarion Kapustin in honor of the pioneer of psychotronics, Dr. L.L. Vasilev.

While the work that takes place at LLVRF is considered a state secret by the Russian government, most experts believe it is dedicated to human ascension. Or, rather, it was.



Credit: Associated Media

At 4:18 PM on Friday, November 2, the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility was destroyed in an enormous fireball that wrecked a 50-acre section of the city. An estimated 3,870 people died and 11,600 were injured in the blast, which was so powerful that seismic sensors as far away as Tokyo, Japan detected the detonation. Much of Akademgorodok has been reduced to rubble, including 18 of its 40 research institutes, with visible damage extending as far as Novosibirsk University campus.

The Russian government has alleged that the devastating explosion was an act of terrorism and has vowed retaliation against the unknown perpetrators. Western governments moved quickly to send condolences – and to deny any involvement in the incident.

A high-ranking Department of Defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Manhattan Times, “While we abhor the terrible loss of life resulting from yesterday’s tragedy, the responsibility for the incident lies solely with Russia, which has pursued reckless research programs to create humans of mass destruction.”

## CONSPIRACY OR COINCIDENCE? Two Secret Government Facilities Have Mysteriously Blown Up in the Last Month

Garrett Spears

11 Nov 2018 15:01 | Updated 11 Nov 2018 16:31



2 COMMENTS

**Enigmatic EXPLOSIONS** set internet abuzz, but authorities offer no answers.

What do the Homey Airport at Groom Lake, Nevada and the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility at Akademgorodok, Siberia have in common? Both are classified government facilities that conspiracy theorists claim have been linked to alien technology and paranormal powers. And now, both have been wrecked by enormous explosions.

The first explosion took place in Russia, when the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility was demolished in a high-energy blast that measured 20 Kilotons and claimed the lives of over 4,000 people.

Western governments have blamed Russia for the incident, but the Russian Ministry of Defense continues to insist that the explosion was an act of terror aimed at Russia's strategic research. In a press conference the day after the explosion, President Vladimir Putin vowed retaliation for the attack. "Russia will discover the identity of the perpetrators and bring them to justice, one way or another," he said.

Yesterday, a second explosion took place, this time at Homey Airport. Popularly known as Area 51, Homey Airport is a highly classified United States Air Force facility within the Nevada Test and Training Range. Conspiracy theorists have long asserted that Area 51 contains the wreckage of alien spacecraft. Those theories seemed more plausible than ever after yesterday's explosion. Social media users uploaded footage of what appeared to be a column of fire erupting from the Airport's main hangar and soaring into space.

The mysterious explosions have ignited a firestorm of speculation about what caused them. So far, there are more questions than answers. Are America and Russia waging a secret war? Did American scientists try to deploy an alien weapon? Did an ultra-powerful Russian ascendant attack Area 51 in retaliation for an American attack on Akademgorodok? Or is it all just a coincidence? Let us know what you think in the comments below!



WORLD • PHILANTHROPY

# Is Rylond Praetorius the World's Most Generous Misanthrope?

BY JORDAN MAGISTER JUNE 7, 2019

Rylond Praetorius doesn't seem to care what his fellow human beings think of him. When the Manhattan Times called him a "proud warmonger" with "reactionary" political views, he issued a one word response: "Yes." When the UKBC tweeted that Praetorius was "the most notorious arms dealer on Earth" live on air, the South African multimillionaire tweeted back asking "what do I need to do to get the title for the solar system?"



But there is one thing the 42-year-old arms dealer does seem to care about: animal rights. While a freshman at Caltech in 1994, the teenaged Praetorius used his trust fund to establish an animal rescue program for stray dogs and cats in Pasadena, CA. Since ascending to the ranks of the 1%, he has given grants to over a dozen veterinary hospitals throughout Africa that offer free healthcare for injured and sick animals.

Yesterday, Praetorius donated \$20 million to the World Wildlife Federation for research into ascended animals. The grant was the largest donation the WWF has received in 5 years, and the largest donation from a personal donor in over 15. It came just one month after Praetorius met WWF spokesmanatee, Levitee, at the latter's fundraiser for coral reef preservation in Melbourne, Australia. The two must have hit it off, because photographers at the event captured a rare moment: Rylond Praetorius actually smiling.

He was still smiling when he boarded his company jet and flew to Saudi Arabia, where he closed a deal valued at \$750 million to provide advanced weapon systems for the conflict in Yemen that has claimed over 150,000 lives.

Rylond Praetorius may love animals, but he has no concern whatsoever for the wellbeing of his fellow man. He may be generous to charities that matter to him, but his heart is hardened to humanity. He may be a philanthropist, but he remains a misanthrope – the world's most generous misanthrope, perhaps, but a misanthrope all the same.

## NEWS

# ISHTAR versus ISIS: Iraqi Insurgents Slain by Ascendant Calling Herself “Queen of Heaven and Earth”

By Sebastian Jaeger

October 21, 2019 | 11:13am | Updated

More than 80 fighters affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) died yesterday at the hands of an ascendant who calls herself Ishtar.

The incident occurred at the ruins of the temple of Inanna at Uruk, an archeological site 19 miles east of modern Samawah, Al-Muthannā, Iraq. ISIS-affiliated insurgents have frequently assaulted Mesopotamian archeological sites, typically seizing the historical artifacts for sale on the black market before destroying the sites in the name of Islam.

According to US Army intelligence officers briefed on the incident, there were approximately 240 insurgents in the vicinity of Uruk, equipped with a BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicle, a number of RPG-7 handheld rocket launchers, and an assortment of small arms.

The ascendant, who arrived by air, proved invulnerable to their fire and dispatched more than 80 insurgents in intense but short-lived fighting. The survivors fled the scene, where they were apprehended by American military police.

US troops from the 101st Airborne Division later made contact with the ascendant, but the details are a classified. In a press conference earlier today, Defense Secretary Esperanto told reporters, “I can confirm that US troops have made contact with a military-grade ascendant in Iraq. The ascendant calls herself ‘Ishtar, Queen of Heaven and Earth’ and claims to be a divine entity.”

In Babylonian mythology, Ishtar was the goddess of love and war. The same goddess was worshipped under the name Inanna by the Sumerian peoples who built Uruk. There is no information at this time about how the ascendant Ishtar is related, if at all, to the mythological figure worshipped at the temple in Uruk.

According to Esperanto, Ishtar “seems to be acting on her own accord” and she is “not affiliated with any nations on our terrorist watch list.” The Defense Secretary used the opportunity to remind world leaders that America will not permit its national security efforts to be impaired by ascendants. “President Flush has made it clear that strong measures will be taken against foreign powers who use humans of mass destruction against our forces,” said Esperanto.



# Chinese hostage rescued from Turkistan terrorists by ‘Heavenly Bird’

Source: Xinhua Editor: huaxia 2020-02-20 17:05:45



Huà Tiān Yòu, a Chinese photojournalist who has been held hostage by terrorists from the radical Turkistan Islamic Party since November 2019, was rescued from captivity today by what authorities are calling a “heavenly bird.”

Huà, 29, worked as a photojournalist for the Chinese of Academy of Social Sciences prior to his capture. On behalf of the Academy, Huà traveled extensively throughout China to document the



country’s historical sites and natural landmarks. During a tour of Xinjiang province’s Mountains of Heaven, Huà was taken hostage by terrorists from the extremist Turkistan Islamic Party.

While the terrorists attempted to use Huà Tiān Yòu as leverage for their illegitimate and unlawful demands, Huà stoically resisted their pressure to betray the Chinese people. His heroic virtue was rewarded today with a rescue that can only be described as “miraculous.”

“The legendary péng descended from the clouds and landed on the highway,” said Zhāng Jūnlì, mayor of Fukang. “Then a young man leaped off its back and the heavenly bird flew off.” Photographs released by the Fukang Ministry of Public Affairs show the heavenly bird to be the size of a jet airplane.

Huà is scheduled to appear at a press conference with Zhāng and spokespersons from the Chinese Communist Party and People’s Liberation Army.

# SOLDIER FOR HIRE



WAR SECURITY SURVIVAL GUNS & GEAR 2ND AMEND. THE FIRE PIT BEST OF SOF BADASS

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## THIS IS THE COMMANDER SPEAKING: EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH WORLD'S FINEST MILITARY LEADER

Soldier For Hire Magazine / 5 days ago / War

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Colonel Martin van Lindt is a busy man. As Dark Emerald's field commander for ascended operations, he commands what may be the most powerful private force of ascendants anywhere in the world. We caught up with Lindt in his Cape Town, South Africa home. He only had a few minutes, so we got to the point.

**SFH:** Colonel, before you moved to South Africa to join Dark Emerald, you were a highly-respected officer in the Israeli Defense Force. Since your ascension, Israel has invited you to return home. Why haven't you?

**Lindt:** If I HAD actually been treated with high respect by the IDF, I would have returned home. But I wasn't. In 2014, when I lost my hand and eye, they pushed me into an experimental medical program. When the program worked and I told them I had changed – ascended, we call it now – they called me crazy and shoved me into a desk job.

**SFH:** The Jerusalem Gazette, which once lauded your exploits as head of Unit 212, recently called you "a Jewish Achilles" and said you were "sulking in your tent until Patroclus is killed." What do you say to that?

**Lindt:** I don't read the papers.

**SFH:** Fair enough. It's all fake news anyway. Do you know that in the SFH community, you're called "The Commander?" Emphasis on "The."

**Lindt:** \*chuckles\* So I'm told.

**SFH:** Tell us about your team at Dark Emerald. You're often considered the world's finest military leader. Do you have the world's finest soldiers?

**Lindt:** The finest soldiers I've ever served with were the brave men of Unit 212 who sacrificed everything in the fight against terror. I don't say that to disparage the warfighters at Dark Emerald. They're incredibly capable military ascendants. But often what makes a great ascendant isn't what makes a fine soldier.

**SFH:** What does?

**Lindt:** A high regard for the welfare of the man to your left and right in the foxhole. Soldiers may start fighting for duty, or patriotism, or money, but what keeps them fighting is the bonds of brotherhood they forge with their comrades. There are great warriors who fight alone, but a great soldier always fights for and with his friends.

**SFH:** Who do you fight for, Colonel?



US Congress • Published April 3, 2021

# Congressional “Fixer” David Bronson Found Dead in Jail Cell

By [Sasha Carter](#) and [Tyler Dennis](#) | [Rox News](#)

ALEXANDRIA, VA – Disgraced Congressional staffer David Bronson died by suicide in his jail cell last night, law enforcement officials told ROX News.

Bronson was being held at the Alexandria City Jail awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty to charges of bribery, public corruption, and attempted extortion. Bronson and his former boss, Congressman Langley Garrison (D-MA), were both arrested on January 20, after police received a leaked series of recorded calls in which Bronson and Garrison were heard accepting bribes and gifts from lobbyists in exchange for favorable voting.

During his police interrogation, Bronson confessed to both the crime and to having been the source of the leaked evidence. “I knew I would feel better if I was honest,” he told detectives. “I am a better man for doing this.”

“This is a tragic end to a public servant’s life,” said Bronson’s former colleague and Harvard Law classmate Sean Franklin. “David was a good man who made a bad mistake, but he tried to atone for it.”

Bronson’s wife, Janice Manning Bronson, refused to comment on her husband’s death. The family’s 5-bedroom Alexandria home is currently up for sale.

Congressman Garrison has pled not guilty to the charges and is out on bail awaiting trial. Prosecutors had been expected to call Bronson as a witness against his ex-employer.



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to **Ascendant: Rogues Gallery™**, the first sourcebook for Ascendant, the superpowered role-playing game of infinite possibilities.

### INSPIRATION FOR THE SYSTEM

If we have succeeded with **Ascendant**, it is because we stand on the shoulders of giants. Two particular giants deserve special acclaim: Jeff Grubb, the designer of TSR's 1984 RPG *Marvel Super Heroes*; and Greg Gorden, designer of Mayfair Game's 1985 RPG *DC Heroes*. Grubb's *Marvel Super Heroes RPG* (sometimes called the FASERIP system) was our inspiration for the color-coded Challenge Action Resolution Table, which enables any and all actions within the game to be resolved with a roll of 1d100. Meanwhile, Gorden's *DC Heroes RPG* (sometimes called the MEGS system) was our inspiration for the logarithmic mathematics that power our physics-based design. We have sought to synthesize what was best about these two games into one cohesive system that surpasses both in robustness, comprehensiveness, and verisimilitude.

# ORGANIZATION

This rulebook is organized into the following parts.

The **Story Teaser** preceding this chapter expands the backstory of the Ascendant Universe with a number of news stories, leaked memoranda, and op-eds that describe some of the important events and characters in the game world. Because they are in-world narratives, they are unreliable and often inaccurate, representing what everyday people know about the world of Ascendant rather than absolute truth. The Story teasers are designed for GMs to print and share them with their players.

**Chapter 1** details the organization and purpose of this book. You're reading this now!

**Chapter 2** provides prebuilt character templates that gamemasters and players can use to quickly start playing *Ascendant*. Each template includes art, game characteristics, customization options, and gameplay advice. Just grab a template, customize it, and go!

**Chapters 3 – 6** each detail a different organization in the Ascendant Universe – Dark Emerald, Exodus, Soaring Sabers, and Spetsikhotron. For each organization, we provided game characteristics for the organization itself as well as for its key members. Each member is introduced with an in-world dossier that GMs can print out and share with their players. Afterwards, game characteristics are provided, secret background details are revealed, and story hooks are offered to let GMs seamlessly introduce the NPC into their campaign.

**Chapter 7** provides three additional unaligned villains that have not yet been recruited into any organization. As in the prior chapters, each villain is introduced with an in-world dossier, then provided game characteristics, secret background details, and story hooks.

**Chapter 8** introduces a number of new templates for use to fill out the campaign world, ranging from cryptids like Mothman, to martial artists like the Clueless Karate Pupil and Uncooperative Ninja, to everyday people such as the Backseat Superhero and Cantankerous Karen, to proto-ascendants like the Final Girl.

**Chapter 9** presents a number of new options for *Ascendant* GMs and players, including new rules, powers, skills, perks, and drawbacks. The new powers, skills, and other material presented in Chapters 3 through 6 is included here for easy reference.

The **Appendix** provides a comprehensive FAQ for questions that have come up in the first 12 months of *Ascendant*'s public availability. This FAQ is kept updated online at [forum.autarch.co](http://forum.autarch.co).

Throughout the Chapters there are a number of small **Designer's Notes** that explain the methodology used to design this book and range from scientific touchpoints to references to prior Autarch products to general game design philosophy.

## INTERPRETING THE RULES

While we have attempted to present a comprehensive and flexible sourcebook, all rules are susceptible to ambiguity and uncertainty. Such issues should be resolved by following three canons of interpretation. These are repeated from the original rulebook because they are important!

**Canon #1 - Specific rules trump general rules.** Whenever rules contradict each other, more specific rules trump more general rules. For instance, it is a general rule that Attacks are made with Attribute vs. Attribute Challenge Checks. A more specific rule states that Ranged Attacks are made as AGI vs. AGI Challenge Checks. An even more specific rule states that Telekinesis Ranged Attacks are made as INS vs. AGI Challenge Checks. And a yet more specific rule states that if the Telekinesis power has the Agile modifier, the Telekinesis Ranged Attacks are made as AGI vs. AGI Challenge Checks. Thus a character who makes Ranged Attacks with Telekinesis attacks uses INS, not AGI, unless he has Agile Telekinesis, in which case he reverts to AGI!

**Canon #2 - Physics fills in the gaps.** This game is intended as a physics-based simulation. The rulebook provides mechanics for a vast number of physical interactions between characters, objects, powers, and skills. Nevertheless, not every interaction or combination of interactions has been precisely delineated. Anytime the rules are ambiguous or absent with regard to a particular interaction, the rules should be interpreted or expanded in whatever manner leads to the most plausible outcome for a world of comic book physics. For instance, imagine that a character with a fiery phoenix-like aura (Thermal Aura, in game terms) walks through a drought-struck California woodland. The rules do not specifically state that the character's Thermal Aura could start a

forest fire, but obviously it could and the gamemaster would be right to rule accordingly. Once the ruling is made, the mechanics of the fire itself could be handled using the rules for Fighting Fires (*Ascendant*, p. 345).

**Canon #3 - Oral rulings create precedent.** From time to time, the rules will be absent or ambiguous and neither the first nor second canon will make it clear what interpretation should be adopted. When this occurs, the gamemaster should make a ruling according to their best judgment. Thereafter, their oral ruling forms a precedent that should guide future interpretations. In this way, the rules of the game can be gradually but coherently expanded over the course of play. For instance, imagine that a battle takes place in a nightclub with strobing, pulsing lights. The rules do not provide specific mechanics for how strobe lights affect Line of Sight, so the gamemaster has to decide. He rules that it's equivalent to claiming Line of Sight during twilight. Having established this ruling, the next time the player characters fight in that nightclub, the same ruling should apply. If the gamemaster were to suddenly rule that the same strobe lights in the same location now counted as full daylight, they'd be violating this canon.

## DEFINED TERMS AND TERMINOLOGY

*Ascendant* has many new mechanics that are precisely and numerically defined. To help the reader while scanning text, game terms are presented with an initial capital letter when they are rated with a numerical value in game or when they are the names of specific attributes, powers, skills, perks, drawbacks, conditions, object types, or other specific mechanical categories. Non-specific and non-numerical game terms are not capitalized. Acronyms and abbreviations are presented in all capital letters, hence "GM" for gamemaster and "TOU" for Toughness.

Hence, the word "speed" has an initial capital in the sentence "Captain Zoom has a Speed of 5" but not in the sentence "Captain Zoom likes to speed." Likewise, in the sentence "The character has the Overwhelmed condition and cannot use his Air Control power for another 1 SP of Time," Overwhelmed is a specific condition, Air Control is a specific power with a numerical value, and Time is a unit of measure with a numerical value.

Note that "condition" is not capitalized in the previous example but would be in the sentence "A character with this Condition is in some serious trouble," because in the first sentence "condition" is effectively an adjective while in the second "Condition" refers to a specific defined category of game mechanics. Similarly, the word "object" is not capitalized when it appears alone but would be capitalized in the sentence "A shield might be an example of a Worn Object," because Worn Object refers to a specific mechanical category of objects.

Throughout the sourcebook, we have generally used they/their/them as the third-person pronoun for the gamemaster and player, he/his/him as the third-person pronoun for individual players, characters, and/or creatures of unspecified gender, and it/it/its as the third-person pronoun for individual objects and/or targets. This method avoided the ambiguity that can arise from combining singular and plural forms ("if a target is rammed by a character, they suffer Ramming damage") and made common interactions easier to parse, such as those between characters and objects ("he tried to stop it but it rammed him") and those between characters and targets ("he attacked it for 48 Damage"). In the FAQ, we have used you as second-person pronoun for the hypothetical interlocutor.



## CHAPTER 2: HERO ARCHETYPES

This chapter presents a number of hero archetypes that can be used as characters for a campaign if you want to jump into play right away. In addition, they serve to demonstrate how to build archetypal types of heroes at a fixed Power Limit. Even though they're all at Power Limit 20, they are wildly different in their capacities and style.

Each archetype is inspired by familiar heroes from pop culture, but since the archetypes are intended as introductory characters we haven't attempted to make ersatz versions of any particular entity. Instead, each of these archetypes is built (a) to be tough enough to withstand mistakes by new players in casual play, (b) to be highly effective at its own niche, and (c) to be simple enough for new players to understand without having to master a lot of esoteric rules.

We have limited each character to just one or two more advanced mechanics. The most complex character is the Dark Detective, as he has Minions and Singular Invention, with the Psychic in second place, as he has a Power Pool. The Blaster, Bulldozer, Champion, and Speedster are very straightforward.

# BLASTER

The Blaster was an attractive and popular NASA astronaut who gained cosmic powers after she experienced the Overview Effect on a spaceflight. Now she's become a one-woman superhero of aerial supremacy, capable of flying at Mach 4 and delivering blasts that hit as hard as a tank gun. With her telescopic vision, she can patrol the skies from 40,000 feet and spot evildoers from on high.

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE BLASTER

Here are some quick ways to customize the Blaster:

- ★ Add Authority and Duty in equal ranks to align her with an organization such as Dreadnaught or the Star-Spangled Squadron.
- ★ Change Cosmic Blast (64 CP) to Annihilating Blast (64 CP) to call on the dark powers of entropy.
- ★ Change Cosmic Blast (64 CP) to Rapid-Fire Thermal Blast (64 CP) and set targets aflame on rolls of 21 or less.
- ★ Make Forcefield Flawed vs. Annihilating and Cosmic Damage (76 CP), for a 19 CP savings. In exchange bump Contrailing Flight to 13 (62 CP instead of 58 CP), Lightning Reflexes to 10 (20 CP instead of 6 CP), and Science (space) to 8 (1 CP). Increase your Flying Speed to 13 and Initiative to 14.
- ★ Change the Blaster's name, sex, costume, and backstory to suit your taste!

## HOW TO PLAY THE BLASTER

Because she has the Ferocious drawback, the Blaster hits harder than she can take. When she attacks with her Cosmic Blast, her AV is 10 and her EV is 11, putting her at a Power Limit of 21 offensively. On defense, her DV against melee and ranged attacks is 10, but her Forcefield and Super-Stamina are only 9, putting her at a Power Limit of 19. She's a glass cannon best suited for players who enjoy staying mobile and dealing damage.

### HIT HARD

With Signature Move (Blast) and RES 8, the Blaster can drop 4 Hero Points on an attack, giving her AV 14. Very few characters at her Power Limit can avoid that attack, and it hits hard enough that even tough guys like the Bulldozer need to Roll with the Attack. The Blaster is a great choice for Team Leader when making Team Attacks. Because the Blaster does Cosmic damage, most real-world Objects have no resistance to her Blast. She can destroy buildings, walls, and even military vehicles with ease.

### STAY MOBILE

The Blaster relies on 10 SPs of Aerial Combat and the Mobile Defense Perk to stay alive. She needs to take a Movement Action every Page on her Panel, or her defenses drop to DV 7 vs. ranged attacks and DV 4 vs. melee attacks. Because she has Contrailing Flight, however, her movement can give away her position, so be careful!

### SHOOT AND SCOOT

With 5 SPs of Telescopic Vision, the Blaster can spot man-sized targets in the open to a range of 13 SPs (8 miles). The range of her Blast is 11 SPs (2 miles). When a fight begins, she should attack her target of choice, then move up to 12 SPs altitude. On her next Panel, she should ready a Challenge Action to blast her target when it comes in range, then take a Movement Action to fly in a loop, closing the distance to within 11 SPs of her target and then returning to 12 SPs altitude. Her Readied Challenge Action will trigger at the bottom of the loop, and then she'll fly back out of range of most threats. If her target has a limited Passive Spotting Range, she might even get Partial or Total Surprise on some of these attacks – brutal!

# BLASTER

640 CP, CR 30

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	4	7	4	8	4	5	16

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	7
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	4
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	11
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	12	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

240

RECOVERY

48

DETERMINATION

160

RECOVERY

32

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Cosmic Blast 11 (64 CP), Contrailing Flight 12 (58 CP), Forcefield 9 (95 CP), Lightning Reflexes 3 (6 CP), Super-Stamina 9 (20 CP), Telescopic Vision 5 (15 CP)

**Skills:** Aerial Combat 10, Engineering (aerospace) 7, Marksmanship (Blasting) 10, Science (space) 7

**Perks:** Famous (12 CP), Ferocious, Mobile Defense Expertise, Sex Appeal, Signature Move (Blast), Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor ("the right stuff," 2 CP)

## BACKGROUND

The Blaster was an attractive and popular NASA astronaut who gained cosmic powers after she experienced the Overview Effect on a spaceflight. Now she's become a one-woman superhero of aerial supremacy, capable of flying at Mach 4 and delivering blasts that hit as hard as a tank gun. With her telescopic vision, she can patrol the skies from 40,000 feet and spot evildoers from on high.

# BULLDOZER

The Bulldozer was a construction worker who took a hit from a bulldozer and halted it in its tracks when he ascended. Now he *is* the bulldozer. He's built like a giant, with the strength to pick up and carry 200 tons, or to throw an SUV across a 100-yard football field, and the toughness to shrug off a direct hit from a Tomahawk missile.

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE BULLDOZER

Here are some quick ways to customize the Bulldozer:

- ★ Add Authority and Duty in equal ranks to align him with an organization such as Dreadnaught or the Star-Spangled Squadron.
- ★ Drop Bombproofing 10 and spend the 18 CP to upgrade to Regeneration 6 (48 CP) and Immovability 7 (12 CP).
- ★ Drop Tireless and add Lacerating or Penetrating Strike (5 CP). Now the Bulldozer can make his enemies bleed.
- ★ Exchange Immovability 5 for Air Supply 5. Now the Bulldozer can fight in Toxic Fogs and Inhalation Auras without fear.
- ★ Change the Bulldozer's name, sex, costume, and backstory to suit your taste!

## HOW TO PLAY THE BULLDOZER

The Bulldozer is a simple build designed to hit hard and take hard hits. On the offense, he isn't very accurate (AV 6) but he punches as hard as a cruise missile (EV 14). On the defense, he cannot dodge or evade attacks very well (DV 6) but with 14 SPs of Invulnerability and MIG, he doesn't have to.

### JUMP AND RAM

Don't underestimate the power of Jumping Speed 9. The Bulldozer's mighty leaps can easily carry him over skyscrapers and across miles of countryside. If he comes up against a target with high VAL and low AGI, one of the Bulldozer's best tactics is to use his Jumping Speed to deliver a ram. He'll hit with an AV of 4 and EV of 15.

### PROTECT YOUR FRIENDS

Each Panel, be sure to reserve an Automatic Action to ready the Protector Perk. That way, when a nearby ally or innocent bystander gets targeted, the Bulldozer can absorb the attack instead. The way Protector works, the attack's Color Result is based on the DV of the original target, but the damage is dealt to the Bulldozer instead. Since the Bulldozer has a low DV but very high Protection and Health, he's great at protecting fast but fragile targets like the Blaster.

### STRIKE MEGAFAST IN MELEE

Normally, the Bulldozer attacks with an AV of 6 and EV of 14. He doesn't hit often, but when he does, he wins the fight. But sometimes the Bulldozer may encounter an enemy who is just too hard to hit, even with Hero Points. If he confronts an opponent with a DV greater than 10, the Bulldozer can use his Megafast Melee Combat Maneuver to change up his AV to 10 and EV to 10. He won't hit as hard, but he also won't waste his Panel swinging and missing every Page.

### USE HEROIC RECOVERY

If the Bulldozer somehow gets knocked out early in the fight, he can use 11 Hero Points in conjunction with his 4 SPs of Regeneration to get back in the fight. At the end of his Panel, he'll immediately heal 256 Health. More than one villain has dropped their guard thinking the Bulldozer is defeated only to realize they've just made him angry.

# BULLDOZER

640 CP, CR 30

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>HP</b>
VALUE	14	4	6	10	3	3	16

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	1	INITIATIVE	6
WEIGHT	6	INCOME	0
RUNNING SPEED	4	REPUTATION	3
JUMPING SPEED	9	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	-1



<b>HEALTH</b>	<b>1280</b>	<b>RECOVERY</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>RECOVERY</b>	<b>64</b>
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## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Bombproofing 10 (18 CP), Immovability 5 (10 CP), Invulnerability 14 (138 CP), Permanent Growth 3 (30 CP), Regeneration 4 (32 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (sports fandom) 5, Craft (construction work) 6, Parkour 6

**Perks:** Combat Maneuver (Megafast Melee), Protector, Tireless

**Drawbacks:** Bad Hearing (too many jackhammers, 1 CP), Dependent (spouse and child, 2 CP), Hesitant (worried he'll hurt people, 5 CP)

## BACKGROUND

The Bulldozer was a construction worker who took a hit from a bulldozer and halted it in its tracks when he ascended. Now he is the bulldozer. He's built like a giant, with the strength to pick up and carry 200 tons, or to throw an SUV across a 100-yard football field, and the toughness to shrug off a direct hit from a Tomahawk missile.

# CHAMPION

The Champion was an electrician working at a nuclear power plant who sacrificed his life to save his co-workers, absorbing a dose of lethal radiation in the process. Instead of dying, he ascended. Now he patrols the skies, an invincible paragon of hope for a world in need of heroes. He can fight with mighty fists in melee or blast his targets with heat ray vision at up to a quarter-mile range.

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE CHAMPION

Here are some quick ways to customize the Champion:

- ★ Add Authority and Duty in equal ranks to align him with an organization such as Dreadnaught or the Star-Spangled Squadron.
- ★ Change the Champion's Adverse Response and Vulnerable State from uranium to another rare substance.
- ★ Drop Aerial Combat, Marksmanship (Blasting), and Protector and spend the 50 CP on raising AGI from 5 to 10 SPs.
- ★ Drop Short Range Thermal Blast and spend the 15 CP on Tireless and Watchful. Exchange Marksmanship (Blasting) for Marksmanship (Throwing). The Champion loses his heat ray vision, but he can still attack at range by throwing objects. In exchange, he gains the ability to fight without respite or rest and becomes much harder to surprise.
- ★ Drop the 5%-refund *Vulnerable State: uranium within 0 SPs* and replace it with two other Vulnerable States that cause the same effects; the 4%-refund *Vulnerable State: caught out of power armor, 4 Page change, 14 SP costume time*, and the 1%-refund *Vulnerable State: deprived of power armor, extended action required to remove*. Now the Champion is the Iron Champion, with powers originating in his high-tech power armor.
- ★ Change the Champion's name, sex, costume, and backstory to suit your taste!

## HOW TO PLAY THE CHAMPION

The Champion is a versatile build that with all-round effectiveness. He's strong enough to lift a 12-ton truck, fast enough to outfly a jet fighter, and tough enough to survive a hit from a tank gun or TOW missile.

### ADAPT TO THE ENEMY

On the offense, the Champion has an AV of 10 and EV of 10 with both melee and ranged attacks. By using Power Attacks and Fast Attacks, he can vary that from AV 11 EV 9 to AV 9 EV 11. Use this flexibility to target his enemy's weak points. If he's fighting a villain who relies on Mobile Defense Expertise, bring the Champion into melee range and stay on them. If he's fighting a powerhouse like the Bulldozer, keep him at a distance and use your Flight to swoop in and out for shots with his heat ray vision.

### POWER STUNT WITH BLAST

The Champion can use his heat ray vision (Short-Range Thermal Blast 10) to power stunt some useful powers, such as Blockable Concentration X-Ray Vision 7 and Dark Vision 5. Cover and darkness cannot hide a foe from the Champion!

### PROTECT YOUR FRIENDS

Each Panel, be sure to reserve an Automatic Action to ready the Protector Perk. That way, when a nearby ally or innocent bystander gets targeted, the Champion can absorb the attack instead. The way Protector works, the attack's Color Result is based on the DV of the original target, but the damage is dealt to the Champion instead. Since the Champion isn't as sturdy as the Bulldozer, he's best off protecting only his most fragile and hard-to-hit allies – or protecting innocent bystanders from small arms fire.

# CHAMPION

640 CP, CR 30



## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>HP</b>
VALUE	10	5	10	8	4	5	16

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	10
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	0
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	5
JUMPING SPEED	7	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	12	PASSIVE LISTENING	0

<b>HEALTH</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>RECOVERY</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>RECOVERY</b>	<b>32</b>
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## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Flight 12 (63 CP), Invulnerability (Flawed vs. Electrical & Ionizing) 10 (100 CP), Pressure Protection 20 (9 CP), Short Range (-2) Thermal Blast 10 (15 CP)

**Skills:** Aerial Combat 10, Engineering (electrical) 7, Marksmanship (Blasting) 10

**Perks:** Protector, Principled 2

**Drawbacks:** Adverse Response: uranium within 0 SPs (5 SP Ionizing Damage per Page in proximity, 8 CP), Code of Honor (four-color hero, 2 CP), Dependent (elderly parents, 2 CP), Vulnerable State: Exposure to Uranium (MIG drops to 5, VAL drops to 5, gains Super-Stamina at 10, loses all Powers, when within 4 SPs of uranium for Duration of proximity + 2 Pages, 13 CP)

## BACKGROUND

The Champion was an electrician working at a nuclear power plant who sacrificed his life to save his co-workers, absorbing a dose of lethal radiation in the process. Instead of dying, he ascended. Now he patrols the skies, an invincible paragon of hope for a world in need of heroes. He can fight with mighty fists in melee or blast his targets with heat ray vision at up to a quarter-mile range.

# DARK DETECTIVE

The Dark Detective is a wealthy tech genius who has ascended to almost superhuman excellence. He now fights crime in the shadows using high-tech gadgets. His capabilities put him at the blurry boundary between peak human performance and preternatural powers.

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE DARK DETECTIVE

Here are some quick ways to customize the Dark Detective:

- ★ Add Authority and Duty in equal ranks to align him with an organization such as Dreadnaught or the Star-Spangled Squadron.
- ★ Change the Dark Detective's Minions to animals, perhaps a pair of Cougars or a Gray Wolf, and become a totemic vigilante.
- ★ Change the damage type of his Boomerang Strike to Lacerating Strike and call it a chakram or razor-disc.
- ★ Change the Dark Detective's name, sex, costume, and backstory to suit your taste!

## HOW TO PLAY THE DARK DETECTIVE

The Dark Detective is the most complex of the introductory archetypes. Because he has so many CP invested in Minions and Singular Object, his personal Power Limit is reduced from 20 to 18. As a result, he can be outgunned and outfought in a one-on-one battle with other PL20 characters. He makes up for this, however, with the support of his minions and the versatility of his utility suit.

### BOOMERANG AND SWING

When it comes to fighting, the Dark Detective does best in an urban setting. He can use his 8 SPs of Swinglining and 5 SPs of Wall-Crawling to move from rooftop to rooftop, and then dispatch enemies with his Bludgeoning Boomerang Strike. With an AV of 9 and EV of 9, the boomerang isn't up to par against PL20 heroes, but it's more than enough to handle ordinary criminals. When up against supervillains, the Dark Detective's best tactic is often to support his allies by Team Attacking with them (granting them +1 to their AV and EV).

### FOCUS ON CRIMEFIGHTING

With 13 SPs of Investigation, the Dark Detective is as good at investigating forensic sites as an entire team of police detectives. His suit's built-in Methodical Biochemical Analysis lets him analyze blood, tissue, and other samples without needing a crime lab. If he needs to run evidence through the CODIS, IAFIS, NIBIN, or FACE-SN databases, he can call on his Contact with the police commissioner to get expedited access or ask his Arrogant Hacker to hack in.

### TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MINIONS

The Beat Cop's access to Authority, firearms, and vehicles can make being a superhero a lot easier. He can also use his Heavy Handgun to Team Attack with the Dark Detective ("I'll lay down suppressive fire!"), granting the hero the +1 to his AV and EV needed to bring his Bludgeoning Boomerang Strike back up to PL20. The Arrogant Hacker's Technology Control can be used to infiltrate and control electronics in low-security facilities. The Morbid Coroner can help with autopsying corpses, treating wounds, and following up on scientific leads. Don't be afraid to get them into the action.

# DARK DETECTIVE

640 CP, CR 30

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	9	9	9	5	7	16

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	9
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	7/10
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

240

RECOVERY

48

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Bludgeoning Boomerang Strike 9 (35 CP), Super-Intelligence 9 (32 CP), Super-Stamina 9 (16 CP)

**Skills:** Alertness 9, Investigation 13

**Perks:** Contact (police commissioner, 10 CP), Grappling Expertise, Headquarters (10 CP), Minions (3 CR worth, 10 CP), Multilingual (Russian, Spanish, 2 CP), Multitask, Signature Inventions (500 CP worth, 40 CP), Tireless, Wealthy (20 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (four-color hero, 2 CP), Duty (business empire, 2 CP), Notorious (10 CP), Vulnerable State: Deprived of Boomerang (Yellow Disarm; loses Bludgeoning Boomerang Strike, 7 CP)

**Equipment:** Utility Suit (Worn Object, Height 0, Weight -1, TOU 4, Durability 240, Air Supply 10, Extended Hearing 5, Filtered Hearing 5, FOV-Limited Telescopic Vision 5, Invulnerability (Flawed vs. Annihilating and Cosmic) 9, Methodical Biochemical Analysis 9, Polarized Vision 4, Regeneration (suit) 4, Sensitive Radio Com 16, Swinglining 8, Thermal Dark Vision 7, Wall-Crawling 5, 500 CP)

**Minions:** Arrogant Hacker (CR 1), Beat Cop (CR 1), Morbid Coroner (CR 1)

## BACKGROUND

The Dark Detective was a wealthy tech genius who ascended to almost superhuman excellence. He now fights crime in the shadows using high-tech gadgets. His capabilities put him at the blurry boundary between peak human performance and preternatural powers.

# GLADIATOR

The Gladiator is a regenerating street fighter with a sharp temper and an edgy fighting style prone to berserker rages. He almost never misses an attack and almost never gets hit. Even if he does get knocked down or out, he gets back up again thanks to his healing powers.

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE GLADIATOR

Here are some quick ways to customize the Gladiator:

- ★ Add Authority and Duty in equal ranks to align him with an organization such as Dreadnaught or the Star-Spangled Squadron.
- ★ Change Lacerating Strike to Penetrating Strike. Now instead of claws he's got spikes!
- ★ Reduce RES to 8 (20 CP), drop Physical Invulnerability (34 CP), drop Smack Talk (8 CP), and drop Heroic Perk (10 CP), saving 72 CP. Note Determination drops from 320 to 160. Spend 60 CP to gain Invisibility 5. Spend 12 CP to gain Stealth 9. The Gladiator is now an assassin or ninja.
- ★ Drop Wealth (1 CP) and Regeneration 13 (104 CP). Spend 105 CP to gain Special Bludgeoning Lacerating Aura 10. The Gladiator is now all-offense, automatically attacking anyone nearby with kicks and punches.
- ★ Change the Gladiator's name, sex, costume, and backstory to suit your taste!

## HOW TO PLAY THE GLADIATOR

The Gladiator is an unusual archetype. He's exceptionally skilled in melee (AV 13) but lacks any form of ranged attack. He is fast enough to hunt down most enemies (8 SPs) but can't keep pace with a fast flyer. His high DV of 13 makes him very hard to hit, but his relatively low Invulnerability and MIG make him easy to knock out. But he won't stay knocked out for long. With Regeneration 13, he heals 24 Health every 4 Pages.

### HEROIC RECOVERY

The Gladiator can use 2 Hero Points in conjunction with his 13 SPs of Regeneration to heal 24 Health at the end of his Panel. If he spends 3 Hero Points, he can heal 48 Health; if he spends 4, he can heal 96 Health; and if he spends 5, he can heal 192 Health. As long as he has a few Hero Points to spare, he can quickly rejoin any fight.

### STRIKE FAST OR HIT HARD

Up close and personal, the Gladiator can hit almost any target in melee. Against a typical opponent of his power limit, he'll be at +3 RV. However, he can have trouble hurting big, tough opponents like the Bulldozer. In those cases, it's a good idea to use Combat Maneuver (Ultrapower Melee Attack) to change up his AV/ EV from 13/7 to 10/10.

### TEAM UP TO TACKLE FLYERS

Since the Gladiator lacks any flight capability or ranged attacks, flying targets are his worst nemesis. Team up with a strong ally like the Bulldozer or the Champion to tackle them. To set up the attack, use his Movement Action to move next to the ally, then ready his Challenge Action to attack the flyer when it's in range. On the ally's Panel, have the ally throw the Gladiator at the flyer. The Gladiator's melee attack will trigger when he gets to within 0 SPs Range, and then he'll collide into the flyer, dealing Ramming Damage to him and his foe with an EV equal to the ally's MIG. But who cares if the Gladiator gets hurt? He'll regenerate!

# GLADIATOR

640 CP, CR 30



## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>HP</b>
VALUE	7	5	13	10	3	5	18

## SECONDARY STATS

<b>HEIGHT</b>	0	<b>INITIATIVE</b>	15
<b>WEIGHT</b>	3	<b>INCOME</b>	4
<b>RUNNING SPEED</b>	8	<b>REPUTATION</b>	5
<b>JUMPING SPEED</b>	4	<b>PASSIVE SPOTTING</b>	8
<b>FLYING SPEED</b>	0	<b>PASSIVE LISTENING</b>	0

<b>HEALTH</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>RECOVERY</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>RECOVERY</b>	<b>64</b>
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## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Lacerating Strike 7 (5 CP), Lightning Reflexes 2 (4 CP), Long Range Combat Sense 13 (40 CP), Regeneration 13 (104 CP), Physical Invulnerability 7 (34 CP), Running 8 (6 CP)

**Skills:** Alertness 10, Smack Talk 7

**Perks:** Combat Maneuver (Ultrapower Melee), Contact (underground streetfighting ring, 10 CP), Criminal Connections (5 CP), Heroic (10 CP), Tireless, Watchful, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (pick unnecessary fights, 2 CP), Vulnerable State: Damaged (if Health reduced by any amount, INS drops to 1, CHA drops to 1, loses Skills, loses Watchful, gains Unobservant, gains 5 CP Compulsion to hit back harder, 50 CP)

## BACKGROUND

The Gladiator was a street fighter with a sharp temper and an edgy fighting style prone to berserker rages. Now that he's ascended, he almost never misses an attack and almost never gets hit. Even if he does get knocked down or out, he gets back up again thanks to his healing powers.

# INVENTOR

The Inventor was a tenured professor of engineering at a major university renowned for his orthogonal thinking and maverick style. When he received a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to study zero-point energy, he accidentally ascended to a higher level of genius. Now he defends his city using a variety of equipment of his own design.

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE INVENTOR

Here are some quick ways to customize the Inventor:

- ★ Add Authority and Duty in equal ranks to align him with an organization such as Dreadnaught or the Star-Spangled Squadron.
- ★ Change his Singular Invention. With a budget of 430 CP, you've got an enormous amount of flexibility you can use to customize the Inventor to your taste, and it's a great way to learn to use the Invention rules.
- ★ Change the Inventor's name, sex, costume, and backstory to suit your taste!

## HOW TO PLAY THE INVENTOR

The Inventor is perhaps the most complex archetype to play. With 430 CP of Singular Inventions, he can begin play with some very powerful Inventions that give him a broad range of capabilities. We've suggested a Gravitational Ontology Destabilizer (G.O.D.) Gadget. He can invent additional Inventions using his 210 CP of Invention. If you're playing the Inventor, be sure to carefully read the Invention rules (*Ascendant*, p. 168) because you'll be using them a lot!

### DEFLECTION IS YOUR BEST DEFENSE

With low AGI and VAL, the Inventor's best defense is an Invention with the Deflection Power. The G.O.D. Gadget, for instance, provides Deflection as an emulated Power from Gravity Control. If you replace the G.O.D. Gadget with one of your own design, make sure to include a Control Power with Deflection or Deflection itself.

### HEADQUARTERS

The Inventor has an Income of 7 SPs and 20 CPs of Headquarters, which entitles him to an 11 SP (50,000 square foot) Headquarters. The Inventor's HQ is where he'll go to build and repair Inventions and to store Equipment he's purchased with his Income. Invite the other members of your team to use it as their base.

### TAKE 15 AND PREPARE

It only takes the Inventor about 8 SPs of Time (15 minutes) to invent a PL 18 Invention with 9 SPs of a useful Power. This gives the Inventor enormous flexibility during play. If the Inventor is confronted by an opponent with a special weakness or troublesome ability, or a particular environmental challenge or difficult forensic site, he can almost certainly invent something to help the situation.

### WATCH OUT FOR 1-ON-1S

The Inventor is only at Power Limit 19 on his combinations. He's only about two-thirds as powerful as his comrades when he's on his own. Be careful not to let him get cornered in a one-on-one engagement with a villain of equal Challenge Rating.

# INVENTOR

640 CP, CR 30

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	4	4	4	9	3	5	16

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	4
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	4	REPUTATION	5
JUMPING SPEED	1	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

240

RECOVERY

48

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Invention (210 CP), Super-Intelligence 10 (56 CP), Super-Stamina 9 (20 CP)

**Skills:** Engineering 11, Science 11

**Perks:** Authority (tenured professor, 2 CP), Headquarters (20 CP), Multitool, Singular Invention (430 CP of Inventions, 20 CP), Wealthy (20 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (always be right, 2 CP), Dim Vision, Unobservant

**Equipment:** G.O.D. Gadget (Crewed Object, Height -3, Weight -2, TOU 5, Durability 60, Cosmic Awareness 5, Forcefield 10, Gravity Control 9, 430 CP)

## BACKGROUND

The Inventor was a tenured professor of engineering at a major university renowned for his orthogonal thinking and maverick style. When he received a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to study zero-point energy, he accidentally ascended to a higher level of genius. Now he defends his city using a variety of equipment of his own design.

## SINGULAR INVENTIONS

The Inventor begins play with 430 CP worth of Singular Inventions. You can use the Gravitational Ontology Destabilization (G.O.D.) Gadget, below, or create your own Invention(s) for your preferred play style. If you create your own Singular Invention(s), remember that Singular Inventions can never have any Primary Attribute or Power that is greater than one-half the character's Power Limit ( $20 / 2 = 10$ ) and cannot cause the Inventor to exceed his PL. Since having Singular Invention adds 1 to the Inventor's PL combinations, he's capped at AV 10 / EV 9 or AV 9 / EV 10.

### G.O.D. GADGET

**Cost:** 29SP (\$5,500,000) / 430 CP **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height -3, Weight -2, Toughness 5, Durability 60, Exterior Crew Requirement 0

**Powers:** Cosmic Awareness 5 (60 CP), Forcefield 10 (100 CP), Gravity Control 9 (230 CP)

**Perks:** Repairable

**Notes:** The G.O.D. Contraption is about 7.5" square and weighs about 6 lbs, resembling a futuristic handheld radar. It enables the Inventor to control and manipulate gravitational and zero-point forces. He can use Gravity Control to fly at 6 SPs and to deflect attacks at 9 SPs. He can attack with Gravity Control using his 10 SPs of Super-Intelligence (AV 10, EV 9), the maximum permitted at his Power Limit.

## OTHER INVENTIONS

The Inventor has 210 CP in his Invention power. Below are Inventions that the Inventor might create for particular situations. The DV to invent any of these inventions is 18. With 11 SPs of Science, the Inventor only needs to spend 8 SPs of Time to get a +1 RV. With just 15 minutes of game time, he can have just what he needs for the situation at hand!

### COUNTER-PSI CAP

**Cost:** 23SP (\$85,000) / 210 CP **Type:** Worn Object

**Attributes:** Height -4, Weight -5, Toughness 4, Durability 40

**Powers:** Spherical Mind Field 9 (94 CP), Spherical Mind Screen 9 (94 CP)

**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Mind Field and Mind Screen become unavailable after 11 SPs of Time, -15 CP)

**Perks:** Repairable

**Notes:** The Counter-Psi Cap is a wearable device that provides protection against Psychic Powers to the Inventor and his nearby allies.

### NEURAL RECALIBRATION SCANNER

**Cost:** 22SP (\$42,500) / 210 CP **Type:** Worn Object

**Attributes:** Height -2, Weight -1, Toughness 4, Durability 40

**Powers:** Memory Manipulation 9 (107 CP), Mind Reading 9 (70 CP)

**Perks:** Repairable

**Notes:** The Neural Recalibration Scanner can be used to read and re-write the minds of targets. It is powerful enough to be used on military-grade ascendants. If used on the unascended, only the strongest-willed humans (with 9 SPs of Stoicism) can hope to resist its power.

### POWER DRAIN RIFLE

**Cost:** 29SP (\$85,000) / 210 CP **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height -1, Weight -3, Toughness 5, Durability 60, Exterior Crew Requirement 0

**Powers:** Power Drain 9 (156 CP), Telescopic Vision 4 (13 CP)

**Perks:** Repairable

**Notes:** The Power Drain Rifle is a 3lbs 30" carbine that can drain the zero-point energy from an ascendant. It's equipped with a telescopic sight to enable the dim-eyed Inventor to use the maximum range of the Power Drain.

# PSYCHIC

While tripping on LSD to celebrate the 60s, this aging hippie-turned-psychiatrist unlocked powerful psionic powers. As the Psychic, he can sense emotions, read minds, remotely view people and places, and telepathically communicate. He can also deliver a brutal mind blast that can overwhelm or even kill weak-minded enemies. His powerful impermeable forcefield keeps him safe from threats.

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE PSYCHIC

Here are some quick ways to customize the Psychic:

- ★ Add Authority and Duty in equal ranks to align him with an organization such as Dreadnaught or the Star-Spangled Squadron.
- ★ Add the Paraplegic drawback to gain 20 CP. In exchange, increase Super-Stamina to 10 SPs, add the Tireless Perk, and add your choice of one of the following powers to the Psychic's Power Pool: Emotion Blast, Eye Contact Memory Manipulation, or Mind Drain. Reduce Running Speed to 0. Note Vulnerable State now refunds 78 CP. Shave the Psychic's head (optional).
- ★ Drop Concentration Impermeable Forcefield 10 (110 CP) and Mind Screen 5 (40 CP). In exchange, add Astral Incorporeality 5 (150 CP). The Psychic becomes a ghost-like astral projector who doesn't need to fear physical harm.
- ★ Drop Concentration Impermeable Forcefield 10 (110 CP). In exchange, add Psychic Cloaking 10 (40 CP), Psychic Invisibility 9 (42 CP), and Psychic Inaudibility 9 (28 CP). The Psychic becomes virtually undetectable to living creatures. But be careful, he's totally exposed to robots and radar!
- ★ Change the Psychic's name, sex, costume, and backstory to suit your taste!

## HOW TO PLAY THE PSYCHIC

The Psychic is one of the most complex of the introductory archetypes. With a DV of only 3, he's easy to hit with both melee and ranged attacks. His 8 SPs of Super-Stamina are enough to keep him alive when facing gunmen and terrorists but won't stand up to the bruising of a character at his Power Limit. What he lacks in physical prowess, the Psychic makes up for with mental powers.

### ACTIVATE THE FORCEFIELD ASAP

As soon as – or even before -- a battle begins, the Psychic should activate his Concentration Impermeable Forcefield. Because it's Impermeable, the Forcefield blocks anyone from physically attacking the Psychic as long as it lasts. With DV 10 and 320 Durability, Forcefield itself is as tough as a Power Limit 20 hero, so it won't get depleted too quickly. Meanwhile, from inside the safety of his Forcefield, the Psychic can deliver 10 SPs of Mind Blast to his enemies. He can hurt them – they can't hurt him. It's a good vibe, man.

### MANAGE AUTOMATIC ACTIONS CAREFULLY

The Psychic has the Multitask Perk, which gives him an extra Automatic Action per Panel. His Forcefield has the Concentration modifier, so he needs to allocate an Automatic Action every Panel to maintain that. His Power Pool requires an Automatic Action to change from one Power to another. He's got no Automatic Actions to spare. That means as soon as he even gets Dazed, let alone Staggered or Overwhelmed, the Psychic faces problems of action economy.

### POWER STUNT WITH THE POWER POOL

The Psychic's Esper Power Pool is already an incredibly versatile power. With Power Stunts, it becomes even more versatile. For 2 Hero Points, the Psychic could use his Esper Power Pool to emulate Emotion Adjustment 10, Terrifying Illusion 10, Memory Manipulation 10, or Telekinesis 7. For 5 Hero Points, he could emulate Psychic Blindsight 12 or Psionic Cosmic Blast 10.

# PSYCHIC

640 CP, CR 30

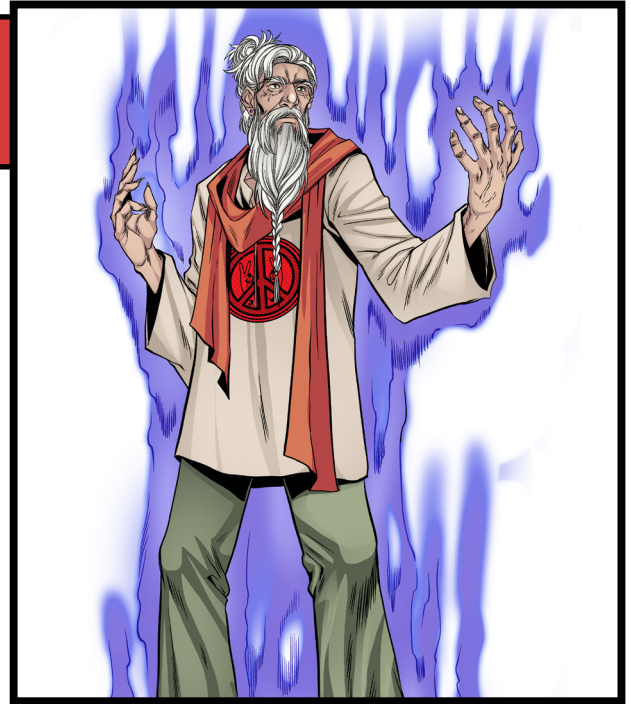
## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	3	3	3	10	5	5	16

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	5
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	4
RUNNING SPEED	3	REPUTATION	5
JUMPING SPEED	0	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

160

RECOVERY

32

DETERMINATION

320

RECOVERY

64

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Concentration Impermeable Forcefield 10 (110 CP), Esper Power Pool 10 (Empathy, Mind Blast, Mind Reading, Non-Transmitting Scrying, Telepathy, 200 CP), Lightning Reflexes 2 (4 CP), Mind Screen 5 (40 CP), Super-Stamina 8 (20 CP)

**Skills:** Medicine 8, Persuasion 8, Power Aptitude (Esper Power Pool) 10, Sport (yoga) 6

**Perks:** Multitask, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (spirit of the 60s man, 2 CP), Easily Winded (1 CP), Sickly 1 (4 CP), Vulnerable State: Damaged (if Health reduced to 128 or less, lose all Powers except Super-Stamina, lose Power Aptitude, 75 CP)

## BACKGROUND

While tripping on LSD to celebrate the 60s, this aging hippie-turned-psychiatrist unlocked powerful psionic powers. As the Psychic, he can sense emotions, read minds, remotely view people and places, and telepathically communicate. He can also deliver a brutal mind blast that can overwhelm or even kill weak-minded enemies. His powerful impermeable forcefield keeps him safe from threats.

# SPEEDSTER

The Speedster was a bond trader living life in the fast lane. His heart started to race when the stress mounted.... And then he started racing, too. Now he's one of the fastest men alive.

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE SPEEDSTER

Here are some quick ways to customize the Speedster:

- ★ Add Authority and Duty in equal ranks to align him with an organization such as Dreadnaught or the Star-Spangled Squadron.
- ★ Change Bludgeoning Strike to Lacerating Strike or Penetrating Strike and add the 20%-Refund Vulnerable State: Deprived of Sword (Yellow Disarm). Add 5 CPs of Heroic to gain 1 Hero Point. The Speedster becomes the world's fastest swordmaster.
- ★ Drop Intuitive Combat Sense and select 25 CPs of Heroic to gain 5 extra Hero Points. These are handy for Power Stunts with Superspeed. But be careful of stealthy or invisible enemies, now!
- ★ Swap Superspeed for Time Control. Now instead of being the Speedster, he's the Timester! It's not that he goes fast, he just freezes time while moving at his normal rate.
- ★ Change the Speedster's name, sex, costume, and backstory to suit your taste!

## HOW TO PLAY THE SPEEDSTER

The Speedster is another versatile build. Because his Superspeed adds to his AV and DV, he's at Power Limit in melee attacks, melee defense, and ranged defense. He can use his 12 SPs of Running for a variety of Power Stunts with Superspeed. His Intuitive Combat Sense reflects his ultra-fast reflexes, which protect him from being surprised by even the stealthiest of foes.

### HIT AND RUN

When a fight begins, the Speedster should ready a Challenge Action to strike his target when it comes in melee range, then take a Movement Action that sends him running up to and then past his target and off into the distance a couple miles away. His Readied Challenge Action will trigger when he moves next to his foe, and then whether he hits or misses, the Speedster will be miles away. On the next Page, repeat the same tactic.

### USE SUPERSPEED TO INVESTIGATE CRIMES AND STOP NATURAL DISASTERS

The Speedster can add his SPs of Superspeed to his Time spent performing Extended Actions. Whether that's investigating a forensic site, putting out a fire, or carrying children to safety from a sinking ship, he can simply do more in the Time available than almost any other character. He's one of the only heroes who can match the Dark Detective in investigation.

### SCOUT FOR THE TEAM

With his high Speed and Intuitive Combat Sense, the Speedster is a great scout. He literally cannot be surprised, and whatever he runs into, he can probably outpace to escape.

### WATCH OUT FOR AURAS AND FOGS

Auras and Damaging Fogs, which deal damage as soon as a character moves into them, are the bane of any Speedster. A 15 SP Aura will take him out of a fight instantly; a 10 SP Aura will hurt him badly. Don't try to engage a target with an Aura in melee; use a power stunt with Superspeed to emulate a Concussive Blast or Concussive Explosion instead.

# SPEEDSTER

640 CP, CR 30

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

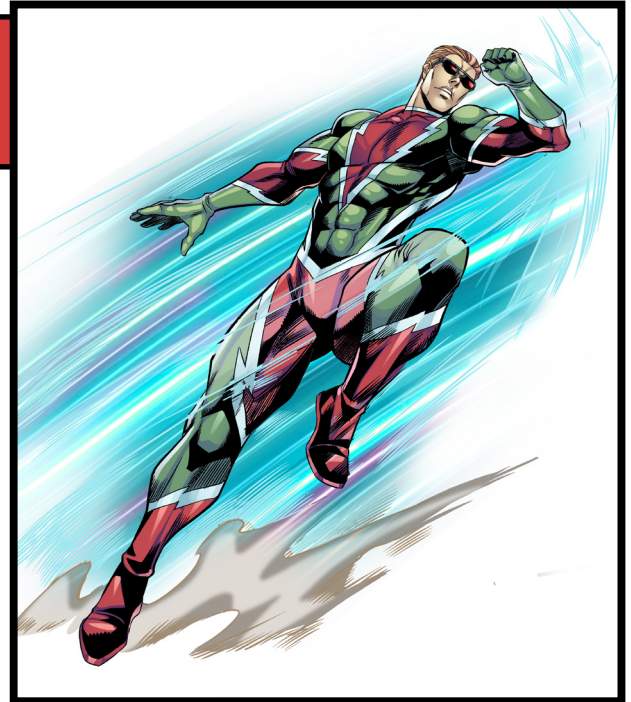
HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	5	5	5	8	4	5

16

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	15
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	6
RUNNING SPEED	12	REPUTATION	5
JUMPING SPEED	12	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

320

RECOVERY

64

DETERMINATION

160

RECOVERY

32

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Bludgeoning Strike 10 (20 CP), Lightning Reflexes 5 (10 CP), Intuitive Combat Sense 5 (25 CP), Regeneration 4 (32 CP), Running 12, Super-Stamina 10 (20 CP), Superspeed 5 (175 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (gambling) 7, Noncombat Parkour 10, Profession (bond trader) 8

**Perks:** Combat Maneuver (Superfast Melee, Ultrafast Melee, Megafast Melee, Megapower Melee), Multitask, Tireless, Wealthy (10 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Dark Secret (felony insider trading, 2 CP), Unlikeable, Vulnerable State: Moderate Calm (loses all Powers except Super-Stamina, 28 CP)

## BACKGROUND

The Speedster was a bond trader living life in the fast lane. His heart started to race when the stress mounted... And then he started racing, too. Now he's one of the fastest men alive.

# SUMMONER

The Summoner was an avid collectible card game player who became a pro to pay for healthcare for her mother, disabled with multiple sclerosis. A cocktail of performance-enhancing drugs provided by her sponsor, the Church of Ascension, triggered an ascension into a real-world monster summoner.

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THE SUMMONER

Here are some quick ways to customize the Summoner:

- ★ Add Authority and Duty in equal ranks to align her with an organization such as Dreadnaught or the Star-Spangled Squadron.
- ★ Change her Minions to another supernatural option, such as angels, demons, or ghosts, and re-build or re-skin them.
- ★ Change the Summoner's name, sex, costume, and backstory to suit your taste!

## HOW TO PLAY THE SUMMONER

The Summoner is a complex character to play. Because she has 80 CP invested in Minions, her Power Limits are reduced from 20 to 18, making her more fragile than other characters with the same CP total. She has to rely on her Minions for success in battle, and be prepared to control multiple characters at the same time.

### ACCEPT THE SACRIFICE

The Summoner's Sacrificer perk is a very valuable defense. By spending an Automatic Action each round and keeping a Minion nearby, she can re-direct any Damage dealt to her onto her Minion. It's often a good idea for her to summon a CR 1 Minion just for this purpose! And don't worry – they're all immortal. Slain Minions will return to play, usually by the next session.

### BE THE LEADER THAT YOUR MONSTERS THINK YOU ARE

The Summoner's Leadership perk enables her to empower her Minions (or other player characters) with her own Hero Points. Since the Minions are going to be doing the brunt of the work, the Summoner usually won't need as many Hero Points for her own actions, giving her plenty to spare to "power up" her monsters when need arises.

### CALL THE RIGHT MONSTER FOR THE JOB

The Summoner doesn't just have Summoning power – she has the Category (monster) modifier applied to it, raising its cost to a hefty 20 CP per SP. With 5 SPs in the Power, she can summon five different types of monstrous minions, which gives her enormous versatility to deal with different situations.

### WATCH OUT FOR 1-ON-1S

Because the Summoner is only at Power Limit 18 on her defenses, she's only about half as powerful as her comrades when she's on her own. Be careful not to let her get cornered in a one-on-one engagement with a villain of equal Challenge Rating. Use her Minions to keep enemies off her.

# SUMMONER

640 CP, CR 30

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	5	5	5	9	5	5

16

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	5
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	0
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	5
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

240

RECOVERY

48

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Combat Sense 9 (40 CP), Super-stamina 9 (16 CP), Monster Summoning 5 (100 CP), Monster-only Telepathy 9 (19 CPs)

**Skills:** Avocation (collectible card games) 9, Smack Talk 9

**Perks:** Leadership, Minions (16 CR, 80 CP), Sacrificer

**Drawbacks:** Dependent (disabled mother, 2 CP), Duty (Church of Ascension, 1 CP), Unlikeable

**Minions:** 16 CR worth of Monsters

## BACKGROUND

The Summoner was an avid collectible card game player who became a pro to pay for healthcare for her mother, disabled with multiple sclerosis. A cocktail of performance-enhancing drugs provided by her sponsor, the Church of Ascension, triggered an ascension into a real-world monster summoner.

# SUMMONER MINIONS

The Summoner can summon Monster Minions totaling a Challenge Rating of 16. For combat she will usually summon a Gorgon, Yali, or Wyvern (CR 15) with an Ogre (CR 1) or a pair of Giant Spiders (CR 8), but she has a number of options for other circumstances.

## GIANT SPIDER (CR 8)

**Character Points:** 479    **Power Limit:** 16    **Hero Points:** 8

**Attributes:** MIG 5, AGI 5, VAL 5, RES 8, INS 1, CHA 3, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 4, Swinglining Speed 7, Initiative 5, Income 0, Reputation 3, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 160, Determination 160

**Powers:** Intuitive Combat Sense 8 (55 CP), Jumping 4 (6 CP), Super-Perception 5 (16 CP), Super-Stamina 8 (12 CP), Swinglining 7 (24 CP), Touch-Range Toxic Life Drain 8 (75 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Touch 8 (26 CP), Wall-Crawling 8 (13 CP)

**Skills:** Martial Arts (Unarmed Melee) 8 (9 CP)

**Perks:** Tireless

**Drawbacks:** Body Form (Insectoid, 20 CP), Disturbing Appearance (man-sized arachnid, 5 CP), Illiterate, Unspeaking

**Notes:** The Giant Spider is a man-sized arachnid. Intuitive Combat Sense makes the Giant Spider impossible to surprise. Touch-Range Toxic Life Drain can bypass the protection of most “tank”-like targets and heal the Spider even as it kills the opponent. Summon two of these for a Life Drain Team Attack!

## GORGON (CR 15)

**Character Points:** 560    **Power Limit:** 18    **Hero Points:** 12

**Attributes:** MIG 9, AGI 5, VAL 5, RES 8, INS 2, CHA 5, Weight 4, Height 0, Running Speed 4, Jumping Speed 0, Initiative 10, Income 0, Reputation 5, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 240, Determination 160

**Powers:** Combat Sense 9 (40 CP), Lightning Reflexes 5 (10 CP), Penetrating Strike (horns) 9 (5 CP), Physical Invulnerability 9 (38 CP), Short-Range (-2) Annihilating Cone 9 (128 CP), Super-Perception 5 (12 CP)

**Skills:** Martial Arts (Unarmed Melee) 9, Non-Combat Parkour 8

**Perks:** None

**Drawbacks:** Body Form (Quadruped, 20 CP), Heavy, Illiterate, Unspeaking

**Notes:** The Gorgon resembles a horned bull with metal scales. Its primary attack is its Annihilating Cone (AV 9, EV 9). Victims disintegrated by the special effect of its Cone are instantly turned to stone. A moment later, the stone form crumbles into fine dust.

## OGRE (CR 1)

**Character Points:** 240    **Power Limit:** 10    **Hero Points:** 0

**Attributes:** MIG 8, AGI 2, VAL 2, RES 3, INS 3, CHA 3, Weight 4, Height 0, Running Speed 1, Jumping Speed 4, Initiative 3, Income 0, Reputation 3, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 160, Determination 30

**Powers:** Lightning Reflexes 1 (2 CP), Physical Invulnerability 8 (36 CP)

**Perks:** None

**Drawbacks:** Heavy, Illiterate, Unspeaking

**Notes:** The Ogre is a huge hairy brute dressed in crude furs. Dumb and slow, the Ogre is designed to be used with the Summoner’s Sacrificer perk. Its low Melee and Ranged DVs don’t matter, because it’s not the target – it’s just there to soak up damage. Because of its high MIG, it can Team Attack with the Gorgon, Wyvern, or Yali against most opponents.

## WYVERN (CR 15)

**Character Points:** 560    **Power Limit:** 18    **Hero Points:** 12

**Attributes:** MIG 7, AGI 5, VAL 8, RES 8, INS 2, CHA 5, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 4, Flight Speed 8, Initiative 10, Income 0, Reputation 5, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 120, Determination 160

**Powers:** Dark Vision 4 (13 CP), Extended Penetrating Toxic Additional Limb (tail) 9 (64 CP), Lacerating Strike (talons) 9 (8 CP), Lightning Reflexes 2 (4 CP), Permanent Radio Cloaking 9 (38 CP), Super-Perception 9 (28 CP), Telescopic Vision 5 (15 CP), Winged Flight 8 (42 CP)

**Skills:** Aerial Combat 8

**Perks:** Ferocious, Grappling Expertise, Tireless

**Drawbacks:** Body Form (Avian, 20 CP), Illiterate, Unspeaking

**Notes:** The Wyvern is a dragon-like beast with razor-sharp talons and a long tail tipped with a poisonous stinger. It can Wrestle effectively due to its high VAL and Grappling Expertise perk, and has the MIG and Speed to carry away human-sized targets (perhaps to drop them from height later). It gets an extra Challenge Action each page with the tail (AV 8, EV 9). Usually it will pair this with a separate Attack from its talons (AV 8, EV 9) but it can also Team Attack with itself, striking with either Power for AV 9, EV 10. Dark Vision, Super-Perception, Telescopic Vision, and Radio Cloaking also make the Wyvern a valuable scout, especially at night time.

## YALI (CR 15)

**Character Points:** 560    **Power Limit:** 18    **Hero Points:** 12

**Attributes:** MIG 5, AGI 5, VAL 9, RES 8, INS 3, CHA 4, Weight 4, Height 0, Running Speed 7, Jumping Speed 1, Initiative 12, Income 0, Reputation 4, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 160, Determination 160

**Powers:** Lightning Reflexes 3 (6 CP), Penetrating Strike (tusks) 10 (20 CP), Physical Invulnerability 8 (36 CP), Running 7 (6 CP), Super-Perception 7 (16 CP), Super-Stamina 8 (12 CP), Thermal Dark Vision 6 (61 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Scent 9 (56 CP), Wall-Crawling 1 (8 CP)

**Skills:** Parkour 9

**Perks:** Ferocious, Watchful

**Drawbacks:** Body Form (Quadruped, 20 CP), Heavy, Illiterate, Unspeaking

**Notes:** The Yali is a noble beast resembling a great lion with a pair of saber-like tusks. It is a ferocious melee combatant with a vicious Penetrating Strike (AV 9, EV 10). With Super-Perception, Thermal Dark Vision, Ultra-Sensitive Scent, and Watchful, it's a highly effective sentry that can spot or smell invisible enemies with ease. Its primary weakness is its lack of flight or long-range attacks.





## CHAPTER 3: DARK EMERALD

### ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

**Personnel:** 14 (8,000 CR)

**Funds:** 16 (\$1.7B annual)

**Facilities:** 17 (72 acres)

**Reputation:** 15 (800K fans)

**Perks:** Authority (private military corporation), Criminal Connections, Contact (South African Defense Force), Contact (PLA)

**Drawbacks:** Notorious 18 (6.5M haters)

Dark Emerald Pty. Ltd. is a private military company that offers scalable solutions to the personnel problems of 21st century warfighting for a select clientele of government and private entities. That is, at least, how their website puts it. Stated bluntly, they offer ascended mercenaries to those willing to pay their exorbitant fees. The company is based out of Cape Town, South Africa (largely for tax reasons), but it operates all over the world in both covert and overt roles. Within the PMC community, Dark Emerald is known for taking on jobs that would be impossible for ordinary mercenaries. Dark Emerald is currently banned from operating in the United States, as the Department of Homeland Security has connected them to the Exodus-led coup in Nauru in 2019.

**Personnel:** While its super-troops are low-powered compared to those fielded by America, China, and Russia, they are far more powerful than ordinary soldiers, and all of them are veterans with real combat experience. The CEO of Dark Emerald, Rylond Praetorius (CR 250), is an ascended super-intelligence who has singlehandedly advanced weapons technology in several key areas. Praetorius's field commander, Colonel Martin van Lindt (CR 120), is an ascended super-soldier with preternatural strategic intuition.

The company's three top operators are the invisible sniper Ghost Ring (CR 60), the infiltration and interrogation expert Declassifier (CR 60), and the arctic warfare specialist Midnight Sun (CR 60). They also frequently retain the services of the bounty hunter Reaver (CR 40). In addition to these elite ascendants, Dark Emerald also employs 40 military-grade ascendants (with an average CR 30 each), 60 other ascendants (with an average CR 20 each), 320 special forces operators (CR 4 each), 640 veteran mercenaries (CR 2 each), and 1,280 ordinary soldiers (CR 1 each). A support staff of 1,640 civilian personnel handles everything from sales to meals.

**Facilities:** The company's corporate headquarters occupy two floors of the Atterbury House in Cape Town, South Africa. Its 50-acre training and manufacturing facilities are located on the outskirts of Saldanha Bay, 65 miles to the northwest of Cape Town. Dark Emerald also has bases in Colombia, Nigeria, Somalia, Sierra Leon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the United Arab Emirates. A typical Dark Emerald base will be built in the countryside with 3-5 acres of barracks, hangars, and other facilities spread across a few square miles of fenced-in land.

**Funds:** Dark Emerald's funds come from its business operations. About 40% of its revenue is derived from service contracts under which it provides military, police, and security contractors to governments and corporations around the world. Another 40% of its revenue comes from the sale of arms, ammunition, and other military technology. The last 20% is generated by political risk and security consulting, scenario planning, and other strategic insights for sale.

It has its own manufacturing facilities in South Africa. It also has connections with arms dealers worldwide, both licit and illicit, from which it can purchase any conventional hardware. The company's major assets include 2 tactical transport airplanes (C-160s), 2 heavy transport helicopters, 8 offshore support vehicles, 16 scout helicopters, 512 armored personnel carriers, and 1,548 military trucks, utility vehicles, and technicals. Dark Emerald's soldiers are exceptionally well-equipped (\$20,000 worth of gear each) and have begun to field the company's proprietary technology: caseless hyperburst assault rifles, ceramic-reinforced spidersilk ballistic armor, and hyper-fragmentation grenades. The company has also produced 250 air assault flight packs and 500 miniaturized anti-tank rocket launchers. (See Parabellum's dossier, p. 53, for details of these objects.)

**Current Situation:** The origin of Dark Emerald traces back to 1963, when the United Nations put in place an embargo that blocked import of weapons into South Africa. In response, the South African government established an Armament Productions Board charged with developing an indigenous arms industry. A number of private sector arms companies emerged in the following decade. One of the most successful was Praetorius Munitions, named for its founder, Oswald Praetorius. By 1979, Praetorius Munitions had become a major supplier of ammunition and ordnance to the South African Defense Force and begun to export its arsenal across the continent. War was his business, and business was good.

After apartheid ended in 1994, the new South Africa government made massive cuts to defense spending and sanctioned many of the country's arms manufacturers for their prior business dealings. Praetorius Munitions was driven into bankruptcy. Oswald Praetorius's son, Rylond Praetorius, created a new company built on assets bought from the bankrupt Praetorius Munitions and personnel recruited from demobilized SADF units. He named the new company Dark Emerald, and it soon became one of the premiere private military companies of the 21st century. The new company's motto was *si vis opes, para bellum*: If you want wealth, prepare for war. Dark Emerald took assignments in Somalia, Sierra Leon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Nigeria, and the United Arab Emirates. It also re-opened the shuttered Praetorius Munitions factories.

In 2015, Dark Emerald hired Colonel Martin van Lindt, formerly of the IDF, as Executive Director of Field Operations. Over the next 24 months, Lindt led Dark Emerald troops on a series of highly successful operations, eventually revealing he had ascendant powers. In October 2017, Praetorius filed several patent applications for various arms-related technologies, including spidersilk ballistic armor and caseless firearm mechanisms, which were developed into several products by the company.

In April 2019, Dark Emerald accepted a contract from the ascendant Maximilian Danneskjöld to take over the island of Nauru. Thereafter, Dark Emerald declared itself the world's first "international military corporation capable of deploying ascended operators." Today the company thrives via contracts with many anti-Western and authoritarian governments and corporations worldwide.

# PARABELLUM

Rylond Praetorius, codenamed *Parabellum* by Squadron Intelligence, is the founder and CEO of Dark Emerald, the notorious South African-based private military company (PMC). Praetorius and Dark Emerald have been under scrutiny by Squadron Intelligence since their 2018 involvement in the takeover of Nauru by Maximilian Danneskjöld.

The origin of Dark Emerald traces back to 1963, when the United Nations put in place an embargo that blocked import of weapons into South Africa. In response, the South African government established an Armament Productions Board charged with developing an indigenous arms industry. A number of private sector arms companies emerged in the following decade. One of the most successful was Praetorius Munitions, named for its founder, Rylond's father, Oswald Praetorius. The elder Praetorius was a chemical engineer by training with a specialization in explosives. By 1979, the year Rylond Praetorius was born, Praetorius Munitions had become a major supplier of ammunition and ordnance to the South African Defense Force and begun to export its arsenal across the continent. War was his business, and business was good.

Parabellum's mother died of brain cancer when he was 4. The boy was thereafter raised by his father, with the clear expectation that he would inherit the family business. From an early age, he displayed prodigious intelligence, and by age 11, he was assisting his father in the laboratory. The two were considered very close. In 1994, at age 15, Praetorius was accepted as an undergraduate at Cal Tech with a dual major in business and aerospace engineering. Records from that time reveal him to have been an exceptional student but not a popular one. Accused of being a racist and warmonger by his left-leaning classmates, he formed few close friendships. His only known hobby was animal rescue. In his first semester, he used trust funds to establish an animal rescue program for stray dogs and cats in Pasadena, CA.

The same year Parabellum's studies began, apartheid ended. The new democratic government established the Cameron Commission to review the country's arms trade practices. Critics denounced the industry. "South Africa's arms industry is characterized by smuggling, secrecy, shady dealings, and a total absence of morality. It played a crucial role in maintaining the apartheid regime and the oppression of the majority, and its exports have helped maintain wars and oppressive regimes around the world," said one report. Among the companies condemned for "shady dealings" was Praetorius Munitions. Oswald Praetorius was accused of corruption by a former business partner, Matthys Vorster. The company was heavily fined.

Rylond Praetorius was distraught and begged to come home to stand by the family. At his father's insistence, however, he continued his studies in America. Over the next four years, South Africa's budget for arms acquisition was cut by 80% while defense expenditure as a percentage of GDP halved from 4.1% to 2%. The massive cuts led to the disbanding of many SADF units; closure of numerous military bases; abolition of conscription; cutback in capital and R&D spending; and cancellation of most of its new armament projects, including Praetorius Munitions' largest deal. The cancellation forced Praetorius Munitions into bankruptcy the day before Parabellum graduated from Cal Tech.

Oswald Praetorius shot himself while his son was en route home.

The death of a beloved parent and destruction of a family fortune would have shattered most teenagers. The events seemed to have simply hardened Parabellum. Within a week of returning home he had buried his father, executed his will, and taken the first of many bold steps in business. There was little left to the family fortune except a small emerald mine in Zambia.

Parabellum sold junk bonds against the mine's cash flow and used the funds to create a new company built on assets bought from the bankrupt Praetorius Munitions and personnel recruited from demobilized SADF units. He named the new company Dark Emerald, and it soon became one of the premiere private military companies of the 21st century. Parabellum had correctly surmised that the "peace dividend" of the New World Order had stopped paying. The 2000s would be an era of war, and Dark Emerald would earn profit on every battlefield. The company's motto "*Si vis opes, para bellum*" said it all. If you want wealth, prepare for war. Dark Emerald took assignments in Somalia, Sierra Leon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Nigeria, and the United Arab Emirates. It also re-opened the shuttered Praetorius Munitions factories.

However, the company only sells to authoritarian or anti-western governments – Parabellum seems to blame the liberal democratic world order for his father’s disease.

In 2002, Matthys Vorster went missing while hiking near his home. His body was never found. South African police suspected Parabellum but without a body the case was dropped.

There are many arms dealers suspected of crimes, of course, and these facts would not otherwise merit that Parabellum receive the attention of the Squadron. However, in 2016, Parabellum hired Colonel Martin van Lindt, formerly of the IDF, as Executive Director of Field Operations. Over the next 18 months, Lindt led Dark Emerald troops on a series of highly successful operations. (See our briefing on Martin van Lindt, aka The Commander, for details.) These operations revealed Lindt to be what is today called an ascendant.

Squadron Intelligence believes that Parabellum learned of the origin of Lindt’s powers and of the existence of other ascendants in early June 2017. Parabellum disappeared from public view from June to October of that year. When he returned to the limelight, Parabellum immediately filed several patent applications for various arms-related technologies, including spidersilk ballistic armor and caseless firearm mechanisms. Based on the advanced technology described in the patents, we surmise that Parabellum experienced an ascension during this time, probably through chemical self-experimentation, gaining super-intelligence on par with that seen in 12Sigma or Dr. Quantum.

At some point between December 2018 and April 2019, Colonel van Lindt introduced Maximilian Danneskjöld to Parabellum. Danneskjöld hired Dark Emerald to assist in his invasion of Nauru. We believe, but cannot confirm, that Danneskjöld was able to secure Dark Emerald’s cooperation by agreeing to help them find and hire military-grade ascendants. Whatever the case, Dark Emerald accepted the contract, and with the company’s aid, Danneskjöld’s coup succeeded in taking power over Nauru. Thereafter, Dark Emerald declared itself the world’s first “international military corporation capable of deploying ascended operators” with Lindt as field commander for ascended operations. Since that time, Dark Emerald has begun to manufacture and equip troops with Parabellum’s patented weapon systems.

Although an exceptionally intelligent, erudite, and polished businessman, Parabellum is one of the world’s most hated men. The international press and social media frequently label him a murderer, racist, warmonger, mercenary, and worse. He has never given any indication that this bothers him in the slightest. Parabellum has no known romantic partners and no close friends. He is a tireless worker, renowned for sustaining 100-hour work weeks for months on end. When not working, he favors high-speed racing, recreational shooting, and dog breeding. His line of Rhodesian ridgebacks, the famous lion-hunting dogs of Africa, have won awards in several international competitions. He also remains active in animal rescue work and funds veterinary hospitals throughout Africa. In 2019, he donated \$20 million to the World Wildlife Federation for research into ascended animals, earning him the ironic label “the world’s most generous misanthrope” from Epoch Magazine.

# PARABELLUM

880 CP, CR 250

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>30</b>
VALUE	5	7	5	10	10	7	

## SECONDARY STATS

<b>HEIGHT</b>	0	<b>INITIATIVE</b>	5
<b>WEIGHT</b>	3	<b>INCOME</b>	12
<b>RUNNING SPEED</b>	5	<b>REPUTATION</b>	12/18
<b>JUMPING SPEED</b>	2	<b>PASSIVE SPOTTING</b>	8
<b>FLYING SPEED</b>	0	<b>PASSIVE LISTENING</b>	0



**HEALTH**

**320**

**RECOVERY**

**64**

**DETERMINATION**

**320**

**RECOVERY**

**64**

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Invention (240 CP) with Power Flaw: State of the Art Required (-60 CP), Super-Stamina 10 (20 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (animal rescue) 12, Combat Posture 7, Engineering 12, Marksmanship (Shooting) 10, Martial Arts 7, Pilot 10, Profession (executive) 12, Science 12

**Perks:** Authority (Dark Emerald CEO, 20 CP), Contact (South African President, 10 CP), Contact (Chinese General Staff, 10 CP), Criminal Connections (40 CP), Famous (10 CP), Headquarters (15 SPs / 24 SPs, 10 CP), Minions (CR 12, 5 CP), Multilingual (English, 1 CP), Sacrificer, Multitask, Wealthy (80 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (despises democracy, 2 CP), Dark Secret (feeds enemies to his dogs, 2 CP), Duty (animal charity trustee, 2 CP), Duty (Dark Emerald CEO, 10 CP), Notorious (18 CP)

**Equipment:** Caseless Hyperburst Assault Rifle (EV 8), Ceramic-Reinforced Spidersilk Ballistic Armor, Private Jet, Satellite Phone, Smartphone, Sports Car

**Minions:** 3 Fanatical Rhodesian Ridgebacks (CR 4 each)

## BACKGROUND

Rylond Praetorius, codenamed Parabellum, is the founder and CEO of Dark Emerald, the notorious South African-based private military company. It's the world's first international military corporation capable of deploying ascended operators and its troops fight with Parabellum's own inventions.

### 3 FANATICAL RHODESIAN RIDGEBACKS (397 CP, CR 4)

**Attributes:** MIG 4, AGI 4, VAL 4, RES 4, INS 1, CHA 4, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 2, Initiative 6, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 10, Health 40, Determination 40, Hero Points 4

**Powers:** All-Frequency Hearing 1 (5.5 CP), Dark Vision 3 (11 CP), Jumping 2 (3 CP), Penetrating Strike 5 (5 CP), Lightning Reflexes 2 (4 CP), Physical Invulnerability 1 (22 CP), Running 5 (2 CP), Super-Perception 5 (16 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Hearing 10 (20 CP), Predatory Ultra-Sensitive Scent 8 (104 CP)

**Perks:** Principled (Duty, 5 CP), Protector

**Drawbacks:** Body Form (quadruped), Duty (loyal service, 5 CP), Illiterate, Unspeaking

### AIR ASSAULT FLIGHT PACK

**Cost:** 27 SP (\$1,350,000) / 60 CP      **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height 0, Weight 1, Toughness 3, Durability 30, Exterior Crew Requirement 0, External Capacity 3, Flight Speed 7

**Powers:** Hovering Flight 7 (48 CP)

**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Hovering Flight becomes unavailable after 9 SPs of Time, -8 CP)

**Notes:** The 50 lb flight pack can carry a 200 lb man at speeds of 120mph for up to 30 min before needing to refuel.

### CASELESS HYPERBURST ASSAULT RIFLE

**Cost:** 19 SP (\$5,250) / 92 CP      **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height -1, Weight -2, Toughness 2, Durability 20, Exterior Crew Requirement 0

**Powers:** Augmented Marksmanship (Shooting) 9 (13.5 CP), Rapid Fire Penetrating Blast 8 (65 CP)

**Notes:** 5.56mm reflex-sighted bullpup-configured assault rifle capable of a cyclic rate of fire that exceeds 2,400 rounds per minute. It can fire three-round salvos so fast that the firer does not feel the recoil.

### CERAMIC-REINFORCED SPIDERSILK BALLISTIC ARMOR

**Cost:** 18 SP (\$2,600) / 73 CP      **Type:** Worn Object

**Attributes:** Height 0, Weight 0, Toughness 6, Durability 80

**Powers:** Bludgeoning Penetrating Resistance 7 (17 CP), Concussive Lacerating Thermal Resistance 5 (22.5 CP)

**Notes:** Spidersilk fibers, 5x tougher than Kevlar, are reinforced with ceramic plate to form advanced body armor.

### HYPER-FRAGMENTATION GRENADE

**Cost:** 15 SP (\$400) / 17 CP      **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height -3, Weight -5, Toughness 1, Durability 15, External Crew 0

**Powers:** Self-Range Triggered Concussive Lacerating Explosion 9 (trigger: varies, 106 CP) with Power Flaw: Single Use

**Notes:** The "hyper-frag" explodes with twice the energy of a standard fragmentation grenade.

## MINIATURIZED ANTI-TANK ROCKET LAUNCHER

**Cost:** 22 SP (\$30,000) / 118 CP      **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height -2, Weight -2, Toughness 2, Durability 20, Exterior Crew Requirement 0

**Powers:** Linked No Multi-Attack Short Range (-2) Thermal Blast 11 (44 CP) / Targeted Concussive Thermal Explosion 8 (102 CP), FOV-Limited Telescopic Vision 2 (7 CP)

**Power Flaws:** Limited Uses (Blast/Explosion must be reloaded after 1 shot; reload requires 3 SPs of Time, -48 CP)

**Notes:** The mini anti-tank rocket launcher is only 18" long and 10 lbs but has the power of a full-size RPG-7.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Parabellum's Character Points are invested into being an inventive mastermind, with contacts, criminal connections, wealth, and facilities galore. His minions are a trio of fanatical Rhodesian Ridgebacks he has raised from pups.

Parabellum's Invention power has a new Power Flaw: State of the Art Required. He cannot invent out-of-this-world super-gadgets. His inventions cannot have attributes more than 1 SP higher than the real-world limits of ordinary objects. These inventions are usually then placed into mass production for sale or for use by Dark Emerald troops. A catalog of some of Parabellum's inventions follows his character sheet.

Parabellum's Compulsion is to oppose liberal democracy. He will not accept business from American, Commonwealth, or EU employers, preferring to work with anti-Western and authoritarian nations. He believes his father and his family are victims of "foolish egalitarians" caught up in "suicidal utopianism."

Parabellum's Dark Secret is that he likes to feed his enemies to his dogs. Merely opposing Parabellum won't trigger such treatment, however; as an arms dealer he recognizes that conflict is often just business. Adversaries who personally betray him, or who are cruel to animals, will be fed to the dogs, though. The first of his victims was Matthys Vorster, the man who betrayed his father.

Parabellum's Rhodesian Ridgebacks have the Principled Perk (so they can resist mind domination that might cause them to harm him) and the Protector Perk (so they can bodyguard him against attacks.) The dogs are Parabellum's only friends and with him constantly. He relies on their keen sense of hearing and smell to avoid ambush. The dogs have been fed human flesh many times and acquired a taste for it.

## STORY HOOK

Parabellum has developed a new Fast Attack Vehicle. Designed as the ultimate "technical" for low-intensity warfare, the FAV has the speed of an off-road rally car, the protection of an armored personnel carrier, and the firepower of an infantry fighting vehicle. If it goes into mass production, Dark Emerald's clients will have a permanent advantage on the Third World battlefield. The heroes are assigned to infiltrate the base and capture the prototype if possible – and destroy it if not.

The prototype is being field-tested at Parabellum's headquarters in South Africa. Parabellum is supervising the test from his 800,000-square foot (15 SP) compound. The field test takes place over his 15 square miles (24 SP) of private veldt. The Commander or Reaver may be operating the FAV, while Ghost Ring or other Dark Emerald ascendants, super-soldiers, or special forces will be participating as OpFor or security. (Set the number of troops to be appropriate to the heroes' Challenge Rating.)

## FAST ASSAULT VEHICLE

**Cost:** 24 SP (\$165,000) / 239 CP      **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height 0, Weight 8, Toughness 9, Durability 240, Crew Requirement 1 (2 crew), Interior Capacity 7, Running Speed 7

**Protection:** Bludgeoning Cryogenic Lacerating Penetrating Thermal Resistance 7 (42.5 CP)

**Weapons:** Long Range (+2) Rapid Fire Penetrating Blast 9 (80 CP, 20mm machinegun)

**Other Powers:** All Terrain Running 7 (27 CP), MF/HF Radio Communication 13 (23 CP), Sustained Spotlight Illumination 5 (20 CP)

**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Running becomes unavailable after 13 SPs of Time, -1 CP)

# THE COMMANDER

Jerusalem-born Martin van Lindt rose to prominence in the Israeli Defense Forces during the 2006 Second Lebanon War. A graduate of the IDF's Tactical Command College, he served as a captain in the elite Unit 212. He led numerous missions against Hezbollah, becoming renowned for audacious operations behind enemy lines. On July 19, 2006, his troops successfully assaulted a fortified Hezbollah dugout; the following month, they destroyed a dozen rocket launchers on the western coastal strip, helping reduce rocket attacks by 40%.

After the war, Lindt remained on active duty while pursuing graduate studies in military science. He proved to be that rarest of professionals, the soldier-scholar, equally adept in the battlefield and classroom. By the time of Operation Protective Edge (2014), Lindt had risen to the rank of major and been placed in charge of Unit 212. With the same audacity and cunning he showed as a captain, Major van Lindt led his men on a series of bold missions that devastated Hamas forces. On 30 July 2014, however, he suffered the first – and only – defeat of his career, when three of his men were killed and fifteen others wounded by explosions in a booby-trapped tunnel. Tragically, Lindt was among the casualties. His right hand and right eye were destroyed by shrapnel, while his face and torso were severely burned.

In the aftermath of Operation Protective Edge, the IDF Chief of General Staff decided to create a new special operations brigade, the 89th "Oz" Brigade, that could lead operational and tactical thinking for the IDF. The new brigade would integrate Unit 212, Unit 217, Unit 621, and Unit 845 into one elite force. Newly-promoted Colonel Martin van Lindt was the ideal candidate to command it – except that his disabilities rendered him unfit to serve in the special forces.

The IDF did not want to lose one of its most promising officers. Through intelligence back channels, the IDF General Staff had heard of a secretive DARPA-funded medical research program that might be able to help the wounded war hero recover his capabilities. They reached out to friends at the Pentagon to see if arrangements could be made.

That program was, of course, Project Ascension. It was desperate for new test subjects, as virtually all candidates continued to mutate, die, or go insane. With the approval of the Pentagon and the Chief of Staff of the IDF, Lindt volunteered to become the first (and to date only) Israeli to receive the experimental Project Ascension protocols. Unlike many recipients of those early treatments, Lindt survived with both body and mind intact. But that was all he did: survive. His right eye did not miraculously regrow. His right hand did not regenerate.

Lindt insisted that he *was* different – that he was once again fit for combat duty. However, he was unable to prove it. He was able to ace the IDF fitness, marksmanship, and tactical courses – but Lindt had *always* been able to ace those. A battery of IQ tests found no unusual gain in cognitive abilities. Neither Ganzfeld experiments nor Zener card testing found any psychic aptitudes. He showed no detectable superstrength, regeneration, invulnerability, or sensory powers. Nevertheless, the colonel continued to claim that he had ascended. Project Ascension files from the time record him as having "delusions of grandeur" regarding his "powers."

With Lindt's psychological state questionable, the IDF decided it was too risky to return him to combat duty. Instead, the colonel was offered a spot at the Israeli National Defense College. Thus was a prestigious opportunity to train for a position as a senior leader in the IDF, but Lindt refused the offer and resigned his commission, saying "my future is on the battlefield, not behind a desk."

In 2016, Colonel van Lindt moved his wife and two children to Cape Town, South Africa to take a job as Executive Director of Special Operations for Dark Emerald, a private military corporation. Over the next 18 months, he led Dark Emerald troops on a series of highly successful operations. During these operations, Lindt's ascendant powers finally revealed themselves. Among the most notable incidents:

- During a gunfight with Houthi rebels in Yemen, Lindt was exposed to over 10,000 rounds of live fire. Not a single round struck him, while every other soldier around him was hit at least once. A statistical analysis finds that the odds of this occurring by chance were less than 1 in  $10^{307}$ .

- In an operation during the Second Libyan Civil War, a hunter-killer team under Lindt's command successfully shot sixteen targets with small arms fire at a range of 1,400 yards. A single confirmed kill at this range is enough to put a sniper in the top 20 worldwide; the performance of Lindt's soldiers is unparalleled in the annals of military history. The same soldiers had entirely unremarkable accuracy during a later skirmish when Colonel van Lindt was not present.
- When a Dark Emerald gun-jeep team found itself low on fuel while patrolling behind enemy lines in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, Lindt commanded them to turn down an unpaved road, where they discovered an unguarded fuel depot. The depot was not designated on any maps and had not been identified by any prior reconnaissance. Lindt simply remarked that was where a fuel depot "ought to be."

Squadron Intelligence now believes that Lindt's ascension has manifested as a superhuman level of tactical acumen, giving him an intuitive understanding of battlefield probability – what was traditionally called "coup d'oeil." He also has become capable of somehow inspiring, or metaphysically *causing*, superior battlefield performance in the troops under his command. These abilities seem to be circumscribed to military operations, and thus were not apparent given the primitive protocols available to test ascendants in 2015.

In late 2017, the IDF reached out to Lindt with an offer to reactivate his commission and place him in command of Israel's special forces. The colonel refused, apparently feeling aggrieved or dishonored by IDF's refusal to believe him in 2015. Lindt's refusal did not sit well with the Israeli government, for several reasons. As Israel's most prominent military-grade ascendant, it was a blow to national prestige that he preferred mercenary work. As a former SF officer, he was privy to classified information that, were it disclosed to enemy actors, could constitute a security risk for the nation. Finally, his increasing notoriety as a soldier of fortune was attracting unwelcome recruitment offers to other members of Israel's special forces. To date, the IDF hasn't acted against Lindt. SIGINT provided by NSA, however, indicates that Mossad may be planning an operation to recover or kill the former IDF officer.

Sometime between December 2018 and April 2019, Maximilian Danneskjöld approached Colonel van Lindt and hired him to help plan the invasion of Nauru. Danneskjöld and Lindt are known to have previously met during their joint tenure within Project Ascension, but we are uncertain whether they had stayed in touch thereafter or if Danneskjöld sought him after his powers became apparent. Given Danneskjöld's philosophy of ascendant supremacy, the latter seems more likely. That said, we cannot rule out the possibility that Danneskjöld may have been influencing Lindt as far back as 2015.

In January 2020, Dark Emerald declared itself the world's first "international military corporation capable of deploying ascended operators" with Lindt as field commander for ascended operations. The following month, Lindt was interviewed by *Soldier for Hire Magazine*, which dubbed him "The Commander" and called him "the world's finest military leader." The story went viral, and the name has stuck. Despite his limited physical capabilities, the Commander is considered one of the most dangerous ascendants in the world.

# THE COMMANDER

800 CP, CR 120

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	5	5	10	5	10	30

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	10
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	10/13
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

320

RECOVERY

64

DETERMINATION

320

RECOVERY

64

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Combat Sense 10 (40 CP), Probability Control 10 (65 CP) with Power Flaw: requires strategic planning (-65 CP), Lightning Reflexes 5 (10 CP), Super-Intelligence 10 (40 CP) with Power Flaw: military operations only (-8 CP), Super-Stamina 10 (20 CP)

**Skills:** Marksmanship (shooting) 9, Martial Arts 9, Non-Combat Parkour 9, Pilot 9, Stealth 9

**Perks:** Authority (Dark Emerald field commander, 10 CP), Heroic (+6 HP, 30 CP), Leadership, Minions (160 CP), Multilingual (English, Afrikaans, 3 CP), Multitask, Sacrificer, Tireless, Watchful, Wealthy (5 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (laws of war, 2 CP), Compulsion (longs for combat, 5 CP), Dependent (wife & children, 1 CP), Disturbing Appearance (burn scars, 2 CP), Duty (Dark Emerald, 5 CP), Hunted (Mossad, 5 CP), Missing Hand (5 CP), Notorious (13 CP), One Eyed (2 CP), Vulnerable State: Drained (if Determination reduced to 160 or less, loses all Powers, Sacrificer, Tireless, and Watchful, -64 CP)

**Equipment:** Caseless Hyperburst Assault Rifle (EV 8), Ceramic-Reinforced Spidersilk Ballistic Armor, Hyper-Fragmentation Grenades x4, Military-Grade Night Vision Goggles, Satellite Phone, Tool Belt, Walkie Talkie

**Minions:** 5 Super-Soldiers (CR 20 each), 5 Special Forces Snipers (CR 4 each), 4 Arrogant Hackers (CR 1 each), 1 Watchful Secret Service Agent (CR 4)

## BACKGROUND

Jerusalem-born Martin van Lindt, codenamed The Commander, was a highly-decorated IDF officer before an enemy bomb cost him his hand and eye. Blocked from combat duty despite his ascension, the Commander accepted a job offer from Ryland Praetorius to lead field operations for Dark Emerald.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

The Commander's Super-Intelligence carries the Power Flaw "military operations only." The power can only be used for matters such as planning battles, calculating artillery trajectories, performing combat engineering, infiltrating enemy security, memorizing weapon or vehicle silhouettes or specifications, investigating battlefields, and so on.

The Commander's Probability Control carries the Power Flaw "requires strategic planning." He can only use his Probability Control in the context of a military operation for which he has formulated a particular strategic plan. Anytime the Commander attempts to formulate a strategic plan, he must make a Challenge Check. The Commander's AV is equal to his Super-Intelligence plus Time spent planning. The Commander's DV is determined by the Time entailed by the operation modified by the Team Size for which he is planning. If the result of the Challenge Check is Green or better, the Commander can freely use his Probability Control on anything related to the mission for the duration of the plan. (Regardless of the length of any given operation, his SPs of Probability Control refresh after use at their usual rate.)

**EXAMPLE:** The Commander has been tasked with planning a 5-day (17 SP) mission for 200 Dark Emerald operators (+7 Team Size). He spends a day and half (15 SP) planning. His AV is  $10 + 15 = 25$ . His DV is  $17 + 7 = 24$ . His RV is +1. If his Challenge Check succeeds, the Commander can use his Probability Control on anything related to the mission for the next 5 days.

As field commander for Dark Emerald, Lindt controls over 2,000 veteran troops with an estimated 50 – 200 ascendants among them. In the field, he often leads a handpicked team of military-grade ascended commandoes supported by elite snipers and cyberwarfare specialists. He is protected 24/7 by former members of the US Secret Service retained by Dark Emerald. These personal troops are noted above as his Minions. He is equipped with Inventions created by his friend and employer, Parabellum.

## STORY HOOK

For over a year, Ethiopia's Tigray Region has been engulfed in a brutal civil war that has cascaded into a humanitarian crisis. Last month, an ascendant warlord emerged among the Tigray rebels. Calling himself 'Nəbasa ("lion") he has proven an invincible soldier on the battlefield and a bloody-handed tyrant to subjugated territory. 'Nəbasa's success has threatened to turn the tide of the war against the recognized government. In response, the Ethiopian National Defense Force has retained Dark Emerald to assist them in the war.

The arrival of the Commander and his super-soldiers might save the government of Ethiopia – but the US government fears the global implications of Africa turning into an ascendant-on-ascendant battleground. Worse, given Dark Emerald's apparent relations with Exodus, the Pentagon suspects the entire operation is part of a plan to turn Ethiopia into a Nauru client state. The heroes are secretly dispatched to Ethiopia to find and defeat 'Nəbasa before the Commander can do so.

The Commander longs for combat and does not intend to allow rivals to claim the glory of his triumph. Moreover, any interference by the heroes (in his opinion) makes them legitimate targets for violence. Unless dealt with beforehand (via diplomacy or force), the Commander will time his own attack to occur when the heroes have exhausted themselves against 'Nəbasa and his men.

### 'NƏBASA (799 CP, CR 120)

**Attributes:** MIG 12, AGI 8, VAL 12, RES 10, INS 5, CHA 8, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 9, Income 6, Initiative 15, Reputation 13, Notoriety 15, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 10, Health 640, Determination 32, Hero Points 24

**Powers:** All-Frequency Hearing 3 (6 CP), Dark Vision 3 (11 CP), Lightning Reflexes 3 (6 CP), Physical Invulnerability 12 (44 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Hearing 10 (20 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Scent 8 (52 CP)

**Skills:** Interrogation 10, Intimidation 10, Marksmanship 12, Parkour 12

**Perks:** Authority (rebel leader, 20 CP), Criminal Connections (40 CP), Famous (10 CP), Tireless, Watchful, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (warrior's code, 2 CP), Notorious (15 CP)

# DECLASSIFIER

Declassifier is an ascended mercenary employed by Dark Emerald. According to confidential briefings that Dark Emerald makes available to select clients, Declassifier is a “polylingual expert in special interrogation” with “comprehensive knowledge of all forms of involuntary HUMINT extraction and confirmation.” Although the briefing does not describe his ascendant abilities, we have surmised they must include mental conditioning, mind reading, or related psychic powers.

Dark Emerald has only a limited presence in the U.S. and to date none of our operatives have encountered Declassifier in the field. The remainder of this briefing is based on information derived from sources within the Third Department of the People’s Liberation Army’s General Staff Department -- the 3PLA, the Chinese counterpart to our own NSA. The CCP only shares information with the U.S. when it suits their purposes, so the information contained herein should be verified by third-party sources before acting on it.

According to 3PLA, Declassifier’s real name is Nergui Oktai. He was born in the town of Fukang, in Xinjiang province of China in June 1984. His mother was an Uyghur Muslim and his father was a Dzungar Buddhist. As a child, Nergui showed precocious language ability, and had already mastered Uyghur, Oirat, Mandarin, and English by primary school. His prodigious abilities caught the attention of local Party officials and Nergui was singled out for fast-track advancement to the best schooling the Chinese Communist Party could offer, culminating in a scholarship to the Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU).

The CCP seems to have believed that, with proper indoctrination, Nergui would be transformed into a “model minority” for CCP diplomatic usage. This effort failed. Since his birth, Nergui’s parents had instilled in him hatred for the Han Chinese and the CCP. From his father, Nergui had learned of the 18th-century Dzungar genocide, in which Qing Dynasty Chinese exterminated 80% of the Dzungar in their homeland, resettling the now-empty countryside with Han and Uyghur immigrants. From his mother, he had heard of the oppression experienced by the present-day Uyghur people and of the dream of a free East Turkistan Republic. Their words deafened him to CCP ideology. However, Nergui did not allow his political views to spoil his career prospects. Nergui graduated from BFSU with master’s degrees in both linguistics and psychology in 2008. In addition to his degrees, he had acquired proficiency in another six languages, with near-native accents in most of them. He returned home to Fukang and took a government job as a translator.

In February 2017, Nergui’s mother, along with several maternal cousins and nieces, were arrested on suspicion of anti-Chinese sentiment and sent to re-education camps. Nergui joined the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) the following month. The TIP is a separatist party known for using terrorism to promote East Turkistan (Xinjian) independence. With his charisma, psychological training, and polylingual skills, Nergui became the TIP’s top interrogator, charged with ferreting state secrets from captives and hostages.

18 months later (August 2018), Nergui’s mother died in a Chinese camp. His father died of grief shortly thereafter. The death of his parents severed something inside Nergui, and thereafter his interrogation of captured Han Chinese prisoners became torturously brutal. 3PLA provided pictures of several former TIP hostages who showed severe mutilation and scarring.

The TIP came to Squadron attention in February 2020, when Huà Tiān Yòu, a Chinese photojournalist who had been held hostage by the TIP since November 2019, escaped from captivity on the wings of the legendary Péng. Huà Tiān Yòu is, of course, better known today as Universe Wanderer, who ascended during torture by his captors. The torturer responsible for Huà’s ascension was none other than Nergui Oktai. Nergui is one of only two men known to have tortured someone so severely that it provoked an ascension. The other, Sergio Enrique Zambada, was slain shortly after provoking Stiletto’s ascension. Unlike Zambada, Nergui was not slain by his victim, and in fact, exposure to Huà’s manifested powers may have induced Nergui to ascend. 3PLA claims that Nergui tortured himself after Huà’s escape until he ascended.

In the aftermath of the Péng incident Nergui fled to South Africa. There, he took employment with Dark Emerald in August 2020. Under the tutelage of Colonel Martin van Lindt, he has become a formidable combatant as well as an exceptionally skilled psychic interrogator. Despite being a mercenary, Nergui seems to have retained both Turkistan patriotism and ties to the TIP. Nergui has allegedly introduced the East Turkistan Republic “government in exile” to Dark Emerald in the hopes his employer will aid them in secession from China.

# DECLASSIFIER

720 CP, CR 60

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	7	7	7	10	6	11	20

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	7
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	4
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	11/15
JUMPING SPEED	4	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

120

RECOVERY

24

DETERMINATION

320

RECOVERY

64

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Charismatic Empathy 11 (21 CP), Charismatic Single Target Touch-Range Emotion Adjustment (Agreeable) 11 (46 CP), Charismatic Touch-Range Mind Drain 11 (37 CP), Charismatic Mind Reading 11 (58 CP), all with Power Flaw: Power only works on target who has suffered Damage equaling or exceeding 50% of their maximum Determination or Health (30% discount, -49 CP), Memory 10 (40 CP)

**Skills:** Alertness 11, Combat Posture 11, Infiltration 9, Interrogation 14, Investigation 11, Martial Arts 11, Marksmanship (shooting) 9, Parkour 11, Stealth 9

**Perks:** Authority (Dark Emerald, 5 CP), Multilingual (Arabic, Cantonese, English, Farsi, French, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Korean, Mandarin, Norwegian, Polish, Pushtun, Russian, Swahili, Uyghur, 5 CP), Signature Move (Touch-Range Mind Drain), Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (East Turkistan independence, 2 CP), Duty (Dark Emerald, 5 CP), Hunted (Soaring Sabers, 5 CP), Notorious (15 CP)

**Equipment:** Ceramic-Reinforced Spidersilk Ballistic Armor, Machete, Pharmaceutical Bag ( Intramuscular Field Anesthetics x4, Rapid-Onset Neuromuscular Blockers x4, Truth Serums x4), Restraints, Satellite Phone, Submachinegun with Silencer, Spy Bugs x 4

## BACKGROUND

Nerguii Oktai, codenamed Declassifier, is an ascended mercenary who works as a polylingual expert in “special interrogation.” He is a supporter of the East Turkistan Republic’s battle for independence against China and an avowed enemy of Universe Wanderer of the Soaring Sabers.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

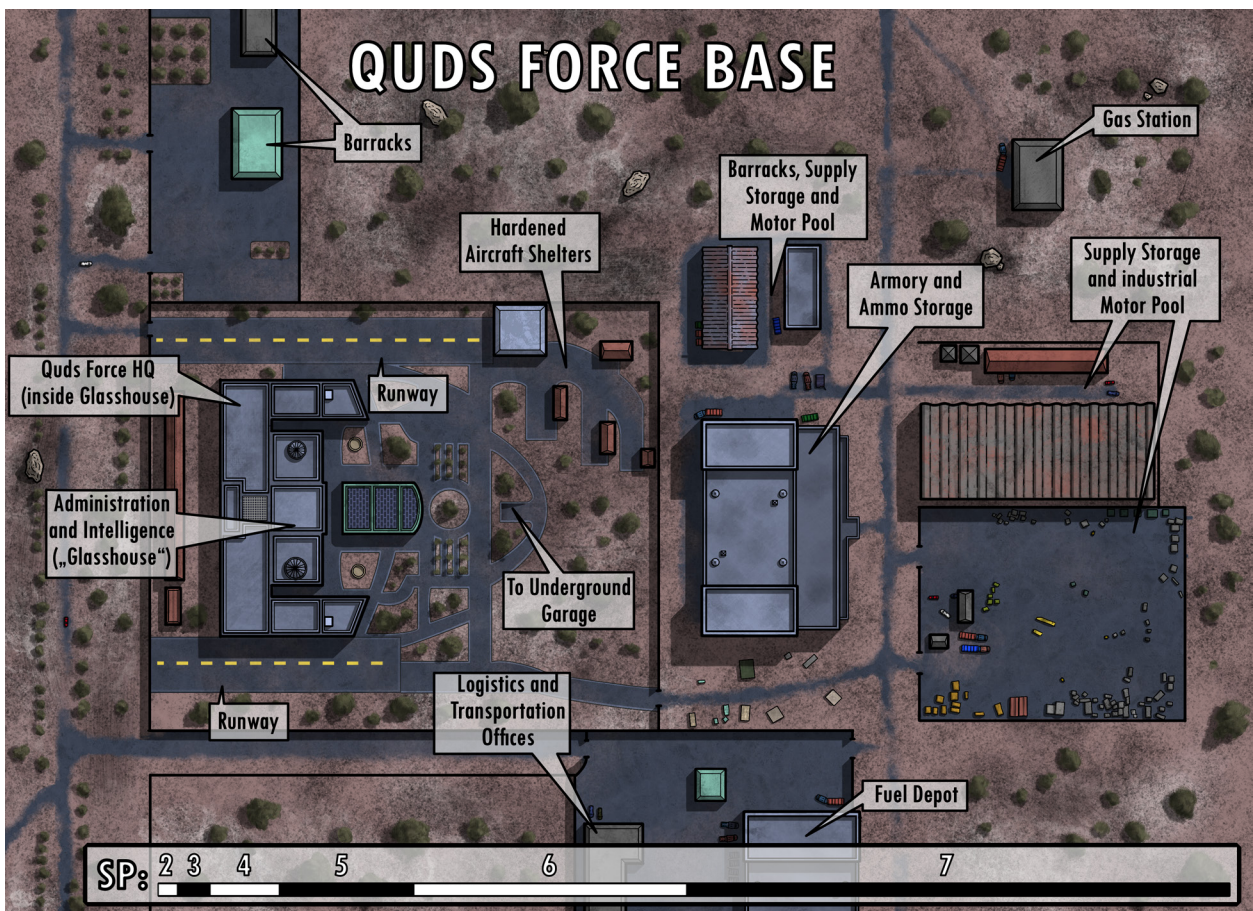
Declassifier's Power Flow applies to all of his Charisma modifier powers. It prevents him from using the powers on targets who haven't already lost at least half their Health or Determination. In an interrogation, Declassifier will either deal the necessary damage by Intimidation (for Determination) or by simple torture (for Health), depending on the target's Resolve. We assigned this Power Flow a 30% refund modifier.

## STORY HOOK

A former Navy SEAL turned CIA covert operative, Lt. Commander Michael Robillard is a walking archive of classified information relating to Defense and State Department missions in Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Now he's been captured by Quds Force, the elite special warfare branch of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Through an asset in country, the CIA has learned that LT CDR Robillard is being held at the Quds Force Headquarters in Al Mazzeh Airport in Syria.

The heroes are tasked with rescuing LT CDR Robillard before he cracks under torture. The bad news is that Quds Force has hired the Declassifier to interrogate their very special prisoner. It's only a matter of time until he breaks. The good news is that, like every top professional consultant, Declassifier bills by the hour, so the time won't be as short as it might be.

The HQ is guarded by a detachment of 50 Special Force Soldiers. In addition, a number of Dark Emerald Super Soldiers might be on hand to guarantee Declassifier's security, perhaps accompanied by a Dark Emerald ascendant such as Reaver or Ghost Ring.



# GHOST RING

Arisa Takeda was born in San Francisco, California, to second-generation Japanese immigrants. All four of her grandparents were interned at Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming during World War II. The experience seems to have left them with an enduring suspicion of the honesty of the US government, a trait which was passed on to Takeda's parents, Rei and Mari. The pair met at Berkeley and were active in progressive and socialist causes. At one point, Rei Takeda had an FBI file tracking his work on behalf of Students for a Democratic Society.

In what seems to have been an act of teenage rebellion, Arisa Takeda spurned her parent's values. She was an excellent athlete, but her academic performance was lackluster despite high test scores. In what seems to be an act of teenage rebellion, she rejected the notion of college, instead enlisting in the United States Air Force in August 2012. After completing Basic Training at Lackland Air Force Base, she enrolled in the 65-day Air Force Security Forces course. There, Takeda's previously-unknown natural shooting talent became apparent, as she achieved perfect scores at every visit to the firing range. Her personnel record notes "exemplary performance in marksmanship" with "intense focus."

As an Airman First Class, she was posted to the 509th Security Forces Squadron at Whiteman Air Force Base. After a six-month stint protecting the B-2 bomber, she was promoted to Senior Airman and placed on the fast-track for advancement to NCO. In June 2013, she became one of the few women to ever complete the USAF's 11-day Advanced Designated Marksman course at Ft Bliss, TX. (It would be five years until another woman, Senior Airman Jennifer Gamez, passed the course.) The following year, she returned to Ft. Bliss, where in June 2014 she completed the 19-day Close Precision Engagement Course, becoming one of only 500 people worldwide to complete the Air Force's counter-sniper training program. Her tactical officer cited her as "the best natural shooter – man or woman – I have ever trained." Like Simo Häyhä, the famed "White Death" of Finland, Takeda preferred to aim with open sights, believing a scope made it easier for the enemy to spot her. Her nickname "Ghost Ring" comes from her amazing ability to rapidly acquire and accurately hit targets at long range over open sights.

In August 2014, her burgeoning marksmanship skills caught the attention of the US Air Force World Class Athlete Program. Takeda was transferred to Colorado Springs to train with the USA Shooting Team at the National Training Center's U.S. Olympic Shooting Center. On 13 April 2015 she earned a silver medal in Women's Three Position Rifle at the ISSF World Cup in Changwon, South Korea. Six months later, she repeated the feat, winning the silver medal in Women's 50m Rifle at the 6th CISM World Military Games in Seoul, South Korea. These successes secured her a place on the US Olympic Team, and in August 2016 she headed to Rio de Janeiro to compete in the XXXI Olympiad, becoming the second American to ever win the gold medal in Women's Three-Position Rifle.

When she returned stateside, Takeda expected to join the Air Force's elite Phoenix Raven "murder crew." To her surprise, she was instead dispatched to Guantanamo Bay to participate in a secretive DARPA project for soldier performance enhancement. As the 63rd test subject for Project Ascension, Takeda received a late-stage formulation of the Ascension protocols. The effort was a success – one of the program's few true successes. Takeda's already-impressive hand-eye coordination and manual dexterity improved 400% while her marksmanship improved by 6400%. With follow-on training from Maximilian Danneskjöld (then the program's foremost ascendant), Takeda learned how to use zero-point energy to mask herself from detection. Takeda described it to Dr. Gupta during debriefing as feeling like she was "suppressing" light and sound around herself. Takeda was ranked as a military-grade ascendant with a quantified assessment of power (QAP) score of 60.

On 12 June 2018, Takeda joined Danneskjöld, Helen Song, Frank Pendleton, and other ascendants in the Guantanamo Bay break-out. She slew two US servicemembers with a rifle before she was incapacitated by chemical weapons. Ironically, the first time Takeda ever took a human life, it was her own nation's soldiers.

After being safely transferred to Leavenworth penitentiary, Takeda was interviewed by Dr. Gupta with the assistance of trained CIA interrogators. Takeda claimed that she had been subjected to mind control by Danneskjöld and denied personal culpability. Dr. Gupta noted:

We are unable to ascertain if Takeda was genuinely subjected to mind control or was simply manipulated by Danneskjöld's superior emotional intelligence. In either case, she seems to feel shame, but not guilt, about her actions.

During interrogation, we used a galvanometer and pneumograph to measure her emotional reaction to footage of her killings. The readings suggested a high level of arousal, similar to that seen during copulation.

Because it was DOD policy at the time to classify Project Ascension and its involvement with Danneskjöld, it was deemed impossible to court martial her. Because of her high profile, extrajudicial action was also ruled out. Instead, Takeda received an administrative discharge from the US Air Force in February 2019. As a condition of her release, she was implanted with a biometric tracking device that would enable Project Ascension to monitor her whereabouts in the future.

Via the tracker, we know that she spent the first half of 2019 with her aging parents in San Francisco and seems to have reconciled with them. Takeda's experience in Project Ascension and her discharge from USAF seem to have soured her patriotism, and/or confirmed her parent's teachings to be suspicious of how America would treat her.

In May 2019, Takeda was contacted by Martin van Lindt, field commander of Dark Emerald, who offered her a position with the corporation. Thereafter, our information on Takeda becomes slim. Personnel at Dark Emerald seem to have been able to detect and remove her implanted biomonitor, rendering us unable to track her whereabouts. She wires over \$20,000 per month into a stateside account held by her aging parents, and Squadron Intelligence believes that any attempt to capture or communicate with Takeda would best be accomplished through them.

Takeda is suspected to have committed eighteen assassinations-for-hire since joining Dark Emerald. In each kill, the victim was slain by an unseen sniper shooting from long-range with a high-powered rifle. In each case, the victim received an *ofuda*, a Japanese paper talisman, bearing the characters リング ("ring"). Due to the nature of her powers, DNA and forensic confirmation has been lacking.

Her present whereabouts are unknown.

# GHOST RING

700 CP, CR 60

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	7	7	8	5	5	20

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	10
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	4
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	11/12
JUMPING SPEED	3	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

320

RECOVERY

64

DETERMINATION

160

RECOVERY

32

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Inaudibility 10 (60 CP), Invisibility 10 (90 CP), Lightning Reflexes 3 (6 CP), Long Range Combat Sense 10 (15 CP), Super-Stamina 10 (20 CP), Telescopic Vision 8 (21 CP), Thermal Dark Vision 8 (73 CP).

**Skills:** Alertness 10, Breath Control 10, Engineering 6, Intimidate 6, Interrogate 6, Marksmanship (shooting) 15, Smack Talk 6, Stealth 12

**Perks:** Authority (Dark Emerald officer, 5 CP), Combat Maneuver (all ranged, 30 CP), Famous (12 CP), Ferocious, Multilingual (Japanese, 1 CP), Resolute (10 CP), Signature Move (all ranged, 30 CP), Sex Appeal, Watchful, Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (always sends a warning, 1 CP) Compulsion (kill-thrill, 2 CP), Dependent (elderly parents, 2 CP), Duty (Dark Emerald, 5 CP), Hunted (Department of Defense, 5 CP), Notorious (12 CP), Vulnerable State: Drained (if Determination reduced to 80 or less, loses Powers, AGI drops to 5, VAL drops to 5, and Marksmanship drops to 9, 101 CP)

**Equipment:** Ceramic-Reinforced Spidersilk Ballistic Armor, Climbing Gear, Satellite Phone, Sniper Rifle with Silencer, Submachinegun with Silencer, Spy Bugs x 4, Tool Belt, Walkie Talkie

## BACKGROUND

Arisa Takeda, codenamed Ghost Ring, was a gold medalist in shooting at the XXXI Olympiad. She gained superhuman marksmanship as part of the secretive Project Ascension protocols, but has betrayed her country to serve as an assassin and sniper for Dark Emerald.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Ghost Ring's Famous Perk represents her fame as a US Olympic shooter. Her Notorious drawback represents her notoriety as the sinister assassin Ghost Ring. The fact that gold medalist Arisa Takeda is Ghost Ring is not widely known outside of US military circles.

Because of her Resolute and Signature Move Perks, Ghost Ring can spend up to 5 Hero Points on any Ranged Attack. With a base AV of 15 and base EV of 8 with her Sniper Rifle, and all the combat maneuvers available to her, that means she can effectively attack at anywhere from AV 20 / EV 8 to AV 16 / EV 12. For a PL 22 character, she hits very hard.

Technically, her Marksmanship 15 is in excess of her Absolute Power Limit (because  $22/2 + 3 = 14$ ). However, since she has no ranged powers, she uses EV 6 to calculate her Ranged Attack limit, meaning that despite her very high Marksmanship she is still well under her Combination Power Limit.  $15 + 6 = 21$  while her Ferocious-modified Power Limit is  $22 + 1 = 23!$  We could have given her more CP to push her from PL 22 to PL 23, raising her Absolute Power Limit to 15, but the character felt complete at 700 CP. If that bothers you, then give her some more CP of Fame and Wealth and rate her as PL 23 with Challenge Rating 85.

## STORY HOOK

Every superhero makes enemies. Sometimes those enemies strike back in the way it hurts the most. One of the heroes has angered someone rich and powerful, and they've hired Ghost Ring to carry out their revenge. But Ghost Ring isn't going to attack the hero – no. She's been hired to assassinate the hero's Dependent or Dependents.

Before the attack, the Dependent will be warned with an *ofuda* sent in the mail to the Dependent(s)' address. If the hero is a member of Dreadnaught or Star-Spangled Squadron, receiving this warning would be enough to trigger the hero getting this briefing from their supervisor. Alternatively, Renard, Rootkit, or conventional intelligence agencies such as NSA might warn the hero of the threat.



# MIDNIGHT SUN

Aki Mäkinen was born in Finland in 1988 and enlisted in the Finnish Defence Forces (FDF) in 2006. He was selected for NCO training and then assigned to the elite Utti Jaeger Regiment's Paratrooper Company, where he received training in long-range reconnaissance patrol, guerilla, urban and air assault operations. When his conscription ended, Mäkinen opted to become a career soldier and transferred into the Special Jaeger Company. He continued to train in hand-to-hand combat, marksmanship, and polar warfare. In 2015, Mäkinen was deployed to Afghanistan as part of the Resolute Support Mission. Although the RSM's tasks did not include participating in combat activities, Mäkinen was secretly attached to Delta Force operations, primarily covert assassinations.

According to former comrades in the FDF, Mäkinen became disillusioned with the politics of warfighting but addicted to the thrill of combat. Upon retiring from the FDF in 2017, he became a private security contractor for Nordic Ore Ventures Oy, a mining company in Lapland. Payroll records indicate that NOV offered substantially above-market rates.

It wasn't long until Mäkinen discovered why NOV's pay was so high. Deep within the mine, the miners had discovered the wreckage of an [REDACTED] flying object [REDACTED]. It was this, rather than the ore itself, that Mäkinen and other elite operatives had been hired to protect. Though the details of this find were kept on highly-secure servers with extensive intrusion countermeasures, Exodus operative Rootkit seems to have discovered the object's existence via data breach sometime in mid-November 2019.

On 29 November 2019, during the sunset that was about to begin polar night, Exodus launched an attack to obtain [REDACTED]. During the onslaught, Mäkinen was grievously wounded; every other employee at the mine was executed. Footage of the assault recovered by Squadron Intelligence shows that Maximum Leader stood over Mäkinen's wounded form for several minutes, apparently exchanging words with him, before he and his Exodus cohorts departed. What they talked about, we do not know, though we can surmise it might have been related to his family ancestry (discussed below). In any case, it seems Maximum Leader was able to detect that Mäkinen had ascended from the pain and stress of his wound, and accordingly spared him.

The powers Mäkinen gained in ascension seem to be correlated to the solar phenomenon of polar night. When the sun is below the horizon (e.g. at night), Mäkinen is able to control darkness in a manner similar to that recorded in Shadowmancer. When the sun is above the horizon (e.g. during the day), he is able to control light in a manner similar to that of Aurora, although he cannot control the bio-photons he and other living things radiate, forcing him to rely on external sources of light. Remarkably, during periods of dusk, he can control both light and darkness. While this is a short period in most times and places, above the arctic circle during solstices, dusk can last for hours.

Unlike most people who ascend, Mäkinen did not immediately begin to use his powers. Instead he began to investigate his family history. Through ancestry records and DNA testing, Mäkinen learned he was ethnically Russian, and that during the Cold War his grandparents had adopted new names and moved to Finland. This discovery seems to have had a traumatic effect on Mäkinen, who shortly thereafter removed the Finnish flag and his FDF service record from his social media pages and began to frequent pro-Russian and pro-Exodus websites. Dr. Gupta has hypothesized that the combination of a traumatic near-death experience, a painful ascension, and a subsequent discovery that his family history had been falsified might have caused a breakdown in Mäkinen's moral framework.

In February 2020, Mäkinen was recruited to join Dark Emerald, and under the codename Midnight Sun has been deployed as an operative in several successful missions. Dark Emerald seems to consider him one of their prized operatives; unlike most ascendants who join the PMC, Mäkinen was already a highly-trained soldier prior to gaining his powers, with expertise in hand-to-hand combat, tundra and mountain survival, orienteering, and cold weather warfare. Mäkinen's estimated quantitative assessment of power (QAP) score is 60, but this might understate his military value.

**MIDNIGHT SUN**

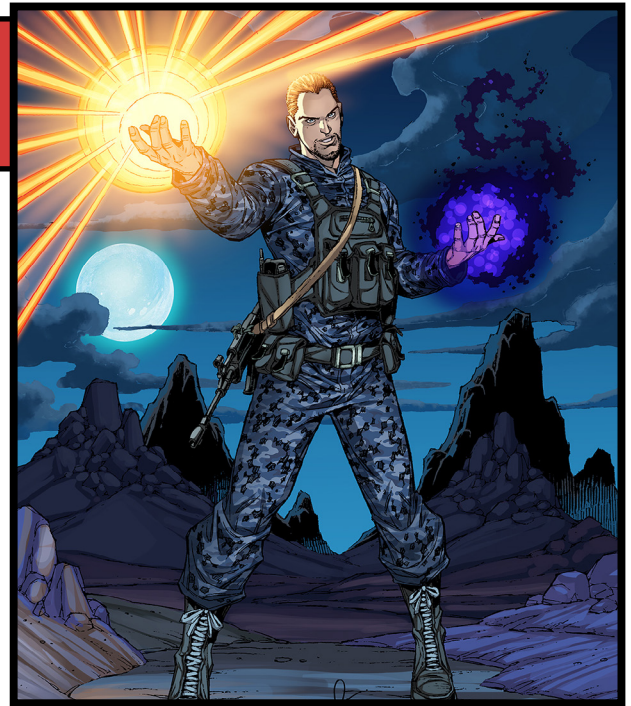
700 CP, CR 60

**PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES****HP**

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	5	12	12	7	5	5

**20****SECONDARY STATS**

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	15
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	5
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	5/9
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	7	PASSIVE LISTENING	0

**HEALTH****320****RECOVERY****64****DETERMINATION****120****RECOVERY****24****POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS**

**Powers:** Agile Darkness Control 0 (100 CP) with Power Flaw: Unavailable between dawn and dusk (-20 CP), Agile External Light Control 0 (50 CP) with Power Flaw: Unavailable between dusk and dawn (-10 CP), Lightning Reflexes 3 (6 CP), Super-Stamina 10 (20 CP), Power Battery (Darkness Control, Light Control) 10 (210 CP) with Power Flaw: Only one power usually available (-42 CP)

**Skills:** Alertness 9, Engineering (combat) 9, Infiltration 9, Stoicism 9

**Perks:** Multilingual (English, Russian, 2 CP), Sex Appeal, Tireless, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (always fulfill mission, 2 CP), Duty (Dark Emerald, 5 CP), Notorious (9 CP), Vulnerable State: Drained (AGI reduced to 9, VAL reduced to 9, loses Darkness Control, Light Control, and Power Battery if Determination reduced to 60 or less, 104 CP)

**Equipment:** Caseless Hyperburst Assault Rifle (EV 8), Ceramic-Reinforced Spidersilk Ballistic Armor, Hyper-Fragmentation Grenades x4, Military-Grade Night Vision Goggles, Satellite Phone, Tool Belt, Walkie Talkie

**BACKGROUND**

An elite Finnish paratrooper turned private security consultant, Aki Mäkinen ascended during the polar night at a classified incident at an arctic mine owned by Nordic Ore Ventures Oy. Now, as Midnight Sun, he can control darkness by night and control light by day – and during the long arctic dusk he can do both. He is one of Dark Emerald's most valued military operatives.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Midnight Sun has an unusual build that is quite thematic but not entirely optimal in most circumstances. Except briefly during dusk and dawn, Midnight Sun can only use one of his two main powers at a time – Darkness Control or Light Control. Because his Light Control has the External modifier, its SPs are penalized by the SPs of Obscurity, making it weaker during the twilight hours. And because of his Vulnerable State and moderate RES, he's highly susceptible to Mental or Emotion Attacks.

In exchange for these weaknesses, Midnight Sun enjoys considerable flexibility. He can, depending on the time of day, fly or teleport, flash or deflect, or deal thermal or annihilating damage. His high AGI and VAL make him an expert marksman and martial artist, while Alertness, Engineering (combat), and Infiltration make him a highly skilled guerilla, what the FDF calls a "sisi".

## STORY HOOK

Little Diomed Island, known colloquially as "Yesterday Isle," is a 2.5 square mile (21 SP) island located in the center of the Bering Strait between Siberia and Alaska. A mere 2.2 miles (11 SP) west of Little Diomed Island is the neighboring Big Diomed Island, which is part of Russia and past the International Date Line. During the Cold War, the border between the American and Russian Diomedes was known as the Ice Curtain and was heavily patrolled by both sides. After the Cold War ended, virtually everyone forgot about Little Diomed except the 82 people who live there .

Now that's changed. United States Space Command (USSPACECOM) has recently finished construction of Sentinel Observatory on Little Diomed. Sentinel Observatory boasts a colossal telescope that pierces through the veil of the Arctic night. Meticulously engineered to observe celestial bodies with unparalleled precision, this behemoth of optics also doubles as a covert surveillance tool, allowing the US Space Force to scrutinize Russian satellite deployments from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Siberia.

Russia is none too pleased with this development, but it cannot afford to act openly against the United States. Therefore it has hired Dark Emerald to destroy the facility. Dark Emerald, in turn, has placed this Arctic operation under Midnight Sun's command and given him a detachment of troops to carry it out. After weeks of logistical effort, Midnight Sun has gotten his troops staged on Big Diomed Island. His plan calls for the attack to take place at dawn so that Midnight Sun can use both his Darkness and Light Control powers. He intends to use his 10 SPs of Darkness Control and 3 Hero Points to create a Portal crossing the 11 SP gap between the staging area and the Sentinel Observatory. From there, his troops will then deploy through the Portal, deal with any guards at the facility, plant explosives, and retreat back through the portal. Since Sentinel Observatory is both lightly defended and largely isolated, Midnight Sun and his troops expect it to be an easy operation.

Unfortunately for Dark Emerald, it won't be, because one of the mercenary soldiers assigned to the mission has betrayed them. Staff Sergeant Todd Falconer (use the Special Forces Soldier template) was a US Army veteran born and raised in Alaska; faced with the prospect of attacking his home state, Falconer suffered an attack of conscience. A few hours before the planned assault, he surreptitiously sent a warning to his old comrades in the US Department of Defense: "Expect an ascendant attack on the Sentinel Observatory at dawn." By the time his warning has been verified as credible, circulated through DOD channels, and reached the hero's organization, there's barely enough time left for the heroes to get to Little Diomed Island... but their presence will be enough to transform Midnight Sun's "easy operation" into a full spectrum battlefield.

The GM can customize the exact size and nature of the Dark Emerald detachment to offer an appropriate challenge to the heroes. Midnight Sun might be leading one or more 30-man platoons of Skilled Infantry Soldiers (CR 60 per platoon), Special Forces Soldiers (CR 120 per platoon) or even Super-Soldiers (CR 600 per platoon), and might even involve Ghost Ring (CR 60) or Reaver (CR 40) to boot. Regardless of his force composition, Midnight Sun will disguise the troops as Nature's Right eco-terrorists, and the soldiers will randomly shout glib environmentalist slogans ("Northern Lights Not Northern Light Pollution!" "Save the Polar Bears!" etc). Whether the heroes figure out that it's actually Dark Emerald and not Nature's Right will entirely depend on their actions during the battle.

Dark Emerald's objective is to destroy the Sentinel Observatory and escape back across the border to Russia; they will attempt to avoid any sort of prolonged engagement with the heroes. The heroes are unlikely to be given permission to pursue into Russia, and if they do, it could lead to an international incident that brings Spetsikhotron and the Star-Spangled Squadron into conflict...

# REAYER

Following the Leavenworth Incident of 2012, TRADOC's Future Soldier Program (FUSOP) was cancelled. DARPA commissioned a renewed Enhanced Human Performance Investigation as Project Ascension in 2013, which continued to pursue epigenetic enhancement of the human genome. That same year, TRADOC replaced FUSOP with the Improved Warfighter Technology (IMWAR) program. IMWAR's mandate was to develop tactical gear for the American warfighter that would enable him to fight and win against ascendant forces.

In 2017, technology developed by IMWAR was issued for field testing to members of G Squadron of the US Army's 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta, commonly known as Delta Force. Unfortunately, on 10 November 2017, G Squadron crashed while en route via Blackhawk helicopter to a classified location in China. With Chinese forces swarming the area, our troops were unable to reach the site to rescue G Squadron or secure the highly classified equipment with which the operators had been equipped. Joint Special Operations Command made the difficult decision to destroy the crash site with drone-fired missiles rather than allow it to fall into Chinese hands.

At the time, it was believed that all of the members of G Squadron had been killed. However, in the intervening 29 months, the Star-Spangled Squadron has received compelling evidence that at least one G Squadron operator survived the failed mission: Staff Sergeant Sean Geraldin. Based on photographic and forensic evidence, as well as eyewitness testimonials and detainee reports, we have concluded that Sergeant Geraldin has been working for the last three years as a mercenary. Using his Delta Force training and IMWAR technology, he has engaged in black operations on criminal organizations such as El Cartel de Los Cartels as well as private military corporations including Dreadnaught Security Inc. and Dark Emerald Corp.

Geraldin is an expert in hand-to-hand combat, small arms, sabotage, and stealth, and is an experienced interrogator with CIA training at Guantanamo Bay. Based on records collected in the aftermath of his missions, we believe he is equipped with the following IMWAR gear:

- Reaver-class advanced personal protective armor. Using classified composite materials, the Reaver armor is rated to withstand sustained bursts of 20mm fire. A biomonitor linked to an auto-injector system can administer stimulants to enhance reaction time and maintain operational alertness despite fatigue and exhaustion. The helmet has a built-in sensor suite including thermal and telescopic optics with anti-dazzle polarization and a medium-range multi-band radio with radar detection. The left gauntlet has a built-in grapple gun with 110m of coiled spidersilk microfiber that can be used for urban mobility. The right gauntlet has a retractable hydraulic vanadium-steel blade that can generate sufficient force to penetrate Reaver armor as well as a multi-tool capable of most mechanical tasks.
- XM2020 experimental assault rifle. This 7.62mm bullpup-configured assault rifle fires caseless rounds with single shot, three round burst, or fully automatic settings. It features a unique variable-ammunition magazine that can be switched between armor-piercing bullets, incendiary bullets, or rubber bullets depending on mission parameters.
- Vanadium steel sword. This unique blade is made of a classified vanadium-steel alloy that can carry a razor-sharp edge while maintaining diamond-like hardness and without losing flexibility or toughness.

Due to his training and equipment, Sergeant Geraldin is considered to be an exceptionally dangerous opponent. He has a quantitative assessment of power (QAP) score of 40, putting him individually on par with ascendants such as Airborne or with multimillion dollar fighting vehicles such as an M1A2 Abrams tank.

# REAVER

680 CP, CR 40

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>18</b>
VALUE	5	5	5	9	7	8	

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	5/12
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	8
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	8/6
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

240

RECOVERY

48

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Combat Sense 9 (40 CP), Super-Stamina 9 (16 CP)

**Skills:** Marksmanship (shooting) 10, Martial Arts 9, Infiltration 9, Intimidation 10, Investigation 9, Non-Combat Parkour 9, Stealth 7

**Perks:** Authority (bounty hunter, 2 CP), Combat Maneuvers (Super-Fast Melee, Super-Fast Ranged, Super-Power Melee, Super-Power Ranged, 20 CP), Contact (Dark Emerald Intel Department, 10 CP), Contact (El Cartel de Los Carteles, 10 CP), Criminal Connections (40 CP), Singular Invention (80 CP), Wealthy (40 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (mercenary's code, 2 CP), Dark Secret (caused death of his comrades, 5 CP), Hunted (Chinese PLA, 5 CP), Hunted (Pentagon, 5 CP), Notorious (6 CP), Unlikeable

**Equipment:** Reaver Battle Armor (Worn Object, TOU 9, Durability 240, Weight 0, Height 0, Lightning Reflexes 7, Invulnerability 10, Penetrating Strike 10, Polarized Vision 8, Sensitive Radio Communication 15, Swinglining 6, Telescopic Vision 8, Thermal Dark Vision 8, 405 CP), XM2020 Assault Rifle (Externally Crewed Object, TOU 5, Durability 60, Weight -2, Height -1, Gunfire Power Set 9 [Rapid-Fire Penetrating Blast, Rapid-Fire Thermal Blast, Rapid-Fire Nonlethal Bludgeoning Blast], 135 CP), Vanadium-Steel Shortsword (Externally Crewed Object, TOU 3, Durability 30, Weight -3, Height -1, Lacerating Strike 10, 59 CP) (599 CP total of 600 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Sean Gerald, codenamed Reaver, is the sole survivor of Delta Force Squadron G, the rest of whom were killed by American air strikes to avoid their prototype super-equipment falling into enemy hands. Now Reaver uses the remaining prototypes as a mercenary for Dark Emerald.

## REAYER BATTLE ARMOR

**Cost:** 29 SP (\$5.4M) / 405 CP **Type:** Worn Object

**Attributes:** Height 0, Weight 0, Toughness 9, Durability 240

**Powers:** Lightning Reflexes 7, Invulnerability 10, Penetrating Strike 10, Polarized Vision 8, Sensitive Radio Communications 15, Swinglining 6, Telescopic Vision 8, Thermal Dark Vision 8

## XM2020 ASSAULT RIFLE

**Cost:** 21 SP (\$21K) / 135 CP **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height -1, Weight -2, Toughness 5, Durability 60, Exterior Crew Requirement 0

**Powers:** Gunfire Power Set 9 (Rapid-Fire Penetrating Blast, Rapid-Fire Thermal Blast, Rapid-Fire Nonlethal Bludgeoning Blast)

## VANADIUM-STEEL SHORTSWORD

**Cost:** 17 SP (\$1.3K) / 59 CP **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height -1, Weight -3, Toughness 3, Durability 30, Exterior Crew Requirement 0

**Powers:** Lacerating Strike 10

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Staff Sergeant Sean Geraldin is both betrayer and betrayed. A loyal soldier in the US Army for over 10 years, Geraldin was repaid with endless deployments on futile and unwinnable wars that led to more and more of his friends suffering death or disability – for what? A greedy and self-serving Pentagon elite focused on its revolving door into the arms industry? An ungrateful nation of precious snowflakes who sneered at the men who protected the liberty they wasted on hashtags on selfies?

Shortly after Geraldin's unit was issued its IMWAR gear, Geraldin was contacted by an international arms syndicate interested in arranging a trade: his gear for \$50 million dollars. For the embittered sergeant, it was easy to say yes. He and the buyers worked out a plan. Geraldin sabotaged the Blackhawk carrying his team of operators, causing it to make a forced landing during its mission to China. In the confusion of the crash, he snuck away to make the trade with his shadowy buyers.

He did not expect the buyers to be the Chinese People's Liberation Army, nor did he expect that they would come in force not just for him but for his whole squad. He did not expect the SOCOM to value the IMWAR gear over the lives of its operators. He did not expect to see his team die.

Furious at SOCOM for killing his men, furious at China for leading him into treachery, and furious most of all at himself, Geraldin killed his PLA handlers and escaped with both the cash and the gear, fleeing into neutral Burma.

Geraldin had hoped to retire from a life of arms. Now he found himself a wanted man and was forced to spend much of his newfound wealth establishing new identities for himself. But more than that, he was restless with guilt and regret. Unable to find peace, he lapsed back into his trade as a warfighter, taking work as a mercenary for criminal organizations and corporations under the code-name Reaver.

Reaver is highly selective of his clients and missions, and he has some level of conscience remaining underneath his bitterness and betrayal. He would kill an ascendant hero, or assassinate an executive, but he would not burn down a hospital or kidnap children. Reaver is highly concerned that as ascendants proliferate, his competitive edge from his IMWAR gear will erode, so many of his high profile jobs are taken in the hopes of securing advanced technology he can add to his arsenal.

In the field, he is generally a sharp tactician who runs tight operations from a carefully planned script. However, when things go off-script, his temper can flare up badly, with ill consequences for whoever has caused the problems.

## STORY HOOK

Dark Emerald has discovered the whereabouts of a cache of experimental technology developed by 12Sigma prior to his disappearance. The technology, originally developed by 12Sigma for the South Korean Ministry of Defense, was sold on the black market by defectors to North Korea, and currently is stored in a secure research facility 17 miles west of Pyongyang. It has retained Reaver (CR 40), along with a team of eight Super-Soldiers (CR 20 each), to infiltrate the facility and capture the technology. Reaver and his team will enter via a High-Altitude High-Opening parachute jump.

Dreadnaught Security and/or the Star-Spangled Squadron have discovered the technology at the same time and ordered the heroes to secure the technology before the Dark Emerald team. Their secondary orders are to capture Reaver and secure his arsenal of US military hardware.

The North Korean facility is guarded by a platoon of 30 Special Forces Soldiers (CR 4 each) from the KPASOF Lightning Commandos. If the heroes are high-powered superheroes from Star-Spangled Squadron, then the North Koreans will be hosting scientific teams from Russia and/or China, protected by Avangard (CR 700) and/or Jiàn Shèng (CR 500), who are on hand to examine 12Sigma's hardware. Thus, the total CR can range from CR 320 to 1520 depending on the GM's campaign.





## CHAPTER 4: EXODUS

### ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Personnel:** 15 (16,000 CR)    **Funds:** 15 (\$650M annual)  
**Facilities:** 15 (18 acres)    **Reputation:** 15 (1M fans)  
**Perks:** Criminal Connections  
**Drawbacks:** Hunted (by everyone), Notorious 20 (25M haters)

Exodus is a loosely organized ideological movement that urges those gifted with superpowers to “exit humanity” in favor of a new ascendant identity. Exodus rose to prominence in the aftermath of Maximum Leader’s speech before the UN on 10 February 2020, when he called for ascendants worldwide to join him. Many members of Exodus began to claim his island of Nauru to be their “homeland,” and the more violent among them began to take steps to punish the national governments that had refused to recognize Nauru’s sovereignty.

On 18 April 2020, the Department of Homeland Security officially listed Exodus as the world's foremost terrorist organization after a rash of violent crimes by the group that targeted institutions and individuals critical of ascendants. The American cells of Exodus responded by increasing their terror spree. Their reprisal campaign culminated on 19 July in a pitched battle when the Star-Spangled Squadron and Exodus ascendants fought at the headquarters of American Citizens Against Vigilantism (ACAV). While the Squadron succeeded in driving off the terrorists, Dr. Quantum, Stronghold, and Warp were left in critical condition. Exodus claimed a moral victory and authorities fear it has more than made good its casualties with new recruits.

**Personnel:** Exodus is a decentralized organization that operates as a largely leaderless network of autonomous cells. Maximum Leader is unquestionably the most powerful and influential member of the organization, and often dubbed the “head” of Exodus, but he largely inspires rather than commands the other members. Like Al-Qaeda and ISIS before it, Exodus coordinates its actions ideologically rather than hierarchically. It is believed to have 10,000 members worldwide, the vast majority of whom have very limited superpowers. Many of its members are societal outcasts for whom a superpower, however trivial, is their sole claim to superiority over the people who have ostracized them. Although no match for military-grade ascendants in a stand-up fight, these broken individuals can pose a grave threat when used in terror attacks against civilians. That is not to say that Exodus has no truly superhuman members – it does, with Maximum Leader foremost among them. The most powerful 12 of these reside on the island of Nauru, where they serve as a strategic deterrent for nations that might take umbrage at a sovereign state of superhumans.

**Facilities:** As a clandestine organization, Exodus has little in the way of proper facilities. The exception is on the island of Nauru, where it operates a 9-acre training camp. Formerly known as Pleasant Island, Nauru is an island country in Micronesia situated between Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and the Marshall Islands. With a territory of only 8.1 square miles and a population of 10,670 residents, Nauru is the third-smallest country in the world behind Vatican City and Monaco. Nauru was conquered in a coup d'état by Maximum Leader on 26 April 2019. Prior to the coup, Nauru's largest source of revenue came from the Nauru Regional Processing Center, which imprisoned illegal immigrants on behalf of Australia starting in 2001 and began to house ascendant detainees in 2018. These criminal ascendants were recruited into Exodus when Maximum Leader seized the island.

**Funds:** According to US intelligence sources, Exodus has five major sources of funding:

- ★ Aid payments to Nauru from foreign governments offered in exchange for Exodus limiting its operations in their territory
- ★ Donations from supporters of the movement, often through not-for-profit front organizations
- ★ Export of phosphates from deposits on Nauru mined with slave labor
- ★ Kidnapping, ransomware, murder-for-hire, and other mercenary criminal enterprise
- ★ Sale of high-tech inventions on the black market to criminal cartels and rogue nations worldwide

With approximately \$650 million in annual revenue, it is one of the best-funded terrorist groups in the world, comparable to ISIS when it controlled 60% of the oil supply of Syria. Exodus has connections into rogue nations, state sponsors of terrorism, and criminal cartels around the world, and can reliably secure contraband, military hardware, government secrets, or anything else with a cost of 32 SPs or less.

**Current Situation:** Having secured a base on Nauru and scored a major propaganda victory over the Star-Spangled Squadron in Washington D.C., Exodus seems to be a greater threat than ever. Maximum Leader claims to only want a homeland for ascendants to develop their powers in peace and argues that Exodus's members are freedom fighters in the vein of the IRA and PLO. But many national leaders fear that granting Exodus the sovereignty it demands will lead to a new world order that puts ascendants in charge.

# MAXIMUM LEADER

Maximilian Danneskjöld was born in Gothenburg, Sweden in 1977. His father was a general in the Swedish Army, and briefly served as the country's Deputy Minister of Defense. Both parents were independently wealthy members of the Swedish nobility, of the baronial Danneskjöld and knightly Krakenhoff families, respectively. To prepare him for life as a cosmopolitan citizen of the world, Danneskjöld was sent to the Collège du Léman Sàrl, an international boarding school in Geneva, Switzerland. There he became fluent in English, French, German, and Russian. A polymathic prodigy, Danneskjöld graduated at the top of his class in 1995. In his free time, he earned the rank of chess grandmaster and composed seven full-length fugues in the Baroque tradition.

Though tall, good-looking, and rich, Danneskjöld was not a particularly cheerful young man. Classmates described him as "melancholy" and "serious." As he confessed to Dr. Gupta, during his time working with Project Ascension, he felt "the modern world had conspired to make great-souled men succumb to despair. Alexander wept for having only one world to conquer; modern man weeps for having only one brand to consume..."

Danneskjöld decided to return to his homeland for university, eventually earning his PhD in Continental Philosophy at the University of Gothenburg in 2007. His brilliant thesis "Quantum Will to Power: A Nietzschean Interpretation of von Neumann-Stapp Quantum Theory" secured him a prestigious job offer at DePaul University in Chicago. There, he taught courses in Hegel, Heidegger, and Nietzsche to enraptured students.

In his evenings, he devoted himself to contemplation of the nature of reality, seeking to achieve, through supreme will, domination of the implicate order. On the night of December 22, 2012, Danneskjöld succeeded in activating his metaplasts. As he later related to Dr. Gupta, "great power coursed into me, through me, threatened to destroy me, that night. I learned that great power is a great beast that must be tamed with a whip and a firm hand." The newly ascendant Danneskjöld took a sabbatical from teaching to focus on developing his own abilities.

Among the first powers that Danneskjöld learned to control was the ability to detect other ascendants. That, in turn, led to him discovering Project Ascension's new headquarters in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. When Danneskjöld presented himself for testing by the program, our scientists found he had more metaplasts in his blood than even Manticore. (When the QAP-correlated exomes were identified in 2016, Danneskjöld was confirmed to have fully expressed all four.) Project Ascension invited Danneskjöld to join the program as a NATO representative, and the professor-turned-superhuman agreed. With the help of Project Ascension's careful training regimen, Danneskjöld gradually brought his cosmic powers under control. With the blessing of the scientists and officers at Gitmo, he began to train other ascendants in his methods. He seemed a model hero, the paragon of the project.

Then, on 12 June 2018, Project Ascension ended in disaster. Manticore inexplicably broke out of confinement, freed a number of other dangerous ascendants, and led a prison break that became a mass casualty event. Danneskjöld was called on to stop the rogue ascendants. Instead, he and Helen Song joined them in defecting to Cuba. Because of the mass casualties suffered by the Project Ascension staff, the loss of substantial records, and the compartmentalization of much of what remained, it is difficult to reconstruct exactly what happened. The following timeline represents our best guess as to what transpired based on prisoners we have interrogated, electronic data intercepts, survivor interviews, and psychoanalytic profiling.

- In August 2014, Danneskjöld became romantically involved with fellow ascendant Helen Song (now known as Helen Killer). Although not given to intimacy, Danneskjöld seems to have been attracted to Song's self-willed ascension in the face of profound disability. Around this time, he also began covert correspondence with the ascendant Rootkit.
- On 14 June 2016, about 24 months prior to the Guantanamo breakout, Danneskjöld experienced a "second ascension" (his words from his Exodus manifesto) during which he came to see himself as a Nietzschean *ubermensch*: A cataclysmic all-destroyer and all-creator whose existence at once overthrew and gave meaning to the teeming masses of humanity. Danneskjöld felt destined to bring about the transvaluation of all values and lead humanity to overcoming itself. Seeing that ascendants were to men as men were to brutes, he concluded that humanity was not an end in itself, merely a means to the higher end. Billions might need to die so that millions could truly live.

- After his “second ascension,” Danneskjöld began to subtly influence the project’s other ascendants. The victims of his suasion were gradually imbued with a sense of innate superiority, desensitized to violence against humans, and indoctrinated with loyalty to him. The scientists at Project Ascension were utterly unaware that Danneskjöld’s ability to control cosmic forces could be used to brainwash other people. They feared the increasingly erratic and dangerous behavior exhibited by Project Ascension’s recruits as evidence for the destabilizing psychological impact of ascension itself – and were thankful that Danneskjöld himself was so sane and reliable!
- In December 2017, Danneskjöld began to question his handlers as to the origin of the biochemical technology used by Project Ascension, some of which seemed to be beyond state of the art. His queries were, of course, rebuffed as the information was classified and compartmented.
- Sometime in early 2018, Danneskjöld discovered that the Pentagon planned to shut Project Ascension down because all its superhumans were becoming criminally dangerous. (That this was due to his own psychic manipulation must have amused him.) The imminent shutdown spurred Danneskjöld and Song into action. Earlier that year, Song had been assigned to psychically analyze Manticore’s mind during his medically-induced coma, which gave her access to the monster. She began to use that access to implant hypnotic suggestions that Manticore free himself and the other captives at the facility.
- On 12 June 2018, Song chemically awakened the brainwashed Manticore from his coma. The monster predictably freed the other captives and massacred the garrison. Song and Danneskjöld then joined their newly-liberated comrades in their exodus to Cuba.

Exactly why Danneskjöld chose to provoke Manticore into causing the breakout, rather than simply doing it himself, is uncertain. Our best guess is that he suspected that the US government had access to secret anti-ascendant weapons derived from the same mysterious source that had provided its ascension technology.

In any case, gaining access to America’s ascension technology was apparently Danneskjöld’s top priority after his defection. In late October 2018, Danneskjöld learned that the technology he sought had been reverse-engineered from a vehicle stored in a sub-basement below Building 18 at Homey Airport. (How exactly he learned this classified information was unknown to us at the time, but we now know that his operative Rootkit had spent the better part of the prior two years hacking US government servers and database in search of it.) Rootkit’s discovery led to Danneskjöld’s 11 November 2018 assault on Homey Airport. The assault nearly succeeded. However, the newly-formed Star-Spangled Squadron, in its first field deployment, was able to defend the airbase, capture Rootkit, and prevent Danneskjöld from reverse-engineering the technology. Unfortunately, Danneskjöld, Song, and their compatriots eluded capture and the technology itself was destroyed during the fighting.

It was in the aftermath of this defeat that Danneskjöld founded Exodus and identified himself as its Maximum Leader. (The name may have been inspired by the SS rank of *oberführer*.) He seems to have originally planned to use Project Ascension’s technology at scale to trigger the ascension of thousands or even millions of people around the world. With that method now foreclosed, he instead planned a campaign of global terrorism to the same end. Danneskjöld knew that fear, pain, and stress could provoke ascension, at a rate of approximately one ascension per thousand victims of trauma. A decentralized terrorist organization, committing local acts of violence around the world, could easily create a new ascendant every day. These could, in turn, be recruited to the cause and used to trigger further outbreaks, bringing about the uplift of every human being capable of ascension.

Danneskjöld has deemed the casualties of Exodus’s actions to be a sacrifice necessary to secure humanity’s destiny. The results of his terrorism, including his successful conquest of Nauru on 26 April 2019 and his raid on Washington D.C. on 19 July 2020, are well-attested in declassified sources, so they will not be discussed here.

Since the Battle of Washington, Danneskjöld has largely remained on Nauru, but the shadow of his power now stretches across the globe. Given the enormous casualties caused by the Squadron’s last encounter with Danneskjöld, it has adopted a policy of containment and deterrence against him. Unless and until American Eagle returns to Earth, Danneskjöld remains the most dangerous human of mass destruction in the world.

# MAXIMUM LEADER

1080 CP, CR 1400

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	5	5	12	10	10	38

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	10
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	14
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	10/23
JUMPING SPEED	4	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	15	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

1920

RECOVERY

384

DETERMINATION

1920

RECOVERY

384

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Cosmic Control 15 (430 CP), Lightning Reflexes 5 (10 CP), Mind Screen 5 (40 CP) with Power Flaw: only screens Cosmic Awareness, Psychic Blindsight, and Scrying (-13 CP), *Pressure Protection* 20 (4 PC), *Super-Strength* 7 (12 CP), Super-Fortitude 15 (12 CP), Super-Stamina 15 (40 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (chess) 11, Avocation (classical music) 11, Avocation (Hermetic occultism) 11, Power Aptitude (Cosmic Control) 15, Profession (philosophy) 14

**Perks:** Authority (40 CP), Criminal Connections (40 CP), Headquarters (20 CP), Leadership, Minions (CR 425, 40 CP), Multilingual (English, French, German, Russian, 3 CP), Multitask, Sacrificer, Tireless, Wealthy (40 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (lead humanity to ascension, 2 CP), Duty (Exodus, 2 CP), Hunted (Star-Spangled Squadron, 10 CP), Notorious (23 CP), Vulnerable State: Caught out of Battle Armor (takes 8 Pages to put on armor and can wear for up to 16 hours; loses *Pressure Protection* and *Super-Strength*, 2 CP), Vulnerable State: Deprived of Battle Armor (remove with Extended Action, loses *Pressure Protection* and *Super-Strength*, 0 CP), Vulnerable State: Drained (if Determination reduced to 960 or less, loses Cosmic Control, Lightning Reflexes, Mind Screen, and Power Aptitude, 146 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Maximilian Danneskjöld, codenamed Maximum Leader, is a multilingual polymath and former philosophy professor who gained superhuman abilities through a mysterious “ascension” process. Initially part of the clandestine Project Ascension at Guantanamo Bay, he orchestrated a breakout of rogue ascendants and used the ensuing chaos to defect to Cuba with his allies. Now leading a global terrorist organization called Exodus, Danneskjöld seeks to provoke ascensions worldwide through fear and violence, believing that the evolution of humanity is worth the necessary sacrifices.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Maximum Leader is formidable enough to be a Series-level antagonist for a powerful group of heroes, but not every encounter with him needs to be antagonistic. Max's primary objective is to lead anyone who can ascend into doing so. Everything else is secondary to that. Exodus terrorism is just one method of achieving that goal. Max believes that all ascendants will eventually recognize the rightness of his cause and would rather recruit than fight other ascendants. If forced to fight, he will be unconcerned about collateral damage to bystanders, but restrains from killing fellow ascendants until they initiate lethal combat first. More details about Max's plans and motivations will be revealed in future *Ascendant* graphic novels and sourcebooks.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Maximum Leader's Cosmic Control represents, in the story world, an ability to directly manipulate the zero-point energy that fuels all ascendant powers. He therefore can replicate virtually any other power. The following applications of his power are particularly useful to a GM in a Series:

- ★ By using Cosmic Awareness, Max can detect when new ascendants arise. If possible, he will dispatch Exodus loyalists to the site of the ascension in order to recruit the new superhuman to their cause.
- ★ By using Portal and/or Power Stunting Teleport, Max can quickly send his allies and minions around the world. Exodus terrorists can show up anywhere at any time. He can also easily escape from combat as well as rescue key allies who are at risk of death or who are captured. This makes it much easier for the GM to have recurring antagonists.
- ★ By Power Stunting Memory Manipulation, Max can make long-term changes in the behaviors and beliefs of others. By spending 6 Hero Points and one hour (10 SPs of Time), he can achieve an AV of 29 on a retrograde confabulation – that's enough to change years of memories in a weak-willed victim. Anyone in the world might fall under his influence.

Maximum Leader's Headquarters consist of 20 SP facilities on the 23 SP island of Nauru. When at his HQ, he is always protected by Minions worth 425 CR, typically including at least one CR 250 ascendant bodyguard and a number of military personnel and vehicles. Due to his vast wealth and criminal connections he can easily acquire objects costing up to 31 SPs.

Maximum Leader has 15 SPs of Super-Fortitude combined with a 146 CP Vulnerable State that triggers when his Determination is reduced to 960 or less. That Vulnerable State is technically in violation of the rule that states "a character cannot select a Drained Vulnerable State other than 'any Damage' if his RES/Super-Fortitude exceeds his (Power Limit / 2) - 2." Since Maximum Leader's Power Limit is 31, his Super-Fortitude should be limited to  $(31/2) - 2 = 14$ . For his build, we made an exception and gave him 15 SPs so that his Determination would be high enough to withstand Power Limit 30 attacks against it.

Why did we feel this exception was reasonable? Maximum Leader's Vulnerable State approximately refunds the value of his Authority, Criminal Connections, Headquarters, and Wealthy Perks. All of those Perks felt appropriate narratively for his "story," but none of them made him more powerful in ascendant vs. ascendant combat; his build has not been "optimized" in a mechanistic sense. We would never make an exception like this on a build that allocated the refunded CP towards becoming more powerful. Maximum Leader's build is intended to illustrate how *Ascendant* GMs can and should "loosen" restrictions where appropriate. *Ascendant's* sturdy character-design guardrails are intended to keep egregiously over-optimized builds off the table, not to straightjacket gamemasters.

## STORY HOOK

The Internet is abuzz with rumors that an unidentified flying object has been shot down over North Korean airspace. North Korean official sources and the country's state-run media are both denying the incident, but credible footage of the UFO crash has been uploaded via satellite internet.

The UFO is actually a prototype US spy plane, the ZX-23. The United States government cannot risk allowing its advanced technology to fall into the hands of the North Korean government. It dispatches the Star-Spangled Squadron (or hires Dreadnaught as government contractors, etc.) to recover the wreckage or, failing that, to destroy it.

The North Korean government will, of course, have scientists and engineers encamped around the wreck for study. The site will be surrounded by a razor-wire fence, illuminated with harsh spotlights, and protected by hundreds of conventional troops.

Meanwhile, Maximum Leader remains convinced that alien technology holds the key to unlocking human ascension. Uncertain whether the UFO is extraterrestrial, he sends a team of Exodus supervillains to North Korea to investigate the incident. These villains will face off against the Squadron in a battle for the wreckage. If the heroes start to use lethal attacks, Max will appear personally to rectify their error.

If you're playing a high-powered Series, you can have the UFO be an actual alien spaceship! In that case, Maximum Leader will certainly get involved personally – and so will the Soaring Sabers and Spetsikhotron. It'll be a four-way super-showdown for the most valuable wreck on Earth.

## ZX-23 SPYPLANE

**Cost:** 37 SP (\$2.7 billion) / 687 CP      **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height 4, Weight 12, Toughness 10, Durability 320, Crew Requirement 0 (1 crew), Interior Capacity 3, Exterior Capacity 10, Flight Speed 15

**Protection:** Bludgeoning Cryogenic Lacerating Penetrating Thermal Resistance 5 (45 CP)

**Other Powers:** Air Supply 14, Degradable Radio Transmitting Blindsight 17, Low Pressure Protection 20, Memory 37, Radio Cloaking 15, Radio Communication 21, Telescopic Vision 18, Thermal Dark Vision 7, Ultra-Sensitive Vision 7, Winged Flight 15

**Notes:** The fictional ZX-23 spy plane is inspired by real-life reports of classified U.S. aerospace vehicles capable of traveling at extremely high velocities.

## ALIEN SPACECRAFT

**Cost:** 66 SP (\$735 Trillion) / 1556 CP      **Type:** Autonomous Object

**Attributes:** Height 4, Weight 12, Agility 12, Insight 11, Toughness 15, Durability 1920, Flight Speed 15, Spaceflight Speed 30, Swimming Speed 15

**Protection:** Force Field 15

**Other Powers:** Biochemical Analysis 18, Hovering Flight 15, Memory 47, Pressure Protection 30, Radio Cloaking 20, Radio Communication 35, Radio Blindsight 25, Sustained Spotlight Illumination 15, Spaceflight 30, Structured Data Processing 42, Swimming 15, Technological Invisibility 10, Ultra-Sensitive Vision 17

**Perks:** Multitask, Multitool

**Notes:** The alien spacecraft is an unmanned unarmed autonomous probe. We have assumed that the alien technology is approximately 1,000 times (+10 SP) more advanced than America's current state-of-the-art. The spacecraft has the capability of lightspeed travel (Spaceflight 30) and can traverse both air and water without any loss in velocity. While it is much tougher than an ordinary jet aircraft (TOU 16) and has superhuman piloting skills (AGI 12), it is nevertheless possible to shoot one down. Based on UFO whistleblower reports in June - July 2023, it is unclear whether this vehicle is fictional or real but kept hidden from us by Majestic 12.

# BLOODY ROSEMARY

Bloody Rosemary is a powerful ascendant that has recently come to the attention of Squadron Intelligence. With a quantitative assessment of power (QAP) score of 700, she is among the top 10 most powerful ascendants we have identified on Earth. Unfortunately, she is a resident of the so-called Ascended Republic of Nauru with close ties to both Exodus and Nature's Right and as such is an enemy of the United States.

Perhaps due to her extraordinary power, Bloody Rosemary has not attempted to conceal her identity. We have confirmed that her real name is Rosemary Atalanta, born 9 December 1997 in Raleigh, North Carolina. Atalanta's parents were apparently affiliated with the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, founder of the Waldorf School movement, and sent their daughter to Raleigh Oak Waldorf School for her secondary education. She excelled as both a student (graduating as valedictorian) and gymnast (reaching the state championships), earning herself a full scholarship to Harvard College. She matriculated in September 2013 and was by all reports a politically active student who participated in a number of environmental protests and actions. Despite one arrest for disorderly conduct, Atalanta earned her B.S. in May 2017 with a joint concentration in Organic and Evolutionary Biology and Biomedical Engineering.

After graduating, Atalanta spent a year abroad learning biodynamic viticulture at Domaine Leroy in Burgundy, Château de la Roche-aux-Moines in the Loire, Maison Chapoutier in the Rhone Valley, and Domaine Zind-Humbrecht in Alsace. Biodynamics is a holistic approach to agriculture developed by Rudolf Steiner that treats the cosmos as an integrated living system that responds to subtle energies, lunar cycles, and planetary forces, often simultaneously ridiculed for its esotericism and praised for the amazing wine it produces. Social media posts written by Atalanta in spring 2018 suggest she became an avowed convert to biodynamic agriculture during her stint in France.

Upon returning to the US in September 2018, Atalanta took a position at the prestigious Blue Barn at Stone Hill Farms restaurant in New York. The Blue Barn was world-renowned for being a fully-organic restaurant where every ingredient was served farm-to-table. Atalanta apparently expected the proprietors to share her spiritual approach to food. This turned out to be far from the case: In November 2019, Atalanta alerted the FDA and the media that the Blue Barn was using chemical fertilizers and substituting cheap industrial food product for the organic certified food it claimed to serve. In turn, the Blue Barn sued her for defamation, and its PR team leveraged Atalanta's esoteric agricultural approach as evidence she was a "certified organic nutjob." At this time she retreated from public view.

Atalanta's ascension must have occurred somewhere between November 2019 and March 2020. The exact circumstances under which she ascended are unknown, but Dr. Gupta believes that her ascension might have been due to anthroposophical spiritual practices. If so, then Anthroposophy joins Siddhi Yoga and Qi-Gong Somatic Science as traditions capable of metaplastic activation. Lending credence to Dr. Gupta's theory, the abilities she developed were entirely in line with her biodynamic and vitalist beliefs about plant life. As Bloody Rosemary, she gained the ability to animate and control plant life, as well as to dynamically re-engineer their genetics. She also seems to have become plant-like herself, with the abilities to harden her skin with an ultra-tough "bark" at will and to regenerate from wounds rapidly provided she has sufficient sunlight to photosynthesize.

By the time Squadron Intelligence became aware of Bloody Rosemary, she had already taken up residence on Nauru. We surmise that Maximum Leader must have detected the intensity of her ascension and moved to immediately recruit her. Since then, she seems to have primarily devoted herself to synthesizing plants that can defend themselves – against pests, against microbes, and against humans. On at least three occasions, she has left Nauru to participate in terror attacks, once with Exodus and twice with Nature's Right. According to witnesses at her third appearance (an attack on an industrial pig farm), Bloody Rosemary was ruthless in her destruction of property and machinery, but seemed hesitant to take human life – at least by the standards of Exodus. This suggests that Bloody Rosemary's commitment to her terrorist organizations is not fanatical, and might instead be purely instrumental in achieving more positive ecological objectives; if so, that suggests she might be enticed to become a double agent or defector if properly incentivized.

Despite her apparent hesitancy to take human life, Bloody Rosemary has an extremely high QAP score and a power set with potentially catastrophic implications for US food security. Operatives who encounter her in the field should be prepared to use all necessary force.

# BLOODY ROSEMARY

1,000 CP, CR 700

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	4	7	5	11	7	7

34

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	5
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	8
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	7/14
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

1280

RECOVERY

256

DETERMINATION

480

RECOVERY

96

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Pathogen Synthesis (200 CP) with Power Flaw: Limited scope (plants only, -100 CP), Physical Deflection 14 (42 CP) with Power Flaw: must be within 1 SP of branching tree or large bush (-13 CP), Plant Control 14 (355 CP), Super-Intelligence 10 (24 CP), Super-Stamina 14 (40 CP), Sustained Physical Invulnerability 14 (38 CP)

**Skills:** Parkour 11, Science (botany) 15

**Perks:** Multitask, Plant, Sacrificer, Sex Appeal, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Duty (Nature's Right, 5 CP), Hesitant, Hunted (Star-Spangled Squadron, 5 CP), Notorious (14 CP), Vulnerable State: Drained (AGI, INS, and CHA reduced to 5 and loses Deflection, Invulnerability, Regeneration, Plant Control, Multitask, and Sacrificer if Determination reduced to 240 or less, 120 CP)

## BACKGROUND

A Waldorf-educated biologist and anthroposophist with a specialization in biodynamic agriculture, Bloody Mary has the ability to animate and control plant life, as well as to dynamically re-engineer their genetics. While a member of Exodus and Nature's Right, she primarily devotes herself to synthesizing plants that can defend themselves – against pests, against microbes, and against humans. She is hesitant, however, to take human life – hesitant by the standards of Exodus, at least!

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Bloody Rosemary's Pathogen Synthesis has a new Power Flaw: Limited Scope (plants only). Her Pathogens can only infect organisms from the plant kingdom (including characters with the Plant perk). The Pathogenicity of Bloody Rosemary's pathogens is opposed by the plants' Toughness. A plant usually has a Toughness equal to 2/3 Weight. For instance a Douglas Fir has a Weight of 15 SPs and Toughness of 10 SPs, while a Red Maple has a Weight of 9 SPs and Toughness of 6 SPs.

Below are the pathogens that Bloody Rosemary has synthesized. Note that these pathogens can take her 20 SPs or more Time to create, and since she has only recently ascended she has not synthesized that many.

### AEROSOLIZED PHORBOLIC FUNGUS

Fungal, Direct Transmission, Infectivity 3, Pathogenicity 5, Virulence None, Incubation Period 17 (5 days), Convalescence Period 10 (1 hour), Symptoms Cause – Self-Immune Self-Range Transparent Toxic Fog 6; Cost 193 CP. Treatment: No current treatments. About 5 days after a plant becomes infected with aerosolized phorbolic fungus, it begins to secrete a gaseous suspension of liquid phorbol particles. Phorbol is the primary toxin in the highly-poisonous Manchineel tree, and can cause edema, eschars, erythema, and epidermal necrolysis. Bloody Rosemary uses this fungus to infect decorative plants found in homes or offices, or on plants she sends as gifts, transforming them into timebombs that will grievously harm or kill those nearby when the plant becomes symptomatic.

### INFLAMMABLE PYROCLASTIC FUNGUS

Fungal, Droplet Transmission, Infectivity 3, Pathogenicity 5, Virulence None, Incubation Period 0 (1 Page), Convalescence Period 8 (15 minutes), Symptoms Cause – Thermal Aura 10, Thermal Resistance 10; Cost 139 CP. Treatment: No current treatments. A plant that becomes infected with inflammable pyroclastic fungus immediately develops two defenses. First, it becomes protected by fibrous silicate minerals (similar to asbestos) tough enough to survive a forest fire. Simultaneously, it begins to convert the phospholipids in its cell walls into secretions of tetraphosphorus, the same compound used in incendiary grenades. After about 15 minutes, the fibrous strands disintegrate and the catalytic conversion of phospholipids ends. For obvious reasons, IPF is sometimes called Burning Bush disease.

### PROJECTILE THISTLE FUNGUS

Fungal, Droplet Transmission, Infectivity 3, Pathogenicity 5, Virulence None, Incubation Period 0 (1 Page), Convalescence Period 8 (15 minutes), Symptoms Cause – Penetrating Reflective Skin 12 (Flawed vs. Annihilating, Corrosive, Cosmic, and Thermal); Cost 196 CP. Treatment: No current treatments. A plant that becomes infected with projectile thistle fungus immediately develops a thistles with a strong thigmonastic response to vibration or touch. When triggered, the thistles explode outward like a claymore. After about 15 minutes, the thistles wither and fall off the plant. When she is expecting combat, Bloody Rosemary will infect a number of bushes and shrubs around her with this disease, and then use her Sacrificer perk to re-direct attacks against her onto those plants, thereby triggering their Reflective Skin power.

## STORY HOOK

Howard Rainier was a prominent attorney and lobbyist whose job was to secure permits permitting timber companies to cut down wood in America's National Parks. He was good at his job – the best. Was. Because now he and his wife have been found dead of phorbol toxin in their suburban mansion. The crime scene is a horror to behold, as both victims have suffered severe epidermal necrosis. Police believe it is an ascendant-related crime and the heroes are called in to help investigate.

While the heroes are investigating Rainier's death, a rich oil and gas executive in another city dies at home of phorbol poisoning – followed by the death of a major lobbyist for the coal industry, and then a wealthy real estate developer known for his donations to anti-environmental groups. The culprit is, of course, Bloody Mary, who is sending house plants infected with Aerosolized Phorbolic Fungus to leading "enemies of nature" around the United States. Her modus operandi is to visit local florists that deliver to her targets' addresses, quietly infect innocuous-looking house plants, and then pay for those plants to be delivered to her targets. She's a genius and she's careful to make sure each plant arrives with an innocuous note ("Thanks for the great work!") at a time when housekeeping staff will receive the delivery and bring it inside.

With the body count rising daily, it will demand careful investigative work by the heroes to discover what's going on.

# ISHTAR

The ascendant code-named Ishtar first came to the attention of the US government on 20 October 2019, when she appeared at the ruins of the temple of Inanna at Uruk, an archeological site 19 miles east of modern Samawah, Al-Muthannā, Iraq. She quickly repelled a company of ISIS-affiliated insurgents attempting to seize historical artifacts for black market sale. During the encounter, she proved invulnerable to sustained cannon and rocket fire and dispatched more than 80 insurgents in under 15 seconds.

Attempts at friendly contact by nearby US service personnel the following day were rebuffed. Ishtar proclaimed herself “queen of heaven and earth” and demanded the service members make sacrifices to her. Their failure to immediately comply resulted in an outbreak of violence. Several M1A2 Abrams were destroyed by direct hits from Ishtar’s spear-like device, and the remaining forces withdrew in disorder. During debriefing, surviving personnel reported unusual emotional states during the battle, ranging from extreme terror to intense lust to sublime adulation.

While fear is not an unusual reaction to combat stress, the report of lust and awe imply Ishtar may have an ability to manipulate human emotional states. She is also confirmed to possess superstrength, invulnerability, and flight, along with the capability to channel electrical blasts through her spear. Her challenge rating is estimated at 250, making her one of the 100 most powerful ascendants known to us.

In March 2020, Ishtar was spotted by satellite on the island of Nauru, where she has reportedly joined the inner circle of Exodus leadership. She is therefore considered a hostile operative and is priority II for capture and/or neutralization.

Although Exodus propaganda claims Ishtar is an actual reincarnation of the Mesopotamian goddess of love and war, these assertions are not considered creditable at this time. Dr. Gupta in the Department of Ascension Analytics believes she may have been an archeologist captured by ISIS and triggered into ascension by either her mistreatment or the mistreatment of artifacts at the site. However, her true identity remains unknown. Facial recognition analysis has been unable to link Ishtar to any identified individual in our databases, suggesting that her physical appearance may have changed during her ascension.

# ISHTAR

880 CP, CR 250

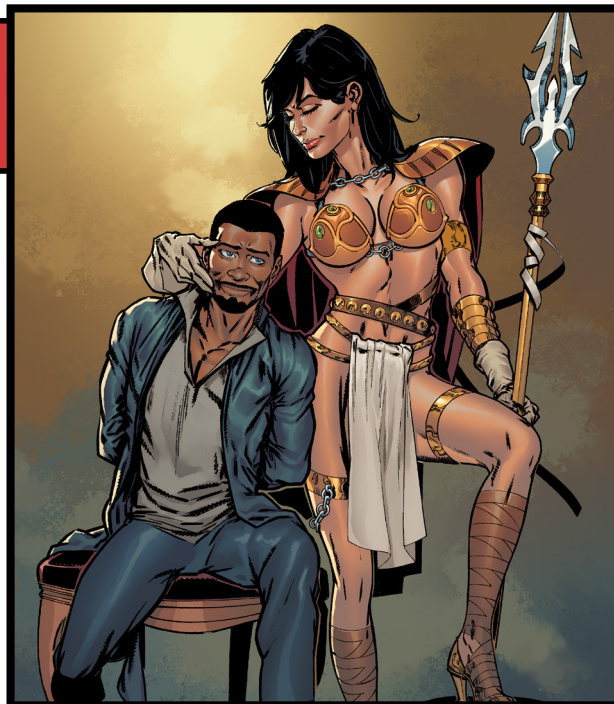
## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	9	7	13	9	5	13	28

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	13
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	13/17
JUMPING SPEED	6	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	8	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

240

RECOVERY

48

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Charismatic Eye Contact Emotion Adjustment 13 (140 CP), Flight 8 (47 CP), Immortality 15 (40 CP), Physical Invulnerability 13 (46 CP), *Continuous Short Range (-2) Electrical Blast* 13 (67 CP), *Cumbersome Long Reach Penetrating Strike* 13 (16 CP)

**Skills:** Aerial Combat 13, Avocation (ancient history) 7, Marksmanship (blasting) 13

**Perks:** Multilingual (Akkadian, Arabic, Assyrian, Sumerian, 3 CP), Sex Appeal, Tireless, Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (to be worshipped, 5 CP), Hunted (Star-Spangled Squadron, 5 CP), Notorious (17 CP), Vulnerable State: Caught out of Costume (if Ishtar is stripped nude, her MIG, AGI, VAL, RES drop to 5 SPs and she loses her Emotion Adjustment, Flight, Immortality, Invulnerability, and Skills; -49 CP), Vulnerable State: Deprived of Device – Lapis Lazuli Spear (if spear is lost via an Orange result on a Disarm or via unconsciousness or paralysis, she loses Blast and Strike; -12 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Ishtar, an ascendant with superstrength, invulnerability, flight, and the ability to manipulate human emotions, emerged on the scene in 2019 in Iraq, where she repelled ISIS insurgents at an archaeological site. The self-proclaimed “queen of heaven and earth” has since joined the Exodus terrorist organization, where she can consort with her fellow “gods.” Although Ishtar’s true identity is unknown, it’s speculated that she may have been an archaeologist who underwent an ascension due to traumatic circumstances.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Ishtar genuinely believes she is the reincarnation of the eponymous ancient goddess, also known as Inanna and Astarte. Ishtar claims that, prior to her appearance at Uruk in October 2019, she was trapped in the Underworld by her sister, the goddess Ereshkigal. These beliefs will hold up even under Mind Reading to an Orange threshold. A Red result will reveal Ishtar's true origin – which we leave for the GM to decide, based on whether he wants his campaign setting to have actual divinities or merely ascended humans who believe they are divine.

Whether she is truly a goddess or merely deluded, Ishtar is fluent in Sumerian, Assyrian, and Akkadian, as well as Arabic and English. She has a commanding knowledge of ancient history and mythology, and her superpowers are closely aligned with the myths of Ishtar:

- ★ Ishtar was the goddess of sexual love and war. In her aspect as love-goddess, she was famous for moving from sexual conquest to conquest, ill-treating her lovers along the way. In her aspect as war-goddess she represented the unbridled fury of battle. One of her hymns declares, “she stirs confusion and chaos against those who are disobedient to her.” These traits are reflected in her Emotion Adjustment power.
- ★ Ishtar was affiliated with storms, and the poem *Inanna and Shukaletuda* describes her calling down storms upon her foes and “flying across the sky like a rainbow.” These traits are reflected in her Electrical Blast and Flight powers.
- ★ The most famous myth about Ishtar is *The Descent into the Underworld*, in which the goddess descends through the seven gates of Hell. At the first gate she is deprived of her lapis lazuli rod, and at each subsequent gate she is forced to remove an item of clothing or jewelry, thus stripping her of her power. She eventually arrives before her sister Ereshkigal naked. Ereshkigal then slays Ishtar, who is powerless while nude. This myth is reflected in Ishtar's Vulnerable State, which is triggered if she is ever fully nude, with neither clothing nor jewelry adorning her.
- ★ Since Ishtar is said to have carried a lapis lazuli rod of power as well as various weapons, the character carries a lapis lazuli spear to reflect this. She loses her Strike and Blast when deprived of her spear.

## STORY HOOK

The Warka Mask and the Warka Vase have just been stolen! These priceless artifacts, originally recovered in 1939 by archaeologists digging at the temple of Inanna in Uruk, are normally kept in a vault in the National Museum of Iraq. To renew interest in tourism to Iraq, the Baghdad-based Ministry of Cultural Affairs arranged for the artifacts to be put on display in a grand world tour. The artifacts were being shown at the Atlantic Museum of History in Capital City when they vanished. Preliminary reports indicate the thief used ascendant powers to steal the Mask and Vase. The heroes are tasked with recovering the missing artifacts.

The thief could be Flashmob (q.v.), or it could be a local member of Exodus charged by Ishtar with the recovery of “her” relics in order to prove his faith. Either way, the artifacts are currently in a storage unit in the Capital City harbor. In 24 hours, the S.S. *Astarte*, a yacht flagged to New Zealand, will dock at Capital City. Ishtar is on board to collect the items, along with various guards and servants from Exodus. If she is able to escape back to her lair at Nauru to study the artifacts, she will unlock her full ascendant potential, growing to become a 1000-CP character with Weather Control.



TOP SECRET / REL TO USA; FYEY

## ROOTKIT

Subject "Rootkit" was captured on 11 NOV 2018 by Squadron assets and transported to Constitution Island facility by "Warp." Subject presents as young adult Caucasian male, morbidly obese, with diabetic neuropathy in both legs. Agent 1 [names redacted under [402(b)(vii)]] was assigned preliminary intake interview.

After interview, Agent 1 reported the following findings on "Rootkit":

- real name "Sam Hyde"
- born September 1, 1993, on a kiwi fruit farm near Auckland, New Zealand
- immigrated to US and graduated Drexel University in 2017
- claimed to have ascended after being harassed online by "five guys"
- expressed gratitude for release from "mind control" by "Maximum Leader," pledged full cooperation to help us in "stopping that evil genius"

38 hours after interview, Agent 1 was arrested by FBI for possession of child pornography. Subsequent investigation found that Agent 1's smartphone had not shut down properly prior to entry into interrogation room and "Rootkit" had psychokinetically accessed and manipulated digital assets on phone during course of interview. Despite reinstatement, Agent 1 refused further engagement with subject. New protocols were put in place for future interrogation efforts.

Following up on intake notes, newly-assigned Agent 2 was able to confirm valid birth certificate for Samuel Hyde as well as transcript of graduation from Drexel University online. However, Department Intern 3 suggested subject had digitally created false records: "Sam Hyde is an internet comedian, Kiwi Farms is a digital hangout for trolls, and September 1, 1993, is when AOL users gained access to USENET." Intern 3 suggested Squadron add knowyourmeme.com to intel intranet.

Subject confirmed Intern 3 hypothesis but refused to provide real identity, insisting his identity was "Anonymous." Therefore Agent 2 collected sample of subject's DNA and submitted to CODIS. Subject was identified as Latoya Queen, a 42-year-old resident of Baltimore, Maryland of mixed French, Nigerian, and Somalian descent. "Rootkit" claimed that this was his real name and that he had benefited from "advanced cosmetic surgery, transracial and transgender hormones, and anti-aging techniques." Agent 2 concluded CODIS data was compromised.

Agent 2 now photographed subject using a vintage Nikon F2 camera. Negatives were developed by hand in a traditional dark room and then uploaded to FBI's FACE-SN for facial recognition analysis. FACE-SN identified subject as "Gordon Matthew Thomas Sumner" of Wallsend, England. Since Mr. Sumner is a popular pop musician known for hits like "Message In a Bottle" and performance in cult classic "Dune," with no resemblance whatsoever to subject, Agent 2 concluded that FACE-SN database had also been compromised. Subject continued to claim he was "really Sting" for several days, until finally challenged by Intern 3 to replicate high notes of "Roxanne" using revolutionary karaoke system. Unable to do so, "Rootkit" instead asserted he was just Sumner's "#1 fan." He pledged his full cooperation going forward if Squadron could arrange a meeting with "Sting."

At this time, ADM Hawkins authorized enhanced interrogation protocols on subject. Agents 4 and 5 were flown from Saudi Arabia to Constitution Island to implement protocols. After EI, Agent 5 noted:

## TOP SECRET / REL TO USA; FYEY

- during interrogated with water dousing, subject agreed he would “put the Lotion in the bottle” if interrogation ceased but offered no additional information.
- when questioned after scopolamine injection, subject stated he could not answer questions truthfully because “truth is a social construct” established by “a system of oppression,” adding that “when nothing is true, everything is permitted.”
- intense electromagnetic stimulation of cortex triggered a disassociated state in subject, characterized by obsessive echolalia; effort was abandoned as futile.

Agent 5 concluded that subject was protected from interrogation by hypnotic triggers implanted deeply in his subconscious by an ascendant using so-called “Manchurian” mind domination. The extent of subject’s psychological manipulation is so severe that subject may not actually have a “real” identity, his personality consisting of nothing more than a number of virtual personas built from online or fictional sources. “Rootkit” verbally agreed with this assessment, stating, “We are legion.”

The ongoing interrogation was interrupted by subject’s escape on 12 January 2019. “Rootkit” has remained at large since then. He is considered to be among the most dangerous ascendants in existence.

Per HERO Act S402(a)(ii) “Preservation of Electronic Information Against Unconventional Threats” this briefing was drafted on a Prima Model 2011 manual typewriter purchased with cash at a flea market. (Prima unit now kept in Storage Facility Bravo for future emergency use.) Personnel are advised that digital reproduction of this briefing is unlawful, and any online copies must be deemed untrustworthy.

## ADDENDUM // 20 June 2020

On 19 January 2019, a C-130 en route from Griffiss AFB in New York to Riyadh AFB in Saudi Arabia crashed over the Atlantic Ocean due to instrument failure. All personnel onboard were lost, including both Agent 4 and Agent 5.

Agent 1’s home in Newburgh, NY was burglarized in broad daylight by a mob on 20 March 2019. Investigation revealed a number of posts on Craigslist.org and other internet bulletin boards stating that Agent 1 was “giving away everything he owned, first come first serve.” Subsequently, a deepfaked sex tape of Agent 1’s wife was released to her friends and family, resulting in marital acrimony. Following his divorce, Agent 1 resigned from the Squadron and relocated to an off-the-grid cabin in Wyoming. He has requested that he never be contacted by the US government again.

On 12 April 2020, Agent 2 was admitted to Keller Army Community Hospital for sinus surgery to correct a deviated septum. At some point after admission, his online chart was altered to state he required surgery for testicular cancer, and he received an orchiectomy. Agent 2 has left active duty while receiving treatment for chronic depression related to the loss of his testicles.

Intern 3 declined to take a full-time position with the Squadron after winning \$62,000,000 in the 4 May 2020 New York State Lottery drawing. He was last seen sailing on a yacht in the South Pacific with several models.

Should “Rootkit” be re-captured, it is strongly advised that all interaction of any sort be taken by masked and anonymized individuals to avoid future incidents.

# ROOTKIT

880 CP, CR 250

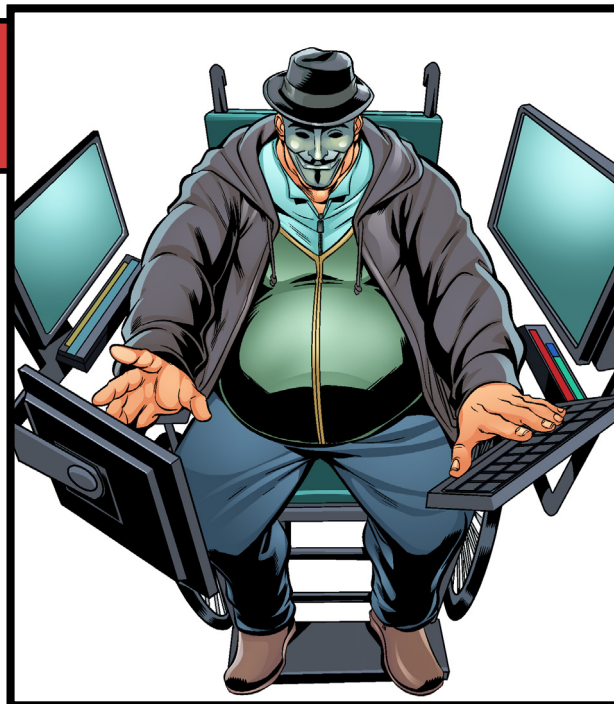
## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>28</b>
VALUE	2	2	2	9	5	2	

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	2
WEIGHT	4	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	0	REPUTATION	2/10
JUMPING SPEED	0	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

240

RECOVERY

48

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Deep Network Technology Control 12 (405 CP), Iron Will 15 (36 CP), Radio Communication 15 (40 CP), Super-Intelligence 12 (56 CP), Super-Stamina 9 (28 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (4chan anon) 15, Avocation (videogames) 15, Data Processing 15, Engineering (computers) 15, Infiltration 15, Marksmanship (shooting) 12 with Power Flaw (only functions on Controlled Objects, -3 CP), Piloting 12 with Power Flaw: only functions on Controlled Objects (-3 CP)

**Perks:** Criminal Connections (10 CP), Extra Attack, Multitask, Multilingual (Chinese, Russian, 2 CP), Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (confabulation about identity, 2 CPs), Dark Secret (loves his grandmother, 2 CP), Duty (Exodus, 5 CP), Heavy, Hunted (Star-Spangled Squadron, 10 CP), Notorious (10 CP), Paraplegic, Unconsummatable, Unlikeable, Vulnerable State: Disconnected (when not connected to Internet via Radio Communications, loses Extra Attack, Multitask, and Super-Intelligence and gains Deathwish and Hesitant, 7 CP)

**Equipment:** Motorized wheelchair

## BACKGROUND

Rootkit, an ascendant with the psychokinetic ability to manipulate digital assets, is a founding member of Exodus. Though he was captured by the Star-Spangled Squadron in November 2018, his true identity remains unclear because he has compromised all known databases with false records. He managed to escape in January 2019 and has been on the run since. His technology control powers make him one of the most feared ascendants in the world.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Rootkit's real name is Dyson Munge. He was born on November 19th, 1995, in Las Vegas, Nevada, the product of an elopement between Theodore Munge, an MIT dropout turned professional card counter, and Clarice Montaigne, a showgirl at the Bellagio. His father died of obesity-related complications in 1997 and his mother died of a heroin overdose in 1999. Thereafter Dyson was raised by his grandmother, Alice Munge; she is the only person he could be said to love. In childhood he was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder, and Learning Disability, and placed into a Special Education program. At age 9, he secretly taught himself to code using software at his school library. At 16, he dropped out of school and began to make a living as a hacker-for-hire. Increasingly reclusive, he lived alone in a studio apartment and experienced the world almost entirely through videogames and message boards.

He ascended on December 22, 2012, while playing Minecraft high on DMT. Rootkit discovered Project Ascension when investigating the cover-up of the Leavenworth Incident, and from there established a friendship (of sorts) with Maximilian Danneskjöld. After Danneskjöld led the Guantanamo Bay breakout and became Maximum Leader, Rootkit joined the nascent Exodus.

Only three people in the world know Rootkit's true identity: Maximilian, Helen Killer, and Rootkit himself. He voluntarily accepted post-hypnotic conditioning from Max and Helen to conceal his own identity, which was never particularly strong in the first place.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

We have represented Rootkit's mental conditioning as 15 SPs of Iron Will supported by a 2 CP Compulsion for confabulating identities. Because of his Compulsion, Rootkit will always spend Hero Points to resist Mind Reading, Interrogation, or other efforts to "crack" him. Only a Red result on Mind Reading will discover his real identity.

Because of Rootkit's manipulation of online data, none of his actual background can be discovered or verified online. Should his grandmother's identity be discovered, Rootkit will trade Dark Secret for Dependent (grandmother) and will take whatever actions he deems necessary to protect her.

As an ascendant, Rootkit is one of the most powerful Technology Controllers in the world, second only to Renard the Fox. His 12 SPs of Super-Intelligence, 15 SPs of Radio Communication, and 12 SPs of Marksmanship and Piloting make him more dangerous than Renard in some ways.

Rootkit's Extra Attack and Multitask enable him to take up to two Challenge Actions and up to three Automatic Actions on each Panel. He typically uses these Actions in conjunction with Technology Control, enabling him to singlehandedly control several Objects or complex systems.

However, Rootkit must maintain Radio Communication with the Internet or an Internet-connected Object or he suffers his Vulnerable State: Disconnected. When disconnected, he loses his Extra Attack and his Super-Intelligence and gains several Drawbacks. We have assigned a 5% Refund Modifier to this Vulnerable State, as it is similar to being Deprived of a worn Device when Paralyzed, Overwhelmed, etc.

In addition, Rootkit's Marksmanship and Piloting have been limited by the custom Power Flaw "Only functions on Controlled Objects." He can use these Skills only in conjunction with Objects controlled using his Technology Power. We assigned a 10% Refund Modifier to this Power Flaw.

## STORY HOOK

The heroes are invited to attend the somber funeral of Joe Yankovic, a low-ranking case officer in Squadron Intelligence. The young analyst drowned after steering his electric car into the freezing Hudson River off Constitution Island, leaving behind a grieving wife and young daughter. Everyone agrees it was a tragic suicide brought on by job stress – everyone except his wife Monica, who believes he was murdered. She says that Joe had been plagued by bad luck ever since he took on his latest case and thinks there may be a rogue probability controller at work. She begs the heroes to investigate Joe's death.

At the time of his death, Joe was following up on a handwritten letter that arrived by US Post Office to Squadron headquarters. The letter, penned by Alice Munge, is in a folder on Joe's desk. The letter states that Mrs. Munge believes her grandson, Dyson Munge, became a member of Exodus in "2016 or 2017" due to the influence of "his friends Max and Helen" and requests that an agent from the Star-Spangled Squadron confidentially meet with her at her residence in Reno, Nevada.

Joe had made a photocopy of the letter and labeled the folder “High Priority,” but there is no indication on Joe’s work computer, home computer, or mobile phone that he did any investigation into the case. If the heroes begin to explore further, they soon find there is no record anywhere of Alice Munge having a grandson. Dyson Munge does not exist.

Unfortunately, the case officer’s early investigation has already alerted Dyson Munge, AKA Rootkit. The one thing Rootkit can’t do is read people’s handwritten mail, so all he knows is that Agent Yankovic suddenly began doing database queries on Alice and Dyson Munge. It seemed simple enough to arrange for an accident to end that inquiry.

If the heroes begin to investigate again, what follows should play like a Final Destination movie. The closer the heroes get to Alice Munge, the more extreme the “coincidences” that occur to keep them away. Early problems such as hard drive failures, power blackouts, police swatting will give way to deadly incidents: driverless cars will steer across multiple lanes to plough into the heroes, sewer systems beneath their feet will detonate in explosions of methane, and eventually airplanes will fall from the sky on top of them.

Should they reach Alice Munge, it is possible Maximum Leader himself may intervene, spiriting Mrs. Munge away to Nauru to protect his friend’s secret (and weakness). Should Mrs. Munge die in the crossfire, Rootkit’s revenge will make the worst cyberstalking in history look like child’s play...

Here’s some sample “mishaps” that can occur due to Rootkit’s shenanigans:

**Manhole Cover Explosion:** Underground electrical wires that get frayed can throw off sparks that set fire to the insulation, building up pressure that leads to a man-hole cover explosion. The heavy metal cover flies into the air at a Speed of 7 SPs. It’s an unintentional collision (7 SPs AV, 7 SPs Speed + 3 SPs Weight = 10 SPs Damage).

**Hot Pursuit:** As the heroes are driving down the highway, a police cruiser puts on its siren and flags them to pull over. Officer Studebaker approaches and asks them to step out of the car slowly with their hands up. Their vehicle registration shows that the vehicle was stolen from the Smithfield Orphanage in nearby town.

**Hot Pursuit II:** As the heroes are driving down the highway, they come to a police roadblock. A pair of parked police cruisers. A pair of officers, Manx and Eidos, are holding cameras with photographs of one of the heroes. They are again asked to step out of the car slowly with their hands up... An Amber Alert has been put out for a child molester matching the character’s description.

**Red Light Control:** An automated Red Light is switched to a Green Light just as a Passenger Bus comes over a hill at an intersection. There are 14 passengers. The bus drive has AGI 4, Pilot (ground) 6. The Passenger Bus (Weight 11, TOU 10, Durability 320, Resistance 3, Running 7) is traveling at Speed 6. The AV is 6 and the DV is the character’s AGI/Piloting. If the Passenger Bus misses the characters it plows into cars halted on the other side of the intersection due to the red light at the next intersection. Note that Stopping Time for a rolling/wheeled object is Weight (11 SPs) + Speed (7 SPs) – (MIG + 6).

**Wrecking Ball:** A crane with a 12,000lbs wrecking ball (Weight 9 SPs) is in the process of demolishing a building. The crane suddenly swings towards the heroes and attacks! The AV is 12 SPs and the Damage is 15 SPs based on the Wrecking Ball’s Weight (9 SPs) and Speed (6 SPs). If the wrecking ball misses, check for Scatter if it misses.

# SERENGETI

The ascendant who calls himself Serengeti first confronted Star-Spangled Squadron on 11 November 2018, when he participated in an Exodus assault on Area 51. During the encounter, he demonstrated military-grade transformation abilities, taking forms including that of a lion, an elephant, and an eagle. Two operatives, Stiletto and Stronghold, witnessed Serengeti's combat abilities up close. Stiletto reported that Serengeti was "a big pussy" and laughed when asked to assess his threat level. Stronghold provided more actionable data, allowing us to estimate Serengeti as having a quantitative assessment of power (QAP) score of 250.

During the opening day of Operation Voodoo Salvation, Stiletto reported that she was attacked by "a f\*\*\*\*\*g eagle" and suggested that the animal in question was actually Serengeti. Since Maximilian Leader, Toxicant, Fireball, and Helen Killer have separately been reported to have been operating in Port-au-Prince the same day, it seems likely that Serengeti was present as well.

Until this month, information about the identity, origin, and motivation of Serengeti was classified and compartmented. However, per Order 4410, Squadron intelligence analysts are now able to offer a biographical profile to operatives. Certain details remain classified.

Serengeti's real name is believed to be Jama "James" Ole Lowassa. He was born in a Maasai encampment near Lake Victoria in September 1995. His mother has been identified as Mary Dasoda, a Kiowa Apache anthropologist studying the pastoral traditions of the Maasai. His father was a laibon (medicine man) named Mbatian Ole Lowassa. Shortly after Jama was born, his mother returned to the United States, taking up a tenured position in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma.

Jama, or James as he was known in the United States, seems to have felt relatively isolated in Oklahoma City. He did not fit into the African-American or white communities at the university, but as a half-African he suffered discrimination from his mother's family (who had expected her to marry a fellow member of the tribe) as well. When Jama was 16, his mother took him to meet his father in Tanzania; she returned to the United States alone, Jama having decided to stay with his father's people.

According to reports from the detainees, Jama underwent the grueling initiation rites associated with becoming a Maasai warrior, including circumcision without anesthesia and ritual scarring. Jama also claimed (according to interrogated detainees) to have undergone certain "secret" rites led by his father to obtain spiritual powers.

Jama's ascension has been dated to 2015, when a rogue lion began to maul his tribe's cattle. The warriors were dispatched in a traditional (illegal) lion hunt. According to reports, Jama defeated the lion in single combat; during the battle, he bit and clawed the lion and was in turn bitten and clawed, such that "the lion's blood and his were intermingled." Jama became septic from his injuries. His father refused modern medical care for the young man, instead relying on traditional tribal medicine and spiritual healing. When Jama recovered, he began to display exceptional strength, speed, and fighting prowess; "the lion had entered him" is how he explained it to his comrades in Exodus. By early 2016, the ascendant was displaying the ability to transform into a lion and several other types of animals. However, he also began to display outbursts of animalistic violence, which led to him becoming ostracized from his tribe.

Thereafter, Jama found work as a mercenary in war-torn East Africa. In September 2016, he was apprehended by Project Ascension and transferred to the Nauru prison facility. There he was personally recruited into the nascent Exodus by Maximum Leader, who promised to teach him to control and enhance his powers. Given Jama's continued loyalty to Exodus, these efforts seem to be succeeding.

# SERENGETI

880 CP, CR 250

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	7	7	7	8	5	8	28

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	7
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	6
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	8/15
JUMPING SPEED	4	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

120

RECOVERY

24

DETERMINATION

160

RECOVERY

32

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Combat Sense 13 (60 CP), Invulnerability (Flawed vs Annihilating and Cosmic) 13 (115 CP), Skinchanging 10 (235 CP) with Power Flaw: must have been scratched or bitten by, then killed and drunk blood of, an animal in order to be able to transform into it (-24 CP), Super-Perception 10 (20 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (Maasai custom) 2, Escape Artist 13, Martial Arts 13, Parkour 13, Stealth 13

**Perks:** Tireless, Wealth (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (Maasai warrior, 2 CP) Duty (Exodus, 5 CP), Hunted (Star-Spangled Squadron, 5 CP), Notorious (15 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Serengeti, real name Jama “James” Ole Lowassa, is an ascendant with the ability to transform into different animals. He was first encountered the Star-Spangled Squadron during an Exodus assault on Area 51. Born to a Kiowa Apache anthropologist and a Maasai laibon, James spent his early life in the United States before choosing to live with his father’s people in Tanzania, where he reportedly acquired spiritual powers through hunting fierce prey. He was captured by Project Ascension, and then recruited into Exodus by Maximum Leader, to whom he is fiercely loyal.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Serengeti's Skinchanging power manifested when "the lion entered him" because "the lion's blood and his were intermingled." Maximum Leader deduced that Serengeti's Skinchanging was shaped by this experience, and that the ascendant needed to repeat this shamanic experience with other animals in order to broaden his shapeshifting abilities. This is reflected in his unique Power Flaw, to which we assigned a 10% modifier.

At present, Serengeti is able to transform into the following animals: African Lion, Cheetah, Chimpanzee, Crocodile, Eagle, Elephant, Gorilla, Grey Wolf, Grizzly Bear, and King Cobra. He is continuously expanding the scope of his powers.

## STORY HOOK

After a weekend-long marathon of Jurassic Park movies, Korean super-genius 12Sigma decided to take a break from developing his spaceplane to recreate the DNA of extinct dinosaurs. Working from DNA extracted from ancient amber deposits and using the DNA of the dinosaur's descendants (birds) to fill the gaps, he was able to synthesize the genetic code of a Tyrannosaurus Rex, or something close to it anyway.

Actually cloning and raising a Tyrannosaur sounded tedious though, so 12Sigma decided to hand that off to lesser minds. He emailed the genetic sequence to the South Korea's Sooam Biotech Research Foundation, headed up by his friend Hwang Woo-suk, a controversial veterinarian and cloning expert, with a note explaining what he'd done.

Two years later, Hwang Woo-suk and his team have completed the extraordinary work of rebirthing the Tyrannosaur species. It's alive! It's perfect! Well, not quite perfect. But the fact that the bird DNA in their Neo-Tyrannosaurus project has created a flying T-Rex will certainly be worked out in the next clone.

Unfortunately, Exodus has caught wind of this highly classified, groundbreaking work and dispatched Serengeti to steal the genetic code... and the secret to transforming into a flying Tyrannosaurus Rex!

## NEO-TYRANNOSAURUS

**Character Points:** 680      **Power Limit:** 22      **Hero Points:** 20

**Attributes:** MIG 7, AGI 3, VAL 9, RES 5, INS 1, CHA 5, Weight 10, Height 3, Running Speed 2, Jumping Speed -1, Flight Speed 4, Initiative 10, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 640, Determination 40, Hero Points 0

**Powers:** Dark Vision 4 (13 CP), Invulnerability 6 (84 CP), Lightning Reflexes 1 (2 CP), Penetrating Strike 12 (20 CP), Permanent Growth 6 (60 CP), Predatory Ultra-Sensitive Scent 9 (132 CP), Super-Perception 6 (20 CP), Telescopic Vision 5 (15 CP), Winged Flight 4 (54 CP)

**Skills:** Aerial Combat 9

**Perks:** Watchful

**Drawbacks:** Body Form (avian), Heavy, Illiterate, Unspeaking

# TOXICANT

Edward Lister was born in 1975 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His maternal grandfather, Rudolf Brill, was a famous biochemist who had emigrated to the United States as part of Operation Paperclip. Lister's father, Albert Lister, was a professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Pennsylvania. By all accounts, he had a loving family that provided him a secure, stable, and intellectually enriching childhood.

Lister graduated magna cum laude from Princeton University with a BS in Chemistry in 1997 and earned his PhD in Biochemistry from Johns Hopkins University in 2004. His dissertation, *Effects of Xenobiotic Toxicity on Neuronal Homeostasis*, attracted the attention of the Department of Defense, which had begun to prioritize chemical weapon research due to the ongoing War on Terror.

During his clearance review, the investigator discovered that Lister's family had taken him to a child psychologist while in middle school after a series of their pets died from poison. Lister had denied poisoning the pets as a child and denied it again to the investigator; a lie detector found no sign of false testimony. Lister received his top secret security clearance in 2005.

After gaining his clearance, Lister went to work at the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense, a military medical research institute located at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, USA. His work there focused on creating countermeasures for fourth-generation chemical weapons such as the Novichok-5 and Novichok-7 nerve agents. These extremely potent toxins were developed in the Soviet Union and are five to eight times more potent than VX. Inhaling less than 0.1mg is lethal in human beings. The Army filed several patents based on his research.

After six years at USARMICD, Lister was re-assigned to work under General Gary D. Hawkins in TRADOC's Future Soldier Program (FUSOP). The Future Soldier Program had secretly been collaborating with DARPA to develop a serum that could enhance warfighter capabilities. When Lister joined the team, the effort – known as Project Ascension – had been underway for 11 months with not one of the test subjects (prisoners from Ft. Leavenworth) surviving. Lister was charged with analyzing the serum and devising an antiserum that could neutralize its toxic effects.

In November 2012, Lister provided his antiserum to Dr. Tige Coffey, the program's head researcher. The first beneficiary of Lister's antiserum was Sergeant Andrew Dillon, who was injected with the serum and antiserum on December 22. Dillon became the first recipient of the serum to survive and ascend. Unfortunately, he ascended into Manticore and massacred most of Munson Army Hospital.

After the Leavenworth Incident, TRADOC cancelled FUSOP and replaced it with the Improved Warfighter Technology (IMWAR) program (discussed further in our briefing on Reaver). However, Project Ascension continued under DARPA. The first question the DARPA team had to answer was "what just happened?" Dr. Coffey blamed Lister's antiserum for Dillon's disastrous ascension, arguing that it had led to an antibody-dependent enhancement of the serum's effects.

Lister decided to prove Dr. Coffey wrong. On March 4th, 2013, he illegally accessed the Project Ascension laboratory (by then re-located to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba) and injected himself with both the serum and antiserum. Like Dillon, Lister survived. And like Dillon, he experienced a painful and traumatic ascension.

Like most ascendants, Lister developed superhuman strength, toughness, and situational awareness. He also developed the ability to biologically synthesize and expel corrosive chemicals and secrete toxic vapors. When he secretes at maximum capacity, the air around him is so poisonous that any human being within 10 feet who inhales it will die within seconds.

Lister is capable of reducing the range and toxicity of his secretions but cannot completely prevent himself from leaking poison from his nose, mouth, and pores. To avoid harming those around him, he must wear a protective suit and a customized air-purifying respirator that removes toxins from his exhalation via chemisorption.

The prospect of lifelong imprisonment in protective equipment seems to have driven Lister mad. He became the first of many Project Ascension subjects to develop a personality disorder post-ascension.

(The foregoing notwithstanding, Dr. Gupta theorizes that Lister had always been psychopathic, and was simply well-socialized enough that his inclinations were sublimated. Being blamed for the death of hundreds of US servicemembers caused this mask of sanity to slip, triggering a malign ascension.)

Once he proved unstable and uncooperative, Lister – or Toxicant, as he now called himself – was transferred to a containment cell for further study. He remained imprisoned from March 2013 until June 12, 2016, when he escaped during the Guantanamo Bay breakout.

After the breakout, Toxicant defected with Maximilian Danneskjöld and Helen Song to Cuba. Thereafter he became a founding member of Exodus. He participated in Exodus's failed assault on Area 51, its successful coup on Nauru, its intervention in Haiti, and its destructive attack on Washington, D.C.

At this time, he remains at large and is considered to be among the deadliest ascendants in the world. His quantified assessment of power (QAP) score is an estimated 250, putting him on par with members of the Star-Spangled Squadron.

# TOXICANT

880 CP, CR 250

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	28
VALUE	5	7	7	9	10	5	

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	7
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	8
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	5/15
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	6	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

960

RECOVERY

192

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Biochemical Physical Invulnerability 13 (69 CP), Corrosive Blast 15 (75 CP), Contrailing Hovering Flight 6 (39 CP), Extended (+1) Inhalation Toxic Aura 13 (147 CP) with Power Flaw: Permanent Ultra-Weak Aura -1 (-5 CP), Intuitive Combat Sense 13 (85 CP), Super-Stamina 13 (32 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (animal cruelty) 12, Engineering (chemical) 12, Marksmanship (Blasting) 11, Science (chemistry) 12

**Perks:** Watchful, Wealthy (5 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (cruelty, 2 CP), Duty (Exodus, 5 CP), Hunted (Star-Spangled Squadron, 5 CP), Notorious (15 CP), Unconsummable

**Equipment:** Hazmat Suit

## BACKGROUND

Edward Lister, codenamed Toxicant, was a highly accomplished biochemist who helped create the Project Ascension serum that led to the disastrous Leavenworth Incident. In a bold attempt to vindicate his work after being blamed for the incident, Lister illegally injected himself with the serum, leading to a painful and traumatic transformation into the poisonous Toxicant. He was recruited from Project Ascension into Exodus by Maximum Leader.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

To simulate the fact that Toxicant constantly leaks poison from his nose, mouth, and pores, we have assigned his Extended (+1) Inhalation Toxic Aura the Miscellaneous Power Flaw: Permanent Ultra-Weak Aura -1. Toxicant can activate or deactivate his Aura normally, but even if he deactivates it, he continues to emit the Ultra-Weak Aura. Every 1 SP of Time (7 seconds), he deals 1 SP of Toxic damage to those nearby. His gasmask and suit block this effect.

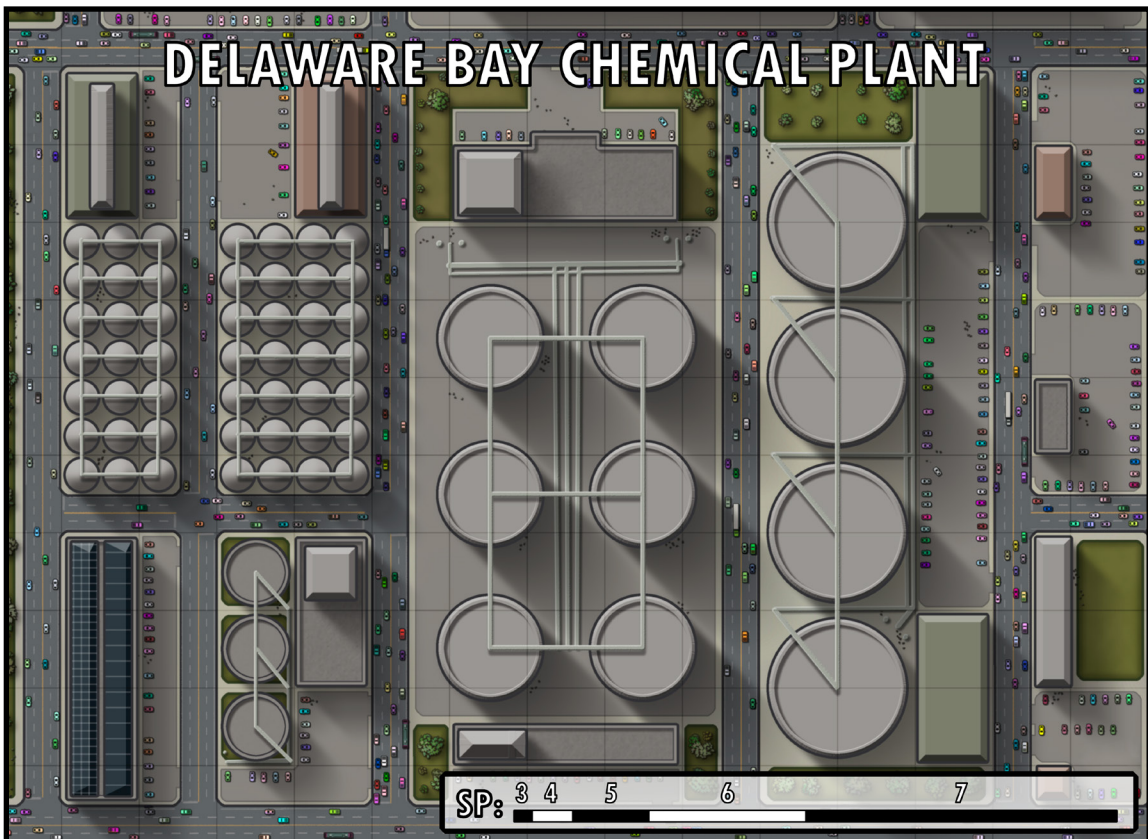
## STORY HOOK

Building on work created by Dr. Edward Lister during his time in Project Ascension, the US Department of Defense has secretly been developing a fifth-generation chemical weapon known as AX that targets and destroys metaplasts. The Delaware Bay Chemical Company has won the contract to manufacture the first samples of the product, underbidding DuPont and Dow by more than 18%. The chief scientist on the project, Dr. Sella Turcica, has flown to Capital City to be on site for the first production run.

Unfortunately, the DBCC achieved these cost efficiencies by cutting its budget for safety and security. Word of the secret project has spilled. Exodus got wind of the plan to manufacture anti-ascendant aerosols, and knew they had to take action. Furious that his work is being used to attack "his kind" and confident that his biochemical invulnerability will protect him from the chemicals in the plant, Toxicant has volunteered to lead the attack. The exit from humanity will not be disrupted!

Toxicant aims to wreck the plant, destroy the product, and capture or kill Dr. Turcica so that her work cannot be replicated. If a fight breaks out in the chemical plant, the first missed shot or scattered effect will cause the AX metaplastic agent to be released. Treat AX as an airborne transmitted disease that causes power dampening after a four-page incubation period and, sometimes, death after two minutes.

**AX Metaplastic Agent:** Complex Prion (20 CP), Direct /Airborne Transmission, Infectivity 2, Pathogenicity 10, Virulence Red (Slain), Incubation Period 2 (4 Pages), Morbidity Period 5 (2 minutes), Convalescence Period 10 (1 hour), Symptoms Caused – Power Dampening, Power Flaw – targets can use their SPs of Biochemical Invulnerability in lieu of MIG as DV to resist Pathogenicity (-10%); Cost 365 CP.



# FIREBALL

Had he chosen a different path, Frank “Fireball” Pendleton might today be one of the NFL’s biggest stars. Born in Columbus, Georgia to a military family – his father was a ranger in the 75th – Pendleton was a natural athlete. As a Junior in high school, he was already 6’4” and 270 lbs. When he graduated in 2012, he enrolled at the University of Alabama with a full athletic scholarship. As a defensive lineman for the Alabama Crimson Tide, Pendleton was the star of the 2015-2016 season, leading all of Division I in QB pressure (QB knockdowns + hurries + sacks). By now standing 6’6” and weighing in at 310 lbs, Fireball had the strength to smash through the offensive line and the speed to catch and sack a panicked quarterback. And panic they did – no sight was more terrifying to a quarterback in the Southeast Conference than Fireball’s crimson helm. After he was named SEC Player of the Year and won the Chuck Bednarik Award for best defensive player in college football, the press dubbed him “Fireball.” “Any football near him is too hot to handle,” quipped SEPN.

Pendleton’s explosive speed and power were matched by an explosive temper. On the field, he was a fearsome beast; more than one quarterback saw a promising career prematurely ended by his brutal tackles. Off the field, he was hardly better, aggressive and nasty. The school’s athletic program managed to cover up the worst of the incidents – generous donors were always on hand to make sure that a star player’s indiscretions could be hushed.

With graduation looming, Pendleton was a heavy favorite for the NFL draft, with both the Denver Broncos and Minnesota Vikings expressing interest in adding him to their defensive lines. To the surprise of football fans across America, Pendleton chose a different path: He enlisted in the US Army. The press lauded him as a patriot in the vein of Pat Tillman, but Pendleton’s decision wasn’t motivated by love of country so much as love of violence. He was called by Ares, not Athena.

A year after Pendleton joined the Army, the DoD began to perform genomic testing on its soldiers. Project Ascension had just discovered the exons that enabled metaplastic expression, and the program was eager to find qualified personnel with the right genetics. Pendleton’s polygenic results predicted a very high quantitative assessment of power. Dr. Gupta expressed concerns about his personality profile, but Pendleton’s QAP was too high to overlook. He was transferred from his duty station in Iraq to the Guantanamo Bay facility for ascension and training with Maximilian Danneskjöld.

With the benefit of Project Ascension’s advanced technology and Danneskjöld’s tutelage, Pendleton developed superhuman strength and toughness. He is considered to be among the strongest ascendants in existence, with only American Eagle and Stronghold exceeding his capabilities. Unlike most strongmen, Pendleton also became empowered with an aura. His metaplasts were able to tap zero-point energy to generate radiant energy sufficient to ignite atmospheric oxygen, creating a thermobaric firestorm similar to that which destroyed Dresden in WWII. Dr. Gupta believes that this latter power resulted through Danneskjöld’s psychosurgical manipulation as he channeled Pendleton’s rage into energy manipulation.

Shortly after he developed his fiery aura, Pendleton – now Fireball in truth – became extremely violent and insubordinate. Whatever limited empathy and patriotism he had previously possessed seemed to disappear. Psychopathic personality development had become a common problem for Project Ascension and the appropriate protocols were followed: Fireball was placed on a power-dampening drug regimen and subjected to psychological counseling. As is now known, the ascendants within the Project were all systematically being psychically manipulated into a fanatical state by the traitor Danneskjöld, resulting in the compromise of the program and the eventual rise of Exodus.

During the Guantanamo Bay breakout, Fireball defected with Danneskjöld and Helen Song to Cuba. Thereafter he participated in Exodus’s failed assault on Area 51, the coup on Nauru, the intervention in Haiti, and the attack on Washington, D.C. He remains at large and is considered to be one of the most dangerous ascendants in the world.

**FIREBALL**

870 CP, CR 250

**PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES****HP**

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	14	5	12	10	5	5	28

**SECONDARY STATS**

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	17
WEIGHT	4	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	4	REPUTATION	15/15
JUMPING SPEED	10	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0

**HEALTH****1280****RECOVERY****256****DETERMINATION****320****RECOVERY****64****POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS**

**Powers:** Invulnerability 14 (144 CP), Lightning Reflexes 5 (10 CP), Long Range Combat Sense 12 (35 CP), Running 5 (2 CP), Special Thermal Aura 13 (108 CP)

**Skills:** Sport (football) 9

**Perks:** Combat Maneuvers (Super-Fast Melee, Super-Power Melee, Ultra-Fast Melee, Ultra-Power Melee, Mega-Fast Melee, Mega-Power Melee), Grappling Expertise, Famous (20 CP), Protector, Tireless, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Duty (Exodus, 5 CP), Heavy, Hunted (Star-Spangled Squadron, 5 CP), Notorious (15 CP)

**BACKGROUND**

Frank “Fireball” Pendleton, born into a military family, was a star defensive lineman in college football and was set for a promising NFL career before he surprised everyone by enlisting in the US Army. Selected for Project Ascension due to his high genetic potential for power, Pendleton developed superhuman strength, toughness, and a fiery aura, but his violence and insubordination grew uncontrollably, leading to his involvement in the project’s eventual compromise. After defecting during Maximum Leader’s breakout, he participated in several high-profile acts of terror and is now considered one of the most dangerous ascendants in the world.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Fireball is a brutally effective, albeit specialized, antagonist. The combination of his high Might, Grappling Expertise, and Aura makes him capable of destroying any target he can get his hands on. And even if he *can't* grapple a high DV target, he can rely on his Aura to deal damage each time he gets close. His primary weakness is his inability to target high-altitude ranged combatants. For this reason, Exodus usually pairs him with a flying blaster like Toxicant or Free Radical.

## STORY HOOK

After a months-long social media campaign by American Citizens Against Vigilantism (ACAV), the University of Alabama has removed Frank Pendleton's college records from its website and archives. The ostensible basis is that as an ascendant, Pendleton had advantages the other players did not. The fact his ascension occurred two years later is irrelevant, of course, because the real reason is that it's a bad look for the University to have a notorious terrorist as a record holder.

In response, Fireball and his Exodus comrades have decided to make a terror attack on Bryant-Denny Stadium. With a seating capacity of 101,821 attendees, Bryant-Denny is the 8th largest stadium in the world. He's chosen a Saturday game against Crimson Tide's arch-rivals, the LSU Tigers, where the game is expected to be sold out. Most of the players and attendees will die in the attack – but some will ascend from the stress and horror, and Fireball will have made his point.



# FREE RADICAL

Alice Breyer, AKA Free Radical, is an eco-terrorist and ascendant criminal currently ranked as #11 on Star-Spangled Squadron's Most Wanted list.

Breyer was born in 1990 in Weston, Massachusetts, and attended Amherst College, earning a double major in Environmental Science and Women's Studies. In her senior year, she studied abroad at Fukushima University, where she became active in anti-nuclear activism.

On Friday, 11 March 2011, she joined a group of four other radical activists at a protest at Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor plant. Bearing signs "No Nukes For Peace," "Save the Planet," and other slogans, the activists chained themselves to the border fence surrounding the reactors. Plant security arrived a few minutes later and began the laborious process of cutting away the chains. Things proceeded peacefully until Breyer, the only American protester, was roughly handled by the Japanese security. As Breyer began to shriek of assault and litigation, the ground shook violently. It was 2:46PM and the 9.1-Richter scale Tōhoku earthquake had just struck offshore.

When the earthquake was detected, the active reactors automatically shut down and personnel began to evacuate. One security guard was left behind to continue to cut away Breyer's chains, but he fled before the 45-foot high tsunami struck the reactors. What happened thereafter is lost to the catastrophe.

Alice Breyer woke up in ICU at Iwase General Hospital. Her body had been discovered floating in the ocean about one mile down the coast from the reactor. The doctors regretfully informed her that she absorbed a dose of over 600 rads. Breyer felt fine, but that was only because she was in the latency period before radiation sickness set in. Once it did, the doctors warned, her odds of survival were less than 50%. Over the next 12 weeks, Breyer endured suffering beyond imagining, as her cells died, her hair fell out, and her skin blistered and rotted. Somehow, she survived. After a month of rehabilitative therapy, Breyer was released from Iwase General in July 2011.

Following her release from Iwase, Breyer dropped out of her college program and began to work full-time as an environmental activist. Her activism was periodically interrupted by bouts of worsening ill health. In October 2011, she was diagnosed with accelerated phase chronic myeloid leukemia and placed on tyrosine kinase inhibitor therapy. The treatment was ineffective. By January 2013, her disease had progressed to blastic phase. And then, suddenly, her cancer vanished. Writing for the Lancet (June 2013), Dr. Ruri Tanaka described Breyer's recovery as "miraculous" and "evidence we know much less about the progress of blastic phase CML than we thought." Breyer's only reported sequela was common variable immunodeficiency (CVID), an immune disorder characterized by recurrent infections and inflammation due to low immunoglobulin. Although Dr. Tanaka considered Breyer's recovery inexplicable and her CVID idiopathic, Squadron researchers believe that Breyer must have ascended in January 2013. Her CVID, far from being idiopathic, is due to her powers: Her immune system is compromised by her own continuous radioactive emissions.

Friends interviewed by Squadron investigators have indicated she was "changed" by her miraculous recovery. In mid-2014, she deleted all of her social media accounts, and her last reported communication with her parents was in June 2016. She re-surfaced again in November 2018 under the alias "Free Radical" when she participated in Maximum Leader's attack on Area 51. Breyer's views seem to have become more radical during the intervening years. She has been linked to 18 different acts of terrorism by Exodus and is believed to have ties to Nature's Right, a vegan terrorist organization.

# FREE RADICAL

860 CP, CR 250

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>28</b>
VALUE	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	

## SECONDARY STATS

<b>HEIGHT</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>INITIATIVE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>WEIGHT</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>INCOME</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>RUNNING SPEED</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>REPUTATION</b>	<b>5/15</b>
<b>JUMPING SPEED</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>PASSIVE SPOTTING</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>FLYING SPEED</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>PASSIVE LISTENING</b>	<b>0</b>



**HEALTH**

**320**

**RECOVERY**

**64**

**DETERMINATION**

**320**

**RECOVERY**

**64**

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Concentration Forcefield 13 (105 CP), Contrailing Flight 10 (50 CP), Radiation Control 13 (360 CP), Super-Fortitude 10 (12 CP), Super-Stamina 10 (28 CP), Telescopic Vision 4 (13 CP)

**Skills:** Aerial Combat 13, Avocation (protesting) 9, Power Aptitude (Radiation Control) 13, Sport (backpacking) 9, Smack Talk 9

**Perks:** Mobile Defense Expertise, Signature Move (Ionizing Blast), Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Adverse Response to Salt Water (6 SP Corrosive Damage while in contact and for 2 Pages thereafter, 6 CP), Compromised Immune System, Compulsion (environmental activism, 5 CP), Dark Secret (caused Fukushima disaster, 5 CP), Hunted (Star-Spangled Squadron, 5 CP), Notorious (15 CP), Vulnerable State: Exposure to Salt Water (Loses Aerial Combat, Power Aptitude, Mobile Defense Expertise, Signature Move, and all Powers except Super-Stamina, while in contact and for 2 Pages thereafter; 30 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Alice Breyer, codenamed Free Radical, was an environmental activist before a high-dose radiation exposure during the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in 2011 left her at the brink of death. Following her unexpected recovery from chronic myeloid leukemia in 2013, likely due to ascension, she disappeared from public view before resurfacing in 2018 as a member of the terrorist group Exodus with the power to control radiation. Now one of the world's most wanted ascendant criminals, she is associated with 18 acts of terrorism and is suspected of having ties to the vegan terrorist organization, Nature's Right.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

When she was an ordinary young woman, Alice Breyer already suffered from guilt and self-hatred due to her privileged upbringing. As Free Radical, the anti-nuclear activist has become nuclear-powered. Free Radical has wrongly concluded that her latent ascendant abilities must have caused the Fukushima Daiichi power plant disaster in a subconscious burst of power. The cognitive dissonance of “nuclear power is evil,” “I am nuclear powered,” and “I caused a nuclear meltdown” made her easy prey for recruitment and radicalization by Maximum Leader and the Exodus organization.

Free Radical now believes that ordinary humanity is too immature and immoral to use nuclear power, which should be reserved for those who, like her, have ascended. Based on this synthesis, Free Radical aims to destroy every nuclear reactor and nuclear warhead in the world. Every nuclear aircraft carrier, nuclear submarine, nuclear power plant, and nuclear missile is a target for her. At the same time, she has no issue with Maximum Leader’s plans to build an arsenal of nuclear weapons on Nauru – because he, like her, is an ascendant.

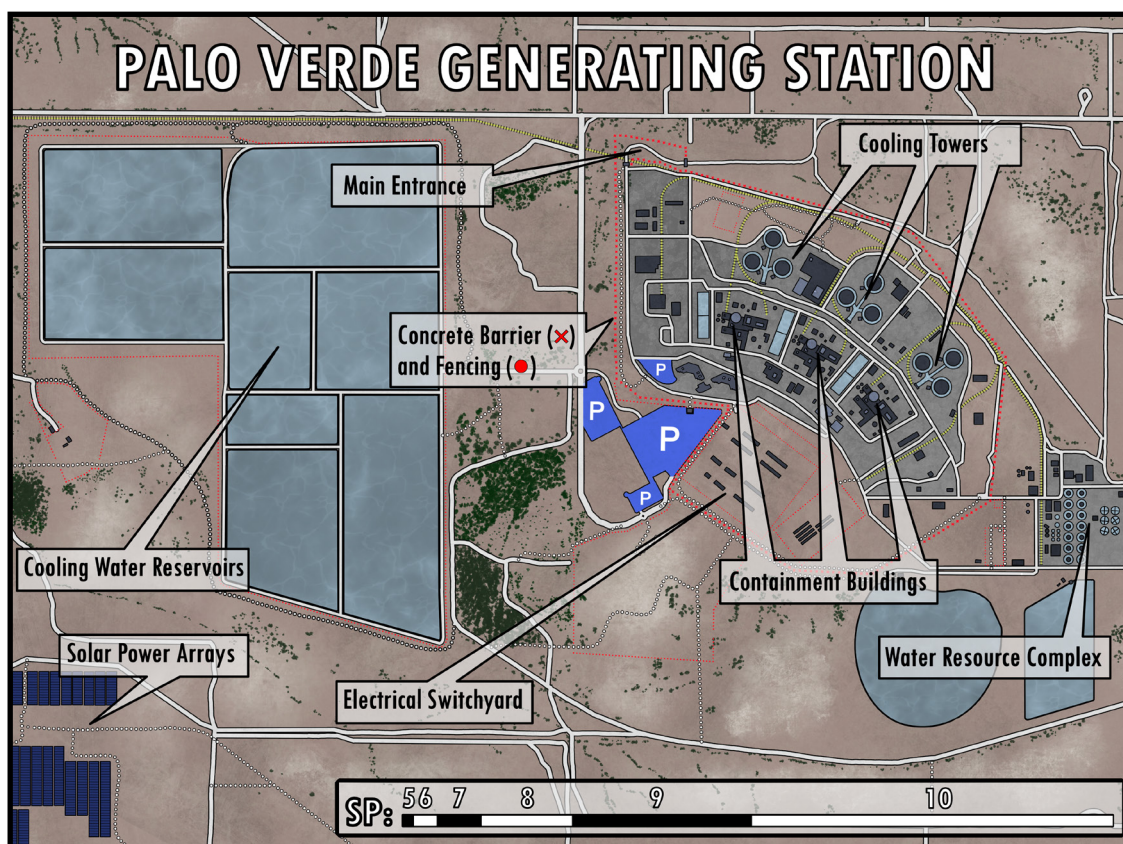
In addition to her anti-nuclear crusade, Free Radical is also a crusader for animal rights. After the ascendant Levitee demonstrated the possibility of animal ascension, she co-founded Nature’s Right, the vegan terrorist organization. Nature’s Right argues that eating living creatures who are potentially sapient is tantamount to genocide. A covert group that believes in direct action, Nature’s Right has been linked to dozens of bombings of meat-packing facilities, steakhouses, and butcher’s shops. Free Radical aims to recruit Levitee as a frontmanatee for the organization.

Free Radical’s appearance is relatively unremarkable. With her blonde hair styled in dreadlocks, her face adorned with a septum piercing, and her customary wardrobe of Doc Martens, cargo pants or fatigues, and t-shirts, she blends into crowds of protestors, indie music fans, and coffeeshop scenesters without issue. Her body does, however, radiate detectable amounts of nuclear radiation at all times, so she will set off Geiger counters or similar tools.

## STORY HOOK

Maximum Leader has created a Portal to allow Free Radical to instantly travel to the 4.2GW Palo Verde Generating Station. Located in the Arizona desert, about 45 miles west of Phoenix, the Palo Verde Generating Station is the largest nuclear power plant in the U.S. It supplies four million people with power using three reactors.

Free Radical’s goal is to permanently shut down the station’s three reactors. She would prefer to do so harmlessly if possible, by reducing each reactor’s Radiation Magnitude to 0 using her Radiation Control. However, if attacked or pressed for time, she will attempt to cause a meltdown. Free Radical remains in radio contact with Maximum Leader and he will open another Portal for her to move from containment building to containment building when she’s ready, or possibly come rescue her if necessary.



## THE GENERATING STATION

The following data about Palo Verde Generating Station will be useful to run the scenario:

- ★ The Generating Station is located on 4,000 acres (23 SP) of land area and employs 2,055 full-time staff, with about 800 staff (5 SP crowd size) present at any time.
- ★ Each of its three reactors is an independent power plant. The reactor containment buildings are each about 25,000 square feet (10 SPs) and 80 feet tall (4 SPs) for a Volume of 14 SPs.
- ★ The Radiation Levels within the reactor containment buildings averages 8 SPs. When added to the Volume of 14 SPs, that yields a total Radiation Magnitude of 22 SPs.
- ★ The concrete containment domes around the reactors are exceptionally sturdy. Each 5-foot by 5-foot segment has 9 SPs of Bombproofing, 9 SPs of TOU, 240 Durability, 6 Protection. The Break DV is 10.
- ★ The reactors are cooled with 3000 gallons of wastewater every few seconds (2 SP Volume of water per Page). The wastewater is stored in a nearby reservoir (Volume of 24 SPs). Since this isn't salt water, it won't trigger Free Radical's Adverse Response or Vulnerable State.

Free Radical will launch her attack at morning twilight to take advantage of fatigue among the night shift. With 13 SPs of Radiation Control, it will take Free Radical (22 – 13) 9 SPs of Time, about 30 minutes, to permanently shut down each of the station's reactors harmlessly. The nuclear power plant workers will realize something has gone wrong when the plant loses 1 SP of Radiation Level (after 8 SPs of Time) and will call the authorities.

By the time that the Star-Spangled Squadron or other heroes arrive, one reactor will be shut down. Police and military will be encircling the Generating Station and treating the situation as a Hostage Negotiation (per Ascendant rules).

# DR KRANKENSCHWESTER

Since February 2020, the National Crisis Response Squadron has been monitoring chatter regarding an ascendant code-named Dr Krankenschwester. Dr Krankenschwester has been tied to Chinese bioweapons programs, to Iran's weapon-modernization program, to Exodus terrorist activity, and to North Korea's ballistic missile warhead research. Her exact powers remain unknown to NCRS but are believed to relate to biological and chemical warfare.

Based on photo-analysis, Dr. Krankenschwester has now been identified as Dr. Elsa von Reiche, a German physician born in East Berlin in 1987. Her father, Hans von Reiche, was a physician working on experiments for the State Security Service (Stasi) while her mother, Emma von Reiche, was a nurse. The collapse of the Berlin Wall and consequent fall of East Germany seem to have brought infamy to Hans von Reiche and poverty to the Von Reiche family. Her school life was reportedly toxic, as Elsa von Reiche faced continuous torment from peers over her father's misdeeds. Her home life was worse: Emma von Reiche died of a prescription drug overdose when Elsa was 11, and Hans von Reiche spiraled into alcoholism and despair thereafter. German Ministry of Child Services records suggest that Mr. von Reiche may have abused his daughter for years, until accidental pesticide consumption claimed his life in 2005.

Elsa von Reiche studied medicine at Leipzig University and became somewhat notorious for her remarkable intelligence and icy beauty. Several of her male classmates launched betting pools gambling on which young doctor would win her affection, but her only known relationship was with a visiting Chinese student named Yan Wang. The relationship was reportedly tumultuous, but it lasted until Wang died of a sudden brain embolism in 2010. Despite this unfortunate loss, Dr. von Reiche graduated at the top of her class in 2011. After a short residency in Saxony, she joined Médecins Sans Frontières in 2012, working as a field doctor combatting tropical disease in Africa.

She was assigned to the Democratic Republic of Congo, and records show she was instrumental in containing the 2014 Ebola outbreak there. Misfortune followed her to Africa, however. Her striking looks attracted the unwanted attention of a Congolese warlord, Thomas Katanga, and she was abducted by his soldiers in April 2017. Dr von Reiche attempted to escape from Katanga's guerrilla camp in September 2017 but was re-captured; Katanga punished her by scarring the lower half of her face with acid and amputating her left hand. Dr. von Reiche was able to make good her escape in August 2018, when Katanga died in the Ebola outbreak that began in Kivu province that month. Dr. von Reiche re-united with her MSF colleagues in Mbandaka shortly thereafter and returned to work despite her disabilities. MSF records show that Dr von Reiche worked in all 18 of the outbreak's hot zones.

By November 2018, MSF's work in the Congo was wrapping up. A Russian colleague, Dr Mikhail Yeltsin, secured her a position at the famous Vector Institute, a Class IV biological laboratory in Novosibirsk Oblast, Russia. While at the Vector Institute, von Reich was interviewed by psychotronic scientists who had been reassigned there after the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility was destroyed. Through signals intelligence we know that the psychotronic scientists designated her as an ascendant and provided her distinctive prosthetic enhancements.

In July 2019, Dr. von Reiche travelled from Russia to China with a team of Vector Institute colleagues, where she met with researchers from the Wuhan Institute of Virology. The nature of her work there remains unknown. Following her stint in Wuhan, Dr. von Reiche vanished from public life, resurfacing as Dr Krankenschwester in February 2020.

# DR KRANKENSCHWESTER

800 CP, CR 120

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	5	5	7	7	7	24

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	10
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	7/15
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0

HEALTH

640

RECOVERY

128

DETERMINATION

120

RECOVERY

24

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Air Filtration 12 (11 CP), Combat Sense 12 (70 CP), Lighting Reflexes 5 (10 CP), Pathogen Synthesis (250 CP), Pathogenic Penetrating Strike 12 (52 CP), Pathogenic Inhalation Ultra-Weak Toxic Aura -2 (23 CP), Super-Stamina 12 (28 CP)

**Skills:** Martial Arts (Unarmed) 12, Medicine 12, Stoicism 12

**Perks:** Authority (doctor, 1 CP), Multilingual (English, Russian, 2 CP), Multitool, Sex Appeal, Wealthy (5 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (spreading disease, 5 CP), Disturbing Appearance (acid burns on lower face, 1 CP), Notorious (15 CP), Unlikeable, Vulnerable State: Caught out of Personality (Dr K personality requires 8 Pages to assert control and can be maintained for only 14 SPs of Time; loses Combat Sense, Lightning Reflexes, Pathogen Synthesis, Toxic Aura, Martial Arts, Stoicism, Compulsion, and Unlikeable when Elsa personality is in charge; 39 CP), Vulnerable State: Wildly Calm (Elsa personality gains control; loses Combat Sense, Lightning Reflexes, Pathogen Synthesis, Toxic Aura, Martial Arts, Stoicism, Compulsion, and Unlikeable when Elsa personality is in charge, 4 CP), Vulnerable State: Destruction of Bionic Hand (Durability 15, requires Yellow result to damage; loses Strike if destroyed; 8 CP), Vulnerable State: Destruction of Cybernetic Respirator (Durability 15, requires Red result to damage; loses Air Filtration and Toxic Aura if destroyed; 1 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Dr. Elsa von Reiche was a brilliant physician who worked with Médecins Sans Frontières in Africa, playing a key role in containing the 2014 Ebola outbreak. After a traumatic period of capture and abuse by a Congolese warlord, she escaped and continued her work, later joining Russia's Vector Institute and receiving advanced prosthetic enhancements from Spetsikhotron. She disappeared after working at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in 2019, only to emerge as the ascended villain Dr. Krankenschwester the following year.



## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Elsa Von Reiche was not born evil, but the stress of her early life led her to develop dissociative personality disorder. Her core persona, Elsa, experienced remorse for her father's misdeeds and a corresponding desire to help others in order to redeem her family name. Her alternate personality, Dr Krankenschwester, saw herself as Elsa's only friend and nursed a withering hate for the society that condemned her for the past misdeeds of the very man who was abusing her. The Dr Krankenschwester personality was responsible for the deaths of Elsa's mother, father, and college boyfriend.

Elsa ascended in the aftermath of her maiming by Katanga in September 2017, at which time she gained the ability to synthesize pathogens in her own body. Elsa was oblivious to her ascension, but her alternate personality was not. Dr Krankenschwester synthesized the Ebola virus in her body to take revenge against Katanga, thereby setting off the 2018 Ebola outbreak in Kivu province. Elsa, unaware that she was the cause of the outbreak, rejoined her MSF colleagues to fight it. The satisfaction Elsa got from treating the disease encouraged her alter to continue its spread. Elsa's friend Dr Yeltsin made the connection between Elsa's presence and the disease's transmission and arranged for Spetsikhotron to test her for ascendancy.

With Elsa's powers confirmed but unavailable to her primary personality, Spetsikhotron ordered its mind manipulator, Volshebrik, to integrate Elsa with her alter. Unfortunately, the fragile Elsa personality was unable to cope with her newly discovered misdeeds; instead of Elsa gaining access to her powers, she retreated from day-to-day activity. Now Dr Krankenschwester is in control 16 hours per day. The evil doctor uses sleeping pills to make sure Elsa stays unconscious the rest of the time, as she does not trust the "little girl" to do what must be done.

Dr Krankenschwester's distinctive prosthetics enhance her pathogen synthesis powers. Her bionic hand is equipped with a diamond-coated titanium needle that can inject pathogens directly from her bloodstream into victims. Her cybernetic respirator protects her from accidental pathogen exposure and enables her to amplify the effect of airborne and droplet pathogens she carries into a toxic aura. (It also conceals the hideous facial scars she suffered from Katanga.)

## STORY HOOK

Dr Krankenschwester has set up a secret lair in Manhattan, taking over the abandoned City Hall subway terminal that once connected to the #6 Train. From there she plans to infect commuters with a new fungal disease of her own devising, Invasive Mycometamorphosis, caused by the cryptocordyceps fungus.

Anyone who inhales spores of, or comes into contact with growths of, cryptocordyceps risks infection. Infected patients face a short incubation period of just eight hours (13 SPs of Time), during which fungal filaments grow throughout their neuromuscular system. Pathogenic patients are noticeable because of grotesque swelling from the immune system's inflammatory response along with visible black filaments that erupt from the victim's hands, neck, and face. The symptoms of Invasive Mycometamorphosis are far worse than swelling and disfigurement. Victims become extremely strong, tough, and aggressive, although some pheromonal effect also makes them submissive to Dr Krankenschwester. Those infected by Invasive Mycometamorphosis are, in short, super-zombies under her control with the capacity to infect victims who simply breathe the air near them.

Dr Krankenschwester will launch her scheme by infecting a homeless man and paying him to ride the #6 line. His transformation will almost certainly lead to a murderous rampage on the train with a consequent derailment. Dealing with Mycometamorph Zero is easy; the real trick is what comes next. With an Infectivity of 3 SPs and an Incubation of 13 SPs, the Invasive Mycometamorphosis patient population will expand eightfold every 8 hours. If heroes do not quickly realize what they are up against, New York City could be overrun with hundreds of thousands of infected within 48 hours.

It is difficult to tell that a Mycometamorph is not an ascendant, so heroes who respond to the first creature's rampage will almost certainly believe they are dealing with "just another recent ascendant" who has lost control during ascension rather than with an infectious disease-carrier. (In my playtest Series, the heroes were doing routine patrols in New York City and had already had three minor encounters that Issue when they came against the first Mycometamorph in the subway; they dealt with it, took the survivors of the Mycometamorph's rampage to the hospital, and went back on patrol. Eight hours later, the survivors they'd rescued turned into Mycometamorphs.... and then things got really interesting.)

Krankenschwester makes little effort to hide her lair as she actually looks forward to the opportunity to infect powerful ascendants. If the heroes are at a high Power Limit, she will certainly have arranged for protection, possibly from low-tier ascendants that she has infected with cryptocordyceps.

## INVASIVE MYCOMETAMORPHOSIS

Fungal, Direct/Airborne Transmission (spores), Infectivity 3, Pathogenicity 5, Virulence Green (Slain), Incubation Period 13 SPs (8 hours), Morbidity Period 17 SPs (5 days), Convalescence Time 18 SPs (10 days), Symptoms Caused –Disturbing Appearance (5 CPs), Emotional State – Extremely Aggressive, Emotional State – Extremely Agreeable to Dr Krankenschwester, Heavy, Martial Arts (Unarmed) 5, Physical Invulnerability 6, Super-Strength 5, Super-Stamina 5; Cost 99 CP. Treatment: Broad-spectrum Antifungal.

### INFECTED WORKER

**Attributes:** MIG 4, AGI 3, VAL 3, RES 3, INS 2, CHA 3, Weight 4, Height 0, Running Speed 2, Jumping Speed 5, Initiative 3, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 240, Determination 30, Hero Points 0

**Powers:** Physical Invulnerability 6, Super-Strength 9, Super-Stamina 9

**Skills:** Martial Arts (Unarmed) 8

**Drawbacks:** Disturbing Appearance, Heavy

**Notes:** The infected worker is based on the Plainspoken Construction Worker. His MIG is effectively 9 instead of 4 because of the infection, and his AV with his unarmed attacks is 8. His low DV (3) makes it easy to hit him, but his 6 SPs of Invulnerability make it difficult for typical police to do much damage.

The GM can create other infected opponents by taking any of the templates in the Character catalog, then increasing MIG and Martial Arts (unarmed) by 5 SPs and adding 6 SPs of Physical Invulnerability. (In my own playtest Series, the heroes encountered infected police officers, infected firemen, infected executives, infected zoo animals, and even an infected ascendant who had achieved grossly high MIG...)



# BASILISK

Beatrice “Trice” Escoffier was born one June 3rd, 1997, in Greenwich, Connecticut. Beautiful, artistic, and emotionally sensitive, she took little interest in formal education, focusing instead on acquiring the skills to become a famous fashion designer in Milan, Italy. Unfortunately, these dreams died with her parents' marriage in August 2017. Escoffier blamed her mother for selfishly initiating the divorce, and sided with her father. When millions of dollars in legal fees devoured her father's wealth, her “study abroad” funds dried up. Escoffier was forced to move back to the United States, finding work in a Nordstrom department store in Capital City to make ends meet. Escoffier's social media from the period testify to depression owing to her “shattered dreams” and “dead-end job” where she had to cater to “overly entitled karens.” In one post, she bemoaned how “bougie” her life had become.

Her “bougie” life changed course on 18 May 2020. Escoffier had just been promoted to manager of the cosmetics department, and to celebrate she attended a rave held that evening at KALI Cabaret. Squadron Intelligence has confirmed that a known Exodus agent codenamed Umbar was present at the Cabaret that night. We believe that Umbar provided Escoffier with psychoactive agents that caused her ASKC-6 and SKRA exons to become expressed.

Her actual ascension occurred two days later, while Escoffier was at work. Footage captured by CCTV of the incident shows an irate customer (later identified as Ms. Karen Garnet of Richville, DE) begin verbally assaulting Escoffier's make-up artists. When Escoffier intervened, Ms. Garnet “got in her face” in an attempt to intimidate her. Upon making eye contact with Escoffier, Ms. Garnet collapsed. Emergency services arrived 8 minutes later, but pronounced Garnet dead on the scene. The apparent cause of death was cardiac arrest.

Escoffier seems to have immediately understood herself to have ascended and began using her abilities. Media and police reports in the following weeks reveal an unusually high number of missing pet reports, followed by a marked uptick in fatal heart attacks within Capital City's population of wealthy middle-aged women. We surmise that Escoffier was practicing her powers.

Because Escoffier's powers manifested as “cosmic” energy (e.g. pure zero-point energy), it is likely that these practice sessions attracted the attention of Maximum Leader. Whether the leader of Exodus took a personal interest in her is unknown, but Squadron Intelligence has confirmed she met with Umbar again on 5 July 2020. We believe she became an agent of Exodus at that time, although no admissible evidence has been found to establish that.

In August 2020, Escoffier adopted the sobriquet “Basilisk” and went public with her ability to kill with a glance. She has since leveraged her infamy, fearsome reputation, and avant-garde mystique in order to build a brand. Escoffier now enjoys the life of a local celebrity in Capital City, operating her own luxury-brand clothing line in East End for an upscale clientele. People tend to be on their best behavior when they think she's watching.

The Capital City Police Department maintains an ongoing casefile on Basilisk, but nothing has conclusively linked her to any intentional homicides – perhaps because the CCPD has had trouble finding detectives willing to investigate the deadly woman. For now both Squadron Intelligence and CCPD continue to monitor Basilisk.

# BASILISK

700 CP, CR 60

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>20</b>
VALUE	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	

## SECONDARY STATS

<b>HEIGHT</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>INITIATIVE</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WEIGHT</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>INCOME</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>RUNNING SPEED</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>REPUTATION</b>	<b>12/10</b>
<b>JUMPING SPEED</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>PASSIVE SPOTTING</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>FLYING SPEED</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>PASSIVE LISTENING</b>	<b>0</b>



**HEALTH**

**320**

**RECOVERY**

**64**

**DETERMINATION**

**160**

**RECOVERY**

**32**

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Mystic Eyes Power Set [Deflection, Eye Contact Mind Blast, Eye Contact Paralysis, Psionic Cosmic Blast] 11 (294 CP), Lightning Reflexes 6 (12 CP), Super-Perception 14 (40 CP) with Power Flaw: Visual Perception Only (-8 CP), Super-Stamina 10 (28 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Vision 7 (21 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (beauty & fashion) 8, Intimidation 11, Power Aptitude (mystic eyes) 12

**Perks:** Combat Maneuver (super-power mental attack), Famous (10 CP), Ferocious, Multilingual (French, 1 CP), Sex Appeal, Signature Move (Super-Power Mind Blast), Tireless, Watchful, Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (punish self-centered jerks, 2 CP), Disturbing Appearance (unnatural eyes, 1 CP), Duty (Exodus, 1 CP), Duty (store owner, 1 CP), Notorious (10 CP), Vulnerable State: Blinded (loses Mystic Eyes, Combat Maneuver, Signature Move, and Power Aptitude, - 14 CP), Vulnerable State: Sees Own Reflection (loses Mystic Eyes, Combat Maneuver, and Power Aptitude, -50 CP)

**Equipment:** Polarized Sunglasses, Sports Car

## BACKGROUND

Basilisk gained the ability to kill with a glance after she ingested a psychoactive agent provided to her by an Exodus operative. After she ascended, she went public with her superpowers, leveraging her infamy, fearsome reputation, and avant-garde mystique in order to build a fashion brand in Capital City. Although Basilisk does not actively operate as part of an Exodus cell, she is nevertheless a member of the organization, working primarily in scouting, intelligence-gathering, and the occasional assassination.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Basilisk's mystic eyes (specifically her pupils) act as tiny conduits through which raw zero-point energy can be channeled and manipulated. She has developed fine control over the effects of her ocular abilities and her visual capabilities are among the most highly-developed of any ascendant.

Although Basilisk does not actively operate as part of an Exodus cell, she is nevertheless a member of the organization. She primarily works as a spy in Capital City, relied upon for scouting, intelligence-gathering, and the occasional assassination. She is not paid or offered favors for any of this work, making it difficult to trace her affiliation.

Basilisk has a seething hatred for people she perceives as "entitled and self-centered assholes." The discreteness of her deadly gaze makes it difficult for her to resist the urge to punish such people in creative ways.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Mystic Eyes is a very flexible power, conceptually similar to Cosmic Control if it were restricted to eyesight. A wide variety of Power Stunts is justifiable, so long as those stunts can plausibly be accomplished via some kind of eye ray. For example, she could emulate Portal using a Power Stunt, using eye beams to slice a rift through reality.

Basilisk's Signature Move, Super-Power Mind Blast, is powerful enough to instantly kill any ordinary human on a Green success. She can literally kill at a glance. However, Basilisk is uniquely vulnerable to Flash, owing to the DV penalty from Ultra-Sensitive Vision and to her blindness-triggered Vulnerable State. If this weakness is exploited, she will spend Hero Points defensively to avoid losing her powers.

Since she lacks any movement powers, Basilisk relies on mundane (if luxurious) methods of travel by driving her sports car (which is tricked out with custom body work), hiring a limousine, chartering a private jet, etc. In combat, if she doesn't have access to a sufficiently fast vehicle, she'll either make do with long-range blasting (disintegrating any cover blocking her way if necessary) or duck into a confined space where her opponent will be forced to look at her. In a dire emergency, she will use a Power Stunt of Mystic Eyes to emulate Portal, slicing open a hole through reality just long enough to step through.

## STORY HOOK

Basilisk is holding a runway show for her new fashion line, Killer Looks, and all the celebrities of Capital City are invited – including the heroes. Basilisk has spent millions of dollars recruiting top models from Elect Model Management to strut the catwalk in her dazzling line of Greek myth-inspired fake fur, animal print, and leather. If the show goes well, the success will catapult her to the top of the fashion world.

It won't go well. The anti-ascendant activists at ACAV (American Citizens Against Vigilantism) have organized a black bloc of 40 masked protestors carrying anti-ascendant propaganda signs. Their plan is to storm the catwalk and let the world know it's NOT okay to wear clothes made by murderous supervillains. This will make Basilisk rather unhappy, but if the heroes are on hand to restore order, she will show enough restraint to avoid disintegrating the activists.

But then things will get worse. Unbeknownst to either ACAV or Basilisk, one of the show's spectators is the daughter of Basilisk's first victim. 28-year-old Amanda Garnet is in the crowd with killer heels, a killer handbag, and a killer mindset. In the chaos of ACAV's assault, Garnet will draw a .45 caliber pistol from her purse and fire a few badly-aimed shots at the woman who killed her mother. She's not likely to hit Basilisk, but she could grievously wound some runway models or other innocent bystanders.

Once bullets start flying, things will get really crazy. It turns out that a few of the ACAV activists are packing pistols, too, and when they see a "civilian" like Garnet "doing the right thing," they'll join in. (They're only against ascendant vigilantes, you see...) More innocents will get shot, and one of them might even experience a spontaneous ascension that makes things even more chaotic. (Thermal Aura is a good choice!) Unless the heroes very quickly resolve matters, Basilisk will lose her cool and unleash her Mystic Eyes on the people who have destroyed her fashion show.

We highly recommend that the GM watch the movie "Zoolander" prior to running this scenario.

# KROKODIL

Maks Vladimirovich Budayev, codenamed Krokodil, is a monstrous ascendant known to operate in the vicinity of Capital City and the Delaware Bay. A first generation Russian-American, Budayev came to the United States in 1993 at age 5 when his parents immigrated after the fall of the Soviet Union. He grew up in the immigrant community of Brighton Beach (sometimes called Little Odessa). His early years are unremarkable. He was a sub-par student who was suspended on several occasions, although he did gain a measure of athletic success in swimming and wrestling during his senior year of high school.

At age 18, however, the burly Budayev was recruited to work for the Bratva (Russian Mob). After a series of petty offenses including shoplifting and credit card fraud, he was arrested for wire fraud in March 2008. He served time from June 2008 to November 2009 but was then released for good behavior. Budayev seems to have immediately returned to crime. He was arrested for racketeering in April 2011, but refused a plea deal that would have required him to implicate his bosses in exchange for a reduced sentence. He spent the remainder of 2011 in jail before being sentenced to the Attica Correctional Facility, where he remained until released on parole in March 2016. The Bratva rewarded his silence with a promotion to head of narcotics trafficking in Capital City – a lucrative but dangerous posting, as it put Budayev in direct confrontation with the powerful El Cartel de Los Carteles.

Budayev proved brutally effective and by September 2019 had managed to take over 15% of El Cartel's drug trade in the city, with a flourishing trade in the "Russian heroin" desomorphine, a street drug commonly called Krokodil because of its severe dermatologic effects. The loss of 15% of their business was unacceptable to the Cartel chiefs, who dispatched one of their top enforcers, El Carnicero ("The Butcher") to deal with the Russian upstart. According to testimony provided by El Cartel operatives during Capital City PD's investigation into the matter, Budayev was kidnapped while visiting a nightclub and transported to a safehouse in South Slaughter. There, he was deliberately and systematically addicted to high doses of Krokodil. Over the next two months, Budayev developed agonizingly-painful scaly necrotic ulcerations over most of his once-fit body. When the addicted and pain-addled Budayev had spilled all of his organization's secrets to El Cartel, he was delivered a lethal dose of desomorphine and dumped into the Delaware Bay to die... Just another victim of the flesh-eating drug he had brought to the city.

But Budayev did not die; he ascended. Rather than succumbing to the drug's lethal effects, he underwent a radical transformation. His human form gave way to a grotesque hybrid of man and crocodile. Six weeks after Budayev was hurled into the Delaware Bay, the ascendant Krokodil surfaced at the Broadkill Marine Terminal. There he engaged in the wholesale slaughter 18 El Cartel traffickers working the docks.

Segments of the battle were caught on CCTV. The footage suggests that Budayev is now gifted with an array of extraordinary abilities, including superhuman strength and durability; imperviousness to most conventional weapons; rapid healing; and superhuman swimming speed. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Budayev's ascension is his development of a manipular tail, which seems to be able to function semi-autonomously in combat. At one point during the fight, Budayev's tail was severed by a chainsaw, but continued to fight in an almost serpentine fashion, inflicting six casualties before re-uniting with Budayev's torso.

Krokodil's present whereabouts are unknown, but Squadron Intelligence believes that he continues to operate primarily in the Delaware Bay area. Internet forums associated with Exodus have claimed Krokodil is a now a member of that terrorist organization charged with using his criminal connections to find new recruits for Exodus from among the city's underworld.

With an estimated QAP score of around 40 - 60, Krokodil is not one of Exodus's most powerful terrorists. He is, however, among its most brutal, and should not be underestimated by operatives who encounter him.

**KROKODIL**

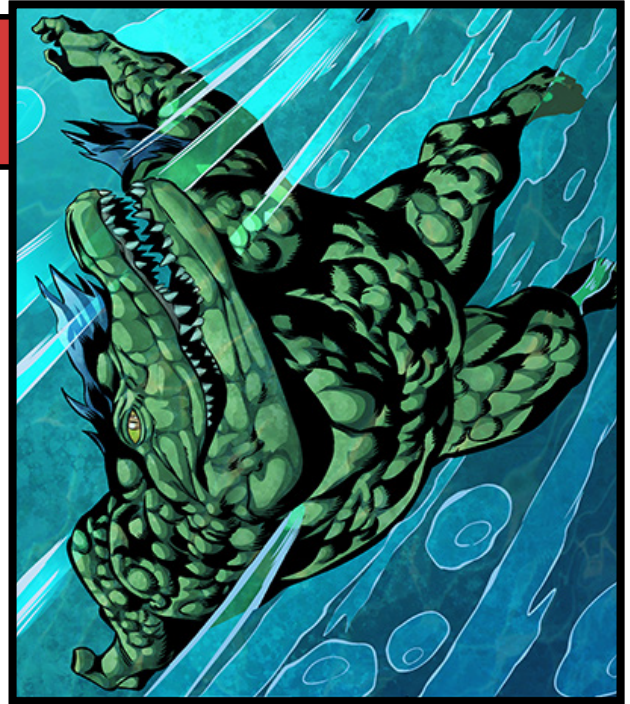
700 CP, CR 60

**PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES****HP**

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	10	5	9	9	3	2

**20****SECONDARY STATS**

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	9
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	4
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	2/15
JUMPING SPEED	7	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
SWIMMING SPEED	7	PASSIVE LISTENING	0

**HEALTH****320****RECOVERY****64****DETERMINATION****240****RECOVERY****48****POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS**

**Powers:** Additional Striking Limb (tail) 11 (44 CP), Close-Quarters Combat Sense 12 (15 CP), Dark Vision 6 (17 CP), Flawed Invulnerability (Annihilating, Cosmic, Cryogenic) 10 (90 CP), Flawed Regeneration (Annihilating, Cosmic, Cryogenic) 8 (48 CP), Lacerating Toxic Strike 11 (15 CP), Super-Perception 5 (8 CP), Swimming 7 (5 CP), Underwater Adaptation 11 (10 CP), Underwater Vision 4 (2 CP)

**Skills:** Aquatic Combat 12, Avocation (recreational drug use) 5, Intimidation 7

**Perks:** Criminal Connections (20 CP), Grappling Expertise, Multilingual (English, Spanish, 2 CP), Sidekick (40 CP), Stalwart, Tireless, Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Disturbing Appearance (hideous crocodile-man, 5 CP), Duty (Exodus, 5 CP), Malodorous (2 CP), Notorious (15 CP), Vulnerable State: Not Damaged Enough (loses Sidekick and Stalwart unless he has lost at least 160 Health, 11 CP), Vulnerable State: Damaged (loses Additional Limb when he has lost at least 160 Health, 13 CP)

**BACKGROUND**

A former drug kingpin for the Russian mob in Capital City, Krokodil was captured by El Cartel agents, who deliberately and systematically addicted him to high doses of the necrotizing street opiate “Krokodil.” Thrown into the Delaware Bay to die, Krokodil instead ascended into a man-crocodile hybrid. Filled with hate and unable to fit into normal society any more, he gladly joined Exodus.

## KROKODIL'S SEVERED TAIL

**Character Points:** 560    **Power Limit:** 18    **Hero Points:** 12

**Attributes:** MIG 10, AGI 5, VAL 8, RES 8, INS 1, CHA 1, Weight 1, Height -1, Running Speed 3, Jumping Speed 7, Swimming Speed 7, Initiative 8, Income 0, Reputation 1, Notoriety 0, Passive Spotting -, Passive Listening -, Health 320, Healthy Recovery 64, Determination 240, Determination Recovery 32

**Powers:** Electroreceptive Transmitting Submarine Blindsight 7 (57 CP), Flawed Invulnerability (Annihilating, Cosmic, Cryogenic) 10 (90 CP), Flawed Regeneration (Annihilating, Cosmic, Cryogenic) 8 (48 CP), Super-Perception 5 (16 CP), Swimming 7 (19 CP)

**Skills:** Aquatic Combat 8

**Perks:** Combat Maneuver (super-power melee attack), Protector, Tireless, Unbreathing

**Drawbacks:** Blindness, Body Form (vermian, 20 CP), Deafness, Disturbing Appearance (animate severed appendage, 5 CP), Mute (10 CP), Short Stature (2 CP)

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Krokodil has two Vulnerable States, "Not Damaged Enough" and "Damaged." When he is Not Damaged Enough, Krokodil loses access to his Sidekick (his severed tail). In this state, Krokodil is at his Melee Attack Limit, with 11 Strike + 9 VAL +2 Additional Limb = 22. He is also at his Melee Defense Limit, with 12 Combat Sense + 10 MIG = 22.

When he is sufficiently Damaged (50% of max Health), he loses access to his Additional Striking Limb (his tail) but gains his Sidekick (his severed tail) and the Stalwart perk. The Stalwart perk adjusts his Power Limit to 21 for Melee Attack and 23 for Melee Defense, which are then modified by his 40 CP Sidekick to 20 and 22 respectively. With 11 Strike + 9 Val = 20 and 12 Combat Sense + 10 Mig = 22, he is at both of these limits.

When Krokodil regenerates sufficient Health to end the Damaged condition, the severed tail automatically re-attaches to his torso if it is nearby. If the tail has already been destroyed or is otherwise unable to re-attach to Krokodil, he simply grows a new tail. Damage to the tail never carries over to Krokodil himself.

## STORY HOOK

Capital City boxing champion Jordan Fairchild has gone missing from his penthouse apartment in East End. Having grown up on the streets and spent his teens and early 20s active in the city's gang scene, Fairchild was no friend to the police, and his mother waited six days before calling 911 to find her son. After a day of investigation, the police have now called in the heroes. According to files that police investigators discovered on Fairchild's computer, Fairchild had apparently ascended: He's recorded selfies of himself performing feats of super strength, smashing concrete blocks with bare hands, and leaping from rooftop to rooftop downtown. Heroes who make a very careful evaluation of the footage might deduce that Fairchild had a quantitative assessment of power (QAP) score of about 20 (e.g. Power Limit 19).

Other files found on Fairchild's computer show that Fairchild had been in regular contact with someone called "K" on an internet message board devoted to East Coast ascendants. Their last conversation dates to a week ago, when "K" invited Fairchild to his "weekly tournament" that evening to "test his powers." The address given points to a dockside warehouse in Broadside owned by a Delaware LLC that can (with very diligent investigation) ultimately be tied back to a corporation registered in Nauru.

"K" is of course Krokodil. The monstrous ascendant has begun holding weekly fights at the Broadside warehouse as a way to find recruits for Exodus – and earn some money for himself and his organization, as there's big cash bets made on every fight. The reigning champion is none other than Krokodil himself. Most of the other contests are low-grade ascendants (Power Limit 14 – 18) with loose morals and common powers such as Blast, Invulnerability, Super-Strength, and Strike. At Power Limit 19, Fairchild was the most promising candidate Krokodil had found, and he'd intended to recruit him to Exodus after he proved his mettle. Unfortunately, Fairchild proved to be a little too promising – in that he damaged Krokodil badly enough to sever his tail, which promptly attacked and killed the ex-champ.

Finding Krokodil's warehouse isn't too hard. The real question is how the heroes handle it. If they go in with powers blazing, they'll face dozens of contestants willing to fight ascended heroes to prove their worth to Krokodil. Krokodil himself will fight if the odds look good but otherwise will escape into the Delaware Bay. If the heroes go in undercover as contestants, they might be able to sleuth out what happened, but they'll be expected to go up against other fighters in one-on-one no-holds-barred matches under Krokodil's watchful eye.

# MOMENTUM MORI

Momentum Mori is an Exodus terrorist who has been responsible for seven mass casualty events in the last year. Although her quantitative assessment of power is at the lower end of military grade (estimated 60), she possesses the remarkable ability to manipulate inertial fields, a heretofore-unknown power which she has used to devastating effect. At the direction of CINCDOG, Squadron Intelligence has prepared a briefing on this unusual ascendant.

Based on DNA evidence collected at the scene of her December 2020 attack on the Los Angeles Freeway, we have identified Momentum Mori as Séraphine Roux, born October 31st 2001 in New Orleans, LA to parents Jean Roux and Maria Cardigan-Roux. After we began our investigation, Roux's school records and social media were deleted from the internet (presumably by Exodus operative Rootkit), but with the assistance of her parents we were able to compile sufficient information to build a profile.

Shortly after her third birthday, Roux was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), a cancer of the lymphoid line of blood cells. She received treatment at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The cure rate in children with ALL is generally good, and Roux's cancer went into remission after induction therapy; after three years of post-induction maintenance she was declared cancer free in 2007. The brush with mortality had a profound effect on the young Roux, who from an early age showed a morbid fascination in black magic, cemeteries, ghosts, goth music, and horror movies. By the time she was a teenager, she had become active in the thriving New Orleans goth scene, adopting the aesthetic of a goth clown girl and promoting her fandom in performances such as Fifi Larue, Emilie Autumn, and Insane Clown Posse. Her parents express regret at being "over permissive" of her activities due to her early illness.

In June 2019, at the age of 17, Roux began to experience fatigue, shortness of breath, and night sweats, which she dismissed as side effects of recreational drug use, smoking, and partying. Two months later, however, she collapsed while dining at the New Orleans Vampire Café. She was rushed to the hospital, where doctors diagnosed her with a relapse of ALL. Roux was devastated to learn that the cancer had already spread to her cerebrospinal fluid – her prognosis was grim.

The news of her terminal diagnosis seems to have been the catalyst for Roux's ascension. It is less clear whether the terminal diagnosis or the ascension broke her personality. Whatever the case, Roux became simultaneously obsessed with her own death and with the freedom that facing her own death granted her. Roux leveraged her new-found inertial control powers to become a thrill junkie of the highest order. Drugs, extreme sports, risky sex, and street racing became her constant pastimes. Each time she "should" have died, her adrenaline fixation seemed to grow. After surviving a fall off the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, she reportedly remarked "if only everyone knew how they'd die, like I do, they could enjoy life as much as me."

Perhaps in order to quell her own self-doubts about her immortality, Roux decided to test her powers by battling other ascendants. During the Battle of Washington on 19 July 2020, she intervened on the side of Exodus. Her contribution to the battle was modest, as her destructive powers were only a fraction of those deployed by ascendants such as American Eagle and Maximum Leader; but it seems to have been impressive enough for Exodus to recruit her to their organization. Since then, she has adopted the moniker Momentum Mori and taken up residence on Nauru, leaving the island only for occasional "escapades" – e.g. terror attacks.

Momentum Mori evidences no guilt whatsoever for her acts of terror. Far from it: In a series of essays that she posted on the social media site Somersault (since deleted), Roux justified her murderous actions as beneficial for her victims, writing "By showing my audience how they're going to die, my escapades give them a brief taste of how it feels to truly live. Most will live but a moment, but that moment will be worth more than their lifetime; and the chosen few will find rebirth in ascension and live a life larger than they imagined possible." Her last social media post was a quote attributed to the existentialist philosopher Albert Camus: "Come to terms with death, and thereafter anything is possible."

# MOMENTUM MORI

700 CP, CR 60

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	5	5	8	5	7	20

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	16
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	4
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	7/15
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
GLIDING SPEED	7	PASSIVE LISTENING	0

HEALTH

480

RECOVERY

96

DETERMINATION

160

RECOVERY

32

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Agile Inertial Control 11 (280 CP), Gliding 7 (24 CP), Plot Immortality 14 (36 CP), Super-Stamina 11 (24 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (goth scene) 9, Power Aptitude (inertial control) 11

**Perks:** Mobile Defense Expertise, Multitask, Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compromised Immune System (10 CP), Compulsion (risk-taking, 2 CP), Deathwish, Duty (Exodus, 5 CP), Hunted (Star-Spangled Squadron, 5 CP), Notorious (15 CP), Vulnerable State: Deprived of Umbrella (loses Gliding, 5 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Momentum Mori is doomed to die of acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) – which means nothing else can kill her! As the immortal gothic clown queen of chaos, she uses her inertial control powers with glee, giving her victims a chance to experience the same rush of adrenalin she enjoys when facing death.



## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Inertial Control is a new power detailed on p. 209, while Plot Immortality is a new type of Immortality detailed on p. 217. Note that 14 SPs of Immortality effectively makes Momentum Mori unkillable by conventional weapons, high explosives, tank guns, or even most military-grade ascendants.

## STORY HOOK

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is a world-renowned healthcare institution dedicated to pioneering research and providing treatment for children with catastrophic diseases, with a particular focus on pediatric cancer. Based in Memphis, Tennessee, the hospital was founded with the vision that "no child should die in the dawn of life." St. Jude is famous for developing protocols that pushed the survival rate for acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) from 4% at the time of its opening in 1962 to 94% today. Now, a new protocol developed by Dr. Kavita Patel (a Philanthropic Doctor) that uses insight from ascension-related medicine promises to push that survival rate to 99% -- including for adult patients who have suffered a recurrence of ALL.

Such a situation is, of course, intolerable to Momentum Mori, whose ascension and very existence is predicated on the idea that her adult-relapse ALL is incurable. The goth clown of calamity has therefore decided to kill Dr. Patel and, since she's not exactly sure where the research is taking place, to destroy St. Jude for good measure. The core of St. Jude campus consists of 9 buildings:

- ★ Patient Care Center (Length 6, Width 5, Height 3, Volume 14, Weight 20, Toughness 15, Durability 1920)
- ★ Richard Shadyac ALSAC Tower (Length 5, Width 4, Height 4, Volume 13, Weight 19, Toughness 15, Durability 1920)
- ★ Danny Thomas Research Center (Length 5, Width 5, Height 4, Volume 14, Weight 20, Toughness 15, Durability 1920)
- ★ Donald Pinkel MD Research Tower (Length 5, Width 5, Height 5, Volume 15, Weight 21, Toughness 16, Durability 2560)
- ★ Chili's Care Center (Length 6, Width 5, Height 4, Volume 15, Weight 21, Toughness 16, Durability 2560)
- ★ Kay's Care Center (Length 6, Width 5, Height 4, Volume 15, Weight 21, Toughness 16, Durability 2560)
- ★ Inspiration4 Research Center (Length 5, Width 6, Height 4, Volume 15, Weight 21, Toughness 16, Durability 2560)
- ★ St. Jude Vivarium (Length 5, Width 5, Height 4, Volume 14, Weight 20, Toughness 15, Durability 1920)

Momentum Mori will time her attack for peak occupancy, when approximately 5,000 people (Crowd Size of 8 SP) are in the buildings. She can do about 768 points of damage per Page using Inertial Control (assuming Red results on the buildings), so it will take her about 3-4 Pages to Wreck each building. However, unless hard pressed by heroes, she will maximize the philosophical impact of her "escapade," making sure fleeing bystanders understand how lucky they are to enjoy this experience of truly living... before she annihilates them. If challenged as to why she's undertaken such wholesale slaughter, Momentum Mori will be very insulted and insist that she's saving the children from dying of cancer...

The heroes could be called to defend St. Jude after Momentum Mori begins her assault. However, if the heroes have high Reputations and are in the good graces of government and law authorities, then they could be present at St. Jude before the attack starts -- invited as ascendant guests of honor by Dr. Patel and hospital administrators, who want to have popular ascendants present to keep everyone feeling positive about her unorthodox use of ascendant-related medicine.

If you opt for this latter set-up, then we recommend running a scene before the battle in which the heroes are introduced to various young St. Jude patients with heartbreaking stories but heartwarming positivity, patients who would be doomed were it not for the miracle cure that Dr. Patel is developing. These young patients can help personalize the stakes in the mission. It's one thing to protect faceless and nameless doctors, nurses, and patients from being killed -- it's another altogether to protect adorable little Timmy, who likes to make Minecraft videos from his hospital bed.



## CHAPTER 5: FÈI JIÀN (SOARING SABERS)

### ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

**Personnel:** 14 (8,000 CR)

**Funds:** 16 (\$1.2B annual)

**Facilities:** 17 (75 acres)

**Reputation:** 23 (200 million fans)

**Perks:** Authority (combined law enforcement and military)

**Drawbacks:** Dark Secret (covert ops), Duty, Notorious 20 (25 million haters)

The world was introduced to the Fēi jiàn (“Soaring Sabers”) at a National Day military parade held in Beijing on October 1, 2020. Part of the People’s Liberation Army’s Beijing Military Region Special Forces Unit, the Soaring Sabers are considered to be among the most powerful military-grade ascendants fielded by any country.

**Personnel:** The leader of Fēi jiàn is Jiàn Shèng (“Sword Master”). Sword Master is a hero with two forms. In one form, he is a man named Liáng Xù who wields the legendary sword Gān Jiàng; in the other she is a woman named Zhù Yuè who wields the legendary sword Mò Yé. Liáng and Zhù were once a married couple; the pair died together in an archeological accident while seeking the legendary swords in China’s remote mountains and were somehow reborn. The full extent of Sword Master’s powers is unknown in the West, but the gestalt hero is said to be able to summon “a rain of swords and a storm of butterflies.” There are five other prominent members of the Soaring Sabers:

- ★ Xiāo Yáo Zī (“Universe Wanderer”) can summon a battleship-sized leviathan and a jetliner-sized eagle.
- ★ Yè Huǒ (“Karma Fire”) is an avatar of the legendary phoenix protected by a fiery aura and regenerative healing.
- ★ Jūn Shī (“Strategist”), master of the I Ching, can change the topography of battlefields and invent machines and weapons.
- ★ Zhàn Shén (“War-God”) can transform into the powerful form of the bull-headed god of war, Chī Yóu.
- ★ Huó Fó (“Living Buddha”) is a devout monk who has mastered the magical and martial arts.

Sword Master, Universe Wanderer, Karma Fire, and Strategist are Han Chinese, while War-God is Miao and Living Buddha is Tibetan. The CCP directs substantial effort towards highlighting the deeds of the latter two heroes in order to curry international favor. Within China, however, Sword Master and Karma Fire are the most popular of the heroes. An entire series of light novels has grown up depicting a love quadrangle between Sword Master’s two forms, Karma Fire, and Strategist.

In addition to these elite ascendants, the Soaring Sabers field an entire company of 120 military-grade ascendants equipped for airmobile special operations. No other organization on Earth can field a comparable force. Unlike the Western powers, which have allowed many ascendants to operate in private organizations due to concerns for liberty and privacy, China has conscripted the vast majority of its most powerful superhumans into government service.

The Soaring Sabers enjoy support from a veritable army of 2,260 administrative, analysis, marketing, legal, public affairs, scientific, and technical staff that ensure that they want for nothing.

**Facilities:** The Soaring Sabers occupy a 40-acre facility at the Beijing Shahezhen Air Base, north of the capital. Sword Master and the other five elite ascendants, 60 military-grade ascendants, and 1,200 support personnel operate from a compound that includes barracks, laboratories, proving grounds, training facilities, and workshops. Each of China’s six other Military Regions has a smaller facility (approximately 6 acres) with a squad of 10 Soaring Sabers and approximately 175 support staff.

**Funds:** China considers ascendant soldiers to be a strategic mandate on a level with nuclear weapons, stealth technology, and aircraft carriers. The Soaring Sabers are very well-equipped, with \$40,000 of personal equipment each. Their most important asset is a squadron of nine special forces heavy transport helicopters that are used to swiftly move the Soaring Sabers wherever they are needed. Fēi jiàn can reliably secure objects with a cost of 33 SPs or less.

**Dark Secret:** The Chinese Communist Party has covertly deployed the Soaring Sabers for its own ends, with missions that have included rounding up dissidents, handling “problematic” individuals, and suppressing separatist forces. If the details of these missions were revealed, it would be a major blow to the international reputation of the Soaring Sabers and the Chinese Communist Party.

**Current Situation:** The Soaring Sabers are wavering between their patriotic desire to serve their nation as directed, and their moral calling to only use their powers to help others. Any form of resistance would come at great cost, however. The government extends great privilege to the team member’s families, including the best living conditions, educational opportunities, medical treatments, and wages available – but the Soaring Sabers know that these perks will only last as long as they stay loyal to the CCP.

# JIÀN SHÈNG (“SWORD MASTER”)

The subject of this briefing is Jiàn Shèng (“Sword Master”), the commander of the Fēi Jiàn (“Soaring Sabers”). Part of the People’s Liberation Army’s Beijing Military Region Special Forces Unit, the Soaring Sabers are considered to be among the most powerful military-grade ascendants fielded by any country – and Sword Master is reputedly most powerful of the Soaring Sabers. The full extent of Sword Master’s powers is unknown in the West, but the gestalt hero is said to be able to summon “a rain of swords and a storm of butterflies.”

What Squadron Intelligence finds most remarkable about Sword Master is that he/she is a gestalt hero with two forms. In one form, he is a man named Liáng Xù who wields the legendary sword Gān Jiàng; in the other she is a woman named Zhù Yuè who wields the legendary sword Mò Yé. According to official Chinese sources, Liáng Xù and Zhù Yuè were once a married couple. The pair died together in an archeological accident in June 2017 while seeking the legendary swords in China’s Yellow Mountains. After death, they were somehow “reborn” as one being with two identities.

The pair have been interviewed many times in the Chinese press about their unique state of existence. They claim to recall their lives pre-ascension only from their prior individual perspective. For instance, Liáng Xù remembers his thoughts when asking Zhù Yuè to marry him, while Zhù Yuè separately remembers her own thoughts when Liáng Xù asked to marry her. Post-ascension, each one clearly remembers any events experienced in his or her own form, but only dimly remembers the events experienced by the other’s form. The one who is in control is “awake and aware” of what’s happening while the other is “dreaming” of what’s happening.

Since the world was introduced to the Soaring Sabers, at the National Day military parade held in Beijing on October 1, 2020, Sword Master has been at the forefront of China’s propaganda and publicity. Because Liáng Xù speaks English and Zhù Yuè does not, he has appeared much more often in world press. Within China, however, Liáng and Zhù are both highly popular. An entire series of light novels has grown up depicting a love quadrangle between Sword Master’s two forms and their comrades Karma Fire and Strategist.

Now, the ability to change from one form into another is not itself extraordinary for an ascendant. For instance, the Exodus terrorist Serengeti is able to adopt a number of animal forms, while the Spetsikhotron operative Pantsyr is able to transform from an ordinary man into a humanoid cockroach. However, no other shapeshifting ascendants, anywhere in the world, claim to be gestalts of two distinct individuals.

Dr. Tige Coffey has two theoretical explanations that might account for Sword Master’s unparalleled duality. The first explanation presumes that there is no actual gestalt. Instead, one spouse survived and the other died during their 2017 accident. The survivor’s grief and guilt triggered a simultaneous ascension and psychological dissociation. The ascension gave the surviving spouse the ability to change shape into the alternate form of his or her deceased spouse, while the psychological dissociation led to the alternate form adopting the personality of the deceased spouse. If this theory is correct, then Sword Master is not an ascendant made up of two beings, but an ascendant who thinks they are two beings. If so, the legendary swords wielded by Sword Master are probably thought-constructs created by Sword Master, as a type of psychic justification for the tragedy the couple experienced in the quest to find them.

The second explanation accepts that Sword Master is a gestalt of two separate conscious beings. There are documented accounts of ascendants who are able to “possess” victims, for the duration of the possession then experiencing the victims’ senses and controlling the victims’ bodies. There are also recorded instances of ascendants who are able to travel as incorporeal beings, a phenomenon sometimes described in esoteric literature as “astral travel.” Both phenomena attest to the ability of an ascendant’s consciousness to maintain both its identity and its influence in the world whilst in an immaterial state. It is theoretically possible that both Liáng Xù and Zhù Yuè exist in exactly that sort of immaterial or “disembodied” state, with each trading possession of Sword Master’s body at any one time.

If this explanation is correct, Sword Master’s physical form might be the actual body of one of the two spouses, transformed through metaplastic action to match the preferred guise of whichever is possessing it at any given time. Alternatively, Swordmaster’s body may be a thought construct created by the conscious will of the incorporeal Liáng Xù and Zhù Yuè.

The latter possibility raises a further question: What is the source of the zero-point energy used to create the body? The only possible answer would be the legendary swords that Sword Master wields. Such devices are not unknown. The 10 June 2017 Analysis and Assessment of Psychoenergetic Technology states:

In discussing psychoenergetic technology we must distinguish between two different categories of technology, which we have labeled as “inventions” and “devices.” By inventions, we refer to any technologies developed or manufactured by an ascendant using their psychoenergetic abilities. The invention itself need not be psychoenergetic in its operation. By devices we refer to technologies developed specifically for ascendants to augment or support their psychoenergetic capabilities. The device need not have been invented by an ascendant but always involves psychoenergetic phenomena in operation...

With regard to... devices which augment or support ascendants, they can be categorized into three classes:

A. Devices for ascendants able to produce substantial amounts of zero-point energy (ZPE) but unable to adequately control or usefully direct it. These ascendants can benefit from a weapon or tool that uses the ascendant’s own zero-point energy as its power supply. Effectively, the ascendant serves as a living “battery” for the device...

B. Devices for ascendants with useful psychoenergetic abilities who are unable to produce or channel enough zero-point energy to fully exploit those abilities. These ascendants can benefit from technology that accumulates or generates zero-point energy for their use...

C. Extraordinary devices that can accumulate or generate zero-point energy and control and direct that energy. They may serve as conduits for zero-point energy generated and transformed elsewhere... Dr. Sven Kolbow, one of the world’s leading experts in Heim Theory, has suggested that extraordinary devices may actually be Type A or Type B devices in synchrony to ascendants operating in parallel dimensions to our own.

It is possible that the sword is a physically real class C device, which physically transforms between its two shapes, while the entity that calls itself Sword Master is essentially an egregore created by Liáng Xù and Zhù Yuè through the sword, which draws on zero-point energy from extradimensional sources.

It is impossible for us to know which of these theories is true, or if any of them are true. The science of psychoenergetic phenomena is only dimly understood and neither the Chinese nor Russians have been eager to share their own findings. Operatives who encounter Sword Master should be debriefed afterwards by scientists capable of collecting data on these issues. The existence of extradimensional sources of zero-point energy is, obviously, a matter of national security, especially in light of the [REDACTED].

# JIÀN SHÈNG - LIÁNG XÙ FORM

960 CP, CR 500

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	7	7	15	9	5	9

?

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	15
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	9
RUNNING SPEED	7	REPUTATION	21
JUMPING SPEED	4	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
GLIDING SPEED	4	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

960

RECOVERY

192

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Gliding 4 (18 CP), Immortality 13 (36 CP), Invulnerability 13 (138 CP), *Lacerating Strike* 13 (24 CP), Running 7 (4 CP), *Self-Immune Self-Range Variable Intensity Lacerating Explosion* 13 (181 CP) with Power Flaw: 1 use per minute (-81 CP), Super-Stamina 13 (24 CP)

**Skills:** Parkour 15, Profession (archeologist) 7

**Perks:** *Alternate Form (Zhù Yuè)*, Authority (Fēi jiàn, 10 CP), Close Defense Expertise, Combat Maneuvers (Super-Fast Melee, Super-Power Melee), Famous 12 (24 CP), Multilingual (English), Sex Appeal, Tireless, Watchful, Wealthy (5 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Duty (Fēi jiàn, 10 CP), Unconsummatable, Vulnerable State: Deprived of Sword (remove with Yellow Disarm, loses *Alternate Form*, *Explosion*, and *Strike*, 33 CP)

## BACKGROUND

The leader of the Soaring Sabers is Jiàn Shèng (“Sword Master”), a hero with two forms. In one form, he is a man named Liáng Xù who wields the legendary sword Gān Jiàng; in the other she is a woman named Zhù Yuè who wields the legendary sword Mò Yé. Liáng and Zhù were once a married couple; the pair died together in an archeological accident while seeking the legendary swords in China’s remote mountains and were somehow reborn. Because Liáng speaks English and Zhù does not, he has appeared much more often in world press. Within China, however, Liáng and Zhù are both highly popular. An entire series of light novels has grown up depicting a love quadrangle between Sword Master’s two forms and their comrades Karma Fire and Strategist.

**JIÀN SHÈNG - ZHÙ YUÈ FORM**

960 CP, CR 500

**PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES****HP**

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	7	15	9	5	9	32

**SECONDARY STATS**

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	15
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	9
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	16
JUMPING SPEED	3	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	7	PASSIVE LISTENING	0

**HEALTH****960**

RECOVERY

**192****DETERMINATION****240**

RECOVERY

**48****POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS**

**Powers:** Flight 7 (43 CP), Immortality 13 (36 CP), Invulnerability 13 (138 CP), *Lacerating Strike* 11 (24 CP), *Self-Immune Self-Range Instant Variable Intensity Fog* 11 (129 CP) with Power Flaw: 1 use per minute (-58 CP), Super-Stamina 13 (32 CP)

**Skills:** Aerial Combat 15, Profession (archeologist) 7

**Perks:** *Alternate Form (Liáng Xù)*, Authority (Fēi jiàn, 10 CP), Extra Attack 1, Famous 7 (14 CP), Sex Appeal, Tireless, Watchful, Wealthy (5 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Duty (Fēi jiàn, 10 CP), Unconsummatable, Vulnerable State: Deprived of Sword (remove with Yellow Disarm, loses Alternate Form, Fog, and Strike, 27 CP)

**BACKGROUND**

The leader of the Soaring Sabers is Jiàn Shèng (“Sword Master”), a hero with two forms. In one form, he is a man named Liáng Xù who wields the legendary sword Gān Jiàng; in the other she is a woman named Zhù Yuè who wields the legendary sword Mò Yé. Liáng and Zhù were once a married couple; the pair died together in an archeological accident while seeking the legendary swords in China’s remote mountains and were somehow reborn. Because Liáng speaks English and Zhù does not, he has appeared much more often in world press. Within China, however, Liáng and Zhù are both highly popular. An entire series of light novels has grown up depicting a love quadrangle between Sword Master’s two forms and their comrades Karma Fire and Strategist.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

When Liáng Xù uses his Explosion power, his legendary sword Gān Jiàng summons a rain of swords that slices and slashes everything around him. The swords appear from thin air and vanish when the effect ends.

When Zhù Yuè uses her Fog power, her legendary sword Mò Yé summons a storm of butterflies that obscure everything in the area. The butterflies appear from thin air and vanish when the effect ends. Zhù Yuè often uses her first action to summon butterflies around herself and her foes and then uses her second action to make a surprise attack.

The two swords, Gān Jiàng and Mò Yé, are one Device. When Sword Master changes form from Liáng Xù to Zhù Yuè, the sword transforms, too. The transformation of the swords occurs whether or not Sword Master is holding it at the time.

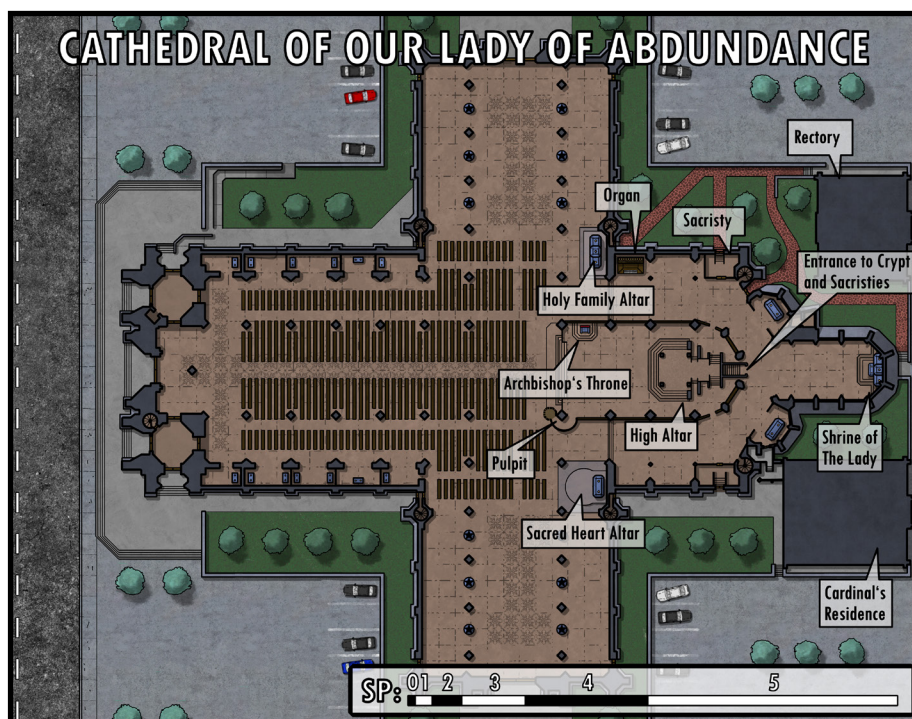
**EXAMPLE:** Trying to avoid a fight with Maximum Leader, Liáng Xù sheathes the legendary sword Gān Jiàng and holds up his hands in a gesture of peace. When Maximum Leader attacks anyway, Liáng Xù transforms into Zhù Yuè form. When she unsheathes her sword, it's the legendary sword Mò Yé.

## STORY HOOK

During an encounter with Exodus terrorists in Tibet, Sword Master was disarmed, the legendary sword Gān Jiàng falling into the hands of an enemy (use the Speedster template on p. 45) who escaped with the precious device. Rather than hand the sword over to Maximum Leader, however, the speedster has decided to betray Exodus and sell the sword to the highest bidder.

One of the speedster's prospects is the Star-Spangled Squadron (or whichever other Organization that the heroes work for). When the Squadron's leadership agrees to purchase the sword in order to study it, the heroes are charged to deliver the purchase price (\$50 million in cash) and retrieve the sword. The exchange is scheduled to take place at midnight in the Cathedral of our Lady of Abundance in Capital City. The High Gothic cathedral will be empty (save, perhaps, for some white doves that will flutter about as if starring in a John Woo movie) – but only until Sword Master shows up, possibly accompanied by some or all of the Soaring Sabers, to secure the sword.

The Soaring Sabers have been ordered to retrieve the sword and capture or kill anyone who's touched it. They don't want a deadly engagement with American ascendants that will trigger World War III, but they'll fight as hard as necessary to secure Sword Master's weapon.



# JŪN SHĪ (“STRATEGIST”)

Jūn Shī (“Strategist”) is one of the six named team members of the Fēi Jiàn (“Soaring Sabers”). The world was introduced to the Fēi Jiàn (“Soaring Sabers”) at a National Day military parade held in Beijing on October 1, 2020. Part of the People’s Liberation Army’s Beijing Military Region Special Forces Unit, the Soaring Sabers are considered to be among the most powerful military-grade ascendants fielded by any country.

Strategist’s real name is Hán Jīnlóng. Originally from Jingxing County, Hebei, he was born into a military family. His great-grandfather was one of Mao’s most trusted lieutenants during the Chinese Civil War. His uncle, Wèi Fènghé, is China’s current Minister of Defense.

Hán Jīnlóng graduated at the top of his class from the PLA National Defense University in 2009. He was commissioned as a lieutenant in the PLA Ground Force and then, after completing advanced training, assigned to Beijing Military Region Special Forces Unit “Arrow.” According to DIA, “Arrow” is an elite PLA Ground Force battalion equipped with high-tech equipment including unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicles (UARVs), individual blast devices, and handheld laser dazzling weapons. Fitness standards are very high; the PLA claims that “every soldier from this unit must be able to run five kilometers bearing heavy equipment in under 25 minutes, complete a 400-meter obstacle course in under one minute and 45 seconds, perform 100 push-ups in a minute, and repeatedly throw grenades more than 160 feet.”

Hán Jīnlóng remained with “Arrow” for five years. DIA believes, but has been unable to confirm, that in 2012 members of “Arrow” were recruited into the highly classified Qigong Somatic Science program. This program, which aimed to develop enhanced soldiers, parallels the US Project Ascension, which led to the development of Manticore. It is possible that Hán Jīnlóng may have ascended during this time; if so, he would be the earliest known military-grade ascendant in China.

Whatever the case, after five years of service in “Arrow,” Hán Jīnlóng had earned the rank of Captain along with a reputation as a brilliant strategist and revolutionary thinker. In 2015, Hán Jīnlóng was re-assigned to a research position at the PLA Academy of Military Science, where he was tasked with developing next-generation military doctrine based on qigong somatic science. DIA has translated excerpts from his doctrine, *Theoretical Foundations of Military Strategy with Chinese Characteristics*:

“The I Ching formed an important theoretical foundation of psychological-operations doctrine in ancient China, and it continues to influence subjective cognition patterns in China today... Theories based upon the five phases, yin and yang, and the sixty-four hexagrams of the I Ching, abstracted from their original context and converted into time and space markers with an intrinsic hierarchical order and inherent, dynamic interrelationships, similarly provide the foundation for both singular theories and complex hybrid systems of contemporary warfare.”

We have been unable to determine whether Strategist ascended due to his work on somatic science at the Academy of Military Science, or whether his work on somatic science at the Academy was inspired by his ascension. In any case, when the Soaring Sabers were introduced to the public in October 2020, Hán Jīnlóng, now dubbed Jūn Shī, was a founding member.

Strategist is described by CCP propaganda as “a master of the I Ching who can change the topography of battlefields and invent machines and weapons.” While Jiàn Shèng (“Sword Master”) is the titular head of the Soaring Sabers, our analysts believe that Strategist actually plans the group’s tactical operations.

In state-sponsored manga and anime, Strategist is frequently depicted in a love triangle with Zhù Yuè, the female form of Jiàn Shèng (“Sword Master”). We have been unable to confirm whether there is an actual romantic relationship between the two, or whether this is purely propaganda. It is confirmed that he has two younger siblings in the PLA; we believe their security is leveraged to help ensure Strategist’s loyalty to the Party and State.

# STRATEGIST

960 CP, CR 500

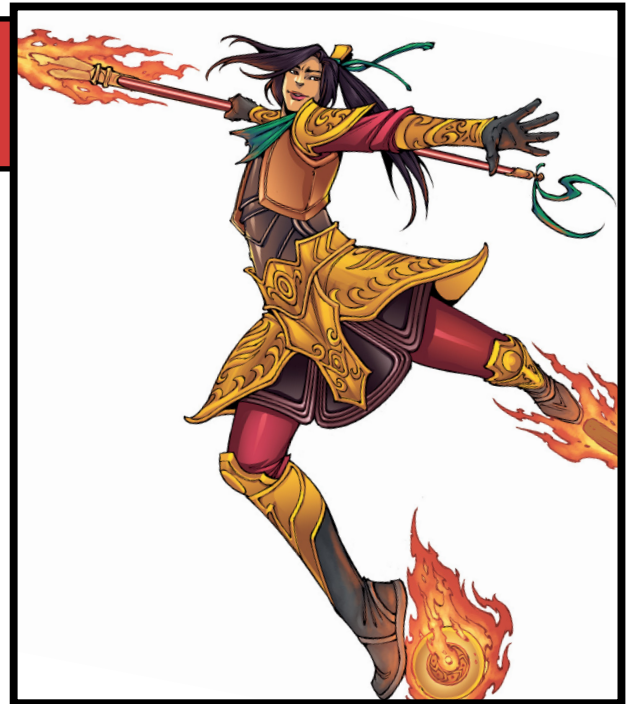
## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	7	5	9	9	5	32

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	10
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	19
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	7	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

960

RECOVERY

192

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Battlefield Control 13 (371 CP) with Power Flaw: Deliberation required (-47 CP), Invention (200 CP) with Power Flaw: Limited creativity (cannot create autonomous or pharmaceutical objects, -40 CP), Lightning Reflexes 5, Super-Stamina 13

**Skills:** Marksmanship (Shooting) 13, Martial Arts 13, Piloting 13, Profession (military officer) 13, Science 13

**Perks:** Authority (Fēi Jiàn, 10 CP), Famous (28 CP), Mobile Defense Expertise (5 CP), Multilingual (English, 1 CP), Multitask (15 CP), Singular Invention (665 CP inventions, 10 CP), Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (Chinese patriotism, 2 CP), Compulsion (Attraction to Zhù Yuè, 2 CP), Dependents (younger brother, younger sister in military, 4 CP), Duty (Fēi Jiàn, 10 CP), Vulnerable State (lose Battlefield Control and Invention if deprived of I Ching by Yellow Disarm, 91 CP)

**Inventions:** *I Ching* (Externally Crewed Object, Height -3, Weight -4, Toughness 5, Durability 60, Probability Control 13, 186 CP), Fire-Tipped Spear (Externally Crewed Object, Height -1, Weight -2, Toughness 2, Durability 20, Cumbersome Long Reach Thermal Boomerang Strike 13, 88 CP), Wind-Fire Wheels (Externally Crewed Object, Object, Height -2, Weight -2, Exterior Capacity 3, Toughness 2, Durability 20, Flight 7, Special Thermal Aura 13, 168 CP), Battle Armor (Worn Object, Height 0, Weight 0, Toughness 13, Durability 960, Invulnerability 13, Low Pressure Protection 20, 213 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Hán Jīnlóng, now known as Jūn Shī or “Strategist,” is a top-ranking member of the Soaring Sabers, an elite military-grade ascendant unit within China’s People’s Liberation Army. Coming from a military family and having served in the “Arrow” battalion, Hán Jīnlóng is speculated to have ascended during his service, after which he developed military doctrines based on qigong somatic science at the PLA Academy of Military Science. As Jūn Shī, he is depicted in propaganda as a master of the I Ching and the planner of the Soaring Sabers’ tactical operations, with his loyalty to the Party and State possibly reinforced by the security of his siblings in the PLA.

## I CHING

**Cost:** 22 SP (\$42,000) / 186 CP    **Type:** Crewed Object  
**Attributes:** Height -3, Weight -4, Toughness 5, Durability 60, Exterior Crew Requirement 0  
**Powers:** Probability Control 13 (154 CP)  
**Notes:** The I Ching is an ancient divination text dating to the Western Zhou period (1000 BC). Strategist's version of the I Ching was scribed by Strategist with ZPE-infused ink, and its predictions come true.

## FIRE-TIPPED SPEAR

**Cost:** 18 SP (\$2,500) / 88 CP    **Type:** Crewed Object  
**Attributes:** Height -1, Weight -2, Toughness 2, Durability 20, Exterior Crew Requirement 0  
**Powers:** Cumbersome Long Reach Thermal Boomerang Strike 13 (75 CP)  
**Notes:** The Fire-tipped Spear (火尖槍) was the legendary weapon of the Chinese demigod Nezha. Strategist constructed his version based on the mythic cycles surrounding Nezha.

## WIND-FIRE WHEELS

**Cost:** 28 SP (\$2,500,000) / 168 CP    **Type:** Crewed Object  
**Attributes:** Height -2, Weight -2, Toughness 2, Durability 20, Exterior Crew Requirement 0, Exterior Capacity 3  
**Powers:** Flight 7 (43 CP), Special Thermal Aura 13 (108 CP)  
**Notes:** The Chinese demigod Nezha is always depicted flying in the sky riding on the Wind Fire Wheels (風火輪). Strategist constructed this invention based on the mythic cycles surrounding Nezha.

## BATTLE ARMOR

**Cost:** 24 (\$167,000) / 213 CP    **Type:** Worn Object  
**Attributes:** Height 0, Weight 0, Toughness 13, Durability 960  
**Powers:** Invulnerability 13 (138 CP), Low Pressure Protection 20 (18 CP)  
**Notes:** Strategist's battle armor affords him substantial invulnerability and enables him to fly at high altitudes. It has been designed to resemble traditional Chinese armor.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Strategist has a new Power, called Battlefield Control (found on p. 209), subject to a new Power Flaw: Deliberation Required (p. 214). The Power Flaw represents his need to consult the I Ching each time he manipulates the topography of the battlefield.

Strategist's Invention power is subject to a new Power Flaw: Limited Creativity. In his case, this limits him from inventing autonomous or pharmaceutical objects.

## STORY HOOK

*The general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought. – Sun Tzu*

Strategist has contemplated the likelihood of US and Chinese confrontation a thousand times and every time he has reached the conclusion that Chinese power is at its peak relative to US power. Any delay in confrontation will mean a decline in China's chances of success due to the country's aging and shrinking population. Therefore, he has developed a plan to provoke a confrontation between the US and China. Secretly working in cahoots with the Exodus terrorist Rootkit, he has leaked fraudulent information to intelligence authorities in both the US and China. US authorities have received information that China is planning an invasion of Taiwan using superheroes; Chinese authorities have received information that the US is planning to place a US superhero team in Taiwan.

When the US government learns of the "threat," it asks the heroes to collaborate with the mercenary super-hacker The Fox to ascertain whether the information is accurate. However, the Fox has gone into hiding and is using all of his technology control powers to avoid being discovered. The heroes must find The Fox and persuade him to use his powers to reveal the truth about the situation, or personally prove that the "leaks" are fake; otherwise, the President will order the heroes to Taiwan to defend against the imminent Chinese invasion – an act that will confirm to the Chinese the necessity of their invasion...

# XIǎO YÁO Zǐ

## (“UNIVERSE WANDERER”)

The world was introduced to the Fēi Jiàn (“Soaring Sabers”) at a National Day military parade held in Beijing on October 1, 2020. Part of the People’s Liberation Army’s Beijing Military Region Special Forces Unit, the Soaring Sabers are considered to be among the most powerful military-grade ascendants fielded by any country.

The subject of this briefing is Xiǎo Yáo Zǐ (“Universe Wanderer”), one of the six named team members of the Soaring Sabers. Prior to his ascension, Universe Wanderer was a photojournalist for the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences named Huà Tiān Yòu. As part of his work, Huà Tiān Yòu traveled extensively throughout mainland China and its periphery, documenting tourist attractions, historical sites, and natural landmarks in order to promote tourism to, and enhance the prestige of, the country. In November 2019, during a tour of Xinjiang province, Huà Tiān Yòu was kidnapped and held hostage by members of the radical Turkistan Islamic Party. (See our briefing on Declassifier for additional details on this incident.) Huà Tiān Yòu escaped captivity in February 2020, with Xinhua News Agency reporting on his “miraculous” rescue by “the legendary Péng.” Shortly thereafter, Huà Tiān Yòu was recruited by the PLA to join the nascent Fēi Jiàn organization.

Universe Wanderer’s primary power is his ability to summon Kūn-Péng, an exceptionally powerful creature first described in the Taoist classic *Zhuangzi*. Kūn-Péng seems to have two forms, that of a giant fish or leviathan (Kūn) and a giant eagle or roc (Péng). When Universe Wanderer calls Kūn, the leviathan seems to rise from the abyss in an awe-inspiring wave. When he calls Péng, the great eagle seems to soar down from the clouds. While Kūn-Péng’s dramatic arrival seems to suggest the creature is traveling to Universe Wanderer from some hidden lair, we actually believe that Kūn-Péng does not exist unless and until called by Universe Wanderer. Attempts by the National Reconnaissance Office to locate an eyrie for Péng have failed, and NOAA’s sonar systems have likewise only ever detected Kūn when called by Universe Wanderer. Dr Quantum has theorized that the creature may actually be a manifestation of Universe Wanderer’s mind, similar to her own quantum constructs, albeit semi-autonomous.

Regardless of whether Kūn-Péng has an independent existence or is a construct of Universe Wanderer’s mind, the creature is considered to have a quantified assessment of power (QAP) score of 500, making it a peer-level threat for most members of the Star-Spangled Squadron. China considers Kūn-Péng to be its answer to the United States carrier fleet in time of war. In its Kūn form, the creature functions as a submarine battleship, while in its Péng form it is a supersonic strike fighter.

Universe Wanderer himself has military-grade superstrength, agility, and toughness. He can accompany Kūn to depths of at least 20,000 feet below sea level and can ride Péng to stratospheric altitudes. His primary means of attack is a handheld *qiang* (spear), with which he is able to strike to a range of four miles with the kinetic energy of a 120mm tank gun. A review of battle footage has confirmed that Universe Wanderer is able to summon his spear out of thin air and teleport the spear back to his hand after he throws it. Dr Quantum theorizes that, like Kūn-Péng, the spear may be a manifestation of Universe Wanderer’s mind rather than a distinct entity.

The question is of practical importance: If both Universe Wanderer’s minion and his spear are constructs of his mind, then Universe Wanderer must himself be an ascendant with a QAP score of 500 or more; but if Kūn-Péng is an independent entity and the spear a product of Chinese weapons technology, his actual QAP score might be as low as 85 to 120.

# UNIVERSE WANDERER

960 CP, CR 500

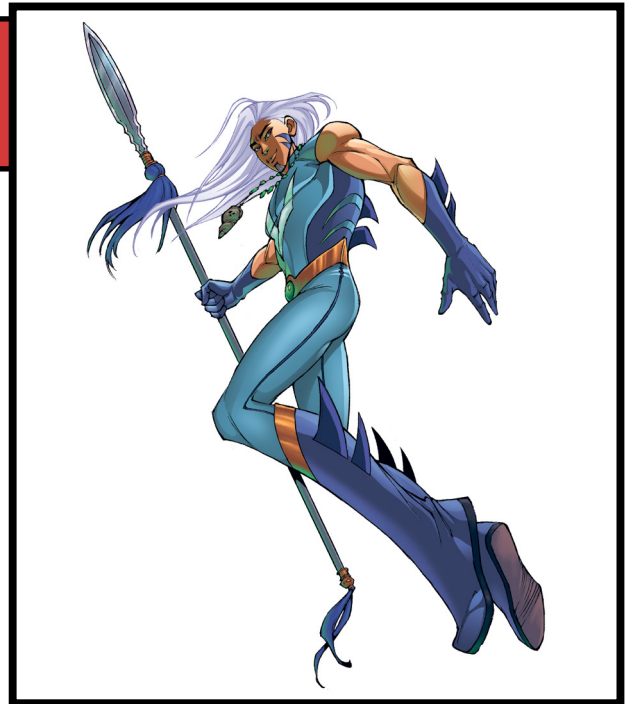
## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	8	8	8	12	4	5	32

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	15
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	19
JUMPING SPEED	5	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
GLIDING SPEED	5	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

640

RECOVERY

128

DETERMINATION

640

RECOVERY

128

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Boomerang Long Reach Penetrating Strike 12 (43 CP), Combat Sense 12 (40 CP), Gliding 5 (20 CP), Low Pressure Protection 20 (3.5 CP), Lightning Reflexes 7 (14 CP), Single Target Minion-only Telepathy 15 (15 CP), Slow Summoning (8 SPs arrival time) 10 (90 CP), Super-Stamina 12 (16 CP), Swimming 5 (11 CP), Telescopic Vision 5 (15 CP), Underwater Adaptation 13 (10 CP), Underwater Vision 3 (1.5 CP)

**Skills:** Martial Arts (armed combat) 12, Marksmanship (thrown) 12, Profession (travel journalist) 8, Sport (hiking) 10

**Perks:** Authority (Fēi Jiàn, 10 CP), Famous (28 CP), Minions (160 CP), Multilingual (English, Tibetan, 2 CP), Resolute (10 CP), Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Duty (Fēi Jiàn, 10 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Huà Tiān Yòu, now known as Xiāo Yáo Zǐ or “Universe Wanderer,” is a member of the Soaring Sabers, a powerful military-grade ascendant unit in China’s People’s Liberation Army. His primary power is summoning the mythical creature Kūn-Péng, which takes the form of either a giant fish (Kūn) or an eagle (Péng). In either form, Kūn-Péng is considered a major military asset. Universe Wanderer himself possesses superstrength, agility, and toughness, can withstand extreme depths and altitudes, and uses a teleporting spear for attacks, though it remains unclear whether his minions and tools are mental constructs or independent entities.

## KŪN (MINION)

**Character Points:** 920    **Power Limit:** 27    **Hero Points:** 30

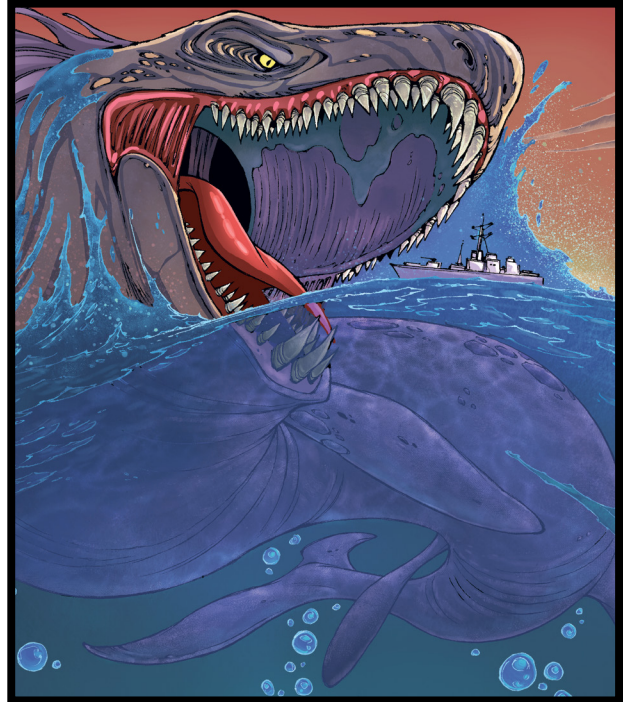
**Attributes:** MIG 15, AGI 3, VAL 10, RES 9, INS 1, CHA 3, Weight 24, Height 6, Running Speed -, Jumping Speed -, Swimming Speed 6, Initiative 13, Income 0, Reputation 3, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 3840, Determination 240

**Powers:** Invulnerability 17 (132 CP), Lightning Reflexes 3 (6 CP), Penetrating Strike 17 (8 CP), Permanent Growth 15 (150 CP), Predatory Ultra-Sensitive Scent 12 (136 CP), Self-Range Noise (“the bloop”) 17 (42 CP), Super-Perception 6 (20 CP), Super-Stamina 17 (8 CP), Swimming 6 (55 CP), Underwater Adaptation 18 (10 CP), Underwater Vision 3 (1.5 CP)

**Skills:** Aquatic Combat 10

**Perks:** Alternate Form (Péng, 40 CP), Combat Maneuver (Mega-Fast Melee Attack, Mega-Power Melee Attack), Protector, Tireless

**Drawbacks:** Body Form (aquatic), Disturbing Appearance (2 CP), Heavy (6 CP), Illiterate, Unspeaking



## PÉNG (MINION)

**Character Points:** 919    **Power Limit:** 27    **Hero Points:** 30

**Attributes:** MIG 12, AGI 5, VAL 13, RES 9, INS 1, CHA 5, Weight 15, Height 5, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 2, Flight Speed 10, Initiative 14, Income 0, Reputation 5, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 1280, Determination 240

**Powers:** Continuous Gust 14 (114 CP) with Power Flaw: 1 use per 32 Pages (-57 CP), Invulnerability 14 (114 CP), Lightning Reflexes 1 (2 CP), Low Pressure Protection 20 (2.5 CP), Penetrating Strike 14 (8 CP), Permanent Growth 15 (150 CP), Super-Stamina 14 (8 CP), Super-Perception 6 (20 CP), Telescopic Vision 8 (21 CP), Winged Flight 10 (98 CP)

**Skills:** Aerial Combat 13

**Perks:** Alternate Form (Kūn, 40 CP), Combat Maneuver (Super-Fast Melee Attack, Ultra-Fast Melee Attack), Lean (6 CP), Protector, Tireless, Watchful

**Drawbacks:** Body Form (avian), Illiterate, Unspeaking



## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Although based on the stat blocks for a Great White Shark and Eagle respectively, Kūn and Péng were built for CP purposes as ordinary (human) characters. Kūn's Heavy drawback was used to increase his Weight to that of a Great White, while Péng's Lean Perk was used to decrease his Weight to that of an Eagle while keeping his Height the same. In both forms, Kūn-Péng has 15 SPs of Permanent Growth, granting +5 SPs of Height, +5 SPs of Reach, +5 SPs of Invulnerability, +10 SPs of Might, and +15 SPs of Weight, all of which are already factored in. Kūn's Swimming and Péng's Flight were purchased based on their Weight after Permanent Growth. Kūn's Noise power was inspired by the famous "Bloop" sound detected by NOAA hydrophones during the 1990s, which resembled a noise produced by a living creature, but was many orders of magnitude louder than any sound produced by any organism on Earth.

China has good reason to consider Kūn to be its answer to the United States carrier fleet in time of war. With the ability to submerge miles below the sea level and make a Mega-Power Strike with an EV of 21, Kūn can travel at an undetected depth anywhere in the ocean and destroy every warship on the planet with a single blow. Universe Wanderer's personal powers allow him to safely swim underwater on or with Kūn to great depth.

Kūn is rarely seen, however, because Universe Wanderer spends more time over land than sea and Péng is far more versatile. Péng can fly at supersonic speeds into the stratosphere and is strong enough to pick up a tank and carry it off. Universe Wanderer cannot fly, but he can glide, which enables him to ride Péng into battle and then "parachute" off it like an air assault ranger.

Whichever form his minion has taken, Universe Wanderer often fights mounted from it, using his Boomerang Long Reach Penetrating Strike to strike enemies near and far. However, because of his 160 CP worth of minions, Universe Wanderer's effective Power Limit is only 24 instead of 28 for his personal attacks and defenses. In order to be able to stay competitive with his peers, he has a maxed-out RES combined with the Resolute Perk. Facing off against, e.g., Star-Spangled Squadron's Aurora, he could outspend her 5 to 2 on Hero Points, enabling his AV 12 attacks to have a chance of success against her DV 14. In addition, both forms of Kūn-Péng have Protector, meaning that Universe Wanderer's virtually invulnerable minion can protect him from attacks.

Note that Kūn has a new Skill, Aquatic Combat, detailed on p. 218.

## STORY HOOK

While on patrol near the South China Sea, The *USS John F. Kennedy* battle group is suddenly assailed by Universe Wanderer and Kūn. Two escort ships have already been sunk, and if superheroes don't intervene, the United States may lose its first aircraft carrier since World War II. The Chinese government has disavowed involvement in the attack, leaving US authorities uncertain as to whether this is part of some larger Chinese offensive effort or an ascendant-gone-rogue. An angry President Flush has warned China's ambassador that if the *John F. Kennedy* is destroyed, it will mean war between the two nations.

When the heroes arrive, Universe Wanderer and Kūn have wrecked one Guided Missile Cruisers (Durability reduced to -128) and Destroyed another Guided Missile Cruiser that were escorting the *USS John F. Kennedy* (an Aircraft Carrier). The remaining escorts are three Guided Missile Cruisers and two Attack Submarines. The Attack Submarines are 10 SPs from the Aircraft Carrier, attempting to engage the submerged Kūn. The three remaining Cruisers are each 8 SPs from the Aircraft Carrier, forming a triangle around it.

Depending on the heroes' actions towards Universe Wanderer, the Chinese government might dispatch the rest of the Soaring Sabers to intervene. If the heroes use non-violent or at least non-lethal methods to stop Universe Wanderer, the Soaring Sabers might arrive at the end to "take custody" of their renegade ascendant. If the heroes use lethal force against Universe Wanderer, the Soaring Sabers might respond in kind...

Unbeknownst to either government, Universe Wanderer has fallen victim to the predations of Maximum Leader, who has power stunted Cosmic Control to achieve temporary mind control over the Chinese ascendant (with an Orange result at 15 SPs). Maximum Leader hopes to provoke war between the US and China so that the ensuing military holocaust creates many new ascendants.

# YÈ HUǒ (“KARMA FIRE”)

The world was introduced to the Fēi Jiàn (“Soaring Sabers”) at a National Day military parade held in Beijing on October 1, 2020. Part of the People’s Liberation Army’s Beijing Military Region Special Forces Unit, the Soaring Sabers are considered to be among the most powerful military-grade ascendants fielded by any country.

Yè Huǒ (“Karma Fire”) is one of the six named team members of the Soaring Sabers. Western intelligence agencies have only gained limited insight into Karma Fire’s actual origins. Most of this briefing is based on facts revealed in the manga and light novel series *Record of the Soaring Sabers* by China Publishing Group, with independent verification of some points yet to be made.

Karma Fire’s real name is Yǔ Jiā. She was born in Hong Kong in 1994. Her father was a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine, while her mother was a tàijí (tai-chi) instructor. The pair were not members of the Chinese Communist Party, and Mr. Yǔ had suffered as a child during the Cultural Revolution; both were devotees of traditional Confucian values and Chinese history. Yǔ Jiā’s birth was an unexpected and somewhat miraculous event, as her mother was 41 years old when she became pregnant. The successful birth of their daughter catapulted the new parents into a measure of fame in Hong Kong. Mr. Yǔ’s traditional medicine practice and Mrs. Yǔ’s qì-gōng’s regimen attracted numerous high-ranking Party members who sought the secrets of their longeval fertility and health. With so many wealthy elite patronizing the Yǔ clinic, the family flourished, and when Yǔ Jiā grew up, she joined the family business.

According to the Chinese sources, Yǔ Jiā’s ascension to Karma Fire occurred in October 2019. In the face of massive protests, Carrie Lam invoked the Emergency Regulations Ordinance to ban wearing face masks in public gatherings (so that protestors would be easier to arrest). Lam’s proclamation actually triggered more demonstrations throughout the city. Many shops perceived to be pro-Beijing were vandalized. One of these was the clinic run by Mr. Yǔ. An angry Mr. Yǔ gave a fiery denunciation of the protestors, damning them as no better than the Red Guard of the Cultural Revolution. For this insult, he and his wife were subjected to crippling beatings. The trauma of watching her beloved parents be assaulted awoke Yǔ Jiā’s latent powers and she became Karma Fire, a living phoenix.

When she ascended, Karma Fire gained superhuman agility, reflexes, and stamina. Based on combat footage, she likely also gained telescopic vision and some sort of active night vision, presumably thermal or infrared. Her most important power, of course, is her eponymous “karma fire.” On command, Karma Fire can surround herself with a fiery aura that takes the shape of the legendary *fēnghuáng* or Chinese phoenix.

While surrounded by her aura, Karma Fire can soar through the sky on pillars of fire at speeds of 1,000MPH and unleash flame blasts with the explosive power of a Tomahawk cruise missile. The aura itself is hotter than a thermobaric firestorm. A slow-motion review of video footage of Karma Fire suggests that the ascendant’s aura actually burns her own body when it is active. The effect is not noticeable to the unaided eye because Karma Fire regenerates extremely quickly. If Karma Fire’s regenerative powers could be disrupted (e.g. by a power drain or through some as-yet undiscovered vulnerable state), it is likely she would be forced to deactivate her aura to avoid burning to death.

In her manga, Karma Fire is romantically linked to two of her comrades, Jūn Shī (“Strategist”) and Liáng Xù, the male form of Jiàn Shèng (“Sword Master”). Our analysts believe this relationship is genuine. Karma Fire is also frequently depicted as the caregiver for her now-disabled parents. Whether her filial loyalty is simply Confucian-themed propaganda or representative of an actual caregiver relationship is unknown. Most analysts believe Karma Fire’s parents are alive and under the “care” of the Chinese Communist Party in order to assure Karma Fire’s loyalty.

# KARMA FIRE

940 CP, CR 500

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	14	5	8	5	10	32

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	10
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	20
JUMPING SPEED	3	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	10	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

1280

RECOVERY

256

DETERMINATION

160

RECOVERY

32

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Contrailing Flight 10 (50 CP) with Power Flaw: Special Thermal Aura must be active (-8 CP), Continuous Thermal Blast 14 (94 CP) with Power Flaw: Special Thermal Aura must be active (-14 CP), Immortality 17 (44 CP), Infrared Dark Vision 5 (10 CP), Lightning Reflexes 5 (10 CP), Low Pressure Protection 20 (2.5 CP), Regeneration 15 (120 CP), Special Thermal Aura 14 (114 CP) with Power Flaw: Damaging 14 (deals 256 Thermal Damage each Page of use, -42 CP), Super-Stamina 14 (36 CP), Telescopic Vision 6 (17 CP)

**Skills:** Breath Control 10, Martial Arts (unarmed) 8, Medicine 8, Stoicism 10

**Perks:** Authority (Fēi Jiàn, 10 CP), Famous (20 CP), Mobile Defense Expertise (5 CP), Multilingual (English, Japanese, 2 CP), Sex Appeal (5 CP), Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (Confucian values, 2 CP), Compulsion (Attraction to Liáng Xù, 2 CP), Dependent (elderly parents, 5 CP), Duty (Fēi Jiàn, 10 CP), Vulnerable State (lose all Powers except Super-Stamina when immersed in water, 16 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Yè Huǒ, or “Karma Fire”, born as Yǔ Jiā, is a key member of the People’s Liberation Army’s powerful ascendant team, the Soaring Sabers. Originating from a traditional Chinese medicine family in Hong Kong, she ascended during the 2019 protests, gaining superhuman agility, reflexes, stamina, and the ability to surround herself with a phoenix-like fire aura. Her aura grants her flight and destructive power but also seemingly burns her own body, necessitating rapid regeneration. In manga and light novels published by the CCP, she has been romantically linked to team members Jūn Shī (“Strategist”) and Liáng Xù, the male form of Jiàn Shèng (“Sword Master”).

# ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

The Star-Spangled Squadron's assessment of Karma Fire is correct as far as it goes, and the origin story presented her in manga series is close to accurate. However, the official story has concealed two key facts.

- ★ The rioters that crippled her parents were actually agent provocateurs on the payroll of the Chinese Communist Party. The agents were paid to vandalize and riot against pro-Beijing targets specifically to justify an increased crackdown on the legitimate protestors. Should this fact ever be revealed, it would likely turn Karma Fire against the CCP.
- ★ Karma Fire does have a vulnerable state that can knock out her powers. When immersed in water, she is unable to use her Immortality and Regeneration powers. That, in turn, means she cannot use her Blast or Flight either. The CCP is aware of this weakness, but for obvious reasons has kept it concealed. The CCP will be very hesitant to employ Karma Fire in any naval engagements unless they are of crucial national importance (e.g. a Battle for Taiwan).

# STORY HOOK

A former spy for the CCP (use Watchful Secret Service Agent template) defects to the US embassy in Taiwan and seeks asylum. He claims he has valuable information but will only share it with ascendants from the heroes' organization. The heroes are assigned to interview him and assess his credibility. While interviewed, the spy claims he worked as a provocateur during the October protests and was one of the individuals who crippled Karma Fire's parents. He claims that support for his allegations, including written evidence, can be found in the Political Officer's office at the Soaring Saber's headquarters at Beijing Shahezhen Air Base.



# HUÓ FÓ (“LIVING BUDDHA”)

Huó Fó (“Living Buddha”) is one of the six named team members of the Soaring Sabers. The name is Mandarin Chinese, assigned to him by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), but Huó Fó is actually an ethnic Tibetan named Dudjom Lingpa. Due to close collaboration with Dr. Sung Jung-Han (“12Sigma”), we have been able to compile a well-developed biography for this ascendant.

Dudjom Lingpa was born in 1995 in the Larung Gar monastic community in the Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan. Larung Gar was, at that time, the largest Buddhist monastery on Earth, with 4500 nuns, 4000 monks, and 1000 students residing there in the late 1990s. It eventually grew to an estimated population of 40,000. Lingpa’s mother, Tsering Wangmo, had come to study at the Serta Larung Five Science Buddhist Academy, a spiritual center for the teaching of Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. There she became the sangyum (“secret consort”) of the lama Dudjom Jamyang Rinpoche Lodrö, a master of Tibetan qigong. In the Nyingma tradition, lamas routinely marry their sangyum and pass their lineages of teachings through the family. The children of lamas are often recognized as reincarnate lamas themselves and may become influential teachers and visionaries who carry on the lineage. Such was the case with Dudjom Lingpa, who was revered as an enlightened reincarnate of great power from an early age.

In 2001, the Sichuan authorities demanded the monks and nuns of Larung Gar sign documents denouncing the Dalai Lama. Many refused, resulting in the destruction of much of the settlement. The 6-year-old Dudjom Lingpa watched as over 4,000 buildings were demolished and 8,000 residents expelled. Lingpa’s father avoided expulsion and continued teaching, but the CCP authorities returned periodically throughout Lingpa’s childhood, with additional demolitions and expulsions in 2002, 2013, 2015, and 2016.

In March 2017, Chinese authorities began another demolition project that led to 4,500 residents being expelled. CCP reports from the time call the events renovations to make the academy fire- and earthquake-safe, while Free Tibetan sources claim it was part of a government program to turn the sacred site into a tourist attraction. Whatever the case, the 22-year-old Dudjom Lingpa was among the residents who left.

Thereafter Lingpa took up residence in Wuhan, China, where he studied at the depository of Buddhist texts at the Guiyuan Buddhist Temple. In October 2019 Wuhan became the epicenter of a mysterious illness initially called the “China Flu” and later identified as the novel coronavirus COVID-19. When the outbreak began, COVID-19 was both highly contagious and dangerously pathogenic. At the urging of CCP authorities, the World Health Organization commissioned Dr. Sung Jung-Han to develop a cure.

According to Dr. Sung, he met Dudjom Lingpa shortly after arriving in Wuhan. The young monk presented himself at Sung’s clinic with the claim, “My energy can cure the illness.” Dr. Sung quickly surmised that Dudjom Lingpa was an ascendant who had, through his years of monastic training, developed superpowers including hyper-immunity to illness, transference healing, and regeneration. Using his astonishing intellect to synthesize traditional Tibetan healing practice, ascendant abilities, and Western medicine, Dr. Sung was able to develop a cure for the incipient pandemic. Dr. Sung earned the People’s Republic of China’s Friendship Award.

Dudjom Lingpa earned the attention of the Chinese Communist Party’s military planners, who quickly conscripted him into the nascent Soaring Sabers organization. Although CCP propaganda portrays Living Buddha as a proud Chinese patriot and uses him to show the “mutual love and goodwill” between Han and Tibetan peoples, there is little evidence that Lingpa is actually a Chinese nationalist or Communist. Dr. Sung surmises that his agreement to join the Soaring Sabers was predicated on the CCP agreeing to cease its persecution of Tibetan Buddhism, end its demolition of Larung Gar, and allow him to teach his qigong to students. The CCP has apparently honored this deal, as there has been no further demolition of Larung Gar, nor of its sister settlement Yarchen Gar, since October 2019.

Based on Dr. Sung’s testimony and analysis of footage from Chinese propaganda film, we believe we have an accurate assessment of Living Buddha’s powers. He has superhuman stamina, agility, and fighting capability and is among the world’s most gifted martial artists. By manipulating zero-point energy (which he calls “qi”), he is able to deliver military-grade concussive strikes to multiple targets at close quarters or to single targets at ranges of up to one mile. He can also induce a paralytic state in targets, allegedly by manipulating the “meridians of their energy flow.” and deliver blasts of concussive force at nearby opponents. Living Buddha can also use his “qigong” to transfer diseases and injuries from a victim to himself; he then can induce a heightened level of disease immunity or rapid regeneration in his own body to deal with the transferred wound or illness.

# LIVING BUDDHA

900 CP, CR 350

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	10	10	12	7	4	30

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	15
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	8
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	16
JUMPING SPEED	5	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

640

RECOVERY

128

DETERMINATION

640

RECOVERY

128

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Qigong Power Pool 12 (Concussive Strike, Cosmic Awareness, Horizontal Transference Healing, Hyper-Immune System, No Multi-Attack Short Range [-2] Concussive Blast, Regeneration, Touch-Range Physical Paralysis, 299 CP), Combat Sense 15 (50cp), Immortality 2 (14 CP), Immovability 5 (10 CP), Iron Will 15 (18 CP), Jumping 5 (6 CP), Lighting Reflexes 5 (10 CP), Super-Stamina 12 (28 CP)

**Skills:** Alertness 15, Breath Control 15, Escape Artist 15, Martial Artist 15, Non-Combat Parkour 15, Stealth 15, Profession (monk) 10

**Perks:** Authority (Fēi Jiàn, 10 CP), Combat Maneuver (Ultra-Power Melee Attack, 5 CP) Famous (24 CP), Grappling Expertise (6 CP), Lean (2 CP), Multilingual (English, Mandarin, 2 CP), Multitask (15 CP), Principled (Code of Honor, 2 CP), Tireless (5 CP), Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (Buddhist values, 2 CP), Dependents (Larung Gar community, 5 CP), Duty (Fēi Jiàn, 10 CP), Vulnerable State: Drained (if reduced to 320 Determination or less, lose all Powers except Super-Stamina and all skills except Profession, 143 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Huó Fó (“Living Buddha”), born Dudjom Lingpa, is the ethnic Tibetan member of the People’s Liberation Army’s ascendant team, the Soaring Sabers. Originating from a significant Buddhist lineage in Larung Gar, he developed superpowers including hyper-immunity, transference healing, and regeneration, and was instrumental in developing a cure for COVID-19 alongside Dr. Sung Jung-Han. Despite being conscripted into the Soaring Sabers, it’s uncertain if he aligns with the Chinese Communist Party’s nationalism, and his agreement to join may have been to ensure the cessation of persecution of Tibetan Buddhism and the destruction of the Larung Gar monastery.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

The Star-Spangled Squadron's assessment of Living Buddha is correct. However, Living Buddha's Qigong has one additional effect they are unaware of – it allows him to sense other users and usages of zero-point energy, much like a Cosmic Controller can. The CCP has kept this power a state secret, as it has been invaluable in finding ascendants and either recruiting or terminating them before they can threaten the Party.

## STORY HOOK

The Living Buddha has gone missing! Free Tibetan and Taiwanese news sources are claiming that Living Buddha has defected, while the CCP is publicly blaming the United States for kidnapping him for “military experiments.” The Soaring Sabers are dispatched to find and return the warrior-monk to Beijing.

In fact, Living Buddha has been kidnapped by Exodus terrorists and teleported to a secret base high in the Himalaya Mountains. There he is to be used as a test subject for diseases synthesized by the mad Dr. Krankenschwester in her quest to perfect a pathogen capable of creating easily controlled ascendant zombies.

Dr. Krankenschwester's current “formulary” is based on the so-called zombie ant fungus, *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*. She calls it *Ascensiocordyceps unilateralis* (described below). A character infected with this super-fungus becomes exceptionally compliant and suggestible, willing to do whatever Dr. Krankenschwester commands. The unfortunate victim's condition is easily (and horrifically) visible as fruiting fungal bodies begin to grow out of their skin. Since the *Ascensiocordyceps unilateralis* has a cost of 148 CP, the DV for Dr. Krankenschwester to create it is  $(148 / 5) = 29.6$ , rounded to 30. With 12 SPs of Medicine, Dr. K needs 19 SPs of Time (3 weeks) to perfect her disease. Because Living Buddha can adjust his Hyper-Immune System from 0 to 12 SPs, he is the perfect candidate for dose testing...

Before the mad doctor went to work on him, Living Buddha used his Qigong (via a Power Stunt on Cosmic Awareness) to reach out to various friends to alert them of his dire condition. In his drugged stupor he's not able to convey much information – only that he is “at the roof of the world” and “needs help.” The heroes' organization is one of the groups he contacts, and the heroes are dispatched to find Living Buddha and discover whether he has voluntarily left China and needs help defecting or has been kidnapped and is in danger.

If the heroes are international-tier, the Himalaya base might be guarded by Ishtar, Serengeti, Toxicant, Fireball, and Dr. K herself. If the heroes are lower power, the operation might be unauthorized by Exodus, and the base defended by just some low-level terrorists – the Hero archetypes can be used for these. Alternatively, the heroes might get assistance from one or more members of the Soaring Sabers.

## ASCENSIOCORDYCEPS UNILATERALIS

Complex Fungal, Direct/Airborne Transmission (spores), Infectivity 5, Pathogenicity 5, Virulence None, Incubation Period 17 SPs (5 days), Convalescence Time 21 SPs (3 months), Symptoms Caused – Disturbing Appearance (2 CPs), Emotional State (Wildly Agreeable to Dr Krankenschwester) (16 CP); Cost 148 CP.

**Treatment:** Broad-spectrum Antifungal.

# ZHÀN SHÉN (“WAR GOD”)

Zhàn Shén (“War God”) is one of the six named team members of the Fēi Jiàn (“Soaring Sabers”). The world was introduced to the Fēi Jiàn (“Soaring Sabers”) at a National Day military parade held in Beijing on October 1, 2020. Part of the People’s Liberation Army’s Beijing Military Region Special Forces Unit, the Soaring Sabers are considered to be among the most powerful military-grade ascendants fielded by any country.

War God is described by CCP propaganda as “able to transform into the powerful form of the bull-headed god of war, Chī Yóu.” Because War God’s powers can only be understood in the context of this god, we begin this briefing with a review of Chinese mythology surrounding Chī Yóu.

Chī Yóu is a culture hero honored as one of the three legendary founding fathers of China. He was said to be a half-man, half-bull war deity with six arms who was capable of breathing out a thick fog that could obscure the sunlight. According to myth, he led the Miao people in war against the Yellow Emperor, the culture hero and progenitor of the Han. Though defeated and beheaded by the Yellow Emperor, Chī Yóu became worshipped as the god of war and weapons.

The ascendant Zhàn Shén is himself of Miao ethnicity, making him one of the only two members of the Soaring Sabers who are not Han Chinese. His real name is Choj Lis, and he hails from Huaihua City in Hunan province. At 18, he enlisted in the People’s Liberation Army. Although his family lacked *guanxi* (connections), Choj Lis scored exceptionally well on the recruitment tests. After completing advanced training, he was assigned to Beijing Military Region Special Forces Unit “Arrow” in 2011. He may have served with Lt. Hán Jīnlóng (the future Strategist) at this time.

Choj Lis’s military record was marked by routine excellence and a decided lack of controversy. His primary avocation while enlisted seems to have been videogaming, with *Dynasty Warriors*, *Persona*, and *Shin Megami Tensei* notable favorites. DIA believes, but has been unable to confirm, that starting in 2012, members of “Arrow” were recruited into the highly classified Qigong Somatic Science program. This program, which aimed to develop enhanced soldiers, parallels the US Project Ascension, which led to the development of Manticore.

Indeed, Zhàn Shén’s power set makes him the closest approximation to Manticore of any Chinese ascendant. Like Manticore, he has developed super-strength, super-stamina, invulnerability, and gross physical mutations including additional physical appendages. His physical appearance matches the bull-headed god of Chinese myth, just as Manticore’s appearance resembled that of the Persian manticore. Unlike Manticore, however, his mutations seem to be reversible at will. (This raises the interesting question as to whether Manticore might have learned to reverse his own monstrous transformation – a question we probably should be grateful we didn’t have time to learn the answer to.) In addition to the powers described above, Zhàn Shén is capable of exhaling a voluminous fog, just as the mythological god could.

The close approximation of Zhàn Shén’s powers to those of the war-god Chī Yóu raise the question as to why the CCP did not choose to call Choj Li by the sobriquet Chī Yóu – or claim that he actually is the god. Imagine the prestige gained by having an actual deity working for the People’s Republic!

The answer seems to lie in the particular ethnic politics of Southeast Asia. The Miao people are an ethnic minority in China that have also migrated into Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. As mentioned above, Chī Yóu was mythologically the leader of the Miao people in their war against the Han, and to this day the deity is held in particular reverence by the Miao. They deem Chī Yóu to be their ancestor and progenitor in the same way that the Yellow Emperor is the progenitor and ancestor of the Han Chinese. The Chinese Communist Party seems to have concluded that if their ascendant were named after Chī Yóu, or claimed to *be* Chī Yóu, he might become a rallying point for Miao nationalism or separatism, just as the Dalai Lama has been in Tibet.

That this represents a real risk can be demonstrated by a review of Zhàn Shén’s social media profile. While he is quite popular (6.5 million fans), he is also remarkably unpopular. It is clear that many Miao people, especially of the Hmong tribes, wish that Zhàn Shén had adopted the identity of Chī Yóu and become the symbol that the Han Chinese fear he could be.

# WAR GOD

880 CP, CR 250

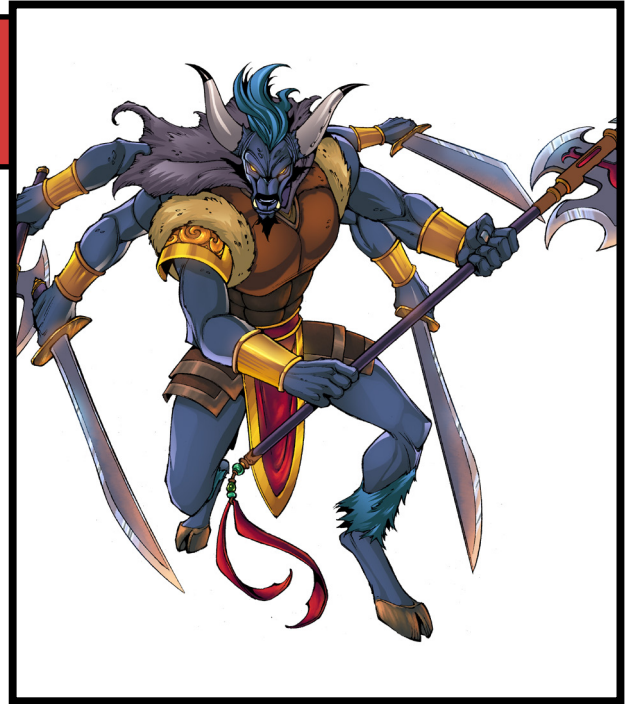
## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	12	7	12	8	5	8	28

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	1	INITIATIVE	15
WEIGHT	6	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	18/17
JUMPING SPEED	7	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

1280

RECOVERY

256

DETERMINATION

160

RECOVERY

32

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Additional Bludgeoning Utilitarian Limbs x 4 (0 CP), *Cumbersome Long Reach Lacerating Strike* 12 (5 CP), Instant Self-Immune Self-Range Fog 8 (102 CP), Invulnerability 12 (126 CP), Lighting Reflexes 3 (6 CP), Permanent Growth 3 (30 CP), Regeneration 14 (Flawed vs. Annihilating and Cosmic, 98 CP), Super-Stamina 14 (8 CP)

**Skills:** Alertness 10, Avocation (video games) 12, Intimidation 12, Parkour 12, Stoicism 12

**Perks:** Authority (Fēi Jiàn, 10 CP), Extra Attack, Famous (20 CP), Multilingual (English, Mandarin, 2 CP), Tireless, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (godhood, 2 CP), Disturbing Appearance (six-armed minotaur, 5 CP), Duty (Fēi Jiàn, 10 CP), Notoriety (17 CP), Vulnerable State: Deprived of Device (lose Lacerating Strike if deprived of battle axe, 0.75 CP), Vulnerable State: Deprived of Battle Axe (lose Lacerating Strike, 0.75 CP), Vulnerable State: Caught out of War God Form (transformation takes 6 Pages and can be maintained for 13 SPs per day; MIG, AGI, and Val drop to 5, CHA drops to 4, loses all Powers, loses Intimidation, Parkour, and Stoic, loses Extra Attack, Famous, Stalwart, and Tireless, loses Disturbing Appearance and Notoriety, 99 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Zhàn Shén (“War God”), a member of the People’s Liberation Army’s Soaring Sabers, possesses abilities similar to the mythological god of war, Chī Yóu, including super-strength, super-stamina, invulnerability, and the capacity to exhale a fog. His true identity is Choj Lis, a Miao from Hunan province, who enlisted in the People’s Liberation Army at 18 and possibly participated in the Quigong Somatic Science program, a parallel to the US Project Ascension. The Chinese Communist Party avoided naming him after Chī Yóu to prevent potential ethnic tensions or separatism among the Miao people, a concern reflected in his mixed reception on social media among Miao communities.

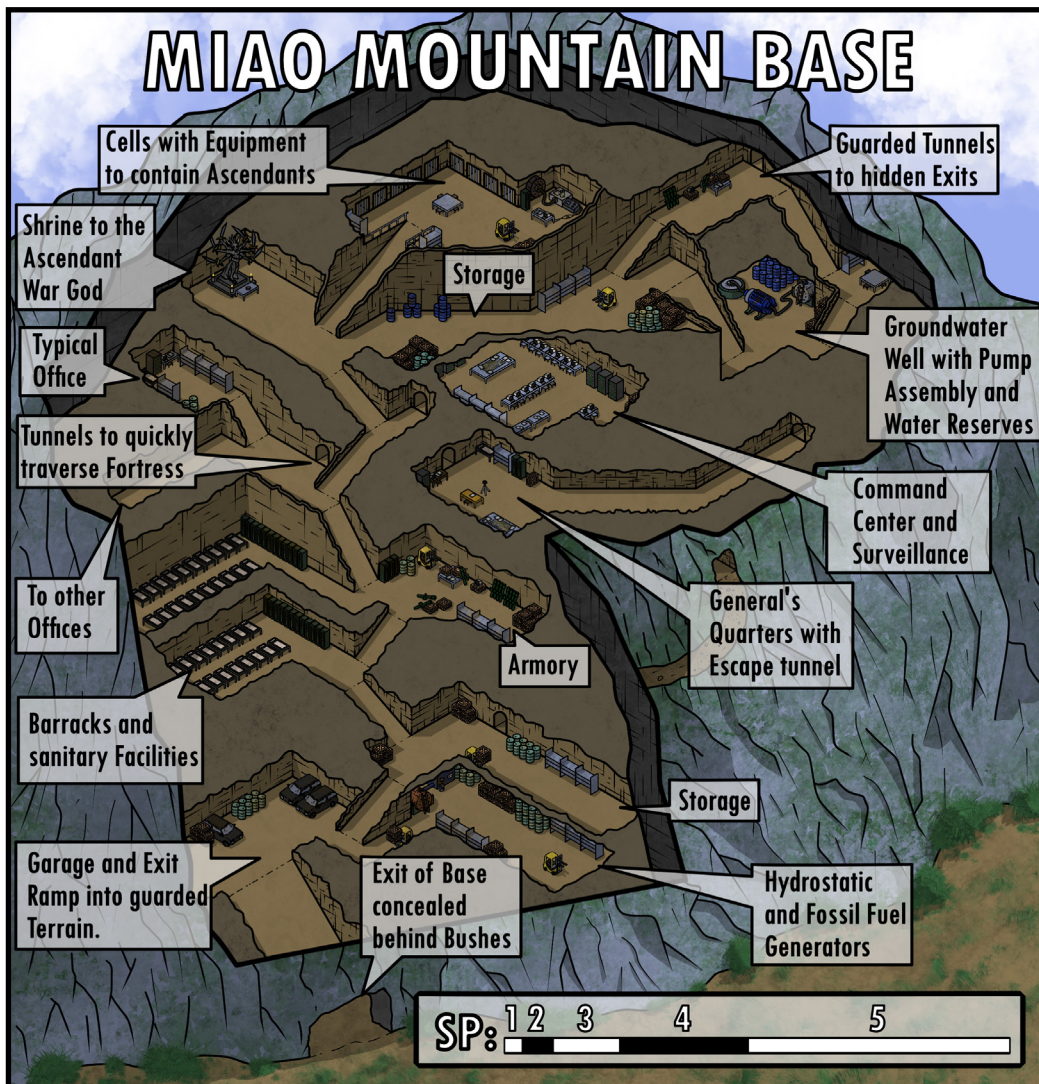
# STORY HOOK

War God has gone missing. The People’s Republic of China denies the reports, but US intelligence sources have confirmed it’s true. Has he defected? Is he joining Exodus? Or has he been killed? The heroes are assigned to figure out what happened and, if possible, recruit War God to their side.

In fact, War God hasn’t gone missing – he’s gone mad. Drunk on delusions of godhood, he has retreated to the mountainous borderlands between China and Vietnam. There, using his special forces training, he has begun to organize a guerilla army with which he intends to create a nation-state for the Miao people.

If he can be found, War God may be open to forming an alliance of convenience with America in the same manner that anti-Soviet rebels used to ally with NATO against their common enemy. However, his burgeoning madness will make any alliance temporary as ultimately he will seek to conquer Southeast Asia.

The Soaring Sabers, on the other hand, will intervene in an attempt to capture War God and return him to Beijing for “re-indoctrination.” Failing that, they would likely be ordered to kill their former comrade rather than allow him to operate as a secessionist and separatist figurehead.





## CHAPTER 6: SPETSIKHOTRON

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### ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

**Personnel:** 13 (4,000 CR)

**Funds:** 15 (\$650M annual)

**Facilities:** 17 (73 acres)

**Reputation:** 20 (25 million fans)

**Perks:** Authority (combined law enforcement and military)

**Drawbacks:** Dark Secret (GRU/KGB ties), Duty, Notorious 20 (25 million haters)

Spetsikhotron is the Russian Army's elite unit of ascendants. The name (pronounced "spet-see-k-o-tron") is a contraction of "Spetsial'naya Psikhotronnaya Komanda" (Special Psychotronics Command). The group is sometimes referred to as the SPK, but only by its enemies; the SPK label is discouraged by the Russian government because they would prefer that Spetsikhotron be viewed as a team of heroes rather than as a sinister government agency.

**Personnel:** Spetsikhotron is commanded by Colonel Pyotr Markov, better known as Avangard ("Vanguard"). Gifted with the powers of hypersonic flight and superhuman strength, Avangard is Russia's answer to American Eagle. Russian propaganda depicts him as an invincible patriot and humanitarian and he has his own state-sponsored comic books, action figures, and animated shows.

There are five other members of Spetsikhotron:

- ★ Tsar Bómba (“Tsar Bomb”) can explode with enough power to level buildings and destroy underground bunkers.
- ★ Krasukha (“Belladonna”), a ravishing femme fatale, has the ability to change her shape and kill with a kiss.
- ★ Volshebnik (“Enchanter”) can read minds, weave illusions, and enslave others to his will.
- ★ Uragan (“Hurricane”) is a flying weather controller who can summon wind, rain, and lightning.
- ★ Pantsyr (“Carapace”) can metamorphize into an invulnerable cockroach-like being.

With the exception of Avangard, the members of Spetsikhotron are individually less powerful than their counterparts in the Star-Spangled Squadron and Soaring Sabers. That’s because they were recruited from a much smaller pool: The Russian government decided to only recruit from patriotic Russians with a history of military or intelligence service and excluded non-Russians, immigrants, and civilians. Spetsikhotron is, however, the best-trained and best-disciplined of the national ascendant teams.

Spetsikhotron’s operations are supported by a staff of 1,100 personnel. 275 of these are security troops and the remainder are a mix of administrative, analysis, intelligence, propaganda, and technical staff.

**Facilities:** Spetsikhotron is based in a 43-acre underground facility located beneath the Mamayev Kurgan war memorial. A dominating hill that overlooks the city of Volgograd (once Stalingrad), the Mamayev Kurgan is surmounted by The Motherland Calls statue, a 280-foot tall concrete colossus of a sword-wielding woman. The statue has been modified with an elevator and airlock so that Spetsikhotron can exit from the head. The site was carefully chosen to represent the resurgent greatness of Russia. 650 of the personnel are stationed here. Outside of Volgograd, Spetsikhotron maintains branch offices in 30 other cities in Russia of varying size, each staffed with an average of 15 personnel.

**Funds:** Although much of Russia’s armed forces are poorly resourced compared to Western armies, the Russian government has taken great care to keep Spetsikhotron amply funded and its members well-paid. The Special Psychotronics Command has a \$650 million annual budget, much of which goes to lavish salaries for the six heroes and sinecures for their family. Spetsikhotron can reliably secure objects with a cost of 32 SPs or less.

**Dark Secret:** Spetsikhotron is a direct descendant of the psychotronics research programs organized by the GRU and KGB under the Soviet Union. Although publicly presented as a humanitarian group of heroes, the members of Spetsikhotron are actually hand-picked military operatives chosen for their training and loyalty to the Russian state, ruthless in their willingness to execute any mission they are given.

**Current Situation:** Prior to the rise of ascendants, Russia had been clinging to its status as a great power only by virtue of land mass, oil, and nuclear weapons. The sudden and unexpected payoff of its Cold War psychotronics research has catapulted Russia back into a position of international leadership. Spetsikhotron will be handled like a precious piece on the international chessboard.

# AVANGARD (“VANGUARD”)

Avangard (Russian for “Vanguard”) is the commander of Spetsial’naya Psikhotronnaya Komanda (Special Psychotronics Command), also known as Spetsikhotron. Spetsikhotron is the Russian Army’s elite unit of ascendants. All of its members have been hand-picked for their record of service to the Russian state. Avangard’s record is the most impressive of all.

Avangard’s real name is Pyotr Markov. He was born in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) on 28 June 1980. His father, Grigori Markov, was a high-ranking KGB agent and devoted Chekist with several widely-circulated ideological publications in state journals. According to the Chekist ideology, the secret police are the sword and shield of the state, situated above the law in order to preserve the motherland. Pyotr Markov was raised under the same ideology and seems to have maintained it despite the collapse of the Soviet Union during his teenage years. In interviews on Russia-1 TV after his ascension, Avangard has called the aftermath of the Cold War a “catastrophe for Russia” and blamed Western exploitation and treachery for the impoverishment of his people. “The tearing down of the Berlin Wall was the beginning of the tearing down of the motherland.”

After graduating secondary school in 1998, Markov spent two years in the Russian Army. Official records, released in 2019 by the Russian government to bolster Avangard’s reputation, show that Markov received high marks as a soldier, with placement into Spetsnaz promised if he re-enlisted. Instead, Markov enrolled in the Academy of the Federal Security Service (FSB) in 2000. In his first year at the FSB Academy, Markov met his future wife, Mariya Tarasova, a student at the Institute of Art at Moscow Pedagogical State University. The two seem to have remained fiercely loyal and loving in the years since.

After completing the five-year academy program, Markov was commissioned as a lieutenant in the FSB in 2005. After a short leave to marry and honeymoon with Ms. Tarasova, he was deployed to Chechnya. He spent the next four years leading a team of counter-terrorist agents. In 2010, he was invited to join Directorate A of the FSB Special Forces, Russia’s equivalent to Delta Force. Markov became a highly-decorated war hero, and by 2017 had earned the Cross of St. George, the Order of Nakhimov, the Order of Courage, the Order For Military Merit, and the rank of Colonel.

The exact nature of Markov’s military service during this time has been kept highly classified by the Russian government. Since the rest of Markov’s career has been publicized, Squadron Intelligence has devoted considerable effort towards getting access to his records. We have only succeeded in securing a single document, a psychological review dating to 2014. It attests that Markov had been cited for excessive use of force on two occasions and was suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder from his counter-terrorist actions. It recommends he be removed from combat duty and offered an administrative position.

The recommendation seems to have been ignored. In February 2017, Colonel Markov was covertly leading Donbass separatists at the Battle of Avdiivka when he manifested superpowers. We have found no evidence that Markov ever participated in any of Russia’s psychotronic programs, so he seems to have experienced a spontaneous ascension. Video footage from the battle shows Markov shocking himself and his comrades by destroying enemy T-72s with hypersonic speed.

Russian President Vladimir Putin saw the ascendant hero as Russia’s answer to American Eagle. Like American Eagle, his powers seemed to come out of nowhere. Like American Eagle, he was a veteran, a patriot, and a father. The Russian President personally recruited Markov to lead what would become Spetsikhotron.

Spetsikhotron was publicly unveiled on 22 March 2019. Since then, Russia’s state-sponsored media has released a series of comic books, action figures, and animated shows depicting Avangard as an invincible patriot and humanitarian. Due to the Russian government’s concern over its national birth rate, it has also emphasized Avangard as a “super” father. He is frequently depicted or presented in the company of his wife and two daughters, Kira (16) and Alya (11), all three of whom have become celebrities in their own right.

Behind the propaganda, however, Markov is a hard and brutal man calloused by war. Since his ascension he seems to have grown even more heartless and remote. Body language experts within Squadron Intelligence, who have carefully reviewed footage of Avangard’s public appearances, see burgeoning sociopathy hiding behind a mask of publicity training. His beloved wife and daughters are probably Avangard’s last link to humanity. Understandably, the Russian government guards them carefully.

# AVANGARD

1000 CP, CR 700

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>34</b>
VALUE	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	<b>0</b>	INITIATIVE	<b>14</b>
WEIGHT	<b>3</b>	INCOME	<b>8</b>
RUNNING SPEED	<b>5</b>	REPUTATION	<b>17/16</b>
JUMPING SPEED	<b>11</b>	PASSIVE SPOTTING	<b>8</b>
FLYING SPEED	<b>15</b>	PASSIVE LISTENING	<b>0</b>



HEALTH

**1280**

RECOVERY

**256**

DETERMINATION

**1280**

RECOVERY

**256**

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** *Air Supply* 10 (15 CP), *Concussive Strike* 16 (8 CP), *Contrailing Hovering Flight* 15 (75 CP), *Invulnerability* 14 (144 CP), *Pressure Protection* 20 (5 CP), *Super-Fortitude* 14 (24 CP), *Triggered Self-Range Self-Immune Bang* 8 (trigger: moves at Speed of 10+ SPs, 70 CP), *Telescopic Vision* 8 (21 CP)

**Skills:** *Stoicism* 10

**Perks:** *Authority* (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), *Famous* (18 CP), *Ferocious*, *Leadership*, *Multilingual* (English, German, Polish, Ukrainian), *Tireless*, *Wealthy* (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** *Dependent* (wife and two children, 6 CP), *Duty* (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), *Notorious* (16 CP), *Vulnerable State: Caught out of Battle Armor* (takes 8 Pages to put on armor and can wear for up to 16 hours; loses *Air Supply*, *Invulnerability*, *Pressure Protection*, *Telescopic Vision*, 19 CP), *Vulnerable State: Deprived of Battle Armor* (remove with *Extended Action*, loses *Air Supply*, *Invulnerability*, *Pressure Protection*, *Telescopic Vision*, 2 CP)

## BACKGROUND

A highly decorated soldier from Directorate A of the FSB Special Forces, Colonel Pyotr Markov was leading Donbass separatists at the Battle of Avdiivka (February 2017) when his superpowers manifested. Markov shocked himself and his comrades by destroying enemy T-72s with hypersonic speed. Seeing Markov as Russia's answer to American Eagle, President Putin quickly promoted him to lead the newly formed Spetsikhotron under the code-name Avangard ("Vanguard"). Russia's state-sponsored media has released a series of comic books, action figures, and animated shows depicting Avangard as an invincible patriot and humanitarian. In reality, he is a hard and brutal man calloused by war. Since his ascension he has grown even more heartless and remote. His beloved wife and daughters are probably his last link to humanity. Understandably, the Russian government guards them carefully.

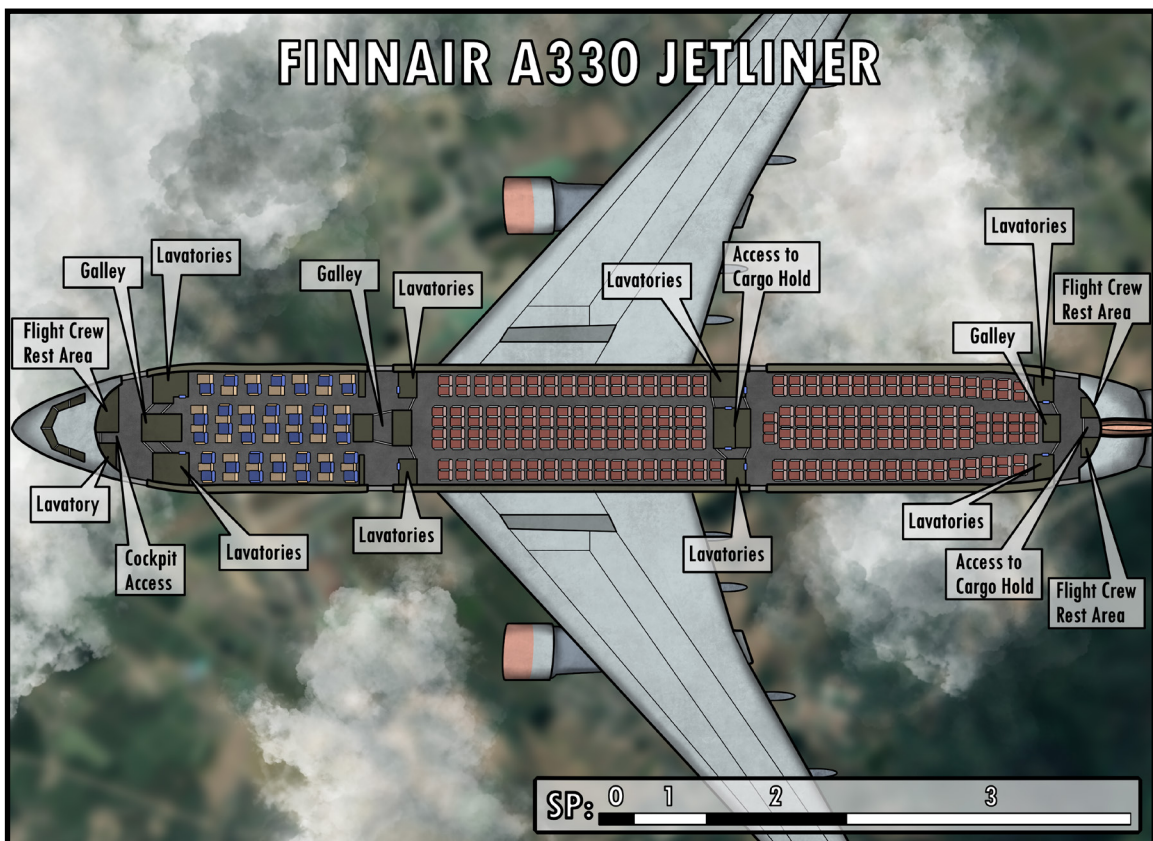
## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Anytime Avangard flies Mach 1 or greater, he triggers a hypersonic boom (8 SPs of Bang) automatically. He does not need to spend a Challenge Action to use his Bang, nor can he use his Bang apart from its trigger.

## STORY HOOK

A Finnair A330 en route from New York to Moscow has been hijacked by Exodos terrorists. One-third of the passengers are Finnish while the remainder are a mix of American and Russian nationals. Intercepted chatter suggests the terrorists intend to crash the plane into Red Square to create a mass casualty event. The plane is currently over international waters. Finland has no superhero team capable of intervening and has requested assistance.

The US government dispatches the heroes with orders to save the hostages and neutralize the terrorists with minimal loss of life. The Russian government dispatches Avangard (or even all of Spetsikhotron) with orders to apprehend the terrorists at all costs. Per Russian doctrine, hostages are presumed dead already.



# VOLSHEBNIK (“ENCHANTER”)

Volshebnik (Russian for “Enchanter”) is one of the six named team members of Spetsial’naya Psikhotronnaya Komanda (Special Psychotronics Command), also known as Spetsikhotron. Spetsikhotron is the Russian Army’s elite unit of ascendants. Like all members of Spetsikhotron, Volshebnik is a hand-picked military operative chosen for his training and loyalty to the Russian state.

Volshebnik’s real name is Ilarion Kapustin. He was born in Moscow in 1975. His father was a physician, and his mother was a professor of anthropology. Kapustin followed the family tradition and became an academic. In 2005 he earned a doctorate in neuropsychology from Moscow State University. He thereafter took a post-doctoral program at St. Petersburg State University, becoming an Assistant Professor of Psychology there in 2007.

While a professor at SPSU, Kapustin became acquainted with the work of Professor Leonid Leonidovich Vasiliev, who had performed psychotronic research there from 1917 until his death in 1966. Vasiliev had believed that the human brain could receive and transmit “high-penetrating non-electromagnetic” radiation that could carry information, change the magnetization of molecules, and stimulate the immune systems of organisms.

Vasiliev’s work inspired a generation of Soviet researchers. One, Czechoslovakian psychotronicist Robert Pavlita, developed a device called a “cerpan” or psychotronic generator. Pavlita’s cerpans were titanium canisters with complex internal structures ostensibly based upon the geometry of spacetime and its energy properties. A trained user allegedly could accumulate “bioenergy” in the cerpan and then release it to influence the external world. The cerpan attracted the interest of both the KGB and DIA but Pavlita died before his work was fully understood. Given what is known today, it is remarkable how close Vasiliev, Pavlita, and other Eastern Bloc scientists came to discovering the scientific basis for what is today called ascension.

Russia’s Ministry of Defense must have felt there was promise in Cold War psychotronics, because in January 2008 it offered Kapustin funding to resume Vasiliev’s work. The young psychologist was able to replicate several of Vasiliev’s experiments, and in August 2010, he began to circulate a pre-print summarizing his findings to several influential journals. Much of what Squadron Intelligence knows about Kapustin’s work is due to this pre-print. Had it been published in a peer-reviewed journal it may have accelerated worldwide interest in parapsychology.

In September 2010, however, Kapustin withdrew his pre-print, apparently under orders from the Russian government. A month later, he left his post at St. Petersburg to head up a classified research program at the newly-formed L.L. Vasilev Research Facility (LLVRF) at Akademgorodok, Siberia. During the Cold War, Akademgorodok (“Science City”) had been home to a secret psychotronic research program run out of Special Department 8 of the Institute for Automation and Electrometry. LLVRF inherited the abandoned offices of Special Department 8 and resumed its work.

The exact methods used in Russian psychotronic enhancement remain highly classified, but we believe they include both behavioral and chemical stressors designed to trigger ascension. Sources within Russia’s FSB have suggested the success rate is very low; failed candidates are usually unfit for duty thereafter. One of Kapustin’s priorities therefore was to find a technological means of improving the outcome. Sometime during the winter of 2014, Kapustin was able to replicate Pavlita’s cerpan technology, creating a functional psychotronic generator. The (re)development of cerpan is a major strategic advantage for Russia. Two of their six Spetsikhotron operatives rely on these devices. One of the two is Kapustin himself, who began to develop his own psychotronic and parapsychological abilities using a cerpan. His efforts seem to have focused on the so-called “classical” or parapsychological fields of remote viewing, mental suggestion, mind reading, and psychokinesis. His codename, Volshebnik, is the Russian word for “magician” or “enchanter”; it reflects the “magical” or “mystical” effects of his abilities.

Kapustin’s research continued until 2 November 2018, when a 20,000-ton explosion destroyed LLVRF. Squadron Intelligence believes the explosion was caused by the ascension of Tsar Bómba, although Russia claims it was the result of terrorism. Whatever the case, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the establishment of Spetsikhotron five months later, on 22 March 2019. Volshebnik was one of the founding members. It is unclear whether Russia has rebuilt its psychotronic research program elsewhere or if Volshebnik continues his research.

# VOLSHEBNIK

920 CP, CR 350

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	5	5	10	6	6	30

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	5
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	17/13
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

640

RECOVERY

128

DETERMINATION

1280

RECOVERY

256

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Magic Power Pool 28 (Mind Domination, Mind Reading, Protective Deflection, Specialized Portal, Terrifying Illusion, 621 CP) with Power Flaw: Draining 14 (deals 256 Psychic Damage each use, -56 CP), Super-Fortitude 14 (16 CP), Super-Stamina 12 (28 CP)

**Skills:** Data Processing 9, Interrogation 9, Science (psychotronics) 9

**Perks:** Authority (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Famous (22 CP), Ferocious, Multilingual (English, Latin, Polish, Slovak, 2 CP), Multitask, Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Duty (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Notorious (13 CP), Vulnerable State: Deprived of Device (lose Power Pool on Yellow Disarm, 113 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Illarion Kapustin, codenamed Volshebnik (“Enchanter”), is a member of the Russian Army’s elite unit of ascendants, Spetsikhotron, with abilities in remote viewing, mental suggestion, mind reading, and psychokinesis. A former professor of psychology, Kapustin was funded by Russia’s Ministry of Defense to continue the work of Professor Leonid Leonidovich Vasiliev in psychotronics, leading to the replication of the psychotronic generator, or cerpan, which accumulates and releases bioenergy. This device has paved the way for Russia to deploy a number of military-grade ascendants, Kapustin being one of them

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Volshebnik's Magic Power Pool has an awe-inspiring 28 SPs. Of course, he cannot allocate SPs in excess of his Power Limit. Because of his Ferocious Perk, he is Power Limit 28 offensively and 26 defensively. He can allocate up to 14 SPs to Mind Domination, Mind Reading, and/or Terrifying Illusion and up to 13 SPs in Protective Deflection.

Volshebnik's Specialized Portal is governed by his Absolute Limit, so he can allocate up to 17 SPs to that Power. His Portal can only connect between physical doors. For instance, he could open a portal from his bedroom door to the door of the Oval Office, but he could not open a portal from his backyard or to the White House lawn.

His Drained Power Flaw applies to the SPs of the Power Pool as a whole. That means that in most cases, Volshebnik only uses one Power at a time at full-strength. If necessary he can fight with Mind Domination or Terrifying Illusion at 14 SPs and Protective Deflection at 14 SPs, but he can only sustain that for about 5 Pages before becoming Overwhelmed.

## STORY HOOK

An extradimensional entity from the Court of Night has taken an interest in Volshebnik. Calling itself Chernobog, the entity has promised the middle-aged ascendant great power and deathless immortality if he binds himself to it. All he has to do is recover the **Orb of Chernobog**, a fist-sized round black star diopside once worn as an amulet by the chief volkhv (priest) of pagan Polabian Slavs.

According to Chernobog, the Orb was kept at the fortified pagan temple of Lubiąz, in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship of present-day Poland. That temple was destroyed in 1109, and the Orb fell into the hands of the Silesian Duke Boleslaw III Wrymouth. His grandson Boleslaw I the Tall donated the Orb to Cistercian monks, who established an abbey at Lubiąz in 1175. The Orb remained there until 1241, when it was carried off by Mongols plundering Silesia after their victories at the battles of Legnica and Mohi. The Mongols were recalled east shortly thereafter to elect a new Khan and carried the Orb back to their capital of Karakorum. It remained as part of the Mongol khan's treasury thereafter, being taken by Kublai Khan to his new capital of Xanadu. After the fall of the Yuan Dynasty, Xanadu was abandoned in 1430, and the Orb was abandoned with it.

Using his Magic power pool to stunt Cosmic Awareness, Volshebnik has been able to confirm the approximate location of the Orb within Xanadu. Unfortunately, Xanadu is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site within the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. Volshebnik knows that China is exceptionally unlikely to permit Spetsikhotron, or even Russian archeologists, to dig up a powerful artifact from their territory. Using front companies with research grants, he has funded a team of Mongolian archeologists under his mental domination to dig in the relevant spots.

Sadly the amount of bureaucratic paperwork required to get a permit to dig at a UNESCO World Heritage Site is enormous, and the transfer of that much data from sources linked to Spetsikhotron attracted the attention of Renard the Fox. Renard, in turn, has informed his contacts at the Star-Spangled Squadron and Exodus that the Mongolian archeological team digging at Xanadu has secret funding from Spetsikhotron and aims to recover some sort of ancient artifact. He does not, however, inform China, because Renard doesn't like censorious communists.

Maximum Leader will certainly attempt to have Exodus members recover the artifact; the Star-Spangled Squadron may be ordered to recover it as well. If either or both groups appear at the dig site, Spetsikhotron may intervene to protect the artifact. A fight at Xanadu between powerful ascendants will certainly attract the Soaring Sabers and may further attract the attention of the Court of Night. This sets the stage for a three-, four-, or even five-way battle between major ascendant groups, most of whom may not even be sure what they're fighting about.

# KRASUKHA (“BELLADONNA”)

Krasukha (Russian for “Belladonna”) is one of the six named team members of Spetsial’naya Psikhotronnaya Komanda (Special Psychotronics Command), also known as Spetsikhotron. Krasukha first appeared alongside her comrades during an event hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin on March 22, 2019.

She has been identified as an FSB agent named Xenia Zhdanova. She was born on 19 November 1993 in St. Petersburg. Her father, Boris Zhdanov, was a professor of music theory at Saint Petersburg Conservatory. Her mother, Natasha Zhdanova, was a ballerina in the Mariinsky Ballet prior to becoming a full-time homemaker. The young Zhdanova inherited her mother’s talents. At age 10, she competed against 3,000 other students to secure a place at the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet. Her outstanding talent earned her one of the school’s 60 slots. When she graduated five years later, she was considered one of the most promising ballerinas of her generation. The 15-year-old Zhdanova was offered contracts with both the Mariinsky Ballet and the Bolshoi Ballet for the 2009 season.

Before she could choose where to start her career, her career came to an end. On 11 May 2008, a drunken American tourist ploughed into the Zhdanov family vehicle while they were driving home from a weekend outing. The impact killed Boris and Natasha; Natasha was left temporarily paralyzed. Surgery saved her from becoming permanently quadriplegic, but she spent the next 18 months in rehabilitation. Her ballet career was over. Her father’s life insurance and assets barely covered her medical expenses.

Orphaned, bereft, and lost, Xenia Zhdanova drifted into alcohol, drugs, and eventually prostitution. By January 2010, when she was arrested by Russian police, she was working as a drug mule and escort for the notorious Tambov Gang. Her dangerous lifestyle only added to her blossoming allure. Her mugshot, taken the day of her capture, could have passed for a modeling showpiece. Zhdanova’s ethereal beauty caught the attention of FSB Colonel Katerina Kharkova, the head of the State School for Foreign Service in Kazan, Tatarstan. Kharkova offered Zhdanova a choice: Serve the motherland or serve time. Zhdanova opted to serve the motherland.

Ostensibly a foreign language program for diplomats, the State School for Foreign Service actually trained agents in the art of kompromat. Its male (“raven”) and female (“swallow”) students were taught to use seduction to lure or blackmail diplomats and executives into divulging secret information. Zhdanova is believed to have attended the school between February and July 2010.

For obvious reasons, the affairs of Russia’s sexpionage operatives are kept closely guarded by the FSB. Squadron Intelligence has been able to confirm Zhdanova attended several diplomatic functions in Moscow, Kiev, Paris, and Berlin between 2011 and 2016. She was photographed twice during that time in the company of VIPS – once with the Ukrainian Ambassador to Germany and once with a board member of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SE. Other details of Zhdanova’s career as a swallow remain classified.

In February 2017, the 24-year-old Zhdanova was sent to the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility at Akademgorodok, Siberia for psychotronic training. Russia’s psychotronic program relies on behavioral and chemical stressors to trigger development of preternatural abilities. Most test subjects are disabled or killed during testing. Zhdanova, always a survivor, became the ascendant Krasukha.

Krasukha has military-grade combat abilities at an estimated threat level 250. Her most worrisome power, however, is her ability to replicate the physical appearance of other human beings. Her replication can easily fool even our most advanced facial recognition software, and can even circumvent optical, fingerprint, and other biometric scanning. Because she combines this faculty for self-transformation with advanced tradecraft, she is considered to be a national security risk on par with Rootkit or Renard.

One possible means of detection may be by scent. During her time in the Tambov Gang, Zhdanov began to smoke Sobranie Black Russian cigarettes, and is believed to be a chain smoker when off duty. Though she may be able to partly mask her scent when she transforms, a highly sensitive ascendant (such as Stiletto) may be able to recognize her by this distinct aroma.

Discovering a means to detect Krasukha is especially important in light of her potential use as an assassin. Since the advent of Spetsikhotron, several enemies of the Russian Federation, including two top Chechnyan terrorists and a CIA informant, have all died of apparent natural causes. In each case, the deceased individual had recently entered into a new intimate relationship shortly before their death. Because of Krasukha’s shapeshifting abilities we cannot be sure that she is responsible, but it seems likely. Several intercepted Russian communications have referred to Krasukha’s potseluy smerti (“kiss of death”). Whether this is simply a metaphor for assassination or an actual superpower she possesses remains unknown at this time.

# KRASUKHA

880 CP, CR 250

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

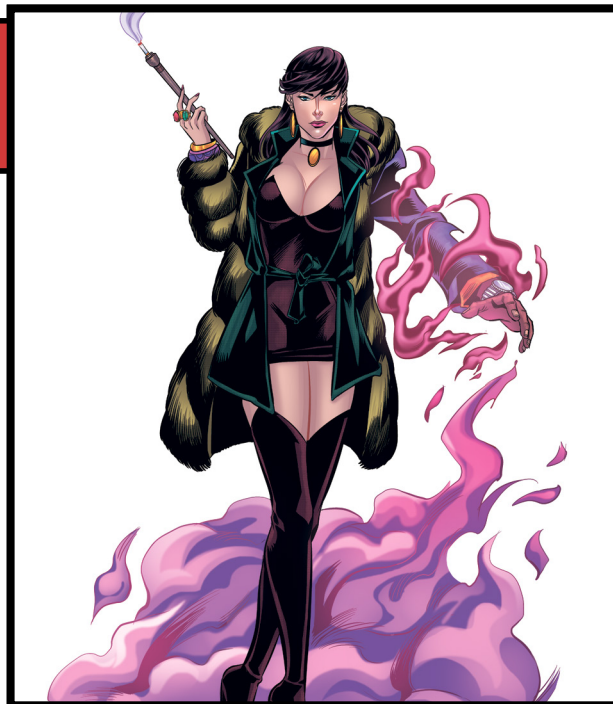
HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	6	9	9	9	7	12

28

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	9
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	17/15
JUMPING SPEED	4	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

960

RECOVERY

192

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Combat Sense 13 (40 CP), Mind Screen 10 (60 CP) with Power Flaw: Only protects against Cosmic Awareness (-18 CP), Replication 13 (77 CP), Super-Stamina 13 (28 CP), Touch-Range Toxic Life Drain 13 (100 CP) with Power Flaw: Kiss required (-40 CP)

**Skills:** Alertness 11, Escape Artist 13, Infiltration 11, Investigation 11, Marksmanship 13, Martial Arts 13, Persuasion 16, Stealth 13

**Perks:** Authority (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Famous (10 CP), Grappling Expertise, Multilingual (5 CP), Sex Appeal, Watchful, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (smoking Sobranie Black Russians, 2 CP), Duty (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Notoriety (15 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Xenia Zhdanova, also known as Krasukha (“Belladonna”), is a member of the Russian Army’s elite unit of ascendants, Spetsikhotron. She has the ability to replicate the physical appearance of other human beings. Born to a ballet dancer and a music professor, she was a promising ballerina until a tragic accident ended her career. She was thereafter recruited to the Russian Foreign Service School where she was trained in sexual espionage. After surviving a dangerous psychotronic training program, she emerged as the ascendant Krasukha, and has since become a significant national security risk for Russia’s enemies due to her espionage experience and potential use as a shapeshifting assassin.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Krasukha's Mind Screen allows her to avoid detection from the likes of Maximum Leader or Living Buddha, who otherwise can sense her use of powers. It doesn't provide any protection from other powers, though in desperate times she could certainly Power Stunt to protect herself!

Krasukha's Touch-Range Life Drain must be delivered by a lip-to-lip kiss on her target. Normally Krasukha delivers her "kiss of death" during intimacy with a seduced target or to an incapacitated victim. In combat, she can place a lip-to-lip kiss on a Pinned enemy with a Yellow Melee Attack, on a Held enemy with an Orange Melee Attack, or on a Grappled enemy with a Red Melee Attack.

Because of her Multilingual Perk, Krasukha is fluent in 16 foreign languages in addition to her native Russian. Among these are Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Hungarian, Polish, and Ukrainian. She knows several accents and dialects of each. The Gamemaster can choose the other languages she speaks based on his campaign.

## STORY HOOK

Krasukha has been assigned to spy on, and if possible seduce, one of the heroes. There are several routes by which Krasukha might skulk into a character's life:

- ★ If the target character is single and unattached, Krasukha will use her Replication to adopt a form that will be attractive to her target and then rely on her Persuasion and Sex Appeal to befriend him or her. The Russian Federation can arrange for whatever identity papers she needs to be able to pose as an actress, influencer, journalist, correspondent, etc. in order to meet with her mark. Krasukha will favor this approach if the target has a reputation as a playboy (like Warp) or, even better, a known Compulsion for such hijinks.
- ★ If the target character is single but has a dependent of some sort, Krasukha will take on the form of someone that can get close to the hero through the dependent. If the dependent is a child, she may take on the form of a sassy new teacher or attractive fellow parent in the PTA. If the dependent is an elderly parent, she may take on the form of a sexy home healthcare nurse. Either way, she will seek to gain the trust of the dependent and leverage that into intimacy with the hero.
- ★ If the target character is in a committed relationship with a love interest, Krasukha will study the love interest for some time until she learns their mannerisms and style. She will then arrange for criminals to abduct the love interest. If the abduction happens quietly, Krasukha will simply replace the love interest before anyone notices. If the abduction happens publicly, Krasukha will replace the love interest at the criminal's release point, so that when the hero "rescues" his or her loved one, it is Krasukha who is rescued. In either case, Krasukha will keep the love interest alive in a hidden location; that affords her both a last-ditch security measure and a means to get additional information if needed to maintain her disguise.

During the early stages of her relationship with her target, Krasukha will shower the target with whatever affection, admiration, or action will best seduce him or her. By means of 'love bombing' her target, she will seek to draw them in and gain control over them.

Once her target is head-over-heels in love with her, Krasukha will pursue one of two approaches. If the target seems weak-willed and pliable, she will begin to solicit favors and information, innocuous at first but increasingly extravagant over time. Simultaneously, she will seek to drive off any rivals for the target's affection such as friends or family.

If the target is strong-willed and independent and starts to regain their equilibrium after the 'honeymoon' crush, Krasukha will seek to find a way to compromise them that she can exploit long-term. For instance, if targeting American Eagle she might try to entice him into a politically-charged rant about a put-upon segment of Americans or videotape him engaged in illicit sexual activities. If targeting Aurora, she might record her spilling state secrets while drunk or cajole her into spending government funds on lavish clothes and jewelry. Once she has compromised her target, she will then begin to blackmail them.

Krasukha's overall goal will vary depending on who she targets and how she targets them. The Russian Federation might plausibly send Krasukha on a sexpionage mission in order to persuade a target to defect to Russia; to gain access to top secret information; to steal important technology; to assassinate an important politician, business executive, or hero; to gain access to an even harder-to-reach person (such as the US President); and so on.

# URAGAN (“HURRICANE”)

Uragan (Russian for “Hurricane”) is one of the six named team members of Spetsial’naya Psikhotronnaya Komanda (Special Psychotronics Command), also known as Spetsikhotron. She is one of two female members of the team (the other being Krasukha). Like her teammates, Uragan made her first public appearance at a speech by Russian President Vladimir Putin on March 22, 2019.

We have identified her as Valeriya Vavilova, of Sortavala, Karelia. Secondary school records obtained by Squadron Intelligence reveal her to have been a bright student as well as avid skier and biathlete. In 2008, she enrolled in the Mozhaisky Military Space Academy, where she majored in climatology. It was the first year the academy accepted women and, as one of the first female cadets to ever attend the school, Vavilova faced severe hazing from upperclassmen who did not appreciate the change. Despite the discrimination, she thrived at the Academy and ended up graduating in the top 5% of her class.

On 10 June 2012, the newly-commissioned Vavilova was assigned to the 8th Military Space Defense Brigade, where she worked as a meteorologist at Airbase Troitsk in Chelyabinsk Oblast. When the now-famous Chelyabinsk meteor struck on 15 February 2013, Vavilova was cross-country skiing at nearby Lake Chebarkul. She witnessed the meteorites’ final impact into the lake firsthand. Rescue workers found her about two hours later, sightlessly wandering and crying out for aid. According to medical reports secured by Squadron Intelligence, Vavilova had ultraviolet radiation burns all over her exposed skin and flash blindness in both eyes. While Vavilova regained her vision and recovered fully from the burns, we believe that her QAP genes were epigenetically activated by the incident.

Vavilova did not actually become an ascendant until four years later. On 28 October 2017, Vavilova was on board Pobeda Airlines Flight DP6811 when the plane failed to land at Petrozavodsk, Karelia. The Boeing 737-800 had developed a coating of ice over its control surfaces due to freezing rain and seemed likely to crash on its second approach. Instead, the rain halted, temperatures rose by 7 °F, and the ice melted. Witnesses described Vavilova as “white-eyed” and “seemingly hypnotized” during the incident. The event was anomalous enough to trigger an investigation by researchers at the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility, who decided to recruit her into the psychotronic program under the codename Uragan.

Psychotronic testing at the Akademgorodok, Siberia laboratory confirmed that Vavilova was a military-grade ascendant with the ability to control weather. However, she seems to have had difficulty maintaining the focus necessary to exploit and channel zero-point energy. Her trainer, the ascendant scientist Volshebnik, had encountered similar difficulties with his own enhancement, and had developed a solution.

Uragan was taught to direct and focus her energy through a handheld device called a cerpan, which is specifically created to accumulate and conduct zero-point energy. (Dr. Coffey has compared such devices to glasses used by greenhouses to increase solar radiation to photosynthesizing plants, but Dr. Gupta believes they are primarily psychical, like wands in traditional magick practice.) While equipped with her “staff,” Vavilova has exceptionally powerful abilities, rated at threat level 250. Star-Spangled Squadron operatives who face her in battle should seek to deprive her of her device if possible.

# URAGAN

880 CP, CR 250

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	4	5	4	9	5	7	28

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	10
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	15/15
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	12
FLYING SPEED	10	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

640

RECOVERY

128

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Flight 10 (55 CP), Lightning Reflexes 6 (12 CP), Low Pressure Protection 10 (3 CP), Super-Stamina 12 (32 CP), Sustained Invulnerability (Flawed: Annihilating, Cosmic) 12 (100 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Vision 4 (12 CP), Weather Control 12 (335 CP)

**Skills:** Aerial Combat 14, Marksmanship (shooting) 9, Power Aptitude (Weather Control) 14, Science (meteorology) 9, Sport (skiing) 9

**Perks:** Authority (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Famous (16 CP), Mobile Defense Expertise, Multilingual (English, Romanian, 2 CP), Multitask, Sex Appeal, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (“the Right Stuff,” 2 CP), Duty (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Notorious (15 CP), Vulnerable State: Deprived of Device (on Yellow Disarm, lose Flight, Lightning Reflexes, Low Pressure Protection, Sustained Invulnerability, Ultra-Sensitive Vision, Aerial Combat, and Power Aptitude; RES and CHA drop to 5; and Weather Control can only be used to modulate temperature, -120 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Valeriya Vavilova, known as Uragan (“Hurricane”), is a member of the Russian Army’s elite unit of ascendants, Spetsikhotron. A former military space academy cadet and meteorologist, her ascendant powers were epigenetically activated following an encounter with the Chelyabinsk meteor, and later fully manifested during a near-disastrous airplane incident. She was subsequently recruited into the psychotronic program, where she uses a handheld device called a cerpan to focus and direct her abilities to control weather.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Uragan's cerpan is a Device. When deprived of it, she loses all of her superhuman Primary Attributes (RES and CHA both drop to 5), her two superhuman skills (Aerial Combat and Power Aptitude) and all of her Powers except Super-Stamina and Weather Control. Her Weather Control gains the Power Flaw "only able to modulate temperature." To calculate the cost of that Power Flaw, we actually built a version of Weather Control with *only* the ability to modulate temperature. That effect has a Base Cost of 10 CP and Variable Cost of 2 CP. 12 CPs therefore cost  $10 + 24 = 34$  CP, meaning that it was 301 CP less than the full Power. The overall refund for her Vulnerable State is therefore  $[0.2 \times (40 + 20 + 55 + 12 + 3 + 100 + 12 + 301 + 27 + 32)] = 120$  CP.

## STORY HOOK

Uragan's reliance on her cerpan is a potentially crippling vulnerability, and her handlers at Spetsikhotron have been desperate for her to overcome it. If she could, she'd be an ascendant as powerful as Avangard or American Eagle – and Spetsikhotron would be the strongest super-team on Earth. So far, nothing has worked.

K21F98R Diva	SP Score
Speed	16
Weight	18
Toughness	12
Protection	3
Detection Range	24

In March 2021, however, astronomers using the BTA-6 Large Altazimuth Telescope at the Special Astrophysical Observatory in Zelenchuksky District of Karachay-Cherkessia have detected a previously-unknown meteor, K21F98R Diva. Measuring 45 feet in diameter and 3850 tons. The astronomers have calculated that the meteor will detonate in an air burst at -18.85 Latitude, 52.07 Longitude, about 50 miles off the coast of Madagascar.

Volshebnik believes that exposing Uragan to the detonation might trigger a second ascension that would help her overcome her inability to consciously tap zero-point energy. As such, Spetsikhotron has covertly traveled to Madagascar. The team intends to be on hand for the 8:14 AM Local Time detonation of the meteor over the ocean. If things go well, the members of Spetsikhotron will see an amazing light show and a second ascension. If things don't go well, they'll be on hand to help or console their comrade.

Things won't go well. Groups such as the Star-Spangled Squadron and/or the Soaring Sabers are well aware of the imminent meteor strike. Nobody whose name doesn't end in -chev or -ich wants to see Uragan ascend to greater power. Someone will send a rival super-team to the impact site to secure it from Spetsikhotron, with orders to keep the Russians away – peacefully if possible. Alternatively, they might be asked to destroy the meteor before it can replicate the Chelyabinsk strike. Whichever team the heroes work for, that's the one that gets sent!

But that's not the real problem. The real problem is that Exodus has also detected the meteor and deemed it a useful tool in their goal to help humanity ascend. Maximum Leader has secretly deflected the meteor so that instead of detonating safely above the Pacific Ocean it will crash right into Antananarivo, Madagascar's largest city. The Chinese, Russian, and US astronomers won't figure out the trajectory has changed until the meteor is 24 Ss from Earth – giving just 15 minutes until the strike!

In the absence of other influences, Avangard will order Spetsikhotron to stand down and allow the meteor to strike, and Uragan will eliminate her 120 CP Vulnerable State and ascend to become a 1,000-CP character.

If anybody does try to mess with the meteor impact, Maximum Leader and his Exodus terrorists might intervene. A meteor strike into a city of 1.4 million people is almost certain to create several new ascendants, and Exodus already has a propaganda campaign ready to blame Russia and recruit new members.

If Diva strikes, it causes a 10 SP Quake and 24 SP Explosion at the point of impact, a traffic circle northwest of Lac Anosy (Latitude -18.907726, Longitude 47.514614). The resulting explosion will kill or incapacitate almost every resident within 9 SPs (one-half mile) and destroy almost a square mile of the city. With a population density of 39,000 people per square mile, casualties might be over 30,000! If Diva can be deflected by 12 SPs to the northwest, its detonation will occur over farmland and the casualties will be only a few hundred.

# TSAR BÓMBA (“EMPEROR BOMB”)

Tsar Bómba (Russian for “Emperor Bomb”) is one of the six named team members of Spetsial’naya Psikhotronnaya Komanda (Special Psychotronics Command), also known as Spetsikhotron. Spetsikhotron is the Russian Army’s elite unit of ascendants. The group is sometimes referred to as the SPK, but only by its enemies; the SPK label is discouraged by the Russian government because they would prefer that Spetsikhotron be viewed as a team of heroes rather than as a sinister government agency.

Like all members of Spetsikhotron, Tsar Bómba is a hand-picked military operative chosen for his training and loyalty to the Russian state. He is widely featured in Russian propaganda, where he is shown to be capable of exploding with enough power to level buildings and destroy underground bunkers. Unconfirmed rumors from alleged government sources assert that Tsar Bómba’s explosions are actually as powerful as a 50-megaton hydrogen bomb. The Squadron’s analysts consider these claims highly unlikely; an ascendant capable of a 50MT explosion would have a quantitative assessment of power (QAP) of 32,000 or more. It is theoretically possible that Tsar Bómba can explode with the power of a thermobaric bomb similar to Russia’s own 44-ton “Father of All Bombs,” but most analysis think his explosive powers are similar to those of a Tomahawk or Hellfire.

Tsar Bómba’s real name is Sergeant First Class Vasily Voronov. Voronov was born in Tolyatti, a city of 720,000 that is among the poorest in Russia. An informant from Tolyatti revealed to us that Voronov was notoriously violent as a young man, a trait which led to him being recruiting as a *shestyorka* (“associate”) of the Bratva, Russia’s organized criminal brotherhood. The *shestyorka* are the lowest echelon of Russia’s criminals, ranking below the *bojeviki* (soldiers) and *vory* (made men). For unknown reasons, Voronov did not advance in the criminal hierarchy. Our intelligence analysts have flagged Voronov’s criminal connections as worthy of further study.

In 2008, Voronov enlisted in the Border Guard Service, a branch of the Russian Federal Security Service. The Border Guard Service combines the functions of the US Coast Guard and US Border Patrol into one uniformed service. Since Russia has the longest national border in the world, its Border Guard is enormous, with ten regional border districts ranging from the Ural Mountains to Siberia. Since 1992, Russia’s Border Guard has also been responsible for guarding Armenia’s border with Turkey and Iran. Voronov spent most of his career deployed to Armenia, working the checkpoints at Gyumri, Armavir, and Zvartnots International Airport.

In 2017, he was redeployed to the Volga district. While there, he was subjected to service-wide genetic testing, and recruited as a candidate for the psychotronic enhancement. Russia’s psychotronic program dates back to the Cold War and its exact methods remain highly classified today; we believe they include both behavioral and chemical stressors designed to trigger expression of QAP-correlated genes. Sources within Russia’s FSB have suggested the success rate is very low; failed candidates are usually unfit for duty thereafter.

On November 2, 2018, a 20,000-ton explosion destroyed the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility at Akademgorodok, Siberia. We believe this event coincided with Voronov’s ascension, although Russian news claimed it was the result of terrorists. In any case, Tsar Bómba made his first appearance alongside his new teammates in a speech by Russian President Vladimir Putin on March 22, 2019.

# TSAR BÓMBA

865 CP, CR 250

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>28</b>
VALUE	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	<b>0</b>	INITIATIVE	<b>11</b>
WEIGHT	<b>4</b>	INCOME	<b>6</b>
RUNNING SPEED	<b>4</b>	REPUTATION	<b>15/15</b>
JUMPING SPEED	<b>10</b>	PASSIVE SPOTTING	<b>8</b>
FLYING SPEED	<b>0</b>	PASSIVE LISTENING	<b>0</b>



HEALTH

**1280**

RECOVERY

**256**

DETERMINATION

**240**

RECOVERY

**48**

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Air Filtration 11 (10.5 CP), Bombproofing 11 (16 CP), Ionizing Thermal Resistance 14 (24 CP), Physical Invulnerability 14 (48 CP), Pressure Protection 20 (5 CP), Self-Range Self-Immune Slow (-7) High-Energy Intense Concussive Ionizing Thermal Explosion 17 (352 CP) with Power Flaw: 1 use per 5 pages (-106 CP)

**Skills:** Alertness 5, Avocation (gambling) 5, Investigation 5, Martial Arts 13

**Perks:** Authority (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Close Defense Expertise, Criminal Connections (10 CP), Famous (20 CP), Ferocious, Grappling Expertise, Multilingual (English, 1 CP), Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Dark Secret (criminal past, 5 CP), Duty (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Heavy (1 CP), Notorious (15 CP), Unlikeable (2 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Sergeant First Class Vasily Voronov, known as Tsar Bómba (“Emperor Bomb”), is an ascendant member of the Russian elite unit Spetsikhotron, with the ability to explode with a force comparable to a thermonuclear bomb. Born in Tolyatti and initially associated with the Bratva criminal brotherhood, Voronov later enlisted in the Russian Border Guard Service, where he spent most of his career. His ascendant powers were activated after genetic testing and a subsequent stint in Russia’s secretive psychotronic program, and his ascension likely led to the notorious explosion at the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility in Siberia.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Star-Spangled Squadron's intelligence analysts are correct to be suspicious of Tsar Bómba's criminal ties. In fact, Vasily Voronov never stopped being a criminal. His entry into the Border Guard Service, and his placement at the Armenian-Iranian checkpoint, were arranged by powerful friends with the Bratva. For over a decade, Voronov was their "inside man" at the border, helping smugglers ship weapons, drugs, sex slaves, and even radioactive materials across national lines.

Voronov's selection for psychotronic experimentation, and his successful ascension as Tsar Bómba, have now put him in an awkward situation. His newfound position offers him power, status, and wealth he never dreamed of as a corrupt Border Guard sergeant. His old friends in the Bratva can offer him only trouble. Unfortunately, his criminal past makes him easy to blackmail. Were the Russian government to discover his criminal ties, Voronov would be immediately deemed unsuitable for Spetsikhotron. Avangard would probably be assigned to kill him.

For now, Voronov is attempting to placate his criminal connections with small deeds of service, while maintaining a respectable front for his comrades at Spetsikhotron. At some point, however, he may be forced to choose between duty, death, and dishonor; and a life as a supervillain may be all that is open to him.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

When Tsar Bómba explodes, there is a very visible charge-up and the shockwave that erupts from him moves in a slow wave to destroy everything in his path. Those who have seen it and survived have described it as resembling the progress of wildfire across flammable material. Russian scientists have labeled it медленный, or "slow." To reflect this, Tsar Bómba's Explosion carries a new modifier, Slow.

## HOW POWERFUL IS TSAR BÓMBA'S EXPLOSION?

Russian state propaganda claims that Tsar Bómba can explode with the same power as his namesake, the 50-megaton hydrogen bomb Tsar Bómba. In game terms, the historical Tsar Bómba was an object with 27 SPs of High-Energy Concussive Ionizing Thermal Explosion. Because it was High-Energy but not Intense, the original bomb reduces the SPs of Explosion by 3 SPs per every 2 SPs of distance between the center of the Explosion and the target. Therefore, it had AV/EV 27/27 at its center, 24/24 at 2 SPs from its center, 21/21 at 4 SPs, 18/18 at 6 SPs, 15/15 at 8 SPs, 12/12 at 10 SPs, 9/9 at 12 SPs, 6/6 at 14 SPs, 3/3 at 16 SPs, and 1/1 at 17 SPs.

In contrast, Tsar Bómba's Explosion has an AV/EV of 10/17 at every point within its blast radius, which extends out to two-thirds of its SPs, or 11 SPs. Thus, for targets between a quarter-mile (8 SPs) and two miles (11 SPs) from the center of the blast, Tsar Bómba's Explosion deals more damage than the eponymous bomb. Unlike the hydrogen bomb he cannot melt the Great Pyramid into slag with a single blast, nor can he shatter windows 100+ miles away. But within his blast radius, his blast is more dangerous than the most powerful nuclear weapon ever deployed.

## STORY HOOK

How do you kill an immortal woman sworn to destroy you? With a really big bomb. El Cartel De Los Carteles has contracted with Russian friends in the Bratva to assassinate their nemesis Stiletto. Bratva, in turn, has tasked "their friend" Tsar Bómba to destroy her. The criminal masterminds have devised a clever plan:

- ★ They will leak (by way of a neutral source, such as Renard the Fox) evidence that major Cartel lords are meeting at a remote mansion in Columbia.
- ★ The rumors will warn that the drug lords are skittish that Stiletto may make an appearance and are using channels within the US military to confirm her whereabouts – encouraging her to respond "off the books" and by herself.
- ★ To complete the ruse, the mansion will be stocked with a few expensive cars and disposable soldiers to make it look like a secure facility for a cartel meeting.
- ★ Once Stiletto has penetrated into the "meeting room," Tsar Bómba will grapple her and then detonate. The resulting destruction should, they estimate, be enough to kill Stiletto – permanently this time.

Tsar Bómba has reluctantly agreed to the mission, with the proviso that this is the last mission he will do for his former underworld handlers. "Da, konechno, tovarishch," they said...

# PANTSYR (“CARAPACE”)

Pantsyr (Russian for “Carapace”) is one of the six named team members of Spetsial’naya Psikhotronnaya Komanda (Special Psychotronics Command), also known as Spetsikhotron. Pantsyr made his first public appearance alongside the rest of Spetsikhotron in a speech by Russian President Vladimir Putin on March 22, 2019. Like all members of Spetsikhotron, he is a government operative with proven loyalty to the Russian state.

According to his official Russian-language comic series *The Unkillable Carapace*, Pantsyr was an FSB agent who gained his powers after he was bitten by a radioactive cockroach during an experiment at the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility (LLVRF) of the Russian Defense Ministry. As with most Russian propaganda, this is a lie concealing a grain of truth.

Pantsyr’s real name is Grigori Bogdanov. He grew up in Kapotnya, an impoverished suburb southeast of Moscow. After completing secondary education in 2004, the bright but penniless Bogdanov enrolled in the state-run Federal Security Service (FSB) Academy. He majored in the Department of Special Technology and entered the FSB Science and Technical Service after graduating in 2008. Until 2014 he worked at the 27th Central Research Institute in Moscow as an information forensic scientist.

Bogdanov’s pre-ascension career is notable only for its lack of notability. His performance reviews were always good but never stellar; his promotions came on time but never early. He attracted no attention whatsoever from anyone of importance and said nothing controversial in digital correspondence. His most rebellious act was seeing the lesbian rockers Tatu in concert in 2009. Bogdanov’s record was so clean that Squadron Intelligence initially suspected that it had been digitally cleansed of damaging information. However, HUMINT assets tasked with a close investigation concluded that Bogdanov was simply a very boring man.

“Intelligent, but introverted,” said one report. “He avoids crowds and dislikes the outdoors.” “Conscientious to the point of fastidious,” remarked another. “His files are always meticulous. He spends a lot of time straightening up.”

In 2014, Bogdanov was appointed Director of Informatic Security for the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility (LLVRF) at Akademgorodok, Siberia. At the time, the LLVRF was functioning as Russia’s leading center for psychotronic enhancement. As such, it attracted many bizarre and iconoclastic researchers operating on the fringe of respectability. The FSB seems to have believed that the staid and reliable Bogdanov would serve to keep the “freaks” in check.

The “freaks” certainly had no love for Bogdanov, whom they called *zhuk muzh*, or bugman, a derogatory term for the lifeless metropolitan drones of 21st century global bureaucracy. Bogdanov’s fastidious attention to their every activity soon made him an expert in psychotronic research, much to their displeasure. As result, Bogdanov became the butt of many practical jokes at the facility – jpegs of cockroaches were appended to his email signature, bugs were left in his lunch bag, and on and on. Bogdanov seems to have been rather hurt by the insults and pranks and responded by doubling down on his work.

During a deliberately unnecessary review of the test data in February 2017, Bogdanov noticed that all of the subjects accepted for enhancement at LLVRF had a number of uncommon exons in their DNA. The exons were unexpressed in all of the unsuccessful subjects and expressed in the project’s sole successful ascendant (see Enchanter’s briefing). Bogdanov surmised that LLVRF psychotronic training was designed to express the exons. He made an uncharacteristically bold move: He quietly had his own genome scanned to confirm he had the necessary exons, then used his administrative access to the system to order that he receive psychotronic training. His motivation seems to have been spite against the scientists who thought themselves his betters.

The researchers were none too happy to have the FSB director be a recipient of their special techniques. After a month of begrudging and ineffectual psychotronic training, the staff decided to play another prank on Bogdanov. On April 1st, 2017, as Bogdanov was seated for his fifth session of training, one of the research assistants poured a bucket of live cockroaches over his head, shouting, “Watch out! The bugman is transforming!”

The ongoing torment followed by the malicious prank proved too much for the sensitive and fastidious Bogdanov, who began a stress-related ascension. Slowly he took on his now-famous form – the bipedal cockroach Pantsyr. Dr Gupta believes that Bogdanov's mutations sent him into a psychotic state of grief and distress, which in turn fueled further transformation as it worsened.

Bogdanov's phenotypical change was perhaps the most impressive ever recorded for an ascendant. When he transformed into Pantsyr, he grew a pair of additional limbs as well as the chitinous carapace from which he derives his name. His body mass doubled. In this cockroach form, he became nearly invulnerable – his level of physical invulnerability is close to that of American Eagle, while his resistance to radiation and toxins became higher than any known ascendant. His overall physical transformation exceeds that of even Andrew Dillon (Manticore).

Unlike Manticore's change, however, Pantsyr's physical transformation proved temporary and reversible. Our scientists disagree as to whether this represents an improvement (conscious control over transformation) or flaw (inability to permanently maintain the form). From Bogdanov's point of view, it is clear that the ability to transform to and from his Pantsyr form is the only thing that makes his ascension livable. Although Russia prefers that he be seen as Pantsyr in all official sources, our HUMINT assets believe Bogdanov prefers to be human whenever possible.

Pantsyr has no known family and few friends. He seems to be oddly devoted to Krasukha (Belladonna). The domineering Krasukha does not treat him particularly kindly, but she seems to treat him no less *unkindly* than she treats everyone else; from Pantsyr's perspective, this must be perceived as affection.

Because of Pantsyr's phenotypical similarity to *Blattella germanica*, Dr. Coffey has theorized that Pantsyr may share the species' weakness to certain insecticides. This theory remains to be tested but ascendants confronting Spetsikhotron should attempt to exploit it.

# PANTSYR

865 CP, CR 250

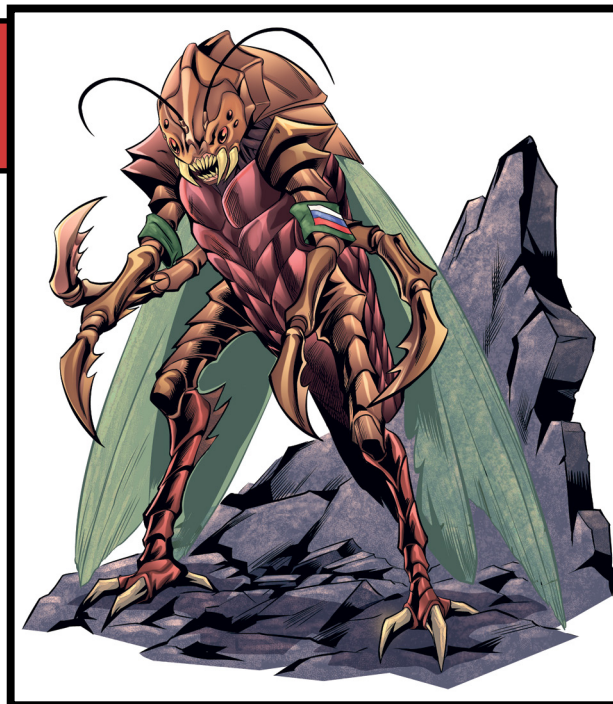
## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	HP
VALUE	10	6	6	8	4	4	28

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	11
WEIGHT	4	INCOME	7
RUNNING SPEED	6	REPUTATION	14/16
JUMPING SPEED	6	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
GLIDING SPEED	4	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

1280

RECOVERY

256

DETERMINATION

320

RECOVERY

64

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Additional Lacerating Limbs x 2 10 (40 CP each), Additional Extended Replacement Lacerating Limbs x 2 (2 CP each), Air Supply 10 (15 CP), Gliding 4 (20 CP), Lightning Reflexes 5 (10 CP), Intuitive Combat Sense 12 (85 CP), Invulnerability (Flawed: Ionizing, Toxic) 14 (120 CP), Ionizing Toxic Resistance 16 (26 CP), Penetrating Strike 10 (5 CP), Regeneration 4 (32 CP), Running 6 (2 CP), Super-Fortitude 10 (8 CP), Super-Stamina 14 (16 CP), Swimming 6 (15 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Scent 5 (40 CP), Wall Crawling 8 (15 CP)

**Skills:** Alertness 8, Intimidation 8, Investigation 8, Marksmanship 10, Martial Arts 12, Non-Combat Parkour 10, Science (forensics) 8, Stealth 10

**Perks:** Authority (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Famous (20 CP), Multilingual (English, 1 CP), Protector, Tireless, Watchful, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Body Form (insectoid), Disturbing Appearance (giant cockroach, 5 CP), Duty (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Heavy (1 CP), Hesitant (5 CP), Notorious (18 CP), Unlikeable (2 CP), Vulnerable State: Caught out of Pantsyr Form (transformation takes 8 Pages and can be maintained for 14 SPs, MIG, AGI, VAL, RES drop to 5; loses all Powers, loses 3 SP in Martial Arts and 2 SP in all other Skills, loses Protector, Tireless, Watchful, loses Body Form, Disturbing Appearance, and Heavy; 68 CP); Vulnerable State: Exposure to Scented Bug Spray MIG, AGI, VAL, RES drop to 5; loses all Powers, loses 3 SP in Martial Arts and 2 SP in all other Skills, loses Protector, Tireless, Watchful, loses Body Form, Disturbing Appearance, and Heavy, while in contact and for 5 Pages thereafter; 50 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Grigori Bogdanov, known as Pantsyr ("Carapace"), is a member of the elite Russian unit Spetsikhotron, with unique ascendant powers that allow him to transform into a near-invulnerable bipedal cockroach. Raised in Kapotnya, Bogdanov was a diligent but unremarkable FSB agent until his role as Director of Informatic Security at the L.L. Vasilev Research Facility led to his ascension. After noticing a genetic correlation in successful psychotronic enhancement subjects, he self-administered the treatment and, following a cruel prank involving cockroaches, underwent a severe transformation into Pantsyr. Although he can revert to human form, Bogdanov is often showcased as Pantsyr in Russian propaganda. He is notably devoted to his teammate Krasukha.

## VULNERABLE GRIGORI BOGDANOV

**Character Points:** 865      **Power Limit:** 26      **Hero Points:** 28

**Attributes:** MIG 5, AGI 5, VAL 5, RES 5, INS 4, CHA 4, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 2, Initiative 5, Income 7, Reputation 14, Notoriety 18, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 60, Determination 60

**Skills:** Alertness 6, Intimidation 6, Investigation 6, Marksmanship 7, Martial Arts 8, Non-Combat Parkour 7, Science (forensics) 6, Stealth 7

**Perks:** Authority (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Famous (20 CP), Multilingual (English, 1 CP), Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Duty (Spetsikhotron, 10 CP), Hesitant (5 CP), Notorious (18 CP), Unlikeable (2 CP)

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Pantsyr can only stay transformed for 16 hours (14 SP) at a time. At the end of this Time, he reverts to his vulnerable state as the ordinary Grigori Bogdanov. Transforming back into his cockroach form is an Extended Automatic Action which takes 8 Pages during which he cannot take any other actions. Pantsyr can be temporarily forced out of his cockroach form if he is sprayed with scented bug spray. The scents he is averse to include bay leaf, eucalyptus, and peppermint oil, any of which must be mixed with an industrial insecticide. A Pepper Spray canister (Targeted Limited Volume (0) Short-Range (-2) Instant Nauseating Fog 4) would suffice to deliver enough spray to trigger his vulnerable state. The effect of scented bug spray does not last long, and Pantsyr will automatically revert to his cockroach form after 5 Pages (15 seconds) unless exposure continues.

## STORY HOOK

In the course of a routine review of Spetsikhotron research, Pantsyr accidentally discovered authorization for Project Chitin, described as a project to eliminate Pantsyr's vulnerability to insecticide. The treatment, when complete, would prevent Pantsyr from reverting to human form when exposed to scented bug spray. The limited information Pantsyr was able to gather didn't say much, but what it was said was enough to alarm him. What if that same treatment might also prevent Pantsyr from reverting to human form altogether? The man who was once Grigor Bogdanov did not want to be stuck as a living cockroach, no matter how much more powerful that might make him.

Pantsyr therefore has decided to defect from Spetsikhotron before the authorities order him to undergo the treatment protocol. To avoid living the rest of his life on the run, Pantsyr wants the Russians to believe he is dead. Using encrypted email, Pantsyr contacts the Star-Spangled Squadron (or other organization seeking their help). His request is simple: Help him publicly stage his death effectively enough that it will fool an ascendant investigation, and then extract him from Russia to a safe place where he can assume a new identity and live out his life as an ordinary person.

Krasukha has been assigned to monitor Pantsyr and will likely be aware of his plans – whether because she spies on his activities or because he confesses them to her in a gush of emotion. In any case, Spetsikhotron will use her to bring him back. Her chief tool will be the truth. The truth that Project Chitin is a lie! Sure, Spetsikhotron would be glad to eliminate Pantsyr's weaknesses, but it has no idea how to do so. The bureaucrats therefore decided to *pretend* to eliminate Pantsyr's vulnerable state with a fake "cure" which could be leaked to Western intelligence agencies. Such deep disinformation has been common in Russia since the Tsarist days... but sometimes it works too well. Pantsyr was not supposed to learn about the program so soon and would have been told it was a fake. His defection is an overreaction to a scam.

If Pantsyr discovers the truth about Project Chitin, he will change his mind about defection and attempt to return to the Motherland, preferably deflecting the blame for his actions on to his would-be friends and rescuers. Depending on how the events have played out, Pantsyr might be deemed so valuable that the heroes are ordered to complete an "unfriendly extraction."

If Pantsyr ends up incapacitated or otherwise indisposed during the extraction, Krasukha may confront the heroes with the evidence that Project Chitin was a trick, and demand they hand over Pantsyr because "if he knew the truth, he'd never leave Russia." If the heroes refuse, it may lead to a showdown with Spetsikhotron.

Whatever happens, one thing is for sure: Pantsyr will feel terrible about it. Why do bad things always happen to him? It's so unfair.



## CHAPTER 7: OTHER CHARACTERS

The world is a big place, and new ascendants are emerging every day. In fact, based on the rate of increase in RF electromagnetic power density (see p. 15), it's likely that the number of ascendants will grow by as many as four million people in the year ahead. Not all of these ascendants are part of the established national teams, nor part of Dark Emerald or Exodus. Some are part of organizations that are little known even by Squadron Intelligence, and others are independent operatives pursuing their own benign or malign agendas. This chapter introduces a number of new characters, and hints about two important secret organizations (The Embassy and the Court of Night).

# ALLEGIANT

In January 2021, Squadron Intelligence established an information-sharing agreement with the Vatican's clandestine intelligence service, sometimes known as Santa Alleanza ("Holy Alliance") or L'Entità ("The Entity"). One of the first files provided by Santa Alleanza described the ascension of Constantine Fidelis, codenamed Allegiant.

Though only 27 years old, Constantine Fidelis is already well-known in academic circles as one of the world's leading scholars of ecclesiastical art history and is one of the few academics to have been granted a post at the Archivum Secretum Apostolicum Vaticanum. He has achieved this prominence despite great disability: For the last 10 years, he has suffered from paraplegia, a condition brought on in March 2012 when he was struck by a drunk driver while working as a volunteer food deliverer for his local diocese. The incident became the basis for Fidelis's profound faith; in the foreword to his 2019 book on cross symbology, *The Sign and The Symbol*, he wrote "What could I make of such a senseless loss? And yet I had not lost everything. I had been spared death, and I found meaning in the search for the meaning of it. What was God's will for me?"

In July 2019, Fidelis was involved in a criminal incident in Rome. The official report from the Polizia Municipale stated that Fidelis and a colleague, Father Giovanni Bellini, were assaulted by robbers. In the ensuing struggle, Bellini was slain and the robbers driven off. The Vatican has revealed that Father Bellini was part of a Catholic order called Custodes Arcanorum, responsible for safeguarding relics and artifacts of religious import. At the time of the incident, Bellini was transporting a 4,000-year-old artifact known as the Ring of Ravanor, and the "robbers" were actually ascendants aiming to steal it. According to Papal sources, Fidelis took hold of the Ring after Bellini was slain, and used its properties to drive off the attackers.

The properties of the Ring seem to be linked to the manipulation of force fields in a similar manner to that previously displayed by Squadron member Dr. Quantum. When using the Ring, Fidelis is able to create a suit of armor (reminiscent of armor worn by Christian Crusaders in the Middle Ages) out of pure energy, which enables him to move despite his paraplegia, along with a host of ancillary powers.

Fidelis has refused to return the Ring to the Vatican but, because of Fidelis's prominence and faith (and perhaps due to a desire not to expose the Custodes Arcanorum to legal scrutiny), the Vatican has declined to press charges against him. Since the incident, Fidelis has given up his post at the Vatican Apostolic Archive and undertaken a tour of holy sites around the world, rarely staying at any one site for more than a few days. During his travels, he has begun to use the Ring to fight ascended criminals and to assist in disaster relief in various locations; unlike many ascendants, who have gone public with their identity, Fidelis has masked his appearance within the energy "armor" and the press and populace as a whole are unaware that the superhero Allegiant is the art historian Constantine Fidelis.

Agents of Santa Alleanza have maintained a close surveillance of Fidelis, but they claim that another organization is also tracking his movements: The Court of Night. This occult cabal has only recently come to the attention of Squadron Intelligence. Sources variously claim its members are avatars of gods, ancient aliens, or almighty ascendants. The Court are said to have invaded from other dimensions, or woken from long slumbers, or been summoned by the rise of new ascendants. The truth, if any, remains unclear. But the one thing all of the rumors agree upon is that the Court of Night are the implacable enemies of mankind. Exactly why the Court of Night is interested in Fidelis remains unknown. There is no evidence that Fidelis himself is in contact with them.

The most troubling possibility is that the Court of Night is somehow connected to the Ring of Ravanor. Since Fidelis had not previously shown any indication of ascension, we surmise that the Ring of Ravanor is a Class C device that serve as conduits for zero-point energy generated elsewhere and then directed by the user's conscious will. As noted in our 10 June 2017 Analysis and Assessment of Psychoenergetic Technology, "ascendants using Type C devices may be operating as conduits to or even possessed by extradimensional intelligences with unknown motives." There exists the possibility that the Court of Night may be extradimensional entities that either recruit or "possess" ascendants by means of Type C devices.

# ALLEGIANT

1000 CP, CR 700

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>38</b>
VALUE	2	2	2	15	7	7	

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	5
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	8
RUNNING SPEED	0	REPUTATION	9
JUMPING SPEED	0	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	7	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

1920

RECOVERY

384

DETERMINATION

1920

RECOVERY

384

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Deflection 15 (90 CP), Force Control 14 (380 CP) with Power Flaw: Draining 6 (deals 16 Psychic Damage each use, -24 CP), Lightning Reflexes 3 (6 CP), Psionic Cosmic Blast 14 (87 CP), Super-Stamina 15 (48 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (Bible studies) 9, Investigation 11, Power Aptitude (Force Control) 14, Power Aptitude (Psionic Cosmic Blast) 14, Profession (art historian) 11

**Perks:** Famous (4 CP), Heroic (20 CP), Multilingual (Ancient Greek, Arabic, Aramaic, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, 4 CP), Multitask, Principled (Code of Honor, 2 CP), Stalwart, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (Christian ethics, 2 CP), Hunted (Court of Night, 5 CP), Hunted (Custodes Arcanorum, 2 CP), Paraplegic, Unconsummatable, Vulnerable State: Deprived of Ring (can be taken when Unconscious or Paralyzed; loses Blast, Deflection, Force Control, Lightning Reflexes, and Super-Stamina, loses Power Aptitudes, 33 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Ever since he was paralyzed by a drunk driver while working as a volunteer food deliverer for his local diocese, Constantine Fidelis has sought meaning in his faith. He thought God meant him to be a historian of the faith, but he was wrong. When a dying priest from the Catholic Custodes Arcanorum gave him the Ring of Ravanor, Fidelis ascended to become Allegiant, faithful servant of the Church. Yet, even as he seeks to do God's will in the world, Fidelis cannot escape the impression that dark forces have targeted him for corruption...or destruction.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

The hypothesis that the Court of Night is connected to the Ring of Ravanor is correct. Just as Ryan Ramos became Revenant when he claimed the Mask of Dirgion (*Ascendant* p. 461) and Diana Grey became Night Hag after she claimed the Brooch of Mara (p. 169), Constantine Fidelis became Allegiant when he claimed the Ring of Ravanor. And, like Ramos and Grey, Fidelis immediately became hunted by the Court of Night. Fidelis's inexorable willpower (RES 15!) has made him immune to the evil temptations that Revenant and Night Hag endure, but the Court of Night will not stop until he is corrupted – or killed.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Allegiant relies on his Deflection to avoid attacks and on his Force Control to overcome the mobility challenges of his paraplegia. His default force construct is a suit of “energy armor” with Force Field 7 and Flight 7, which enables him to shrug off small arms fire and outpace most vehicles. He relies on his Psionic Cosmic Blast as his main attack.

## STORY HOOK

Karl Oldenburg was a Korean War veteran who later become a technology magnate during the early years of the silicon revolution. In later life, Oldenburg grew skeptical of technology and devoted himself to philanthropy. After he died, his children used his collection of classical and contemporary texts on history, mythology, and fiction to establish the Karl Oldenburg Memorial Library at Capital City University in his honor. This is public record.

What is less widely known is that during his stint in the Department of Defense, Oldenburg worked on a number of highly classified projects for the US Army involving retrieval, analysis, and reproduction of unidentified and out-of-place artifacts. Constantine Fidelis has come to believe that Oldenburg's personal papers may contain clues to the nature of these artifacts, clues that might in turn help Fidelis understand the Ring of Ravanor. Therefore, Fidelis has taken a post as a guest lecturer at Capital City University this semester. While there, he hopes to gain faculty access to the private archives hidden in the Library.

Shortly after Oldenburg took a post at Capital City University, a number of faculty, students, and office workers at the Library began to complain of an “uneasy sense of being watched” and “a malevolent presence,” and most recently several eye witnesses claimed to have seen a dark figure lurking outside the Library at night. The curators of the Library have begun to worry that they may be targets for Ascendants patterned after mythological or historical figures who wish to possess old texts about “themselves” as well as those pursuing the rumor of technological secrets. In the post-ascension world, such claims cannot be dismissed out of hand, and so the university administrators have called on the hero's organization to patrol the Library for a few days and investigate the claims.

The malevolent presence is none other than the Court of Night, which has sent one or more members to attempt to seduce Allegiant to their side – or, failing that, kill him. Either or both Revenant (from *Ascendant* p. 461) or Night Hag (from this book, p. 169) could be used for the villains of this mission, or the GM can devise his own members of the Court of Night. If the latter, be aware that all Court of Night members should have a Device (e.g. Mask of Dirgion, Ring of Ravanor, etc.) that has a malevolent influence on its wielder.

The Court of Night will strike late one night when Fidelis is deep in study in the Library's private archives. Fidelis has far too much willpower and conviction to be influenced to their cause, so the encounter will certainly develop into a battle, as the other Court of Night members attempt to seize the Ring of Ravanor.

Depending on the hero's course of action in the leadup to the attack, they might have befriended Fidelis and be actively helping him; they might be suspicious of him and keeping him under watch; or they might simply be oblivious to what's going on until the fireworks begin. One thing's for certain: There's going to be a lot of burning books.

# NIGHT HAG

A series of incidents in New York City metropolitan area have led the threat assessment team to conclude there is a previously-unknown and highly-developed ascendant operating in the region. This briefing summarizes the evidence and conclusions about this ascendant, who has been codenamed "Night Hag."

The first incident occurred on 22 October, 2020 in the Westchester residence of Viktor Petrovich Kuznetsov, a wealthy model manager for Elect Model Management. Kuznetsov's mistress, Mila Ivanova, is the only survivor and witness to the event. According to her report, she was awakened by Kuznetsov's terrified screams at around 3AM. Although violently screaming, Kuznetsov was very still and not otherwise moving about in a frightened manner. When Ivanova's eyes adjusted to the dim light, she reportedly saw a hideous "crone" or "hag" in the room with them. Ivanova retrieved a firearm from Kuznetsov's nightstand and fired five times at the creature, but none of her shots seemed to hit (and the bullets were later found in the wall of the bedroom without evidence of body penetration). A few seconds after she stopped firing, Kuznetsov stopped screaming. The "hag" then reportedly levitated into the air and through the ceiling of the bedroom, vanishing from sight. Ivanova called 911 but Kuznetsov was pronounced dead on the scene by first responders. The Westchester Coroner's Office determined Kuznetsov's cause of death was brain aneurysm. Investigators at the scene discovered a large cache of files on Kuznetsov's computer that linked him to the sex trafficking of women and girls in the New York City metropolitan area.

On 22 December 2020, a second incident occurred. EMTs were called to Sheepshead Bay houseboat of Santiago "El Diablo" González, a high-ranking member of El Cartel de Los Carteles with ties to international sex trafficking. Like Kuznetsov, González had died of a brain aneurysm. Unlike Kuznetsov, González was not survived by any witnesses. Fortunately for investigators, González had installed a security camera on his boat. Footage from González's houseboat showed a large hag-like creature with iron nails pass through the boat's hull and enter González's bedroom. González began to scream but his body remained motionless. After about 10 seconds, González ceased screaming and the apparition or creature exited by floating through the ceiling.

Because the incidents took place in two different jurisdictions, investigators did not immediately connect them. A report of each incident was, however, forward to the Squadron Intelligence's threat assessment team. Because Ivanova had provided a police sketch of Kuznetsov's killer that matched the footage found in González's houseboat, Squadron Intelligence was able to confirm the presence of an incorporeal psychic ascendant.

A third incident occurred three weeks later. On 6 January 2021, police were dispatched to a warehouse in Red Hook, Brooklyn, after a security guard at a local car dealership reported hearing a high volume of automatic gunfire. Upon entering the warehouse, the police discovered that it had been functioning as an underground brothel. The remains of 8 Bratva-affiliated criminals were found scattered throughout the warehouse, all of them showing signs of dismemberment or disembowelment by a large clawed animal. Police also discovered a locker room where a dozen undocumented women were in hiding. The women claimed that a "new girl" had entered the brothel, only to transform into a creature described as a "hideous crone," "a giant hag," "Baba Yaga," and "the bogeywoman." The "bogeywoman" had then proceeded to systematically massacre the Bratva members before "running off into the dark."

When this incident report arrived at Squadron Intelligence, analysts were initially wary of asserting that the same ascendant was responsible for all three murders. For that to be true, Night Hag would have to be capable of incorporeality, flight, and psychic assault and also capable of physical growth, physical transformation, and super strength. Such a combination was deemed exceptionally unlikely. CPT Anderson therefore ordered an additional investigation. In that investigation, four separate witnesses to the Red Hook massacre all separately testified that the figure visible in the González footage was the same figure they had seen.

Squadron Intelligence is therefore forced to conclude that an exceptionally powerful ascendant with a capacity for military-grade incorporeal and corporeal activity is operating in the NYC metropolitan region. Since all of Night Hag's murders have been criminals associated with human trafficking, however, she has been assigned a low priority for apprehension. At this time we recommend ongoing monitoring for future incidents related to Night Hag.

# NIGHT HAG (HUMAN FORM)

1000 CP, CR 700

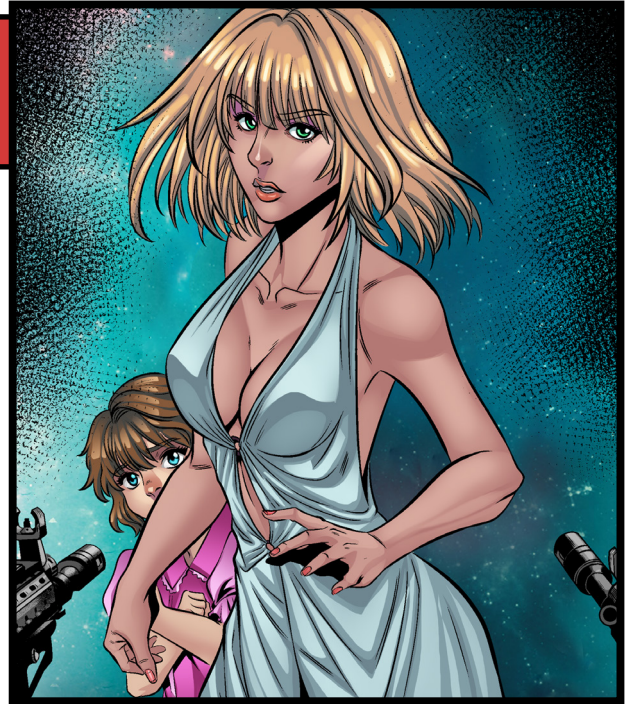
## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	5	7	7	9	7	14	34

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	7
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	8
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	14/0
JUMPING SPEED	3	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	7	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

1280

RECOVERY

256

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Astral Incorporeality 14 (195 CP), Charismatic Eye Contact Neck-Down Paralysis 14 (173 CP) with Miscellaneous Power Flaw (Night Hag can only use the power while Incorporeal and can only target men with it, -43 CP), Dark Vision 6 (17 CP), Flight 7 (43 CP) with Miscellaneous Power Flaw (Night Hag can only use the power while Incorporeal, -9 CP), Psychic Power Pool (Mind Reading, Murderous Eye Contact Emotion Blast) 14 (142 CP) with Miscellaneous Power Flaw (Night Hag can only use power on men currently affected by her Paralysis power, -43 CP), Super-Stamina 14 (36 CP)

**Skills:** Infiltration 9, Investigation 9, Martial Arts 9, Profession (fashion model) 8, Stealth 9

**Perks:** Alternate Form (monstrous), Multitask, Sex Appeal, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (protect victims of abuse, 2 CP), Compulsion (cause horror, 2 CP), Dependents (Lighthouse Refuge residents, 2 CP), Disturbing Appearance (incorporeal form resembles monstrous night hag, 2 CP), Hunted (Court of Night, 5 CP), Vulnerable State: Deprived of Brooch (remove with Red Disarm; AGI, VAL, RES, INS, and CHA reduced to 5, loses Alternate Form, Incorporeality, Flight, Paralysis, and Power Pool, 68 CP)

## BACKGROUND

When supermodel Diana Grey pinned on an ancient Celtic brooch she'd been gifted by an unknown benefactor, she discovered she could transform at will into the monstrous mythical form of a night hag. In her monstrous form, she was an unstoppable physical force, capable of devastating melee attacks and feats of superstrength. Even in her human form, her powers were far from ordinary – she had become a powerful psychic capable of projecting the astral form of the night hag. But with the powers came the continuous whisperings of the presence, calling on her to commit terrible deeds on behalf of an organization called the Court of Night...

# NIGHT HAG (MONSTROUS FORM)

1000 CP, CR 700

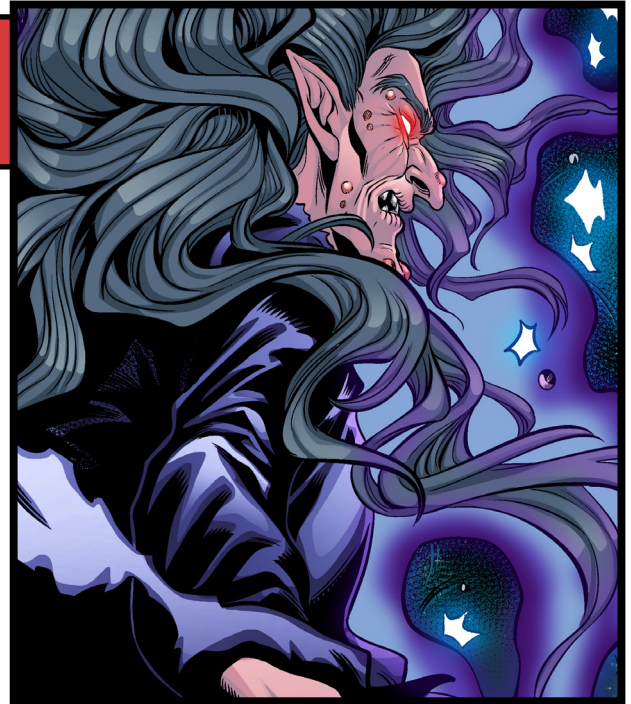
## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	34
VALUE	14	14	14	9	7	9	

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	1	INITIATIVE	14
WEIGHT	6	INCOME	8
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	9/9
JUMPING SPEED	9	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

1280

RECOVERY

256

DETERMINATION

240

RECOVERY

48

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Dark Vision 7 (19 CP), Eye Contact Emotion Adjustment (Fearful) 14 (135 CP), Invulnerability 15 (144 CP), Lacerating Strike 15 (4 CP), Permanent Growth 3 (30 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Scent 5 (40 CP)

**Perks:** Alternate Form (human), Protector, Tireless, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (protect victims of abuse, 2 CP), Compulsion (cause horror, 2 CP), Dependents (Lighthouse Refuge residents, 2 CP), Disturbing Appearance (monstrous night hag, 5 CP), Hunted (Court of Night, 5 CP), Notorious 9, Vulnerable State: Deprived of Brooch (remove with Red Disarm; AGI, VAL, RES, INS, and CHA reduced to 5, loses Alternate Form, Emotion Adjustment, Invulnerability, Ultra-Sensitive Scent)

## BACKGROUND

When supermodel Diana Grey pinned on an ancient Celtic brooch she'd been gifted by an unknown benefactor, she discovered she could transform at will into the monstrous mythical form of a night hag. In her monstrous form, she was an unstoppable physical force, capable of devastating melee attacks and feats of superstrength. Even in her human form, her powers were far from ordinary – she had become a powerful psychic capable of projecting the astral form of the night hag. But with the powers came the continuous whisperings of the presence, calling on her to commit terrible deeds on behalf of an organization called the Court of Night....

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Diana Grey was born on October 31st, 1998, in the heartland of Lincoln, Nebraska. Grey's early life was characterized by rustic simplicity. As she grew older, her natural beauty became more and more apparent, attracting the attention of those around her. In 2016, after graduating from Lincoln East High School, Grey's life took a turn towards the extraordinary. While working a part-time job at a local café, she was spotted by a talent scout for Elect Model Management. The scout was entranced by her distinct and captivating features – a striking blend of rural innocence and an enigmatic allure.

Grey moved to New York City, a dramatic shift from her quiet hometown, to start her career in fashion modeling. She worked tirelessly, walking runways and posing for photoshoots. Her unique persona caught the attention of major brands such as Calvin Klein, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and Gucci. By 2019, she was one of the most sought-after models in the world, gracing countless covers of fashion magazines. Behind the scenes, however, Grey's life was falling apart. Since signing on with Elect, she had suffered severe abuse from her manager, Viktor Petrovich Kuznetsov, leading to anorexia and substance abuse.

Then everything changed. In March 2020, an anonymous patron sent Grey a Celtic brooch made from intricately gilt silver with ornate script. Grey took it to an expert in Celtic antiquities, who found it comparable in workmanship to the famous 7th century “Tara” brooch – but the archaic language used in the script suggested a date that was thousands of years prior. Grey found herself unable to resist the allure of the ancient brooch and on 17 March 2020 she pinned it on. Instantly she felt a presence. Something within the brooch had awakened – something that called itself mara, marōn, mare, moroi, morrigain, and a thousand other names from folklore. A moment later the presence, Mara, had united itself with her, bringing with it a terrible transformation...

Over the next several weeks, Grey came to understand that she could transform at will into the monstrous form of a night hag. In her monstrous form, she was an unstoppable physical force. In her human form, she was a powerful psychic capable of projecting the astral form of the night hag. She decided to use her newly-developed abilities for the greater good. Her experiences in the modeling industry had opened her eyes to the exploitation and vulnerabilities that many young women face. She became their avenger. The first victim was her former manager, Viktor Petrovich Kuznetsov.

After killing Kuznetsov, Grey retired from modeling. Now, when not meting out justice against sex traffickers and abusers, Grey runs a not-for-profit shelter for victims of human trafficking called the Lighthouse Refuge. Despite her intentions towards heroism, however, Grey is a deeply troubled woman. Since pinning on the brooch of Mara, she has endured the continuous whisperings of its extradimensional presence, calling on her to commit terrible deeds. Like Constantine Fidelis, who became Allegiant after claiming the Ring of Ravanor (p. 166), Grey is now a target of the Court of Night. The sinister Court is waiting to see if Night Hag will succumb to the evil compulsions of Mara or whether intervention by the Court will be required to help her “achieve her full potential.”

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

In her monstrous form, Night Hag has 3 SPs of Permanent Growth, granting +1 SP of Height, +1 SP of Reach, +1 SPs of Invulnerability, +2 SPs of Might, and +3 SPs of Weight, all of which are already factored in. Her Disturbing Appearance in her monstrous form merits a 5 CP refund. In her model form, her Disturbing Appearance only takes effect when she is Incorporeal, so we reduced the refund to 2 CP. If Night Hag is deprived of her brooch she is stuck in her current form (human or monster). The brooch stays on Night Hag's physical body when she is using Astral Incorporeality. If the brooch is removed from her unconscious form, she instantly returns to her body.

## STORY HOOK

A high-level officer in the hero's organization has been savagely slain in an assault by what witnesses describe as a “hideous giant crone.” The heroes are given the Night Hag briefing and called in to investigate. They soon discover that the slain officer was hiding a Dark Secret: He was a sexual predator. His computer archives are packed with compromising photographs of dozens of women, one of whom was a younger Diana Grey. The evidence is sufficiently malodorous that the organization asks them to quickly close up the investigation. If they cross check the names in the slain officer's computer with files on Night Hag, the heroes can discover that Diana Grey was once managed by Kuznetsov, the Night Hag's first victim. By pursuing that lead, they can come face to face with Grey herself. If confronted by the evidence, Grey will admit to being the Night Hag, but unless the heroes are exceptionally charismatic, she is unlikely to agree to halt her pogrom. It'll be up to the heroes to decide whether Night Hag's crimes should be punished, overlooked, or even applauded.

# NOLAN CROSS

Nolan Cross was born in the middle of a harsh Canadian winter on February 29th, 1984, in a remote town in the Yukon Territory. Growing up surrounded by the Yukon's wild, frozen beauty, Cross learned to respect the brutal honesty of nature early on. He attended Whitehorse High School, where he excelled in boxing and developed an academic interest in history, particularly military strategy.

After graduating from high school, Cross left the icy isolation of the Yukon to attend the University of Toronto, where he studied Military History. Despite the stark contrast from his northern upbringing, Cross thrived, his fascination with battle tactics and unconventional warfare growing with every lecture. Yet the quiet bustle of the university campus felt far removed from the harsh realities that the military strategies described, and Cross yearned for a more hands-on experience.

Answering this call, Cross dropped out in his junior year to enlist in the Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR). His training in the CSOR honed his raw talents into lethal skills. While he mastered several areas like reconnaissance and counter-terrorism, Cross truly stood out in small arms handling and hand-to-hand combat. During a tour of duty in Afghanistan, he earned the Star of Military Valour, Canada's second-highest military honor.

Despite his success, Cross soon grew frustrated with the bureaucratic constraints of military service. His unique abilities and his dissatisfaction with the military did not remain unnoticed. In October 2012, while Cross was still serving in the CSOR, a man known as "The Attaché" approached him. The Attaché has been under U.S. surveillance since 2008 and our analysts believe he works as a sort of recruiter for criminal organizations seeking elite "hitters." Field agents have confirmed that Cross met with the Attaché at the Embassy Hotel Toronto on the evening of 18 October 2012. Exactly what the two men discussed is unknown, but Cross never reported to duty again. An investigation ensued, but nothing came of it: Nolan Cross had vanished.

Two years later, on 17 September 2014, Cross surfaced in Poland. A vacationer in the Embassy Hotel Warsaw unintentionally photographed Cross in the background of a selfie; when the vacationer uploaded the photo to the cloud, Cross's image was picked up by [REDACTED] automated image recognition. Interpol was alerted but was unable to find the AWOL commando. However, a day after the photograph was taken, a don of the Pruszkowska (Polish mafia), Kazimierz Słowikowski, was found dead in his suburban home. According to Polish police, Słowikowski had recently become an informant against his criminal colleagues. No evidence has been found that ties Cross to Słowikowski's death but he remains a person of interest.

On 20 June 2018, Cross was spotted leaving the Embassy Hotel Moscow by a field agent of the CIA. Two days prior to the sighting, an international arms dealer named Dmitri Valkov had been assassinated in his Moscow villa. The killer or killers also slew 7 armed guards and set fire to the villa. Again, no evidence links Cross to the hit, but the timing suggests something more than happenstance.

Were Cross merely a highly-skilled assassin, he would not merit the attention of the Star-Spangled Squadron. But Cross is something more. On 8 May 2020, Cross was recorded entering a night club in Bucharest, Romania. The owner of the night club, Adrian "The Carpathian" Dragomir, is known to have ascended in late 2019 and had begun to use pyrokinetic powers to create a criminal empire in opposition to the Romanian Banda. In the video recording, Cross appears to use ascended abilities to deal with Dragomir's guards. One guard was telekinetically hurled through a concrete wall and landed more than one mile away from the night club. Two other guards were slain in close combat by some sort of energy blade. Dragomir himself was seen conversing with Cross for a few moments, after which he nodded and immolated himself. Based on the recording, Cross is estimated to have a quantitative assessment of power (QAP) score of at least 500 and possibly as high as 700. Why Cross, or Cross's employers, did not arrange for the video recording to be destroyed is unknown, though we believe it was left deliberately to send a message to ascended criminals considering going independent.

In 10 June 2020, Squadron Intelligence received a tip that Cross was seen entering the Embassy Hotel Prague. Since no high-profile assassination or crime has taken place in Prague around that time, it is possible this represents his base of operations. Any operatives dispatched to confront Nolan Cross must be warned that he is a highly dangerous and powerful ascended killer, and possibly the world's deadliest Canadian.

# NOLAN CROSS

1000 CP, CR 700

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	5	9	9	12	6	6

34

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	9
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	8
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	6/17
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	7	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

1280

RECOVERY

256

DETERMINATION

640

RECOVERY

128

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Kundalini Power Pool (Agile Telekinesis, Cosmic Strike, Empathy, Hair-Trigger Combat Sense, Psychic Blindsight, Psychic Cloaking, Super-Perception, Verbal Emotion Adjustment (Agreeable)) 14 (492 CP), Super-Stamina 14 (36 CP)

**Skills:** Marksmanship 15, Martial Arts 15

**Perks:** Authority (Ambassador of the Embassy, 2 CP), Criminal Connections (20 CP), Grappling Expertise, Gun-Fu 4 (120 CP), Hard to Pin, Multitask, Sex Appeal, Tireless, Watchful, Wealthy

**Drawbacks:** Dependent (dog, 2 CP), Duty (the Embassy, 10 CP), Notoriety (17 CP), Vulnerable State: Drained (AGI and VAL drop to 5, Martial Arts and Marksmanship drop to 11, loses Kundalini Power Pool, and loses Gun-Fu, if Determination reduced to 320 or less, 208 CP)

**Equipment:** Bulletproof Vest, Flashbang or Tear Gas Grenades x2, Heavy Handguns x2, Night Vision Goggles or Polarized Sunglasses, Satellite Phone, Spy Bugs x4, Submachineguns x2. Cross may carry other equipment depending on his mission.

## BACKGROUND

Nolan Cross, sometimes called “the world’s deadliest Canadian,” has worked for over a decade as Ambassador (enforcer and hitman) for the global criminal organization known only as The Embassy. During a hit on a Russian arms dealer in 2018, he was exposed to psychotronic drugs from the LL Vasilev Research Facility, triggering an ascension that gave him unfathomable telekinetic powers.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Nolan Cross is not a freelance assassin who works for various criminal organizations – he is the top hitman of one particular organization, a multinational crime syndicate known only as the Embassy. The Embassy itself operates out a closely-held chain of hotels distributed throughout Europe and Asia as well as a number of former Commonwealth countries. (It has not yet managed to penetrate into North and South America, which remain firmly under the grip of El Cartel de Los Carteles.) As one of the Embassy’s elite Ambassadors (their term for assassins), Nolan Cross worked for years to eliminate turncoats, informants, and other rulebreakers who trouble the organization.

Cross ascended during his assassination of Dmitri Valkov in 2018. Valkov had been commissioned by the Embassy to acquire psychotronic drugs from the LL Vasilev Research Facility. However, rather than hand the drugs over, Valkov decided to auction them to the highest bidder – a violation of the Embassy’s strict code of “honor among thieves.” When Cross was exposed to the psychotronic pharmaceuticals during the gunfight, he underwent an immediate ascension.

Cross currently resides in Prague, in the Czech Republic. A loner by nature, his only companion is his Siberian Husky, Sherpa.

## DESIGNER’S NOTES

Cross has two basic tactics for deploying his Kundalini Power Pool. First, he can allocate his Pool’s SP into Hair-Trigger Combat Sense (for DV 14) while attacking five times per Panel with real-world firearms using Gun-Fu. Alternatively, he can allocate his Pool’s SP into Telekinesis, which can emulate both Blast and Deflection. Typically he will use Gun-Fu when he is fighting ordinary humans or weak ascendants, and Telekinesis when he needs to fight singular, powerful opposition. Less frequently, he might use Emotion Agreement to attempt to overwhelm a weak-minded foe, or Cosmic Strike to deal with a target with a low VAL .

His dog, Sherpa, is Cross’s only friend. Should Sherpa ever be killed, Cross will lose the Dependent drawback and gain the Compulsion (revenge) drawback.

## STORY HOOK

Armir Osmani (a Criminal Kingpin) was a kryetar (underboss) of one of Albania’s most feared Mafia’s families, the Banda e Lushnjës. During a visit to the United States to inspect the family’s operations, Osmani was caught by a police sting. Rather than face a lifetime sentence in a US Supermax Penitentiary, Osmani decided to become a witness for federal prosecutors. He is now in protective custody in a safehouse near Capital City (or other location of the GM’s choice) with three days to go until he testifies in court. His assigned protectors are, of course, the heroes.

But the Albanian Mafia is an “old school” criminal organization, founded on loyalty, honor, and family. The executive committee of each family, its bajrak, enforces ruthless discipline, with punitive punishment for even the slightest deviation from the family’s rules. For a member of the Albanian Mafia to betray his family is almost unheard of. For such a betrayal to go unpunished is unthinkable. In its hour of need, the Banda e Lushnjës family has turned to the Embassy, which enforces the criminal code of honor anywhere in the world. The Embassy, in turn, has guaranteed that Armir Osmani will die before he testifies in court. He has been marked for death and every Ambassador in the world knows there’s a rich reward for the kill.

How do the Embassy’s assassins know where to find Osmani? That’s up to the GM. They might have hired The Fox or Rootkit to sniff out the information. They might have a double agent highly placed within the heroes’ organization. They might have an ascendant who can locate people with Scrying or Psychic Blindsight. Whatever the case, the Embassy’s assassins will be on Osmani’s trail.

The escalating attempts on Osmani’s life should, of course, play out like a John Wick movie. The level of violence directed at Osmani and the heroes will escalate continuously into the absurd. On the first day, an Albanian-American hitman Liridon Hoxha will attempt to kill Osmani with long-range rifle fire into the safehouse (or other location). Use the Methodical Assassin template for Hoxha.

On the second day, the Outhouse Boys will attack. The Boys are a crew of Southern roughnecks from Mississippi looking to get rich with a quick hit. They’re six in number, and will arrive by way of a pick-up truck with a Dixie flag blaring country music. Use the Skilled Infantry Soldier template for each of the Outhouse Boys. Five of them have Assault Rifles... but one has a Man-Portable Anti-Tank Rocket Launcher.

On the second night, 8 ninja assassins from the Kage no Tora clan will attempt to infiltrate into the safehouse (or other location where Osmani is being kept) using stealth supported by gas grenades. Use the Ruthless Ninja template (p. 198) for the Kage no Tora assassins.

On the third day, if all else has failed, the Embassy will send Nolan Cross. And Nolan Cross has never failed a mission...

# SHADOWMANCER

In the aftermath of the Battle of Washington, ADM Hawkins ordered a nationwide talent search to find and recruit additional ascendants into service with the National Crisis Response Squadron. One of the most promising candidates we have identified to date is the Capital City vigilante Shadowmancer. This briefing has been compiled based on extensive interviews with the candidate by Dr. Gupta, Dr. Coffey, and the current Squadron team members.

Shadowmancer has revealed himself to be a Capital City police detective named Rial Porcher. Mr. Porcher was born 19 January 1990 in Atlanta, Georgia. Porcher's parents were well-to-do (his father was a city prosecutor and his mother a successful realtor) and he seems to have had an excellent childhood. He attended Frederick Douglass High School, an institution renowned for fostering an environment of learning and empowerment for the African-American community. Out of school, he was active in the local Baptist church and on weekends frequently volunteered for Hands On Atlanta.

Porcher inherited his father's strong sense of justice, which led him to enlist in the US Army military police following graduation. He was deployed to Iraq in 2011, providing security and law enforcement in the challenging environment of the war-torn country. His service there lasted for two years, during which he earned a Bronze Star.

Upon his return to the United States in August 2013, Porcher mustered out of the Army and joined the Capital City Police Department. Working as a patrol officer in the beleaguered "City of Fortune," Rial frequently volunteered for hazardous night shifts that put him up against the city's worst elements. His dedication and skill quickly saw him rise to the rank of detective in April 2016.

On 24 July 2019, Porcher's life took a dramatic turn: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Dr. Gupta reported that when Porcher briefed him on these events, the ascendant's heart rate increased to over 140bpm and the interview room was plunged into a chilling darkness. Because of the disturbing nature of these events, the details of Porcher's ascension have been classified [REDACTED] compartmented under the 2018 Homeland Emergency Response Oversight (HERO) Act.

After his ascension, Porcher adopted the moniker Shadowmancer and began operating as a vigilante. While he only targeted criminals, his grim appearance and shadowy powers lend him a sinister air and his concentrated focus appeared to witnesses as anger or hatred. Despite his many heroic endeavors, he got little press coverage, and what he did receive often describes him more like a villain than a hero. Not surprisingly, when the Squadron first encountered Shadowmancer on 22 February 2020, the team believed him to be a supervillain. Fortunately, the Squadron quickly realized Shadowmancer's heroic nature and they teamed up to successfully apprehend the rogue plant controller Kudzu in Fortune Park.

During that encounter, it became apparent that Shadowmancer was simultaneously disgusted and enthralled by Squadron member Aurora. Shadowmancer confirmed to Dr. Gupta that he views Aurora as his polar opposite: "She's light, I'm dark. She's famous and popular, I'm infamous and feared. She has brand sponsorship and sex appeal, and I think those are the marks of sellouts." Fortunately, Shadowmancer seems capable of setting aside these issues in order to work as part of the team.

While Squadron Intelligence had previously estimated Shadowmancer to have a QAP Score of about 60, current testing indicates that his QAP has substantially increased and now measures somewhere between 500 and 700. Porcher's personal intensity and single-minded focus on crimefighting seem to have effectuated something like a "second ascension" similar to that experienced by Maximilian Danneskjöld (q.v.).

# SHADOWMANCER

1000 CP, CR 700

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	7	7	7	12	7	6

34

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	13
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	8
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	14/9
JUMPING SPEED	4	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

640

RECOVERY

128

DETERMINATION

640

RECOVERY

128

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Agile Darkness Control 14 (380 CP), Lightning Reflexes 6 (12 CP), Polarized Vision 6 (11 CP), Regeneration 11 (88 CP), Super-Stamina 12 (20 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Vision 7 (21 CP), Unstable Duplication 1 (80 CP)

**Skills:** Interrogation 11, Investigation 11, Marksmanship (Blasting) 14

**Perks:** Authority (Star-Spangled Squadron, 10 CP), Famous (16 CP), Ferocious, Multitask, Principled (Code of Honor, 2 CP), Tireless, Watchful, Wealthy (1 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (four-color hero, 2 CP), Compulsion (Aurora's social media, 1 CP), Dark Secret (source of power, 1 CP), Duty (Star-Spangled Squadron, 5 CP), Hunted (Exodus, 5 CP), Notorious (9 CP), Vulnerable State: Direct Sunlight (loses Regeneration, 35 CP), Vulnerable State: Height of Day (from 11:30AM to 12:30PM, loses all Powers, Marksmanship, Multitask, Tireless, and Watchful, 125 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Rial Porcher, better known as the Shadowmancer, is the master of darkness and shadow. He never speaks of how he gained his abilities, but it must have been a disturbing event to cause his consciousness to choose powers of darkness. Whatever their origin, Rial constantly strives to push his powers to new limits. Unfortunately for him, his grim appearance and shadowy powers lend him a sinister air and his concentrated focus appears to others as anger and hatred. He is fascinated and repulsed by the Star-Spangled Squadron's current team leader, Aurora, whose bright, cheerful, and carefree demeanor is everything he is not.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Shadowmancer, as he appeared in the Ascendant Core Rules, was a 700 CP character. In the intervening period (in the game world), he has improved his ascendant abilities substantially, reflected by increasing him to 1,000 CP. He has improved his Darkness Control and Marksmanship (Blast) from 11 SPs to 14 SPs and his Ultra-Sensitive Vision from 5 to 7 SPs. He has gained 6 SPs of Lightning Reflexes and Polarized Vision. Most impressively, he has gained 11 SPs of Regeneration and 1 SP of Unstable Duplication.

When Shadowmancer uses Unstable Duplication, the Duplicate is actually his own shadow, which “detaches” from him and operates independently thereafter. Apart from appearing as a figure of pure darkness, the Duplicate is identical to Shadowmancer.

Note that Shadowmancer has two Vulnerable States. His first Vulnerable State is triggered anytime he is in direct sunlight, and prevents him from regenerating. His second Vulnerable State causes him to substantially weaken each day between 11:30AM and 12:30PM local time, when the sun is at its apex.

In presenting the 1000-CP Shadowmancer, we have assumed he has joined the Star-Spangled Squadron. If the heroes in your campaign are the new recruits into the Squadron, however, you can assume his application to join was rejected, either because of his rivalry with Aurora or because of the disturbing nature of his ascension. The details of the latter are left to the GM's discretion.

## STORY HOOK

The heroes are called to defend Capital City... from one of its greatest defenders. For reasons unknown, the Shadowmancer has begun using his powers to terrorize the very city he was sworn to protect. The press headlines are as lurid as they are repulsive: “A black day in Capital City as the Shadowmancer turns to the dark side!” screams the Capital City Times; “Shadowmancer reveals a heart of darkness!” says the Capital City Review-Journal. Egged on by the press, everyone is quick to judge Shadowmancer a supervillain - again.

But there's another villain at work: a serial killer called William “The Kaiser” Dietrich. Dietrich, a once-respected professor of history at CCU, was sent to prison in November 2018 after being convicted of a string of killings that targeted homeless African-American men. Five days ago, however, Dietrich spontaneously ascended into a mind controller. Using his newfound powers, he escaped the Delaware Correctional Center and set out to get revenge on the men who put him behind bars. And Detective Rial Porcher was the lead detective on the case... Dietrich ambushed Detective Porcher and luckily managed to dominate his mind (Orange result). It wasn't until after he implanted the order to “gradually destroy everything you love” into Porcher's mind that he discovered that his hated foe was actually an exceptionally powerful ascendant!

Since most people are unaware that Shadowmancer's secret identity is Detective Rial Porcher, no one has linked the escape of William Dietrich with the sudden villainy of Shadowmancer -- no one except Porcher's partner, Detective Louis Hernandez of the Special Crimes unit. Hernandez has long suspected his friend was secretly the Shadowmancer and now Dietrich's escape and Porcher's bad turn had confirmed his suspicions. He will contact the heroes and ask to meet up before they take on Shadowmancer to try to persuade them that Shadowmancer needs help, not hurt.

Unfortunately, Hernandez has been marked for death by Dietrich. What could give a mind-controlling serial killer more pleasure than to see Shadowmancer murder his own long-time partner and best friend? When the heroes go to Hernandez, Shadowmancer will confront them with orders to kill. Can they apprehend Shadowmancer and free him from the grips of “The Kaiser”?

Note that if the heroes are not powerful enough to handle the 1000-CP version of Shadowmancer, the GM can run this same scenario with the 700-CP version of Shadowmancer found in the core rules.

### WILLIAM “THE KAISER” DIETRICH

**Attributes:** MIG 5, AGI 5, VAL 5, RES 11, INS 7, CHA 9, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 2, Initiative 5, Reputation 9, Notoriety 11, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 480, Determination 480, Hero Points 22

**Powers:** Super-Stamina 11 (24 CP), Verbal Eye Contact Manchurian Mind Domination 11 (277 CP)

**Skills:** Profession (historian) 9

**Perks:** Criminal Connections (10 CP), Sacrificer

**Drawbacks:** Hunted (CCPD, 2 CP), Notorious (11 CP)

# THE SHADOW MAN

A series of mysterious deaths lately has caught the attention of our threat assessment analysts. In each case, the victims reported seeing a “shadow man” in the days before their death. The phenomenon of the “shadow man” is one of the most widely-reported and most disturbing of mental phenomenon. Sleep paralysis sufferers often report seeing shadowy shapes that approach them when they lie awake paralyzed. Paranoid schizophrenics may hallucinate shadowy figures at the edge of their peripheral vision. Methamphetamine addicts report the appearance of shadow men after prolonged sleep deprivation. Whatever their source, the shadow men inspire dread in those who see them. During premodern eras, these reports were taken as evidence of the existence of ghosts, shades, and other paranormal entities from folklore and myth. Such creatures were believed to be ubiquitous, though only perceptible by the enlightened or disturbed. In the 20th century, the same reports were dismissed as mere aberrations of the mind, to be cured by pharmacology. With the rise of ascendants, we no longer have the luxury of such an easy dismissal.

The victims that have come to our attention include Jerry Boyar, Warden of the William C. Holman Correctional Facility in Escambia County, Alabama; Henry Hippogriff, Judge of the 15th Judicial Circuit Court in Montgomery, Alabama; Dr. Felicia Rich, a psychiatrist employed by the Alabama Department of Corrections; and Dancy Winehouse, a resident of Montgomery, Alabama.

The thread uniting these individuals is that each participated in the 2008-2010 trial and/or 2019 execution of the so-called “Montgomery Monster.” Throughout the early 2000s, Montgomery was plagued by a rash of missing persons, mostly college-aged women. In October 2007, one of the missing women, Dancy Winehouse, surfaced with a terrifying tale of abduction and assault. According to Ms. Winehouse, she had been kidnapped by a man named Robert Britain, who had taken her to an abandoned slaughterhouse north of Selma Highway. There she had witnessed two other women be slain, bled out, and processed into pork chop. While captured, Ms. Winehouse suffered a severe flare-up of lupus, a condition that led her captor to dismiss her as “unsuitable” and led him to seek out a new victim. She escaped while he was hunting for her replacement.

Police quickly moved to arrest Mr. Britain. They found him on site at the slaughterhouse, where he quickly surrendered. During interrogation, he happily confessed to the crimes. Speaking without any apparent emotion or remorse, Britain explained that since childhood he had suffered from sleep paralysis, during which he’d be visited by “shadow people.” At first he had feared the dark shapes, but eventually he had “befriended” them, and had learned how to “join them” after he died. His killings were sacrifices to ensure his survival after death as one of the shadow people. Mr. Britain was examined by Dr. Felicia Rich, who found him legally sane. In her notes, she recorded that Mr. Britain was ready to “accept death” because “his work was done.”

Mr. Britain was trialed at Montgomery Circuit Court, and a jury found him guilty of 19 counts of first-degree murder. Judge Hippogriff sentenced him to death, and the Montgomery Monster was executed on December 14, 2019, by Warden Boyar of the Holman Correctional Facility. Ms. Winehouse witnessed the execution and described it as “horrifying”; Britain’s flesh and hair caught fire from the current, and his corpse smoked and burned.

A month thereafter, Ms. Winehouse was dead, and the other deaths followed. The cause of death in each case was malignant cardiac arrhythmia. Only Judge Hippogriff had a past history of heart disease. Due to the strange circumstances, Montgomery police investigated the cases. Hippogriff and Boyar were survived by their spouses, while Winehouse was survived by her live-in boyfriend. Dr. Rich had no spouse or roommates but had left behind a dream journal. In all cases, the victims had been having vivid and terrifying nightmares for days prior to their eventual death, and all of the decedents’ reports included a sighting of a shadowy figure, black mass, or dark man.

Follow-up at the gravesite of Robert Britain found his corpse still within its coffin, which ended speculation that he was still alive and carrying out a scheme of revenge. Dr. Gupta theorizes that Mr. Britain may have ascended in some manner that transcended his corporeal form and is now continuing his habit of murder as a “shadow person.” An alternative possibility – that the shadow people are a real phenomenon that predates ascension – cannot be ruled out, nor can the possibility that an ascendant “copycat” is operating.

# THE SHADOW MAN

880 CP, CR 250

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

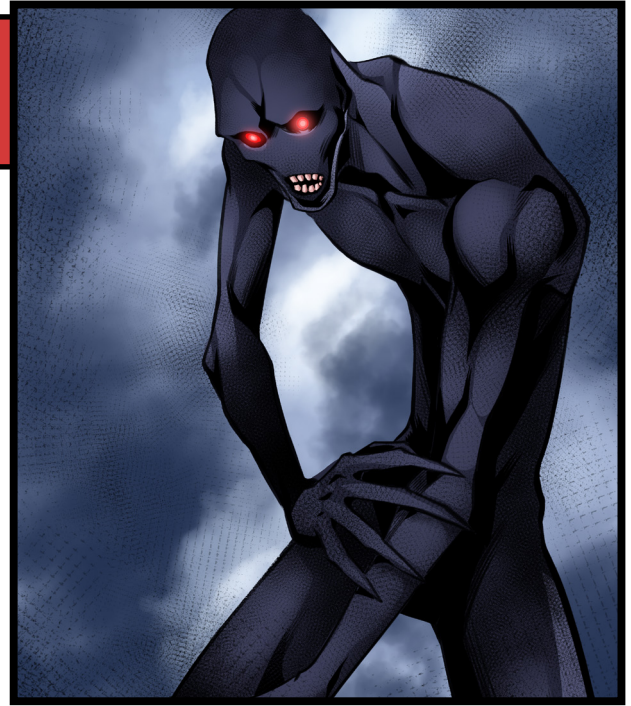
HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	5	5	5	11	3	13

28

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	10
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	0
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	13/18
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

960

RECOVERY

192

DETERMINATION

480

RECOVERY

96

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Dark Vision 8 (21 CP), Immortality 5 (20 CP), Lacerating Strike 13 (32 CP), Lightning Reflexes 5 (10 CP), Permanent Incorporeality 13 (190 CP), Regeneration 13 (129 CP), Resilience 13 (52 CP), Self-only Criteria-Limited Teleportation (to/from headquarters) 11 (94 CP), Super-Stamina 13 (32 CP), Terrifying Charismatic Illusion 13 (205 CP) with Miscellaneous Power Flaws (can only target sleeping characters, -68 CP; illusion must include Shadow Man's corporeal form, -34 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (urban legends) 5, Martial Arts 13, Profession (butcher) 5

**Perks:** Headquarters (abandoned slaughterhouse, 10 CP), Undead (5 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (sadism, 5 CP), Disturbing Appearance (shadowy silhouette, 2 CP), Mute (10 CP), Notorious (18 CP), Unconsummable (2 CP), Vulnerable State: Ambient Light (loses Dark Vision, Lacerating Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Regeneration, Resilience, Teleportation; gains Permanent Psychic Invisibility 13, 232 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Robert Britain, the "Montgomery Monster", was serial killer who believed his murders would ensure his survival as a "shadow person" after death. Captured, tried, and sentenced to death, he ascended on the electric chair to become the Shadow Man, an incorporeal consciousness capable of causing terrifying dreams in the minds of sleeping victims.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

At the moment that Robert Britain was electrocuted, he ascended and became the Shadow Man. As the Shadow Man, he is an incorporeal consciousness – an undead spirit – capable of causing terrifying dreams in the minds of sleeping victims. Sadistic and schizophrenic while he was alive, Robert Britain has now become truly insane. As an incorporeal undead being, he can no longer eat, drink, speak, or engage in any of the activities that make and keep us human. Every pleasure of the flesh denied him, the Shadow Man exists merely so that his cruelty can be satiated.

Whether the “shadow people” are real, or figments of Britain’s imagination that caused his unique ascension, is left to the GM to decide. If the “shadow people” are actual entities, they might be linked to the Court of Night or opposed by the Night Stalkers.

## DESIGNER’S NOTES

Because he is permanently incorporeal, the Shadow Man cannot directly take advantage of his Martial Arts and Lacerating Strike attributes. However, he can exploit those abilities via illusion. When he comes upon a slumbering victim, the Shadow Man can use his Terrifying Charismatic Illusion to insert himself into the target’s dreams. Appearing as a burn-scarred serial killer with a chef’s knife, the Shadow-Man can then make illusory attacks against the target with an AV and EV of 13, dealing Psychic damage to Determination and then Neural damage to Health. The victim can defend with his own attributes (as if he were awake) but does not actually awaken until he succeeds on a Challenge Action to disbelieve the Illusion.

Note that the Shadow Man can structure the environment of the illusory dream to suit the victim’s fears, but the Illusion must always incorporate his own prior (corporeal) form – He cannot use his Illusion to appear as someone else, attack as another character, etc. Often his Illusions incorporate the slaughterhouse he used during his mortal life. Shadow Man’s Terrifying Illusion was discounted by 33% for only being able to target sleeping characters, reducing its cost by  $205 \times 33\% = 68$  CP. It was then discounted by 25% for being restricted to illusions of himself, reducing its cost by  $(205 - 68) \times 25\% = 34$  CP.

The Shadow Man, as befits his name, must operate from the shadows. Under direct light, the Shadow Man is rendered powerless and vanishes to the naked eye, though his shadowy presence can still be detected with cameras and other technological devices. (Gaining Permanent Psychic Invisibility from a Vulnerable State is a violation of the rules, but we’ve made an exception here because it’s so flavorful and not overpowering.) When Shadow Man’s Vulnerable State is triggered, he typically retreats to a shadowed area and uses his Teleportation power to depart. Sometimes, however, he may lurk unseen until his victim turns off the lights... If a target takes to lighting their bedroom brightly at all times, so that the Shadow Man can never use his powers on them while sleeping, he will Power Stunt his Illusion into 2 SPs of Telekinesis or 1 SP of Electrical Control to manipulate the environment, by flipping a switch on a circuit breaker, deactivating a generator, etc.

If hard-pressed by conscious enemies, the Shadow Man will use his Terrifying Charismatic Illusion to make a Power Stunt. He only has 102.5 CPs to work with on these Power Stunts, since his Power Flaws won’t apply. Common choices are either 12 SPs of Charismatic Eye-Contact Emotion Adjustment (fear) or 13 SPs of Murderous Eye-Contact Emotion Blast. He sometimes Power Stunts a paralytic effect on victims who wake up, calculated as Charismatic Eye-Contact Paralysis of 4 SPs.

When not actively hunting his victims, the Shadow Man lurks in his headquarters, the condemned slaughterhouse where he conducted his 19 murders. It is a vast, dark, and run-down structure, its windows blocked over and its rusting machinery and cracked concrete floor stained with blood. The Shadow Man has used telekinesis to destroy all of the electrical lights in the slaughterhouse. (Note that Shadow Man’s Teleportation has a special Criteria of Destination modifier with a -2 variable cost modifier. When in his headquarters, he can teleport anywhere. When he is anywhere else, he can only teleport back to his headquarters.)

## STORY HOOK

In the course of his revenge on those who caught and executed him, Britain has mastered his powers. Ordinary humans are no longer much of a challenge or thrill, so he has turned his attention to more exciting prey: ascendants. His first attack will target a well-known moderately powerful ascendant, ideally one that is known personally to the player characters. Once that target has been slain, he will choose another ascendant, and then another, eventually targeting one of the player characters themselves.

The Shadow Man will avoid targeting ascendants who are known to have Mental powers or who are known to be Tireless, preferring those with lower RES and ordinary sleep schedules. If unable to directly assail an ascendant, he will begin to target the ascendant’s family members (Dependents).

# THE SHRINK

A series of as-yet unexplained incidents has alerted Squadron intelligence to the possibility that a mind controller may be operating in the Greater D.C. metropolitan area.

Incident #1: On August 15, 2020, James Falconi, a 14-year-old freshman at T.C. Williams High School, was paralyzed when his spinal cord was crushed during tryouts for the high school football team. Falconi had been born with osteogenesis imperfect (brittle bone disease), and although his condition was mild, he had been warned to avoid high-risk activities like football all his life. The tryout was an uncharacteristic choice for a boy his parents described as “bookish” and “cautious.” Both claimed to be unaware that he even made the attempt until receiving a call from the coach about their son’s accident. Falconi’s family had moved to Alexandria to give their son a fresh start after severe bullying at their prior home in Manhattan. When interviewed about why he had decided to try out, Falconi offered up stock phrases such as “I needed to live my dreams” and “I had to show the world that I wasn’t disabled” in an almost parrot-like fashion.

Incident #2: On January 20, 2021, David Bronson, chief of staff for Congressman Langley Garrison, was arrested alongside his boss after leaking a series of recorded calls in which Congressman Garrison and he accepted bribes for political votes. During his police interrogation, Bronson repeatedly explained his behaviors in a robotic fashion, stating, “I knew I would feel better if I was honest” and “I am a better man for doing this.” He hanged himself in his jail cell after he was indicted.

Incident #3: On February 7, 2021, Dinesh Ramada, CEO of Alexandria-based AI start-up Polyhedral Intelligence, was ousted from his own company after a series of strange policy decisions. First, Ramada re-hired former CTO Calvin Carville, then signed over half his shares to Carville, telling the Board that “all of the ideas that power Polyhedral are really Calvin’s.” A vote by the Board the following month led to his firing, with Carville appointed as the new CEO. Ramada then gave a strange interview to Wired, notable for his monotone speaking and repeated stock phrases. The former CEO was unable to find work and is currently homeless.

The Squadron’s own Dr. Gupta has extensively researched ascendant psychics. He has found that monotone or robot-like expression of implanted ideas is the hallmark of an inexperienced mind controller attempting deep (so-called “Manchurian”) mental domination. Dr. Gupta theorizes that the mind controller may have felt guilty after the first incident and held back from using his powers for several months. There has been no fourth incident, so either the mind controller has ceased his efforts, or he has perfected his abilities.

There is only one person of interest in the case: Dr. Philbert Mandelbrot, a well-known “celebrity” psychiatrist based in Alexandria, Virginia. Dr. Mandelbrot had treated young Falconi for depression and treated Bronson’s wife for bipolar disorder. He has no apparent ties to Dinesh Ramada but had treated Calvin Carville for anxiety following his termination from Polyhedral. Because of his connections to all three victims, he was flagged for interrogation.

Dr. Mandelbrot was highly cooperative. He shared his notes on all three patients and agreed to screening by Star-Spangled Squadron. His test results showed expression of QAP genes known to be correlated with psychic abilities. Thereafter his psychic abilities were tested using the Coffey-Lindgren protocols to trigger involuntarily and reflexive expression of maximum powers. Unfortunately, Dr. Mandelbrot proved to have exceptionally weak abilities that attenuated rapidly with range. It is possible that Mandelbrot has figured out a method of combining psychoactive drugs or therapeutic techniques with his psychic abilities, but it seems unlikely these could yield deep mind control of the sort evidenced by the victims. For now the cases remain unsolved, and Dr. Mandelbrot remains a person of interest but not a suspect.

# THE SHRINK

875 CP, CR 250

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	<b>MIG</b>	<b>AGI</b>	<b>VAL</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>INS</b>	<b>CHA</b>	<b>28</b>
VALUE	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	<b>0</b>	INITIATIVE	<b>3</b>
WEIGHT	<b>3</b>	INCOME	<b>9</b>
RUNNING SPEED	<b>3</b>	REPUTATION	<b>16/10</b>
JUMPING SPEED	<b>0</b>	PASSIVE SPOTTING	<b>8</b>
FLYING SPEED	<b>0</b>	PASSIVE LISTENING	<b>0</b>



HEALTH

**160**

RECOVERY

**32**

DETERMINATION

**320**

RECOVERY

**64**

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Parapsychiatry 13 (Empathy, Emotion Adjustment, Manchurian Mind Domination, Memory Manipulation, Mind Drain, Neural Mind Blast, Protective Deflection, 474 CP) with Power Flaw – attenuating microscopic range (-156 CP), Hovering Flight 0 (20 CP), Shrinking 75 (105 CP), Super-Intelligence 8 (24 CP), Super-Stamina 8 (20 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (stock trading) 10, Medicine 10, Persuasion 10, Power Aptitude (Parapsychiatry) 13

**Perks:** Authority (licensed psychiatrist, 2 CP), Contacts (politicians, celebrities, 40 CP), Famous (celebrity therapist, 16 CP), Multilingual (French, 1 CP), Multitask, Wealthy (10 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (“getting inside people’s heads,” 2 CP), Dark Secret (parapsychiatric practices, 5 CP), Dependents (mentally ill husband, 2 CP), Duty (psychiatrist practice, 2 CP), Notorious (10 CP), Unheroic (20 CP), Vulnerable State: Distressed by Husband (loses all Powers, RES drops to 5, CHA drops to 5, when within line of sight of husband, 9 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Dr. Philbert Mandelbrot is a renowned psychiatrist and neuroscientist with a prestigious educational background from Cornell University and Yale University’s School of Medicine, whose groundbreaking work in the field of neuroplasticity with victims of chronic post-traumatic stress has made significant contributions to clinical psychiatry. However, following his husband’s descent into paranoid schizophrenia and his own subsequent mental breakdown, Mandelbrot turned to psychoactive drugs, which triggered an ascension. By shrinking to a tiny size, he is able to penetrate into the brain cells of his patients and perform psychic surgery on their minds. He aims to transform them into his idealized vision of mentally healthy individuals, but his interventions often have grave or disastrous consequences. He’s a shrink who can really get inside your head.

## BACKGROUND NOTES

Dr. Philbert Mandelbrot was already at the top of his career before he ascended. He studied psychology and biology as an undergraduate at Cornell University, then attended the psychiatry program at Yale University's School of Medicine. After getting his M.D. he also earned a PhD in Neuroscience, then took a fellowship at Johns Hopkins working with victims of chronic post-traumatic stress. His landmark paper, *Implications for Treatment of Neuroplasticity in CPTSD Patients*, was published in the Annual Review of Clinical Psychiatry, and became the basis for his best-selling book *Your Brain is Plastic But Your Heart is Gold*, which was the #1 self-help book on Amazon for eighteen weeks. Mandelbrot moved to Alexandria, Virginia and established a private practice treating celebrities and politicians. He and his husband, Roland Applebaum, were the toast of the town.

The fact that Mandelbrot was a vain egoist with narcissistic personality disorder didn't stop his success – it gave him the confidence he needed. Everything was going his way. He had always been obsessed with the human brain, with the human *mind*. He found his life's calling in psychiatry, where through a combination of pharmacology, analytic psychology, cognitive therapy, and hypnosis, he had learned to “get inside people's heads” to understand the unconscious and subconscious drivers of their behavior. And then he could use his great insights and superior wisdom to help them make the *right* life choices – right according to Dr. Philip Mandelbrot, that is.

Then dear Roland began to develop paranoid schizophrenia, and all of Dr Mandelbrot's protocols and treatments proved for naught. Nothing Mandelbrot could do seemed to help his husband. Mandelbrot had a nervous breakdown, his self-esteem collapsing from his failure. Roland spiraled into madness and was committed to avoid self-harm. Alone and distraught, Mandelbrot began to explore alternatives to traditional medicine. He joined the Church of Ascension. He studied Jungian psychology. He took to dosing himself with entheogenic compounds, first in micro-doses and later quite large ones, hoping to discover insights into his husband's troubled mind. Eventually Mandelbrot was approached by a friend within the Church of Ascension who offered him a powerful psychoactive drug allegedly designed by the US military. (It was, in fact, a replica of the compounds once used in trials by Project Ascension.)

Mandelbrot took the strange drug on July 18, 2020. The last thing he remembers from that night was petting his cat, Nemo, and watching the Star-Spangled Squadron and Exodus battle for control of downtown D.C. on TV. Then he fell asleep.

He woke to a nightmare world. Everywhere he looked he saw sleek white towers the size of skyscrapers erupting from black pits in the ground. Monstrous crustacean megafauna moved across a pulpy, flesh-like landscape, the white towers swaying like pine needles in the wind as they passed. The sky was a wan yellow, the sun tiny and dim.

Dr Philbert Mandelbrot had shrunk to microscopic size, and he was trapped on the back of his cat, prey for dust mites. The stress of his confrontation with poor vacuum cleaning led his other powers to surface. Mandelbrot was soon soaring through the skyscraper canyons of Nemo's fur, frying dust mites with his mind blast. As he gusted over his cat's mountain-sized ears, Mandelbrot suddenly realized that, for the first time in his life, he could get inside someone's head... Shrinking himself even further, he entered Nemo's brain, riding along neurons to its corpus callosum and taking control of its primitive mammalian mind. Memories, sensations, everything was under his control!

The next day, Mandelbrot went to the asylum where Roland had been committed, certain he could cure his husband. But he didn't. His ego had fractured. The moment he saw Roland he regressed back to an anxious and depressed state where his ascendant abilities withered away. He was unable to help his husband. In a screaming rage, he blamed Roland for his own flaws and fled the asylum.

Unable to save his husband, Mandelbrot decided to use his powers to “help” his patients. Thus the Shrink was born! By “getting inside their head,” Mandelbrot could erase traumatic memories, implant suggestions for self-improvement, remove roadblocks to personal development, and eliminate negative self-talk. He was like a physical trainer of the mind, turning flabby weak-willed people into paragons of psychological wellness! True, his first attempt led to young James Falconi getting paralyzed, a terrible tragedy that gave the doctor pause. But, after ruminating on the issue, Mandelbrot decided that Falconi's accident was not his fault. Psychologically Falconi had been ready for a bigger world; just one of life's injustices that his body wasn't up for it. Still, he decided to take a subtler approach with his patients, sticking to small “tweaks” and adjustments.

His circumspect behavior only lasted a few months. Then Janice Bronson accidentally revealed her husband David's corrupt duplicity. It was easy to convince Janice to bring her husband in for a joint session, so that Mandelbrot could get inside David's head to make him do the right thing. It was very sad that Bronson later took his own life and left his wife penniless, of course, but wasn't it just? After all the same could be said of the sad situation with Ramada. Of course Ramada wasn't a patient, and technically he'd had to trespass into his home in order to enter his brain – but he owed it to his patient, Calvin Carville, didn't he?

Dr. Mandelbrot's visit from Dr Gupta and the Star-Spangled Squadron should have scared him, but it didn't. It infuriated him. It was terribly insulting that they even noticed his handiwork – his patients had been helped, not turned “robotic.” But, having noticed his work, the authorities should at least have given him credit for it. What nonsense to have his powers dismissed as too weak?!

He would show them what Dr. Philbert Mandelbrot could achieve. First, he would mentally transform his patients into the happy, positive, self-actualized people he knew they really were. And if he could get access to the right patients, patients with power and influence -- he would transform the world!

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

The Shrink's **Parapsychiatry** power pool has a custom Power Flaw of **Attenuating Microscopic Range**. The Shrink's powers only work effectively at microscopic distances (-8 SPs or less) and degrade with distance. His various mental powers must be targeted against the target's corpus collosum or anterior commissure, the portions of the brain that control communication between the hemispheres. If the Shrink is -8 SPs from the target's corpus collosum, he can use the Powers at their full SP. If he's further away than -8 SPs, each SP of Distance greater reduces the effective SP of any power he uses by 1 SP. If a power has 0 or fewer effective SPs against a target, it cannot be used against that target.

**EXAMPLE:** The Shrink currently has allocated 7 SPs of Parapsychiatry to Emotion Adjustment and 6 SPs to Empathy. His patient Demeter La Croix, a French diplomat, has just entered his office and is standing 1 SP (10 feet) away. He would like to use Emotion Adjustment to make her agreeable. Because of the Range, the Shrink must reduce the effective SPs of his Emotion Adjustment and Empathy by  $[1 - (-8)] = 9$  SPs each, putting them at -2 and -3 SPs respectively. He cannot use either power.

That's no good! The Shrink spends an Automatic Action to shift all of his Parapsychiatry SPs to Emotion Adjustment. Now he can deploy  $(13 - 9) = 4$  SPs of Emotion Adjustment against Demeter. Unfortunately, she has 5 SPs of RES. With an RV of -1, the Shrink rolls a 64 and the Action fails with a white result.

Now the Shrink walks over and kisses Demeter on the cheek. Given that the human skull is about -3 SPs in diameter, his range to her corpus collosum in the center of the skull is now just -4 SPs. The reduced range means that his penalty to his effective SPs is  $(-4) - (-8) = 4$  SP. He can use Emotion Adjustment at  $(13 - 4) = 9$  SPs, for an RV of +4. A roll of 27 yields Orange result - Extremely Agreeable.

The psychiatrist leads his very willing patient to his patient sofa and has her sit down. “Close your eyes and don't open them until I tell you!” he says. Demeter shuts her eyes tight. The Shrink then uses his 75 SPs of Shrinking to reduce himself to a height of -25 SPs. He makes a Microscopic Insertion trick attack with Total Surprise. He's so small that he can pass through her cell membranes; she doesn't feel a thing. The Shrink flies through her brain until he reaches Demeter's corpus collosum. Now he can use his Powers at their full SP.

When microscopically inserted into a target, the Shrink typically uses a few SP on Protective Deflection to ward off antibodies, T-cells, and other immune defenses. He does not have Air Filtration or Air Supply, so when inside the bodies of his victims he has to hold his breath, limiting him to spending no more than 10 SPs (one hour) inside.

## STORY HOOK

The “friend” from the Church of Ascension who gave Dr. Mandelbrot the pills that unlocked his powers is actually an undercover Exodus operative called Umbar. Umbar monitors the influential DC Church of the Ascension for prospective recruits, pro-ascendant politicians, and other useful allies. From time to time, he shares the Project Ascension pharmaceuticals with a would-be ascendant.

Over the last year, Umbar has provided the pills to several people, with results mostly ranging from ineffective to disastrous. None of the pill takers have ascended, except one – Dr. Mandelbrot. Now Umbar has approached Dr. Mandelbrot with an offer he cannot refuse. If Dr. Mandelbrot will begin to target his powers against US government officials to make them pro-Exodus, Maximum Leader will use his cosmic power to cure Roland of his mental illness. When politicians in Washington begin supporting Exodus, the heroes are sent to investigate whether the suspected mind controller is to blame.

# FLASHMOB

Flashmob is an ascended burglar who is wanted for a string of crimes on the Atlantic seaboard. Her most famous heists include stealing Dali's "Constancy of Memory" from the Museum of Modern Art in New York City; Browning's Auto-5 prototype from the Atlantic Museum of American History in Capital City; and the rare coin collection from the Money Museum in Atlanta. Her quantitative assessment of power (QAP) is 60, making her a military-grade threat.

Flashmob was born Alice Glass in Cincinnati, Ohio on October 17th, 1996. Alice's father died of a heart attack when she was 7 years old; her mother died of lymphoma before Alice was 10. In both cases, Alice found her parent's body. There were no surviving grandparents, so Alice was thereafter in foster care. The loss of her parents seems to have profoundly affected Alice. Her childhood medical report, unsealed under authority of Section 8 of the Hero Act, shows that she was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. She also maintained several imaginary companions throughout adolescence. These were embodied in various stuffed toys and dolls, of which she was an avid, perhaps obsessive, collector. Her childhood therapist, Dr. Abigail Justice, noted, "Alice's hyperactivity seems to arise from an age-inappropriate fear of death. She wants to live fast because she thinks she'll die young. Her imaginary companions join her on various misadventures, defending her from the sense of abandonment and loneliness she would otherwise feel."

In her high school years, Alice drifted into drugs and petty crime. At 18, she left foster care to move in with her boyfriend, a drug dealer. She self-medicated with methamphetamines, eventually becoming an addict, and landed in jail after street racing a stolen Porsche at 132mph. There were no other cars on the road; asked by the arresting officer who she was racing, Alice said, "Myself."

Alice spent the next two years at Cincinnati's River City Correctional Center. During her period of confinement, the nation transformed: American Eagle had his confrontation with Manticore at the Battle of Atlanta, the Church of Ascension went public, and the Star-Spangled Squadron took flight. When Alice became free in 2019, she moved to Atlanta and joined the burgeoning Church of Ascension there. Genetic testing sponsored by the Church revealed she had partial activation of the ASKC-6 and SKRA exons. After a brief trial period, she was fast-tracked for advanced psychotronic training despite her criminal record on the approval of Kaya Ramakananda. By June 2020, she had begun to manifest superhuman speed of thought and movement. Alice was, to all appearances, a devout pupil of the Church's teachings, and for a period of three months even worked as a motivational speaker for the Atlanta chapter.

Unfortunately, superspeed was not the only power Alice had developed. She had also gained the ability to duplicate herself into four identical copies. Whatever moral self-improvement Alice Prime professed to have achieved, it was not evident in her duplicates. While Alice Prime was leading motivational seminars and meditating on dharma, Alice 2, Alice 3, and Alice 4 were stealing art from local galleries, running contraband for friends, and causing traffic accidents with high-speed racing. At the time, she managed to conceal her crimes, and only later has forensic investigation deduced her past activities. Alice actually got caught because Alice 2 and 3 went on Tinder dates with two different men simultaneously, unaware that the men were friends, and one was a member of the Church.

When her (literal) duplicity was revealed, the Church kicked her out of the organization for concealing the scope of her powers. Alice went underground thereafter, adopted her Flashmob identity, and began her crime spree. Flashmob seems to operate on her own. (For simplicity we retain the singular pronoun, although Dr Gupta has argued that Flashmob is now a collective.) There is no evidence that Flashmob has joined Exodus, El Cartel de Los Carteles, or other criminal organizations. Flashmob could evolve into a greater threat over time, and as such is on our watch list.

At this time, Flashmob's whereabouts are unknown. Given the nature of her powers, she could have several "whereabouts" at once, and change them rapidly. Given Flashmob's personification of her collectibles in childhood, and obsessive tendencies, however, Dr. Gupta believes that Flashmob probably does have a headquarters of some sort where she collects her ill-gotten artifacts. Locating this headquarters will likely be key to capturing her.

# FLASHMOB

720 CP, CR 60

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	3	5	5	5	4	5

20

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	10
WEIGHT	2	INCOME	6
RUNNING SPEED	11	REPUTATION	5/12
JUMPING SPEED	1	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

30

RECOVERY

6

DETERMINATION

60

RECOVERY

12

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Concussive Strike 8 (20 CP), Duplication 2 (160 CP), Running 11 (2 CP), Superspeed 5 (175 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (collectibles) 7, Escape Artist 7, Infiltration 7, Marksmanship (shooting) 7, Parkour 10, Stealth 10

**Perks:** Criminal Connections (guns and drugs, 10 CP), Headquarters (2 CP), Mobile Defense Expertise, Multitask, Sacrificer, Sex Appeal, Tireless, Wealthy (5 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (hyperactivity, 2 CP), Compulsion (collector of rare curiosities, 2 CP), Dependents (Mr. Fluffernutter and friends, 2 CP), Hunted (arrest warrants, 5 CP), Notorious (12 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Alice Glass, now known as the ascendant Flashmob, is a notorious burglar with the ability to duplicate herself into four identical copies, each capable of independent action at superspeed. She was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1996, suffered a traumatic childhood leading to a life of petty crimes, and later discovered her superhuman abilities through the Church of Ascension in Atlanta. While her exact location remains unknown, her past obsession with collectibles suggests she may have a headquarters for her stolen items, which could provide the key to her capture.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Squadron Intelligence is correct that Flashmob has a headquarters. It's a three-bedroom home on a quarter-acre lot in suburban Capital City. That's where she keeps her most precious possession, her childhood collection of stuffed friends, led by a plush panda named Mr. Fluffernutter. Flashmob enjoys turning off her own Superspeed with one copy of herself, while her other three copies use their own Superspeed to animate the stuffed animals and act out stories and adventures. When out running heists, she sometimes leaves one duplicate behind to guard Mr. Fluffernutter and friends.

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Unlike most ascendants, Flashmob lacks any SPs of Super-Stamina. She is no hardier than a normal woman. In combat, she compensates by staying hyper-mobile, using acrobatic maneuvers at superspeed via Parkour to become virtually impossible to hit (DV 15). She typically reserves two Automatic Actions per Page for use with her Sacrificer Perk, so anyone who *does* manage to land a blow on her is almost certain to find an innocent bystander in the way.

**Errata:** Duplication power in Ascendant's first printing was in error. The power should offer a total of 2 instances of the character at 1 SP, one the "prime" version and the other a duplicate. At 2 SP, there are 4 instances of the character (one "prime" and three duplicates); at 3 SP there are 6 instances; and so on. The Power has been corrected in the second printing.

## STORY HOOK

Dreadnaught Security has just been hired to protect the Atlantic Museum of American History. A new exhibit, "Early Works of American Toy Manufacturers," is launching tomorrow, and the curators are terrified that the valuable 19th century dolls and gizmos will be stolen by the world's fastest burglar, Flashmob.

While auditing security of the facility, the Dreadnaught team meets Lisa Sandhurst, a morbidly obese freelance journalist who is writing a story about the new exhibit for *Variety*. Ms. Sandhurst asks if she can accompany them on their audit and write up their deeds in her story. Dreadnaught HQ is happy for the publicity. Sandhurst is a bit eccentric, having a tendency to talk to herself a lot, but is very sweet and very knowledgeable about the collection.

Lisa Sandhurst is actually Flashmob, who has recently discovered that she can duplicate herself *within* herself, and then partially extrude bits and pieces, creating the appearance of the 400 lb Ms. Sandhurst. (In game terms, she can Power Stunt Replication, changing her shape to resemble the obese Ms. Sandhurst.)

If Flashmob's ploy is not discovered, she will use her position as a "journalist" to get as much information as possible about the team's strengths, weaknesses, and security protocols before launching her heist on the second night of the exhibit.

If Flashmob's ploy *is* discovered, she will split into four duplicates and attempt to speedily escape, with each duplicate heading into a separate destination. If any duplicate survives, she will attempt her heist once her other copies "respawn."

# COSTA DE MORTA

Uxía Torres is a 23-year-old woman from a small fishing town in Galicia, a region in northwestern Spain. This part of Spain is called "Costa de la Muerte" (Death Coast), due to the hundreds of shipwrecks that happened over the centuries along its beautiful but treacherous shores.

One of the casualties of the Death Coast was Uxía's father, Aleixo, who died in a raging sea storm when she was only 14 years old. Aleixo's death left her and her mother, Margarida, in poverty. Despite being a good student, Torres had to leave high school to work as "percebeira", or barnacle catcher, picking seafood from the reefs. It is a high-risk, low-pay job, despite the high prices that such delicacies reach on the market, but in a poverty-stricken region like this, it was also one of the very few honest jobs a high-school dropout could apply for. Torres' mother had herself been a percebeira, but had to stop working after too many injuries.

Being a percebeira requires a great deal of agility, stamina and willpower, but Torres had inherited her mother's talents. She swam through stormy waters and climbed up to the highest and slipperiest reefs, the ones that even the most experienced percebeiras didn't dare to. And she did it every day -- until 16 January 2020, when a raging storm eerily similar to that which had claimed her father's life threatened to take hers. Torres clung to the rocks with all her strength, but it was not enough to resist the merciless winds and waves. Eventually, she fell to the sea, the same sea where her father died years ago.

But she did not die.

When she hit the bottom of the sea, she ascended. Her body floated upwards, and when her head emerged to the surface, all the water inside her lungs was expelled through her mouth. Her body had been rebuilt to breathe and see underwater, as well as to survive under high pressure. The ascension also improved her already above-average agility and stamina to a superhuman level, allowing her to swim and climb rocks effortlessly. But Uxía Torres discovered she could do more than thrive in water: she could control it.

Like many people who unexpectedly ascend, Torres seems to have been unsure what to do with her powers. While ascension had by this time become a well-known phenomenon she seems to have rejected the notion of being a superhero as too "Hollywood." At the same time, it seemed pointless to keep working on her job and becoming some kind of super-fisherwoman.

In the end, the question answered itself. On February 2020 2020, while Torres was practicing her water control powers, a speedboat full of illegal drugs arrived to the beach where she was training. Rumors of drug smuggling were not uncommon on the Costa de la Muerte (in fact, Galicia is one of the main ports of call of the drug trade routes between South America and Europe) but it was her first run-in with actual smugglers and she was immediately struck by the wealth they were transporting. The drug smugglers spotted the bikini-clad ascendant on the beach watching them and decided they didn't want any witnesses. They raised their guns, and Torres raised her hands. A moment later a blast of water threw the thugs to the sand. Then a fountain of water erupted inside the closest thug's lungs, drowning him. Realizing that Torres was an ascendant, most of the thugs ran away. But one remained: their boss, Bieito Lino. Lino was, apparently, a man who knew talent when he saw it. He offered the young Torres a job.

Torres had no prior criminal record before she encountered Bieito Lino. Why Torres took his job remains unknown. Maybe it was her lack of father figure, maybe she was tired of risking her life for petty cash, or maybe she simply succumbed to the corruption of power. Whatever the case, she quickly became an indispensable asset as Lino climbed through the ranks of the Spanish underworld, hiring her services as an assassin. She adopted the codename Costa da Morte as a reminder of her origin, and as a warning of what happens to those who oppose her.

Ironically, Torres succeeded so well that Bieito Lino attracted the attention of the authorities. He was arrested on 11 October 2020, and his testimony to investigators about Torres provides the basis of most of this profile of his former associate. Since Lino's arrest, Torres has gone underground. Her present whereabouts and employer are unknown.

# COSTA DE MORTA

700 CP, CR 60

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA
VALUE	5	11	5	6	6	5

20

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	5
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	5
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	5
JUMPING SPEED	2	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
SWIMMING SPEED	8	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

480

RECOVERY

96

DETERMINATION

80

RECOVERY

16

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Agile Water Control 11 (256 CP), Super-Stamina 11 (24 CP), Underwater Adaptation 13 (11 CP), Underwater Vision 3 (2 CP), Wall-Crawling 11 (6 CP)

**Skills:** Avocation (Turkish soap operas) 11 (6 CP)

**Perks:** Criminal Connections (20 CP), Multilingual (English, Galician), Tireless, Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Dependent (sick mother, 2 CP), Duty (Spanish underworld, 2 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Uxía Torres grew up poor in a small fishing town in Galicia, a region in northwestern Spain called "Costa de la Muerte" (Death Coast). To support her ailing mother, she worked as a "percebeira", or barnacle catcher, picking seafood from the reefs, a dangerous job that almost caused her death. Instead, she ascended into a powerful water controller. Unfortunately, Uxía – now known as Costa De Morta – was seduced by the easy money of crime, and has become an assassin and smuggler for the Spanish underworld.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Costa da Morte continues to work as a freelance operative in the Spanish underworld. There are strong historical ties between Galicia and Argentina (to the point that Argentinians call Spanish people "Gallegos") and the drug trade routes between Colombia and the Netherlands often use Galicia as an intermediate port of call. In such operations, Costa da Morte is typically hired as a convoy bodyguard; though she is not great in a "fair fight", she can control the environment in many useful ways, manipulating the surrounding waters to keep heroes at bay or help the drug smugglers with a fast, clean getaway.

Where Costa da Morte really earns her pay is in assassination. Whenever her employer wants to get rid of someone, be it an honest politician, a rival mob boss, or whatever, Costa da Morte can use her water control to kill her target, either by dehydration or drowning. She adapts her method to the target's environment, so that the death will be overlooked as natural causes. As she has become increasingly callous over time, she has grown fond of torturing captured enemies with slow drops of water on their forehead.

Costa da Morte's only redeeming quality is that she genuinely cares for her mother. Uxia sends her mother about 80% of her earnings, and although her mother is smart enough to know that it's dirty money, she has no clue about her daughter's powers.

## STORY HOOK

Over the past six weeks, five deputies in El Congreso de los Diputados (the lower house of the Spanish legislature) have died by drowning – two in their own bathtubs, one after he fell off his yacht, and two others in freak accidents at the beach. The intelligence analysts working for the heroes' organization attribute these killings to Costa da Morte. After being briefed on the assassin, the heroes are dispatched to Madrid to prevent further bloodshed and apprehend Costa before she disappears once more.

By careful investigation of the recent assassinations, the heroes can discover that all of the assassinated political figures were prominent supporters of "Ley Contra el Blanqueo de Capitales," a new bill winding through El Congreso that seeks to increase government surveillance on offshore money transfers. The Spanish underworld is none too pleased at the prospect of this bill entering into law. And since that illegal offshore transfer is how Costa sends money to her ailing mother, she's taken it as a personal affront!

Only one of the bill's sponsors remains alive. His name is Ivan Cantero Muñoz, and he's the guest of honor at a gala at the Royal Palace in Madrid scheduled for the following evening. If confronted, Muñoz will agree that something seems "off" about the deaths of his colleagues, but will argue that it is too important to Spain (not to mention his own political aspirations) to not press forward with the bill. He will assure the heroes that he won't drown while dancing at the Royal Palace.

Of course, if Costa da Morte has her way, he surely will. Using her criminal connections, Costa has already arranged to get a job as a server for the catering at the gala. If the heroes don't take countermeasures (such as interviewing all of the serving staff), she'll already be "behind enemy lines" when the gala begins. The wealthy elite have learned to pay no notice to the domestic servants who cater to them, and no one is likely to recognize Costa in her prim uniform as she brings trays of tapas to the guests.

Costa will wait until the opportune moment to strike at Muñoz. Only when the crowd is relaxed by alcohol and music, and the guest of honor has been called to speak on the pressing issue of preventing offshore money laundering, only then she will attack. Costa's plan is to sneak out of sight and kill Muñoz by drowning him with water from the Royal Palace's majestic fountain. She'll enjoy 4 SPs of Obscurity from the crowd and festive lighting, which will combine with her Stealth to give her 8 SPs of Obscurity – a Watchful character with a high INS/Super-Perception might notice her, but most heroes won't; and unless one of the heroes has Cosmic Awareness or something similar, it'll be very hard to tell who's manipulating the water.

As soon as she has assassinated Muñoz, Costa will evacuate the building by the staff entrance and descend into the old sewer network beneath Madrid. If the heroes give chase, they'll have to navigate the labyrinthine tunnels while combating an ascendant with "home field advantage" in the watery environment.

# GIT R DONE

Git R Done is an ascendant operating in the American Midwest who has recently come to the attention of Squadron Intelligence. While further analysis is required, initial indications are that Git R Done may be a suitable candidate for recruitment into a government-affiliated ascension program.

Git R Done has been identified as Jaycee K Hansen, a 37-year old woman from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her father, John Tucker, ran a small engine repair shop that patched-up anything from dirt bikes and snowmobiles to lawn mowers and snow blowers. From a young age, Hansen reportedly displayed a natural affinity for the machinery. According to her father, she spent virtually all of her free time as a child in his garage, tinkering with tools and learning the ins and outs of the various machines that people brought in for repair. By the time she entered high school, Hansen had already developed an almost uncanny ability to fix anything that came to her father's shop. She craved a greater challenge. When she graduated from high school in 2003, she enrolled in the Swanson School of Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh. She graduated with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering summa cum laude in spring 2007.

Over the next 11 years, Hansen worked at many of the most prestigious engineering firms in the world, including Caterpillar, Honeywell, and Raytheon. She also fell in love with and married civil engineer Travis Hansen. By all reports the marriage was a happy one, and the couple welcomed their daughter, Liv Hansen, in September 2013. Unfortunately, the happiness did not last. On 4 May, 2018, Hansen received the devastating news that her husband had been killed in an industrial accident. Travis Hansen had been performing maintenance work in the engine compartment of a dragline crane when he was caught in the crane's internal mechanisms and torn apart. The model of crane was one that Hansen had helped design during her tenure at Caterpillar, and she blamed herself for its malfunction. The widowed single mother spiraled into depression and lost her job at Honeywell in October 2018. The following month, Hansen moved back to her childhood home and took a part-time job in her father's garage. Her father bought her a Yorkshire terrier named Moose as an emotional support animal.

Struggling with existential despair and in search of meaning, Hansen joined the Pittsburgh branch of the Church of Ascension in March 2019. According to confidential information shared by [REDACTED], Hansen's genetic tests showed partial expression of all four QAP genes (ASKC-6, KAH-R2, CYF11, and SKRA) and she was quickly enrolled in a trial of an Adderall-like drug called Halcyon that the Church had begun testing. Although the success rate of the Halcyon trials remains very low, in Hansen's case the drug was a resounding success. She ascended on 11 January 2020.

Given Hansen's prodigious mechanical talents and her post-traumatic stress from her husband's death to a malfunctioning machine, it was altogether unsurprising that Hansen manifested powers relating to engineering and technology. Over the next several months, she invented a number of singular pieces of equipment, including a hydraulic utility wrench capable of exerting 227 kN of force; a swingline system for nimble maneuvering in urban environments, and a needle gun that fires non-lethal fragmenting flechettes.

Beyond her inventive genius, Hansen gained a hyper-focused attunement to technology that enabled her to choose and use the best tool for any job, as well as the ability to alter the functionality of virtually any item – “kit-bashing” a transistor radio into a radar, or converting a motorcycle into an autogyro. These abilities could be highly useful for warfighters operating in the post-ascension full-spectrum battlefield.

Like many American ascendants, Hansen – or Git R Done, as she now calls herself – seems to have been inspired to adopt the role of a superhero. In recent months, she has helped Pittsburgh Police deal with a number of ascendant-related incidents, including an attack on the Duquesne Incline by the inertial controlling terrorist Momentum Mori. As a crimefighter, Git R Done has reportedly been accompanied by a mysterious sidekick called The Moosenator. Although initially incredulous of these reports, we now believe The Moosenator is actually her emotional support animal, the Yorkshire terrier Moose. Whether Git R Done is simply taking her dog on missions, is using her zero-point energy to empower Moose, or has somehow arranged for her dog to ascend remains unknown. If The Moosenator is actually an ascended animal, the implications could be profound. We strongly recommend further investigation into this interesting and unusual ascendant and her canine comrade.

# GIT R DONE

700 CP, CR 60

## PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

HP

	MIG	AGI	VAL	RES	INS	CHA	
VALUE	7	5	5	8	5	5	20

## SECONDARY STATS

HEIGHT	0	INITIATIVE	5
WEIGHT	3	INCOME	5
RUNNING SPEED	5	REPUTATION	5
JUMPING SPEED	4	PASSIVE SPOTTING	8
FLYING SPEED	0	PASSIVE LISTENING	0



HEALTH

320

RECOVERY

64

DETERMINATION

160

RECOVERY

32

## POWERS, SKILLS, PERKS, AND DRAWBACKS

**Powers:** Combat Sense 10 (50 CP), Invention (200 CP), with Power Flaw – Miscellaneous (can only modify existing real-world objects), Super-Intelligence 7 (16 CP), Super-Stamina 10 (12 CP)

**Skills:** Engineering 10 (9 CP), Marksmanship (shooting) 10 (15 CP), Martial Arts (armed melee) 10 (15 CP), Science 10 (9 CP), Sport (ball throwing) 7

**Perks:** Multitool, Sidekick (Moose, 10 CP), Singular Inventions (10 CP), Wealthy (2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Dependent (daughter Liv, 2 CP)

**Equipment:** Advanced Imaging Goggles (Worn Object, Height -4, Weight -6, TOU 3, Durability 30, Dark Vision 6, Polarized Vision 6, Microscopic Vision 26, Telescopic Vision 8, X-Ray Vision 8, Augmentative Science 10, 189 CP), Hydraulic Utility Wrench (Crewed Object, Height -3, Weight -2, TOU 5, Durability 60, Augmentative Engineering 10, Bludgeoning Strike 11, 100 CP), Nano Needle Gun (Crewed Object, height -3, Weight -4, TOU 3, Durability 30, Rapid-Fire Nonlethal Penetrating Blast 11), Swingline System (Worn Object, Height -1, Weight 2, TOU 1, Durability 15, Swinglining 6, 26 CP)

## BACKGROUND

Jaycee K Hansen was a mechanical prodigy with a loving husband, a beautiful daughter, and a successful engineering career. When her husband died, she sought meaning by joining the Church of Ascension. There she was dosed with Halcyon, an Adderall-like psychoactive drug, that transformed her into Git R Done, an inventive genius with hyper-focused attunement to technology and the ability to alter the functionality of virtually any item.

## THE MOOSENATOR

**Character Points:** 415    **Power Limit:** 15    **Hero Points:** 6

**Attributes:** MIG 3, AGI 3, VAL 3, RES 3, INS 3, CHA 5, Weight 0, Height -1, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 1, Initiative 5, Income 0, Reputation 5, Notoriety 0, Passive Spotting 17, Passive Listening 10, Health 120, Healthy Recovery 24, Determination 30, Determination Recovery 6

**Powers:** All-Frequency Hearing 2 (6 CP), Dark Vision 3 (11 CP), Lightning Reflexes 2 (4 CP), Penetrating Strike 4 (4 CP), Physical Invulnerability 7 (34 CP), Running 5 (4 CP), Super-Perception 5 (8 CP), Super-Stamina 7 (16 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Hearing 10 (20 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Scent 10 (60 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Vision 9 (27 CP)

**Skills:** Investigation 7, Martial Arts (unarmed) 7, Parkour 7, Sport (ball chasing) 5

**Perks:** Sex Appeal (super adorable), Watchful

**Drawbacks:** Body Form (quadruped, 20 CP), Short Stature, Unspeaking, Vulnerable State: Deprived of Ballistic Armor (remove with Extended Action; loses Invulnerability, -2 CP), Vulnerable State: Deprived of Colorizing Goggles (remove with Red Disarm; loses Ultra-Sensitive Vision, -3 CP)

## ADVANCED IMAGING GOGGLES

**Cost:** 22 SP (\$42,000) / 189 CP    **Type:** Worn Object

**Attributes:** Height -4, Weight -6, Toughness 3, Durability 30

**Powers:** Dark Vision 6, Polarized Vision 8, Microscopic Vision 26, Telescopic Vision 8, X-Ray Vision 8

**Skills:** Augmentative Science 10

## HYDRAULIC UTILITY WRENCH

**Cost:** 19 SP (\$5,250) / 100 CP    **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height -3, Weight -2, Toughness 5, Durability 60, External Crew Requirement 0

**Powers:** Bludgeoning Strike 11

**Skills:** Augmentative Engineering 10

## NANO NEEDLE GUN

**Cost:** 19 SP (\$5,250) / 100 CP    **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height -3, Weight -4, Toughness 3, Durability 30, External Crew Requirement 0

**Powers:** Rapid Fire Nonlethal Penetrating Blast 11

## SWINGLINE SYSTEM

**Cost:** 13 SP (\$90) / 26 CP    **Type:** Worn Object

**Attributes:** Height -1, Weight 2, Toughness 1, Durability 15

**Powers:** Swinglining 6

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

Git R Done has the Power Flaw “can only modify existing real world objects”. To develop Inventions, Git Her Done must have access to her Multitool and must have access to a real-world object within a CP cost and SP cost at least equal to the CP cost and SP cost of the Invention she wants to create.

She cannot modify a real-world object that is currently being Worn or Crewed. She does not need to have a laboratory to modify an object. When she finishes her Invention, the real-world object she modifies loses a percentage of its Durability equal to twice the CP cost of the Invention divided by the CP cost of the original object. The real-world object can be repaired normally but it is not automatically repaired when Git R Done disassembles her Invention.

EXAMPLE: Git R Done is on patrol near the Allegheny River when she learns that a flying ascendant is menacing the US Steel Tower. She runs over to a nearby Motor Yacht (28 SP, 270 CP, Durability 640) and modifies it into a Light Helicopter (27 SP, 178 CP), upgrading it from 7 to 9 SPs of Winged Flight (+12 CP) and 3 to 7 SPs of Resistance (+10 CP) but downgrading it from 15 to 4 SPs of Radio Communication (-22 CP). The Invention's highest SP score is 9, so the DV of her Invention check is 18. Git R Done has 11 SPs of Science when using her Advanced Imaging Goggles. She spends 6 SPs of Time and 2 Hero Points to gain an RV of +1. After about 5 minutes of tinkering, Git R Done has made a custom Light Helicopter out of the Motor Yacht. The Yacht loses  $640 \times (178 \times 2) / 270 = 843$  Durability, leaving it Wrecked at -203 Durability.

The Moosenator's Colorizing Goggles (a Device) increase his color perception from blue and yellow to over 175 different colors.

## STORY HOOK

A distraught Levitee and Git R Done contact the heroes for assistance. Git R Done's sidekick The Moosenator has been kidnapped by Nature's Right terrorists! The fiends are even now probably inflicting nefarious experiments and cruel animal tortures on him – or, at least, not feeding him the special dog food he likes. Git R Done and Levitee are military-grade ascendants, but they're no match for the likes of the Exodus-trained eco-terrorists of Nature's Right. They'll need the heroes' help to save The Moosenator.

How did this awful situation come about? At the urging of its international spokesmanatee, the World Wildlife Federation decided to open an investigation into whether Git R Done's sidekick, The Moosenator, was actually an ascended animal. However, some of the more radical members of the WWF, frustrated by the anthropogenic decline in wildlife, had secretly made a "heel turn" towards the extreme position of Nature's Right. These extremist leaked the time, date, and location of the planned meet-up between Git R Done and Levitee to their eco-terrorist allies. The mere fact that the WWF considered The Moosenator worth investigating was enough to persuade Nature's Right that The Moosenator was worth kidnapping – or, as they call it, "liberating." A team of ascended villains ambushed Git R Done on her way to the rendezvous, leaving her badly hurt (160 Health Damage) and shaken (80 Determination Damage).

Who were the assailants? That's up to the GM. Depending on his Series power level, it could have been Bloody Rosemary (CR 700), Free Radical (CR 250), or some eco-villains of the GM's design. Whoever they are, they need to be tough enough to have handily defeated Git R Done and escaped with The Moosenator, with enough of a Challenge Rating to oppose the heroes as a whole plus Git R Done and Levitee.

If the heroes don't have any way to track down The Moosenator, Git R Done can almost certainly invent one – perhaps a long-range tracking device that is keyed to detect the unique signature of Moose's microchip. It turns out that Nature's Right has holed up in a disused offshore oil rig that they've repurposed as a hideout – a symbol of environmental harm turned into an outpost in the struggle to save the Earth. They've retrofitted the oil rig with tidal energy generators and a hydroponic garden enabling them to maintain self-sufficiency with a low carbon footprint. In addition to the kidnapers, the oil rig will be staffed by a number of other Nature's Right members, including a cell leader (Fanatical Terrorist Mastermind); a number of non-ascended members (Fanatical Terrorists); and a clinical veterinarian (Philanthropic Doctor). The veterinarian works for the WWF and is the one responsible for leaking word of the meeting to Nature's Right.

When the heroes arrive at the oil rig, Nature's Right will be attempting to communicate with the Moosenator using sign language and soundboard. Whether they succeed will depend on your decision as to whether The Moosenator is actually an ascended animal or is an ordinary animal that is somehow being sustained in ascension by Git R Done. If The Moosenator is not an ascended animal, then his long absence from Git R Done's presence will have reduced him to just a typical yorkiepoop, confounding all of the eco-terrorists' attempts to communicate with him. But he'll certainly wag his tail and do his best, because he's a good boy.



## CHAPTER 8: TEMPLATES

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### CRYPTIDS

Now that there's a wisecracking aerial manatee on the nightly news, scientists have become more open-minded about the potential existence of cryptids. Nowadays, the primary point of disagreement is not whether cryptids are real, but what they really are. Metabiologists claim they are ascended animals that are deviations from known species, while cryptozoologists assert they are distinct species that breed true. Perhaps both are correct, and ascension is the means by which new species emerge?

## MOTHMAN (480 CP, CR 8)

**Attributes:** MIG 6, AGI 7, VAL 6, RES 6, INS 2, CHA 6, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Flight Speed 7, Jumping Speed 3, Initiative 11, Reputation 6, Notoriety 6, Passive Spotting 12, Passive Listening 0, Health 120, Determination 80, Hero Points 8

**Powers:** Infrared Dark Vision 6, Lacerating Strike 7, Lightning Reflexes 5, Physical Invulnerability 7, Super-Perception 6, Super-Stamina 7, Ultra-Sensitive Vision 4, Winged Flight 7

**Skills:** Aerial Combat 9, Intimidation 9, Martial Arts 9, Stealth 9

**Perks:** Mobile Defense Expertise

**Drawbacks:** Disturbing Appearance (2 CP), Hunted (cryptozoologists, 2 CP), Illiterate, Notorious (6 CP), Unspeaking

**Notes:** The so-called “Mothman” was first spotted in Point Pleasant, WV in 1966. Since then the cryptid has become famous, with a bestselling book and feature film highlighting its prophetic importance. An annual festival is devoted to the creature. Those who have spotted Mothman describe it as a dark bipedal humanoid with glowing red eyes. Some describe it as having butterfly-like wings while others describe it as owl-like. All accounts agree that the creature flies with great swiftness (over 100mph) and is exceptionally intimidating or terrifying. Whether Mothman is an ascendant, an ascended animal, a species of animals, or something else entirely remains unknown. Some cryptozoologists claim it is an extradimensional entity or alien visitor, in which case there may exist multiple beings or yet more powerful mothmen.



## YETI (440 CP, CR 6)

**Attributes:** MIG 7, AGI 4, VAL 7, RES 4, INS 3, CHA 4, Weight 4, Height 0, Running Speed 4, Jumping Speed 4, Initiative 7, Reputation 4, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 120, Determination 40, Hero Points 6

**Powers:** All-Frequency Hearing 1, Close-Quarters Combat Sense 8, Cryogenic Resistance 5, Dark Vision 4, Lacerating Strike 8, Low Pressure Protection 13, Physical Invulnerability 5, Super-Perception 7, Ultra-Sensitive Scent 5, Wall-Crawling 2

**Skills:** Parkour 8, Stealth 8

**Perks:** Grappling Expertise

**Drawbacks:** Disturbing Appearance (1 CP), Heavy, Hunted (cryptozoologists, 2 CP), Illiterate, Unspeaking

**Notes:** The Yeti, also known as the abominable snowman, is a cryptid alleged to exist in the Himalayan mountains. The Yeti is said to be smarter and stronger than a gorilla, possessed of an almost supernatural cunning that has enabled it to avoid detection and survive modern attempts to capture or catch it. It allegedly can endure the harsh weather and thin atmosphere found at the high altitudes of Tibet and is supposed to have a goat-like ability to maneuver across sheer mountains and snow drifts. Cryptozoologists believe it to be related to the sasquatch, much like polar bears are related to grizzly bears. The geographic and chronological dispersion of yeti sightings suggest it is a species, rather than a singular ascendant. The possibility of an ascended yeti that is yet more powerful cannot be ruled out.



## MARTIAL ARTISTS

In the last 24 months, the Chinese government has tripled state funding for martial arts academies and training, believing that the ancient teachings of Kung-Fu are an underutilized means of unlocking ascendant capabilities. Even in the West, more than a few martial artists have demonstrated capabilities that could be seen as superhuman.

### CLUELESS KARATE PUPIL (310 CP, CR 2)

**Attributes:** MIG 4, AGI 4, VAL 5, RES 4, INS 3, CHA 3, Weight 2, Height 0, Running Speed 4, Jumping Speed 2, Initiative 6, Income 0, Reputation 3, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 40, Determination 40, Hero Points 3

**Powers:** Bludgeoning Strike 5, Lightning Reflexes 1

**Skills:** Alertness 4, Breath Control 5, Combat Posture 7, Martial Arts 7, Parkour 5, Smack Talk 5, Stoicism 6

**Perks:** Combat Maneuvers (Super-Fast Melee, Super-Power Melee), Heroic (15 CP), Lean, Resolute, Signature Move (“Crane Kick,” Super-Power Strike)

**Drawbacks:** Hesitant, Hunted (local bullies, 1 CP)

**Notes:** The clueless karate pupil is an unimpressive athlete with an unassuming build, but he conceals a natural talent for martial arts empowered by a heroic soul. All that is required to transform him into a champion is a Wise Sensei with a few Hero Points to spare in time of need. (And the Pupil’s 15 CP in the Heroic Perk violates Power Limit but was permitted for sake of the archetype.)

### UNDAUNTED KUNG-FU CHAMPION (440 CP, CR 6)

**Attributes:** MIG 5, AGI 5, VAL 5, RES 5, INS 3, CHA 5, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 2, Initiative 10, Income 3, Reputation 10, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 80, Determination 60, Hero Points 6

**Powers:** Bludgeoning Lacerating Penetrating Resistance 5, Bludgeoning Strike 6, Lightning Reflexes 5, Super-Stamina 6

**Skills:** Alertness 5, Breath Control 7, Combat Posture 9, Martial Arts 9, Parkour 9, Smack Talk 7, Stealth 7, Stoicism 9

**Perks:** Combat Maneuvers (Super-Fast Melee, Super-Power Melee, Ultra-Fast Melee, Ultra-Power Melee), Famous (10 CP), Grappling Expertise, Signature Move (“One-Inch Punch,” Ultra-Fast Strike), Wealthy (5 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (warrior’s code, 2 CP), Hunted (kung-fu traditionalists, 5 CP)

**Equipment:** Nunchaku

**Notes:** The Undaunted Kung-Fu Champion has brought ancient secrets into the modern world. Taking on any and all comers, he has earned a worldwide reputation for his mastery of kung-fu. In so doing he has angered traditionalists who would have preferred to see certain techniques kept secret, and it is only a matter of time until they come for him...

### UNCOOPERATIVE NINJA (280 CP, CR 1.5)

**Attributes:** MIG 4, AGI 4, VAL 4, RES 4, INS 3, CHA 3, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 4, Jumping Speed 1, Initiative 5, Income 0, Reputation 3, Notoriety 3, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 40, Determination 40, Hero Points 0

**Powers:** Bludgeoning Strike 5, Lightning Reflexes 1

**Skills:** Alertness 5, Combat Posture 6, Infiltration 5, Martial Arts 6, Parkour 6, Stealth 6

**Perks:** Combat Maneuver (Super-Fast Melee, Super-Power Melee), Criminal Connections (ninja clan, 20 CP), Grappling Expertise

**Drawbacks:** Code of Honor (must attack independently, 5 CP), Duty (ninja clan, 5 CP), Hunted (rival clans, 5 CP), Notorious (3 CP)

**Equipment:** Spy Catsuit, Nunchaku, Short Sword, Climbing Kit, Tool Belt, Night-Vision Goggles, 2 Smoke Grenades

**Notes:** The Uncooperative Ninja is fixated on defeating his opponent in single combat. Even faced with a superior opponent, he will never Team Attack with his comrades, preferring to take an independent action on his Panel each Page. The more dangerous Ruthless Ninja has Code of Honor (never retreat, never show mercy, 5 CP).



## WISE SENSEI (400 CP, CR 4)

**Attributes:** MIG 3, AGI 3, VAL 3, RES 5, INS 5, CHA 5, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 3, Jumping Speed 0, Initiative 5, Income 0, Reputation 5, Passive Spotting 7, Passive Listening -1, Health 30, Determination 60, Hero Points 5

**Powers:** Bludgeoning Strike 5, Lightning Reflexes 2

**Skills:** Alertness 6, Avocation (Bonsai trees) 6, Avocation (car maintenance) 6, Breath Control 7, Combat Posture 9, Martial Arts 9, Parkour 6, Smack Talk 9, Stealth 5, Stoicism 9

**Perks:** Combat Maneuvers (all Melee variants), Grappling Expertise, Heroic, Leadership (variant, 5 CP), Principled, Signature Move (“Crane Kick,” Super-Power Strike)

**Drawbacks:** Bad Hearing (1 CP), Code of Honor (karate for defense only, 2 CP), Dim Vision (2 CP), Duty (sensei, 2 CP), Easily Winded (1 CP), Sickly (3 CP)

**Equipment:** Chopsticks (treat as Baton)

**Notes:** The Wise Sensei is aged in body but young at heart. He is prone to using unconventional teaching methods that may resemble mundane chores. Faced with a reluctant pupil, he can exhort him to impossible deeds through 9 SPs of Smack Talk. “Focus, Ralph-san!” To transfer Hero Points to a recipient using his “variant” Leadership, the Wise Sensei must spend an Automatic Action meditating and then spend a Challenge Action to touch the recipient. Often a reiki-like gesture is used.

## EVERYDAY PEOPLE

A character does need to be an ascendant to be important or interesting. Sometimes an average person can be just what’s needed to spice up a story or create a challenge.

## BACKSEAT SUPERHERO (220 CP, CR 1)

**Attributes:** MIG 3, AGI 3, VAL 3, RES 3, INS 3, CHA 3, Weight 4, Height 0, Running Speed 2, Jumping Speed -1, Initiative 3, Income 0, Reputation 3, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 30, Determination 30, Hero Points 0

**Skills:** Avocation (ascendant fandom) 5, Combat Posture 4, Interrogate 4, Marksmanship 4, Martial Arts 4, Persuasion 4, Profession (security guard) 5, Smack Talk 7, Sport (go-carts) 4, Stoicism 4

**Perks:** Authority (mall security guard, 2 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Duty (9-to-5 job, 2 CP), Easily Winded (2 CP), Heavy (1 CP)

**Equipment:** Smartphone; Baton and Handcuffs (if on-duty)

**Notes:** The Backseat Superhero is an ordinary man with an extraordinary ability to opine about how other people should use the superpowers he doesn’t have. Whether he’s advising Stiletto on how to cut a bitch, telling Dr Quantum what type of force construct to make, or informing Maximum Leader what he *really* should do with cosmic control, the Backseat Superhero never lets his inexperience stand in the way of his assertiveness. With 7 SPs of Smack Talk, he can egg on reckless or foolish behavior with catastrophic consequences. When not cajoling heroes from the safety of crowds, he works as a mall security guard, a clerk at the DMV, or other bossy-but-insignificant position. Any crowd of 12 SPs or more is statistically likely to have a Backseat Superhero.

## BULLYING COWORKER (340 CP, CR 3)

**Attributes:** MIG 4, AGI 4, VAL 4, RES 2, INS 4, CHA 5, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 4, Jumping Speed 1, Initiative 4, Income 2, Reputation 10, Notoriety 10, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 40, Determination 20, Hero Points 2

**Skills:** Avocation (holiday travel) 6, Intimidate 6, Persuasion 6, Profession (sales) 6, Smack Talk 6, Sport (golf or racquetball) 6

**Perks:** Contact (the boss, 10 CP), Famous (10 CP), Minions (various flunkies, 80 CP), Sex Appeal, Wealthy (10 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Dark Secret (nasty texts about boss, 2 CP), Dependent (narcissistic spouse, 2 CP), Duty (demanding job, 5 CP), Notorious (10 CP), Unlikeable

**Equipment:** Smartphone, Sunglasses, Sports Car

**Notes:** The perfect foil for a high-powered hero’s secret identity, the Bullying Coworker is smart, good-looking, charismatic, and accompanied at all times by a posse of flunkies. Nothing sucks more than saving the life of the biggest jerk at the office.

## CANTANKEROUS KAREN (220 CP, CR 1)

**Attributes:** MIG 2, AGI 3, VAL 2, RES 4, INS 3, CHA 3, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 3, Jumping Speed -1, Initiative 2, Income 2 Reputation 3, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 20, Determination 40, Hero Points 0

**Skills:** Avocation (winetasting) 5, Craft (scrapbooking) 5, Interrogation 5, Intimidation 5, Profession (HR manager) 5, Smack Talk 5, Sport (yoga) 5

**Perks:** Contact (varies by Karen, 10 CP), Ferocious, Wealthy (20 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (escalate conflict, 2 CP), Dependent (aging parent and teenage child, 2 CP), Duty (full-time worker and homemaker, 5CP), Unlikeable, Unobservant

**Equipment:** Smartphone, SUV

**Notes:** The Cantankerous Karen is to an ordinary woman as a rabid mastiff is to a golden retriever. She is Ferocious for no apparent reason. A youthful ascendant runaway could certainly have the Hunted drawback if this NPC is his mother. The Cantankerous Karen could also make for a delightfully devilish Dependent or a not-so-innocent bystander that could make even American Eagle question his Code of Honor. The Cantankerous Karen's Contact Perk is usually one related to domestic or social advantage, such as the local school board, the boss's wife, etc.

## OBSESSIVE GROUPIE (260 CP, CR 1.5)

**Attributes:** MIG 2, AGI 3, VAL 2, RES 5, INS 3, CHA 5, Weight 2, Height 0, Running Speed 4, Jumping Speed 0, Initiative 2, Income 2, Reputation 5, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 20, Determination 60, Hero Points 0

**Skills:** Avocation (her ascendant's favorite hobby) 5, Craft (costumes) 5, Interrogate 7, Intimidate 7, Investigate 7, Persuasion 7, Profession (cosplay model) 5, Smack Talk 7, Sport (her ascendant's favorite sport) 5, Stealth 5

**Perks:** Contact (someone important to her ascendant, 10 CP), Sex Appeal, Wealthy (10 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (be with her ascendant, 5 CP), Dark Secret (all prior boyfriends died under mysterious circumstances, 5 CP), Dependent (small annoying dog, 1 CP)

**Equipment:** Smartphone

**Notes:** While an Awe-Struck Groupie is like an ascendant's adoring kid brother, an Obsessive Groupie is like an ascendant's perfect girlfriend – or so she seems initially. Whatever her ascendant is into, she's into. Whatever her ascendant wants to do, she wants to do. Whatever her ascendant likes her to wear, that's what she'll wear. But woe unto that ascendant if he ever breaks up with her, cheats on her, fails to call her, talks to another woman, looks at another woman, is near another woman... The Obsessive Groupie isn't just a love interest, she's a love obsession.

## PROTO-ASCENDANTS

Although American Eagle and Manticore are publicly credited as the first ascendants, with hindsight it has become clear that the phenomenon of exponential human self-actualization predated the Battle of Atlanta by at least several decades. One example of proto-ascension is the mysterious phenomenon of the "final girl," which first emerged in the United States during a series of brutal mass murders that began in 1978 and peaked in the 1990s. Project Ascension scientists have identified it as an early example of low-tier pseudo-ascension under stress. So-called final girls often displayed inexplicable increases in fighting ability and improbably good luck; the mass murderers who triggered their ascension may also have been proto-ascendants themselves.

## FINAL GIRL (440 CP, CR 6)

**Attributes:** MIG 3, AGI 5, VAL 5, RES 5, INS 5, CHA 3, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 0, Initiative 5, Income 0, Reputation 3, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 30, Determination 60, Hero Points 6

**Powers:** Probability Control 8

**Skills:** Alertness 9, Avocation (nerdy hobby) 7, Breath Control 7, Combat Posture 9, Escape Artist 9, Martial Arts 9, Parkour 9, Smack Talk 9, Stealth 9, Stoicism 9

**Perks:** Watchful

**Equipment:** Smartphone with broken screen

**Drawbacks:** Hunted (implacable slasher, 5 CP), Vulnerable State: Not Damaged Enough (If Health exceeds 15, Final Girl's Attributes are as noted below)

## FINAL GIRL (VULNERABLE STATE)

**Attributes:** MIG 3, AGI 3, VAL 3, RES 5, INS 5, CHA 3, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 3, Jumping Speed 0, Initiative 3, Income 0, Reputation 3, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 30, Determination 60, Hero Points 6

**Powers:** None

**Skills:** Alertness 7, Avocation (nerdy hobby) 7, Breath Control 7, Combat Posture 5, Escape Artist 5, Martial Arts 5, Parkour 5, Smack Talk 7, Stealth 5, Stoicism 7

**Perks:** Sacrificer, Watchful

**Drawbacks:** Hunted (implacable slasher, 5 CP)

**Equipment:** Smartphone

**Notes:** The Final Girl is an average young adult in most respects, albeit strong-willed and intelligent – often a class valedictorian. What keeps her alive is her alertness, her ability to hold her breath rather than fearfully panting like her weak-willed classmates, and – most importantly – the inexplicable tendency of her friends to get hit instead of her. She might end up covered with her ex-boyfriend’s guts and gibbets, but she’s alive and that’s what counts. We simulated this cinematic effect with the Sacrificer Perk. (As with Shadow Man, we’ve made an exception to the rule that the character in the Vulnerable State cannot have a Perk that she does not have in his normal state just for flavor.) When she’s the only one left, things get interesting: A single Green result from an Implacable Slasher’s Chainsaw deals 16 Health Damage, which is just enough to overcome the Final Girl’s Vulnerable State and awaken her powers.



## IMPLACABLE SLASHER (480 CP, CR 8)

**Attributes:** MIG 5, AGI 3, VAL 5, RES 5, INS 3, CHA 3, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 3, Jumping Speed 2, Initiative 5, Income 0, Reputation 3, Notoriety 10, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 120, Determination 60, Hero Points 8

**Powers:** Flawed Invulnerability 5 (no protection vs. Ann. or Cosmic), Immortality 5, Iron Will 7, Regeneration 9, Super-Stamina 7

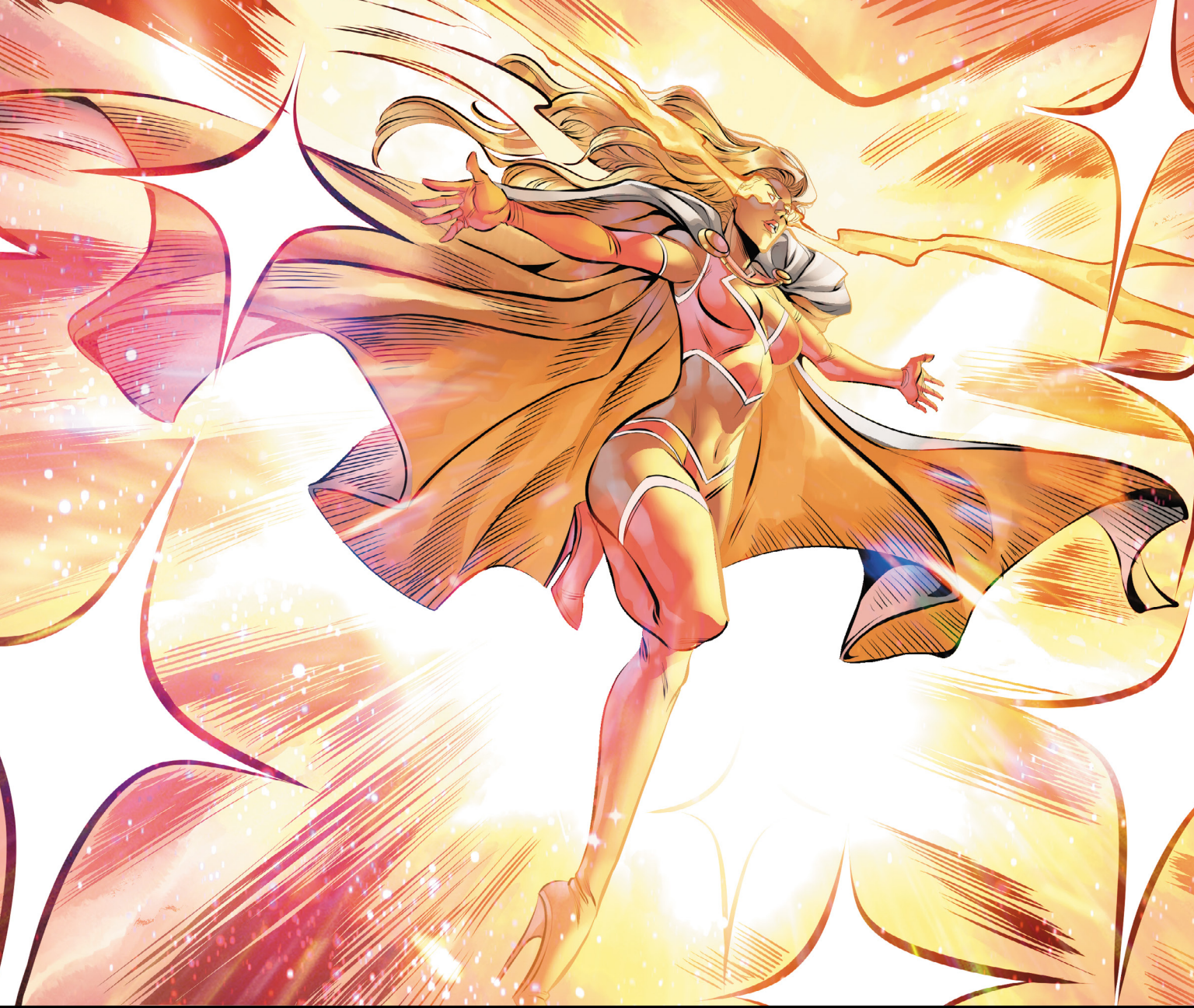
**Skills:** Alertness 5, Escapist Artist 8, Intimidate 9, Martial Arts 9, Stealth 9

**Perks:** Combat Maneuvers (Super-Fast Melee, Super-Power Melee), Grappling Expertise, Tireless

**Drawbacks:** Compulsion (murdering young adults, 5 CP), Disturbing Appearance (1 CP), Hunted (law enforcement, 5 CP), Notorious (10 CP), Unconsummable, Unlikeable, Unspeaking

**Equipment:** Chainsaw (Cumbersome Lacerating Strike 6), Hockey Mask

**Notes:** The Implacable Slasher isn’t agile or fast. He doesn’t really avoid attacks or dodge blows. But he never stops in his relentless pursuit of murdering local youth. He doesn’t die easily, and no matter how many times you knock him down, he’s somehow back up in a few minutes. His murderous compulsion leads him to target victims in the following order: first promiscuous women, then promiscuous men, then token minorities, then token nerds, and finally genre-aware teenagers.



# CHAPTER 9: GAME MECHANICS

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## NEW RULES AND RULE CLARIFICATIONS

### CORE MECHANICS

#### ROUNDING

When adding or subtracting fractions to and from whole numbers, round before performing the operation. For instance, to calculate Absolute Power Limit, we divide PL by 2 and add 3. Therefore, Power Limit 27 has an Absolute Power Limit of  $27/2 + 3$ .  $27/2$  is 13.5, which rounds to 14, yielding an Absolute Power Limit of 17.

When adding or subtracting fractions to and from other fractions, round after completing all the operations. For instance, the Radius of an Explosion is equal to the  $SPs/2$ . The Volume of an Explosion is its Radius + Radius + Radius + 2. Imagine that for some

reason we need to find the exact Volume of an Explosion of 15 SPs. The Radius as 7.5, so the Volume would be  $7.5 + 7.5 + 7.5 + 2$ . We would first add the fractions to get 22.5. This would round to 22. We would then add 2, to get 24. Note that if we had rounded the Radius up to 8 before the operation, the Volume would be  $8 + 8 + 8 + 2 = 26$ , which is four times greater.

## CHARACTER CREATION

### ALTERNATE FORM

A character who selects Alternate Form must have the same number of Hero Points in all forms and cannot take the Heroic Perk or Unheroic Drawback in one form but not another. The number of Hero Points the character can spend on adjusting the RV can vary however, either due to the different forms having varying amounts of RES or the Resolute Perk.

### BASE COST OF MOVEMENT POWERS

Movement Powers which have a Base Cost modified by the character's Weight do not have their Speed reduced by permanent effects that increase the character's Weight, such as Permanent Growth or Permanent Hyper-Density. Instead, the Base Cost must be calculated based on the character's Weight *after* these Powers are applied.

### EFFECT OF ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS ON POWER LIMIT

For purposes of determining the CR of minions gained, anytime a character purchases more than 80 CP of Minions, he reduces his effective Power Limit by 2 points for each extra 80 CP.

### PERMANENT POWERS

During character creation, Permanent Growth and Permanent Shrinking can be designated to be immune to effects that reduce the SPs of Powers such as Power Dampening or Power Drain. Characters with Powers that target other Powers (e.g. Power Drain) must choose a different Power to target in lieu of the Permanent one. However, the Permanent Powers can thereafter no longer be used for Power Stunts. With the GM's permission, this designation can also be applied to other Powers that represent permanent and irrevocable structural changes, such as Additional Limb or Winged Flight.

### POWER SETS

When building a Power Set that allows the character to emulate Burrowing, Flight, Gliding, Jumping, Running, Swimming, or Wall Crawling, the character may choose to treat the Base Cost of that Movement Power as 0 CPs. He gains the ability to emulate that Power at SPs equal to his SPs of Power - his Weight. This is how all of the Control Powers in the book were built, except Cosmic Control.

### RAMMING POWER LIMIT

When assessing a character with a Weight greater than 3, calculate a character's Ramming Power Limit as the total of AGI + Speed + (Weight - 3) instead of just AGI + Speed.

If a character's SPs of Superspeed would cause him to exceed his Ramming Power Limit, the character is not considered above Power Limit; however, he cannot use his full SPs of Superspeed to exceed his Ramming Power Limit in play. The character may offer whatever rationale as desired (too fragile, physical limits, etc.) to justify this.

### VULNERABLE STATES

A character's Vulnerable State cannot have Perks, Powers, or Skills that his normal state does not, nor can it have higher SP score in any existing Attributes, Powers, or Skills than his normal state. However, if the Vulnerable State reduces a Primary Attribute (such as MIG) that can be enhanced by Powers, the character in his Vulnerable State can take SPs of the Enhancement Powers up to an amount sufficient to reach the SPs of the Primary Attribute. The GM can waive this rule at his discretion for particular concepts; see the Shadow Man for an example (p. 179).

EXAMPLE: The Champion has MIG 10. In his Vulnerable State, he has 5 SPs of MIG but 10 SPs of Super-Stamina. This does not violate the Vulnerable State rules. He isn't really "gaining" Super-Stamina, he's just losing part of his MIG.

## POWERS

### PROBABILITY CONTROL

A character with Probability Control cannot use it on a Team Attack unless the character is leading the attack. If a character with Probability Control also has Duplication, his Duplicates share the same pool of SPs of Probability Control, just like they share the same pool of Hero Points.

A character with Probability Control who is included as a target in a Multi-Attack can use his Probability Control to force the attacker to re-roll, but the new result only applies to the Controller. The rest of the targets remain affected by the original roll.

### INVENTION

Inventions can generally only be used freely by the character who invented them. Other characters must expend Hero Points equal to the Invention's highest SP score / 4. However, there are two exceptions to this rule.

- ★ If an Invention obeys the real-world limits on ordinary objects (including an advancements in state-of-the-art), it can be used by any character without requiring Hero Points.
- ★ If an Invention is designed for a specific character (other than the inventor), the specified character can use the Invention as if he were its inventor. If the character's use of the Invention triggers a Power Limit violation, he must pay Hero Points (as per *Ascendant* p. 170) or reduce his Attributes, Powers, or Skills to maintain the Power Limit. Other characters, including the inventor himself, cannot use the Invention except by expending Hero Points.

EXAMPLE: Davin Hazzar is an Inventor (p. 40). His ally, Proxima, is a Blaster (p. 30) with Aerial Combat 10, Forcefield 9, and a Physical Protection Power Limit of 19. Hazzar invents a suit of battle armor specifically for Proxima that grants her 10 SPs of Invulnerability when she wears it. When Proxima wears the battle armor, she violates her Physical Protection Power Limit by 2 SP. (Why 2 SP? Because she has 10 SPs of Aerial Combat, 10 SPs of Invulnerability, and stacked protection from Forcefield that adds an additional SP, for a total of 21 SPs, which is 2 SPs more than her Power Limit of 19.) Each time Proxima dons the battle armor, she must either expend 2 Hero Points (because of the Power Limit violation) or reduce her Aerial Combat to 8 SPs.

## OBJECTS

### SUSTAINED SPOTLIGHT ILLUMINATION

Objects built within real-world limitations can purchase Sustained Spotlight Illumination at a Base Cost of 5 CP and a Variable Cost of 0.5 CP per SP. If so, the Power can never be used to Power Stunt. All of the Objects in *Ascendant* and *Ascendant: Rogues Gallery* were built with this rule.

### REPAIRING REAL-WORLD OBJECTS

The Time required to repair an object built within real-world limitations cannot exceed its twice its highest SP value.

## ACTIONS

### COLLISIONS AND RAMS BETWEEN DIFFERENT SIZED TARGETS

When a character collides with or rams a target with fewer SPs of Height than itself, subtract 2 times the difference in Height from the taller character or object's Weight for purposes of the ram's EV.

**EXAMPLE:** A hero (Height 0, Weight 3) collides with a kaiju (Height 7, Weight 24) at Speed 4. The EV of the ram would normally be calculated as 28 SPs. Applying this rule, however, the GM subtracts  $(7 \times 2) = 14$  SPs, putting the collision EV at 14 SPs.

**Designer's Note:** Weight can be calculated as Density + Volume. For a square object, Volume = Height + Height + Height and Surface Area = Height + Height. We assume this Weight is distributed across the character or object's Surface Area. Therefore, Damage is decreased by Height  $\times$  2. Note that using this rule, highly dense characters or objects are much more damaging than low-density high-volume objects. A ram from Depleted Uranium Midget Man is more damaging than a ram from Giant Pillow Man even if they have the same Weight.

### COLLISIONS AND RAMS WITH STATIONARY OBJECT

When a character collides with or rams a stationary object, the character's Weight is used in lieu of the object's Weight for determining how much Damage the character suffers.

**Designer's Note:** This rule simulates the fact that the maximum force the character can suffer is the reaction force of his own impact. Absent this rule, the physics of colliding with stationary objects are arguably *too* cartoonish, more Wil E Coyote than Batman.

### EXTENDED CHALLENGE ACTIONS

A character that has Superspeed or Time Control who takes an Extended Challenge Action with a DV so low that he would have to spend less than 0 SPs of Time to stay within the limit of RV +1, instead spends 0 SPs of Time and increases his RV beyond +1.

**EXAMPLE:** The Librarian has 12 SPs of Time Control and 9 SPs of INS. He is investigating a forensic site with a Complexity of 18 SPs. He takes an Extended Challenge Action to investigate the site. If he didn't have Time Control, he would spend 10 SPs of Time (one hour) to reach an AV of  $9 + 10 = 19$ , for an RV of  $19 - 18 = +1$ . Because he has 12 SPs of Time Control, however, he has to limit himself to -2 SPs of Time to have an RV of +1. Instead, he spends 0 SPs of Time, with an AV of 21 and RV of +3.

### LIFTING, CARRYING, PUSHING, PULLING, AND THROWING UNDERWATER

Because water is buoyant, characters and objects immersed underwater weigh less than they do in air. A character or object's Water Weight = Weight + 9 - Density. A character or object's weight in other fluids is its Weight + (Fluid Density +1) - Density. The foregoing notwithstanding, Water Weight never exceeds Weight in air. For vehicles with unknown Density, subtract 1 from the Density of whatever they are made of.

$$\text{WATER WEIGHT} = \text{WEIGHT} + 9 - \text{DENSITY}$$

$$\text{FLUID WEIGHT} = \text{WEIGHT} + (\text{FLUID DENSITY} + 1) - \text{DENSITY}$$

$$\text{DENSITY OF VEHICLE} = \text{DENSITY OF MATERIAL} - 1$$

**EXAMPLE:** An attack submarine has a Weight of 20 SPs. The submarine is made of steel, which has a Density of 11 SPs. Therefore the submarine has a Density of 10 SPs. That means that its Water Weight is  $20 + 9 - 10 = 19$  SPs.

Use Water Weight for purposes of lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling objects underwater, but not for purposes of calculating Speed or Ramming Damage. If pushing or pulling an object underwater, use the Water Weight in conjunction with the modifier for a sliding object (-1).

**EXAMPLE:** American Eagle has 15 SPs of MIG, granting him 12 SPs of Carrying Capacity, and 15 SPs of Flight, granting him 7 SPs of Swimming. He needs to push an attack submarine through an underwater chasm in which it's lodged. The submarine's Water Weight is 19 SPs. The Effective Weight of a sliding object is its Weight -1, or 18 SPs. Eagle's Encumbrance is the sub's Effective Weight - his Carrying Capacity,  $18 - 12 = 6$  SPs. With 6 SPs of Encumbrance, Eagle's Swimming Speed is reduced from 7 SPs to 1 SP. Eagle is able to gently and slowly push the submarine to safety at about 2mph.

**Designer's Note:** The real-world formula for calculating water weight (Ww) for an object with a known air weight (Wa) and density is  $Ww = Wa * (\text{specific gravity of water} / (\text{specific gravity of object} - \text{specific gravity of water}))$ . Translated into the Supermetric system, that yields  $Ww = Wa + \text{Water Density} - (\text{Object Density} - 1)$ .

## MOVING UNDERWATER

The same force that impels an ascendant's flight through the air can also propel him underwater. Likewise, the same mighty muscles can propel him from the seabed in a great jump. However, water reflects a much stronger drag force on the character. The ascendant's Flight Speed or Jump Speed is reduced by 8 SPs (the Density of Water). If the ascendant is immersed in another fluid (e.g. liquid mercury, lava, etc.), use the Density of the fluid instead. The ascendant can use Flight at any depth but can only use Jumping if he begins his Page on the seabed, pool bottom, etc. Otherwise, treat the ascendant's modified Flight or Jumping Speed as if it were a Swimming Speed while the ascendant remains in water. This rule does not apply to real-world objects.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{FLIGHT/JUMP SPEED IN WATER} &= \text{FLIGHT/JUMP SPEED} - 8 \\ \text{FLIGHT/JUMP SPEED IN FLUID} &= \text{FLIGHT/JUMP SPEED} - \text{FLUID DENSITY} \end{aligned}$$

**EXAMPLE:** American Eagle has 15 SPs of Flight. He needs to head into the depths to rescue a fallen submarine. Water has a Density of 8 SPs, so he can "fly" through the water at a Swimming Speed of  $15 - 8 = 7$  SPs.

## SPOTTING UNDERWATER

A target underwater has SPs of Obscurity from darkness equal to his Depth, to a maximum of 9 SPs. (At 9 SPs of Depth, the ocean is as dark as a lightless cave.) Dark Vision and/or Illumination can reduce these SPs of Obscurity by SPs of Power.

**EXAMPLE:** Universe Wanderer is diving in the Pacific Ocean at a Depth of 7 SPs (600 ft). Uragan, flying about 50 ft over the water (4 SPs). She has 4 SPs of Ultra-Sensitive Vision, giving her a Passive Spotting Range of 12 SPs. Can she see Universe Wanderer? The Effective Range from Uragan to Universe Wanderer is 6 SPs. Because Universe Wanderer is at a Depth of 7 SPs, he has 7 SPs of Obscurity against Uragan. Therefore, Uragan's Vision Clarity is  $12 - (6 + 7) = -1$ . She cannot spot the Chinese submariner.

Anytime a character uses Acoustic Blindsight to spot a target underwater, apply the absolute difference in Depth between the character and the target as SPs of Acoustic Cloaking.

**Designer's Note:** Sonar has trouble detecting targets in the water that are at a different depth because the temperature differentials that occur at different depths alter water density and salinity, which distorts the sound waves which traverse these distortions.

Universe Wanderer is again diving in the Pacific Ocean at a Depth of 7 SPs (600 ft). A U.S. Seawolf-class attack submarine is patrolling the Pacific Ocean at a Depth of 9 SPs (1/2 mile). It is running silent with passive sonar (13 SPs of Acoustic Submarine Blindsight). How close will the Seawolf need to be in order to detect Universe Wanderer? The difference between their Depth is  $(9 - 7) = 2$  SPs, granting Universe Wanderer 2 SPs of Acoustic Cloaking. Therefore, the Seawolf will detect Universe Wanderer at  $(13 - 2) = 11$  SPs. If Universe Wanderer were riding on Kūn (Height of 6 SPs), the Seawolf could detect Kūn at  $(13 + 6 - 2) = 17$  SPs. If Universe Wanderer and Kūn were at a Depth of just 2 SPs (20 ft), the difference in Depth would be  $(9 - 2) = 7$  SPs, granting them 7 SPs of Acoustic Cloaking. In that case, the Seawolf could detect Universe Wanderer at  $(13 - 7) = 6$  SPs and Kūn at  $(13 + 6 - 7) = 12$  SPs of Distance.

### OBSCURITY (DARKNESS UNDERWATER) = TARGET DEPTH

**ACOUSTIC CLOAKING (TEMPERATURE DIFFERENTIAL) = TARGET DEPTH - CHARACTER DEPTH / CHARACTER DEPTH - TARGET DEPTH**

## SPOTTING AND LISTENING ACROSS LARGE AREAS

In most cases, characters have an approximate idea of where their opponents are, due to light, noise, collateral damage, and brightly-colored capes. Sometimes, however, a character might need to look for something that blends into the background of a vast Area. A character can Spot a specific target in an Area of up to 10 SPs (25,000 sf or 1 Battle Area) without penalty. If the character wants to Spot a specific target somewhere in a larger Area, the target gains SPs of Cover equal to the Area - 10. (Alternatively, if using Battle Areas on a map, Observing across multiple Battle Regions can be handled as a Multi-Attack, with each Battle Area counting as one opponent for purposes of the penalty.) For similar reasons, characters attempting to Listen for specific sounds somewhere in a large Area increase Ambient Noise by SPs of Area - 10. These rule only apply when the character is looking for something specific that blends into its surroundings, such as a man somewhere in a crowd in Times Square or a conversation taking place somewhere in Manhattan.

**TARGET COVER FROM LARGE AREA = AREA - 10**

**AMBIENT NOISE CAUSED BY LARGE AREA = AREA - 10**

**EXAMPLE:** Aurora is flying above Capital City at an altitude of 6 SPs. Aurora has 4 SPs of INS and 6 SPs of Ultra-Sensitive Vision, giving her 14 SPs of Passive Spotting Range. She's looking for Fireball, who is in a street crowd somewhere within one half-mile (9 SPs) from the KALI Cabaret. Aurora is thus surveying an Area of  $(9 + 9) = 18$  SPs, and Fireball gains  $(18 - 10) = 8$  SPs of Cover against her. Aurora is using an Automatic Action to Observe, so she can ignore 4 SPs of Cover. Therefore she can spot Fireball to a Range of  $(14 - (8 - 4)) = 10$  SPs. Unless Fireball is benefitting from other Obscurity, Stealth, and so on, she'll easily spot him since she's at most 9 SPs away.

## COMBAT

### RANGED ATTACKS UNDERWATER

When a character makes a Ranged Attack against a target underwater or otherwise immersed in a fluid, the target gains Protection equal to 2 SPs plus two-thirds the fluid's Density plus the Range between the attacker and the target. (Only count the portion of the Range underwater.) Water has a Density of 8 SPs, so in most cases the Protection afforded to underwater targets is just the SPs of Range + 7.

However, if the attacker has Underwater Adaptation (or is using a weapon with Underwater Adaptation), water provides no Protection against his Ranged Attack provided the Actual Range to the target is less than the SPs of Underwater Adaptation.

**Designer's Note:** A projectile moving through a fluid is slowed down by drag, where the drag is proportional to the density of the fluid. Water is approximately 1,000 times denser than air. In the real world, bullets can be stopped by as little as 5 to 10 ft of water.

Universe Wanderer is diving in the Pacific Ocean at a Depth of 4 SPs (75 ft). A Seahawk helicopter, skimming just above the waterline, opens fire on him with its door-mounted machinegun (Rapid Fire Penetrating Blast 8). It scores a lucky Green result. Because the attack had to pass through 4 SPs of water, however, Universe Wanderer enjoys (4 + 7) 11 SPs of Protection against the machinegun. That's more than enough to protect him! Even Universe Wanderer were only 10 ft below the surface (1 SP), he would enjoy (1 + 7) 8 SPs of Protection against the machinegun, enough to protect him a Green result but not enough against a Yellow or better result.

**PROTECTION (TARGET UNDERWATER) = RANGE UNDERWATER + 7**

**PROTECTION (TARGET IMMersed IN OTHER FLUID) = RANGER UNDERWATER + 2/3 FLUID DENSITY + 2.**

**UNDERWATER ADAPTATION = IGNORE UNDERWATER PROTECTION TO SPS OF RANGE EQUAL TO SPS OF POWER**

## READIED DAMAGE FROM AURAS, DAMAGING FOGS, AND SIMILAR EFFECTS

If a character readies an Action on his Panel, and then in another character's Panel becomes newly subjected to the effects of an Aura, Damaging Fog, or similar effect that causes Damage at the start of the character's Panel, the character suffers the Damage from the effect immediately after his Action triggers.

On her Panel, Stiletto readies a Challenge Action to attack Fireball when he comes into Range. Fireball has a Thermal Aura. On his Panel, Fireball moves adjacent to Stiletto, triggering Stiletto's Challenge Action. Assuming that Fireball's Aura is still active after the attack (e.g. he didn't become Overwhelmed or Unconscious), Stiletto is damaged by the Aura. Had Stiletto not taken a readied Action, she would not have been damaged by the Aura until the start of her own next Panel.

## ROLLING WITH FALLS AND UNINTENTIONAL COLLISIONS

When a character suffers Damage from a Fall or Unintentional Collision, the character isn't being attacked by an active opponent who is trying to harm him. It doesn't require any particular heroics to try to break a fall. Therefore, even a character with 0 Hero Points can reduce Damage from Falls or Unintentional Collisions by Rolling with the Attack. However, if the character does not spend Hero Points, the resulting Condition is worse for each color result. He is Staggered if he rolls the damage down by one color; Overwhelmed if he rolls the damage down by two colors; and Unconscious if he rolls the damage down by three colors. (As with other Conditions from Rolling with an Attack, the Unconsciousness lasts until the end of the character's next Panel.) This rule does not apply if the target is already Overwhelmed, Unconscious, or Totally Surprised.

## ROLLING WITH ATTACKS VS CLAMBERING ATTACKERS

A target cannot Roll with the Melee, Ramming, or Ranged Attacks of a character that has Clambered onto it. The target can Roll with Emotional or Mental Attacks made by a character that has Clambered onto it.

## SURPRISE MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL ATTACKS

Just as a character retains his full RES or Iron Will against Mental Attacks when Unconscious, so too does he retain it while Surprised. Therefore, a Partially Surprised or Totally Surprised character does not suffer a penalty to his RES or Iron Will when targeted by an Emotional Attack or Mental Attack. However, a Partially Surprised character does suffer a penalty to his Stoicism, although the penalty cannot reduce his DV to below Stoicism's Base Score. A Totally Surprised character with Stoicism uses its Base Score as his DV.

# NEW POWERS

## CONTROL POWERS

### BATTLEFIELD CONTROL

**Base Cost:** 85      **Variable Cost:** 22      **Base Score:** 0  
**Range:** Standard/By Emulated Power      **Duration:** By Effect

The character can manipulate the topography of battlefields. He can use Battlefield Control to:

- ★ Change the topography of an area, moving masses of earth with SPs of Weight up to the character's SPs of Power along the ground a distance equal to the character's SPs of Power minus the SPs of Weight moved. All of the earth moved must start and end within Range and LOS, and unlike Earth Control, the earth moved must remain in contact with earth at all times – the Power cannot be used to lift earth into the air and fling it around. Changing topography is a Concentration effect requiring an Automatic Action each Panel.
- ★ Connect two non-adjacent points on the ground using subtle topography as a Challenge Action, emulating Specialized (ground-only) Portal at the Power's value in SPs. Portal is a Concentration effect requiring an Automatic Action to maintain each Panel.
- ★ Create ground hazards within Range and LOS as a Challenge Action, emulating Variable Volume Damaging Hidden Ground Hazard at the Power's value in SPs. Hazard is a Concentration effect requiring an Automatic Action to maintain each Panel.
- ★ Create a protective topographic barrier that deflects and blocks damage, emulating Projectable Protective Deflection at the Power's value in SPs. Deflection is a Concentration effect requiring an Automatic Action to maintain each Panel.

### INERTIA CONTROL

**Base Cost:** 60      **Variable Cost:** 20      **Base Score:** 0  
**Range:** Standard/By Emulated Power      **Duration:** By Effect

This Power grants the ability to manipulate inertial masses and inertial frames. The character can:

- ★ Add his SPs of Inertia Control to his initiative, emulating Lightning Reflexes.
- ★ Dynamically adjust his inertia, or that of a willing target, in order to add his SPs of Power to the effected character's Maximum Safe Speed when moving through a Hazard. This is a Concentration effect requiring an Automatic Action to activate and maintain each Panel.
- ★ Increase or decrease his Weight, or the Weight of a willing target within Range, by up to his SPs of Power as an Automatic Action. As momentum is always conserved, the effected character's Speed is immediately decreased or increased by the opposite value in SPs. If the effected character's Speed is reduced to less than 0 SPs, the effected character is considered Stationary. The effect lasts until the end of the effected character's next Panel. The inertia controller can change the Weight of multiple targets with one Action by applying the Multi-Attack penalty to his Power.
- ★ Increase or decrease the Weight of an unwilling target within Range as a Challenge Action. The character must make an INS vs. RES/Weight Challenge Check. On a Green result, the target's Weight is changed by 1 SP. On a Yellow result, the target's Weight is changed by 2 SP. On an Orange result, the target's Weight is changed by up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  SPs of Power. On a Red result, the target's Weight is changed by up to SPs of Power. As momentum is always conserved, the effected character's Speed is immediately decreased or increased by the opposite value in SPs. If the effected character's Speed is reduced to less than 0 SPs, the effected character is considered Stationary. The effect lasts until the end of the effected character's next Panel. The character can change the Weight of multiple targets with one Action by applying the Multi-Attack penalty to his AV and Power.
- ★ Protect himself or other target(s) within Range and LOS with a rotating inertial frame that deflects bullets, blades, and other matter, emulating Projectable Multi-Target Physical Deflection at Inertia Control's value in SPs. The Deflection is a Concentration effect requiring an Automatic Action to maintain each Panel.

- ★ Reverse the inertial mass of a target within Range and LOS as a Challenge Action, emulating Gust at Inertia Control's value in SPs, to a maximum of the target's Weight + 7 SPs. The target is knocked back away from the surface of the planet rather than away from the character using the Power. The reversal of the target's inertial mass is brief, so the target begins falling at the end of the character's Challenge Action.
- ★ Reverse the inertial mass of the interior of a target within Range and LOS as a Challenge Action, emulating Annihilating Blast at Inertia Control's value in SPs.
- ★ Reflect bodies of matter that strike him by creating an Inertial Field around himself as an Automatic Action. While the Inertial Field is active, it protects against and reflects Bludgeoning, Concussive, Lacerating, or Penetrating Damage. This is a Sustained effect requiring an Automatic Action to activate. It is deactivated if the character becomes Overwhelmed or Unconscious. The mechanics of reflection are explained below.

A character's Inertial Field has one Variable Attribute, Protection, determined by the character's SPs of Inertia Control on the USPA table. Each time the character is dealt Damage by one of the Damage Types the Power functions against, it blocks a number of points of Damage equal to its Protection and reduces the effect of any Special Effects. This Protection is applied after an Absorption Field's Protection, but before any other Protection. The Absorption Field will reduce the effective EV of the Damage for purposes of any reflected attacks.

Simultaneous with the character's Inertial Field blocking damage from a protected Damage Type, it makes a reflected attack against the triggering damage-dealer. This attack interrupts the Panel as if it were a Triggered Power. It does not require the controller to have readied or to expend an Action. If the controller becomes Overwhelmed by Rolling with an Attack, his Inertial Field drops after the reflected attack occurs. (Thus, if his opponent had Inertia Control and now made a reflected attack back, the character's Inertial Field would now be down. See below!)

The AV of the reflected attack is equal to the SPs of Inertia Control. The EV of the reflected attack is equal to the lesser of the EV of the triggering attack or the SPs of Inertia Control. The Damage Type of the reflected attack is the same as the triggering attack's Damage Type. The DV of the reflected attack is the triggering damage-dealer's AGI/ Speed. The character may not expend Hero Points to increase the AV of the reflected attack, but the triggering damage-dealer can spend them to increase his DV. If the triggering damage-dealer is not within 0 SPs of in Range of the reflected attack, then the reflected attack does not occur.

EXAMPLE: Counterstrike is a villain with 12 SPs of Inertia Control. He is fighting for his life against the hero Stiletto. Counterstrike has activated both his Deflection (giving him DV 12) and his Inertial Field (granting 128 Protection). Stiletto attacks Counterstrike with her razor nails (EV 12). With 14 SPs of VAL to his 12 SPs of Deflection, she has an RV of +2. Her roll of 18 yields an Orange result. Counterstrike rolls with the Attack, reducing it to Green and becoming Staggered as a result. A Green result with Stiletto's razor nails (EV 12) deals 128 Lacerating Damage.

Counterstrike's Inertial Field protects him from 128 points of Damage, so he is unharmed. His Inertial Field immediately triggers a reflected attack against Stiletto. In the game world, Stiletto finds herself suddenly subjected to an inertial force equal and opposite to the force she just applied in her attack.

Mechanically, the AV of this Attack is equal to Counterstrike's 12 SPs of Inertia Control and the EV is Stiletto's 12 SPs of Lacerating Strike. (If Stiletto had, e.g., only 8 SPs of Strike, then the EV would be capped at 8; if Counterstrike had, e.g., only 10 SPs of Inertia Control, the EV would be capped at 10.)

The attack is opposed by Stiletto's AGI of 14 SPs, so it has a -2 RV. Counterstrike can't spend Hero Points on the attack, and Stiletto decides she doesn't need to. Unfortunately, Counterstrike rolls an 08 and scores a Yellow Result. He deals 256 Lacerating Damage to Stiletto. She rolls with the attack, reducing it to a Green result dealing 128 Lacerating Damage, and becomes Dazed.

Stiletto realizes that an inertial controller may be a foe against that a melee combatant such as herself is ill-suited to fight. Before she can retreat, however, it's Counterstrike's Panel. He spends 2 Hero Points to end his Staggered condition and then uses a Challenge Action to increase Stiletto's Weight. The AV of this attack is 12 and the DV is the greater of Stiletto's RES (10) or Weight (2). With 12 vs. 10, the RV is +2. Counterstrike rolls a 40, for a Yellow Result. Stiletto's Weight is increased by 2 SPs, from 2 SPs to 4 SPs, while her Running and Jumping Speeds drop by 2 SPs, from 6 SPs to 4 SPs. The effect lasts until the end of her next Panel.

Had Counterstrike scored an Orange result, Stiletto's Weight and Speed would have changed by one-half his SPs of Inertia Control, or 6 SPs. That would have left Stiletto weighing 8 SPs with a Speed of 0 SPs on her Panel!

If a character with Inertia Control collides with another character (deliberately or accidentally) while his Inertial Field is active, the damage dealt to the Inertia Controller by the collision is reflected back on the other character. This can result in the controller taking no damage from the ram, while the other character takes damage twice!

Anytime a character has an Inertial Field active when a collision occurs, he can choose whether the collision is elastic or inelastic, and momentarily change his or the target's Weight by up to his SPs of Power for purposes of determining the condition. This rule does not apply if the target is instantly Slain or Destroyed; a Breakthrough occurs instead.

EXAMPLE: Counterstrike makes a Ramming Attack against a Sedan driven by a Secret Service Agent. He has a Weight of 3 SPs and was moving at 5 SPs. The Sedan weighs 7 SPs and was moving at 10MPH (3 SPs) because of traffic. The Ramming Attack uses Counterstrike's AGI of 10 SPs vs. the Sedan driver's Piloting (7 SPs) or the sedan's Speed (3 SPs). That yields an RV of +3.

Counterstrike rolls a Yellow result. Counterstrike's EV is 5 (Speed) + 3 (Weight) = 8 SPs, so he deals 64 Bludgeoning Damage to the Sedan. The Sedan's EV is 5 (Speed) + 7 (Weight) = 12 SPs. Counterstrike takes 256 Bludgeoning Damage from the Sedan. He Rolls with the Attack, becoming Dazed, in order to reduce the Damage to just 128 points, which his 12 SP Inertial Field protects him against.

Because Counterstrike has just taken Bludgeoning Damage, that triggers a reflected attack back at the damage-dealer, i.e. the Sedan. The AV of the reflected attack is Counterstrike's SPs of Inertia Control (12) while the EV of the Attack is the lesser of his Inertia Control (12 SPs) or the EV of the Damage (12) – it's 12 either way. The DV is the Sedan driver's Piloting of 7 SPs, so the reflected attack has an RV of +5. Counterstrike rolls poorly, though, and only scores a Yellow result. That's still enough to deal 256 Bludgeoning Damage to the Sedan. The Sedan has a Durability of 160, and has now taken (256 + 64) = 320 Damage, so it has been Wrecked but not Destroyed.

Because his Inertial Field is active, Counterstrike can now choose whether the Collision he just caused is Elastic or Inelastic. He decides it will be an Elastic Collision. In an Elastic Collision, if the attacker's Weight is less than the opponent's Weight, he is knocked back a distance equal to the greater of his Speed or his opponent's Speed; if the attacker's Weight is greater than the opponent's Weight, the opponent bounces off the attacker a distance equal to the greater of their Speeds. Counterstrike chooses to temporarily increase his Weight to 8 SPs, so he is heavier than the Sedan. The Sedan therefore is knocked back a distance of 5 SPs (his Speed). That causes it to hit the highway guardrail, another Collision! The already Wrecked Sedan ends up Destroyed. Glorious!

If two characters with Inertial Fields collide with (or even attack) each other, very bad things happen. Each character first takes Damage from the Collision. Then, each character makes a reflected attack against the other. If the reflected attacks deal Damage, this triggers another reflect attack or attacks from that Damage. This continues until neither character is eligible to make a reflected attack. The knockback is then automatically resolved as an Elastic Collision, with each adding his Inertia Control to his Weight if not Unconscious or Overwhelmed.

Counterstrike rams his arch-nemesis, Reaction. Both characters have 10 SPs of AGI, 9 SPs of Flight, 3 SPs of Weight, and 12 SPs of Inertia Control. The Ramming Attack has an AV of 10 vs DV 10 for an RV of 0, and scores a Green result. Counterstrike and Reaction each deal (3 + 9) = 12 SPs of Damage to each other, or 128 points. Each now makes a reflected attack against the other, with an AV of 12 vs. DV 10. Both roll poorly and get Yellow results at EV 12. Both Roll with the Attack to reduce the Damage to 128 points and are now Dazed.

This Damage now triggers another set of reflected attack, again with an AV of 12 vs. DV 10 for each. This time Counterstrike gets an Orange result (512 Damage) while Reaction gets a Green result (128 Damage). Counterstrike's Inertial Field Reaction protects him. Reaction doesn't want to take 512 Bludgeoning Damage, so he Rolls the attack down to Green, so that his Inertial Field protects him. Since he was already Dazed, now he is Overwhelmed.

This Damage also triggers another set of reflected attacks, again with an AV of 12 vs. DV 10 for each. Once again, both get Yellow results (256 Damage). Counterstrike spends a Hero Point to Roll it down to Green, becoming Staggered. Reaction spends two Hero Points to Roll it down to Green, remaining Overwhelmed.

Since Counterstrike took Damage, he now makes another reflected attack. However, Reaction does not, because his Inertial Field dropped after making the prior reflected attack. Counterstrike rolls at AV 12 vs. DV 10 and scores another Orange result. Reaction spends 6 Hero Points to Roll it down to 128 Damage, but with no Inertial Field to protect him, he takes all of it!

Neither Counterstrike or Reaction is eligible at this point to make a reflected attack. Therefore, knockback is now resolved as an Elastic Collision, with Counterstrike using Weight + Inertia Control versus Reaction's Weight. That's no contest – Reaction is sent bouncing back 9 SPs!

## DEFENSIVE POWERS

### REFLECTIVE SKIN

**Base Cost:** 90

**Variable Cost:** 9

**Base Score:** 0

**Range:** Self

**Duration:** Permanent

The character reflects attacks made using any of the following Damage Types: Annihilating, Bludgeoning, Concussive, Corrosive, Cosmic, Cryogenic, Electrical, Ionizing, Lacerating, Penetrating, Thermal, and Toxic Damage. Reflective Skin has one Variable Attribute, Protection, determined by the character's SPs of Reflective Skin on the USPA table. Each time a character with Reflective Skin is dealt Damage by one of the Damage Types the Power functions against, it blocks a number of points of Damage equal to its Protection.

Immediately after the character's Reflective Skin blocks damage from an attack, the character makes a Ranged Attack in response against the triggering attacker. This Ranged Attack interrupts the triggering attacker's Panel as if it were a Triggered Power. It does not require the character to have readied or to expend an Action.

The AV of the reflected attack is equal to the SPs of Reflective Skin. The Range and EV of the reflected attack is equal to the lesser of the EV of the triggering attack or the SPs of Reflective Skin. The Damage Type of the reflected attack is the same as the triggering attack's Damage Type. If the attacker is not in Range of the reflected attack, then the reflected attack targets the first target in Range in a straight line between the character and the triggering attacker.

Reflective Skin can stack with Invulnerability and Resistance. Its Protection is applied after Forcefield but before Invulnerability or Resistance. Reflective Skin counts as a form of Protection when determining whether a character is within his Physical Protection Limit. Reflective Skin also counts as both an AV and EV when determining whether a character is within his Ranged Attack Limit.

**Biochemical Modifier:** The Reflective Skin only affords Protection against Corrosive and Toxic Damage. Reduce the Base Cost to 15 and the Variable Cost to 1.5. Record the Power as Biochemical Reflective Skin.

**Energy Modifier:** The Reflective Skin only affords Protection against Annihilating, Cosmic, Cryogenic, Electrical, Ionizing, and Thermal Damage. Reduce the Base Cost to 45 and the Variable Cost to 4.5. Record the Power as Energy Reflective Skin.

**Physical Modifier:** The Reflective Skin only affords Protection against Bludgeoning, Concussive, Lacerating, and Penetrating Damage. Reduce the Base Cost to 30 and the Variable Cost to 3. Record the Power as Physical Reflective Skin.

**Flawed Modifier:** Some Reflective Skins may not work against all Damage Types. Reduce the Base Cost by 15 and the Variable Cost by 1.5 for each two missing Damage Types. Any missing Types should be recorded as (Flawed vs. [Type]) after the Power SPs.

**Sustained Modifier:** The character's Reflective Skin has a Duration of Sustained. The character must activate or deactivate the Power with an Automatic Action. If he becomes Unconscious or Overwhelmed, his Reflective Skin deactivates. Reduce the Base Cost by 10.

**Fixed Damage Modifier:** The reflected attacks deal a specific type of damage, rather than the same Damage Type as the triggering attack. Choose from one of the previously listed Damage Types. Do not adjust the Base Cost or Variable Cost of Reflective Skin, except to include the Base Cost for an uncommon or rare Damage Type.

**Specific Attacks Modifier:** Reflective Skin's automatic attacks only trigger against Melee or Ranged Attacks. Reduce the Base Cost and Variable Cost by 50% (after applying all other modifiers), and record the Power as Melee or Ranged Reflective Skin.

**Touch-Range Modifier:** Reflective Skin's reflected attacks are limited to the character's Unarmed Melee Attack Range. Reduce the Base Cost by 10 and the Variable Cost by 1, and record the Power as Touch-Range Reflective Skin.

**Vulnerable Modifier:** The Reflective Skin does not reduce Damage taken, it only reflects attacks. Vulnerable Reflective Skin no longer counts as a layer of Protection for the purposes of calculating Power Limits. Reduce the Base Cost by 60 and the Variable Cost by 6. Record the Power as Vulnerable Reflective Skin.

## MENTAL POWERS

### MIND STRIKE

**Base Cost:** 10      **Variable Cost:** 6      **Base Score:** 0  
**Range:** Touch      **Duration:** Instant

The character can use this Power to make a VAL vs. VAL Melee Attack on a target in Range on whom he has Line of Sight. The Attack deals either Psychic or Neural Damage using the character's SPs of Mind Strike as the EV. If the target's Current Determination is 1 or more, the Mind Strike first deals Psychic Determination Damage to the target, and then any leftover damage is dealt as Neural damage. If the target's Current Determination is 0, the Mind Strike deals Neural Health Damage to the target. The target can Roll with the Attack to reduce the Damage if desired in either case. (The character may be internally reeling with confusion rather than outwardly rolling back, of course.)

**Neural Modifier:** The Mind Strike deals Neural Damage exclusively, regardless of the target's Determination. Increase the Base Cost by 60. Record the Power as Neural Mind Strike.

**No Multi-Attack Modifier:** The Power cannot be used to Multi-Attack. Reduce the Base Cost by 5 and the Variable Cost by 1.

**Nonlethal Modifier:** The Power cannot reduce the target's Current Health to below 0. Record the Power as Nonlethal Mind Strike. Do not change the Base Cost or Variable Cost.

**Psychic Modifier:** The Mind Strike only deals Psychic Damage and does not deal Neural Damage once the target's Determination is reduced to 0. Reduce the Variable Cost by 2 and record the Power as Psychic Mind Strike.

### RESTORATION

**Base Cost:** 20      **Variable Cost:** 2      **Base Score:** 0  
**Range:** Touch      **Duration:** Concentration

This Power allows a character to restore the morale and willpower of a target he touches, causing the target to increase his Current Determination by his Determination Recovery Rate. Restoring a target is an Extended Automatic Action. The Time required is 13 SPs minus the character's SPs of Restoration and the target's SPs of Resilience (if any). If the Time is reduced to 0 or less, it occurs immediately, on the recovering character's Panel. The character or the target may expend 1 or more Hero Points to decrease the Time required by the collective total of Hero Points spent, as per Heroic Recovery (*Ascendant* p. 373). In addition, as an Automatic Action, the character can use Restoration to reduce the SEV of a target's Disoriented Special Effect by the SPs of Restoration.

**Verbal:** The character can restore the morale and willpower of a target within Earshot of him. Increase the Base Cost by 10 and the Variable Cost by 1. Record the power as Verbal Restoration. The Restoration is delivered by means of a pep talk, inspiring speech, or 1980s montage music that lasts for the duration of the Power..

**Horizontal Transference Modifier:** The character cannot actually restore, only transfer, Determination from himself to the target or other willing recipient he touches while using the Power. When the target is restored, the recipient is assigned the Determination Damage. The transfer bypasses any Protection. Reduce the Base Cost by 5 and the Variable Cost by 1. Record the Power as Horizontal Transference Restoration.

# NEW POWER FLAWS

## ATTENUATING MICROSCOPIC RANGE

**Modifier:** 33%

This Power Flaw may only be applied to Powers that affect other targets at Standard Range. The flawed Power(s) only work effectively at microscopic distances (-8 SPs or less) from the target's corpus collosum (or equivalent) and degrades with distance. If the character is at -8 SPs from the target's corpus collosum, he can use the Power(s) at their full SP. If he's further away than -8 SPs, each SP of Distance greater reduces the effective SP of any Power he uses by 1 SP. If a power has 0 or fewer effective SPs against a target, it cannot be used against that target. The Shrink has this Power Flaw applied to his Parapsychiatry Power Pool.

**Designer's Note:** This Power Flaw offers a relatively low discount because it can be easily bypassed by characters who use Incorporeality or Shrinking to get within microscopic ranges of their targets.

## DELIBERATION REQUIRED

**Modifier:** 20%

This Power Flaw can only be applied to Control Powers and/or Telekinesis. Before the character can use an effect of his Power, he must expend an Automatic Action deliberating on the use. The Action might represent a moment of meditation, consulting a magic 8-ball, offering a prayer, etc.

Once he has expended the Automatic Action to deliberate on an effect, the character can use the effect, either in the same Panel or on his next Panel in the subsequent Page. As long as the character continues to use that effect each Page thereafter (whether through subsequent Challenge Actions, maintenance through Automatic Actions, or simply Sustained duration), he does not need to deliberate again.

Strategist has Battlefield Control with the Power Flaw: Slow Control. The Power Flaw represents his need to consult the I Ching each time he manipulates the topography of the battlefield. At the start of his Panel, he uses an Automatic Action to consult the I Ching and then uses a Challenge Action to open a Portal between his location and Soaring Sabers HQ. He uses a second Automatic Action (via Multitask) to consult the I Ching, and then uses a third Automatic Action (replacing his Movement Action) to change the topography of the area, concealing the Portal.

At the start of his next Panel, he can continue maintaining the Portal and/or moving masses of the earth by expending Automatic Actions as usual. He does not need to consult the I Ching again. However, if he wanted to create a hazard, his Slow Control requirement would apply again.

## KISS REQUIRED

**Modifier:** 40%

This Power Flaw can only be applied to Offensive or Mental Powers with a Range of Touch. Instead of touching the target, the character using the Power must kiss the target. A character can automatically kiss a Lustful or Friendly target or an Unconscious target. Otherwise, the target must be grappled, and the character must make a Melee Attack to kiss it. The color result required depends on the target's condition. The character can kiss a Pinned target with a Yellow result, a Held target with an Orange result, or a Grappled target with a Red result. Belladonna has this Power Flaw applied to her Touch-Range Life Drain.

## LIMITED CREATIVITY

**Modifier:** 10% - 30%

This Power Flaw can only be applied to the Invention Power. The character is unable to create one or more types of Objects, choosing from Autonomous Objects, Crewed Objects, Pharmaceutical Objects, and Worn Objects. The modifier is 10% per type. Strategist has this Power Flaw applied to his Invention.

## LIMITED SCOPE

**Modifier:** 20% - 50%

This Power Flaw can only be applied to the Pathogen Synthesis Power. The character is only able to create pathogens that affect particular types of characters. The modifier depends on the scope of characters that can be effected. Bloody Rosemary has this Power Flaw applied to her Pathogen Synthesis.

Limitation	Modifier
Can only affect non-ascendants	20%
Can only affect ascendants	30%
Can only affect non-human animals	40%
Can only affect plants	50%

## PLANNING REQUIRED

**Modifier:** 50%

This Power Flaw can only be applied to Probability Control and to Powers with an Instant Duration. The character's Power can only be used in a context for which he has formulated a plan in advance. To formulate a plan, the character must make a Challenge Check. The character's AV is equal to INS/Super-Intelligence + Time spent. The DV is equal to the Time entailed by the operation modified by the Team Size which is involved in the plan. If the result of the Challenge Check is Green or better, the character can use his Power on anything related to the plan for the duration of the plan. The Commander has this Power Flaw applied to his Probability Control.

**EXAMPLE:** A new hero, Salvo, is able to call on a network of orbital weapon satellites that can deliver directed energy blasts around the world if they have been correctly positioned and oriented over the appropriate part of the globe. This is represented in game with Indirect Thermal Blast 15 with the Power Flaw: Planning Required.

At 4PM on Friday, Salvo learns that he has to support the Star-Spangled Squadron while they patrol Capital City from 5pm that night until 11am on Monday (60 hours or 16 SP). Including Salvo, the Team has 7 members. Salvo has an INS of 9 SPs and has 10 SPs of Time to prepare, so his AV is  $9 + 10 = 19$ . The DV is 16 (Duration of plan) + 3 (Team modifier) = 19, yielding an RV of 0. Sadly, Salvo rolls a 63 and gets a White result.

He hasn't been able to get his satellites in position in time, and as a result when 5pm rolls around, he cannot use his Blast to help the Squadron. He can try again, perhaps spending 8 hours (13 SP) on the effort, to be ready by morning...

## SLOW CONTROL

**Modifier:** 20%

This Power Flaw can only be applied to Control Powers and/or Telekinesis. Before the character can use an effect of his Power, he must expand an Automatic Action deliberating on the use. The Action might represent a moment of meditation, consulting a magic 8-ball, offering a prayer, etc.

Once he has expended the Automatic Action to deliberate on an effect, the character can use the effect, either in the same Panel or on his next Panel in the subsequent Page. As long as the character continues to use that effect each Page thereafter (whether through subsequent Challenge Actions, maintenance through Automatic Actions, or simply Sustained duration), he does not need to deliberate again. Strategist has this Power Flaw applied to his Battlefield Control.

Strategist has Battlefield Control with the Power Flaw: Slow Control. The Power Flaw represents his need to consult the *I Ching* each time he manipulates the topography of the battlefield. At the start of his Panel, he uses an Automatic Action to consult the *I Ching* and then uses a Challenge Action to open a Portal between his location and Soaring Sabers HQ. He uses a second Automatic Action (via Multitask) to consult the *I Ching*, and then uses a third Automatic Action (replacing his Movement Action) to change the topography of the area, concealing the Portal.

At the start of his next Panel, he can continue maintaining the Portal and/or moving masses of the earth by expending Automatic Actions as usual. He does not need to consult the *I Ching* again. However, if he wanted to create a hazard, his Slow Control requirement would apply again.

## SLUMBERING TARGET

**Modifier:** 25%

This Power Flaw can only be applied to Mental Powers that affect targets. The Power can only affect a target that is Unconscious or otherwise asleep. The Shadow Man has this Power Flaw applied to his Terrifying Illusion.

## STATE OF THE ART

**Modifier:** 25%

This Power Flaw can only be applied to the Invention power. Inventions created with this Power cannot have Attributes more than 1 SP greater than the real-world limits of ordinary objects.

# NEW POWER MODIFIERS

## COMBAT SENSE

**Hair-Trigger Modifier:** The character's Combat Sense makes him hard to surprise. When Totally Surprised, his DV is penalized as if he were Partially Surprised. When Partially Surprised, his DV is not penalized. Increase the Base Cost by 15 and record the power as Hair-Trigger Combat Sense.

## EXPLOSION

**Slow Modifier:** The Explosion detonates at a pace that allows targets to take cover. Reduce the AV of the Explosion at its center by 1 or more, by up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the SPs of Explosion. The AV of the Explosion is reduced by an equal amount at each point throughout its Blast Radius, but never to less than an AV of 1. Reduce the Base Cost by 4 per SP of AV penalty, or by 2 per SP of AV penalty if the Explosion is Targeted or Targeted Indirect. Record the Power as Slow (-#) Explosion, where # is the penalty to AV. This modifier can be used to represent mortar shells that can be heard approaching, gasoline-type explosions that spread across a puddle of fluid before detonating, and so on.

Imagine a fluid-based gasoline bomb has Slow (-8) Concussive Thermal Explosion of 20 SPs. It is detonated at the UN Headquarters in New York City. The bomb attacks every character within a radius of 10 SPs (1 mile). Characters at the epicenter are attacked with an Acting Value of 12 and Effect Value of 20. Characters that are 160 feet (5 SPs) away from the epicenter are attacked with an Acting Value of 2 and Effect Value of 10. Characters that are ½ mile (9 SPs) away from the epicenter are attacked with an Acting Value of 1 and Effect Value of 2.

## FLIGHT

**Altitude-Limited Modifier:** The character cannot use Flight to ascend to an Altitude greater than two-thirds the SPs of Power. Reduce the Base Cost by 5 and the Variable Cost by 1. Record the Power as Altitude-Limited Flight.

**Ground Effect Modifier:** The character cannot use Flight to ascend to an Altitude of greater than 1 SP above the surface. Reduce the Base Cost by 10 and the Variable Cost by 2. Record the Power as Ground-Effect Flight.

## HEALING

**Mechanical Modifier:** The healing only affects characters and objects that use Durability instead of Health, such as Robotic or Undead characters, or objects, devices, and inventions. Do not adjust the Base Cost or Variable Cost. Record the Power as Mechanical Healing.

## IMMORTALITY

**Plot Modifier:** The Immortality does not reduce the rate at which the character ages each year. Reduce the Base Cost by 2 and record the Power as Plot Immortality. Mainstream comic book characters have this Power in direct proportion to the annual revenue they generate for their IP holder.

## INVISIBILITY

**Naked Modifier:** The Invisibility only functions for the character, and not Objects, Devices, or Inventions worn by him. (A Device or Invention which grants Naked Invisibility is itself rendered invisible, however.) Reduce the Base Cost by 10 and the Variable Cost by 2. Record the Power as Naked Invisibility.

## NECROMANCY

**Touch Range Modifier:** The Challenge Action to turn a Slain character into an Undead minion requires the character to touch the target. Reduce the Power's range to Touch Range. The character must make a VAL vs. VAL Attack Check to use the Power on an Undead target, but need not do so for a Slain character. If the Attack Check succeeds with a Green result or better, an Undead target is then attacked by the SPs of Necromancy (as above). Reduce the Variable Cost by 2 and record the Power as Touch-Range Necromancy.

## RADIO COMMUNICATION

**Wired Modifier:** The character is only able to broadcast and receive radio waves by means of wire connected to another character or characters with this Power. The Length of the wire is equal to SPs of Power. If multiple characters with Wired Radio Communication connect together, all of the characters can communicate with each other on the same frequency. Reduce the variable cost by 1, or by 0.5 if Narrow-Band. Record the Power as Wired Radio Communication.

**Designer's Note:** This modifier is just to simulate 20th century technology from before the wireless era. I cannot fathom a good reason for you to apply this modifier to a Power on a hero. Having said that, I look forward to seeing everyone's builds for Morse Code Red and Just the Fax-Man appear on the *Ascendant* Discord.

## REGENERATION

**Perfect Modifier:** The character no longer suffers the drawbacks of this Power, for example due to disease or radiation exposure. Increase the Variable Cost by 1 and record the Power as Perfect Regeneration.

## SCRYING

**Digital Modifier:** The character can only Scry from the vantage point of a particular object with the Remote Controllable Perk (p. 220) that he is controlling using Radio Communication (purchased separately). Digital Scrying is an Automatic Action. He thereafter receives the controlled object's sensory data exactly as if he were the object, including whatever Enhancement Powers the controlled object has. He can change the object from which he is Scrying or deactivate the Power with another Automatic Action. The Power immediately deactivates if the Scrying character or the controlled target becomes Unconscious or Overwhelmed. Reduce the Base Cost by 10 and the Variable Cost by 8. Digital Scrying is always Unenhanceable and Non-Transmitting. Digital Scrying cannot have the Sight-Limited or Hearing-Limited modifiers applied to it, as it is already limited to the object's sensors. Change the Range of the Power to Special; it is limited to the lesser of the SPs of Digital Scrying or the SPs of Radio Communication. Digital Scrying does not count as an AV that can be combined with attacks for purposes of calculating Power Limit.

## TELEPATHY

**High Bandwidth Modifier:** The character gains the ability to send and receive SPs of Information equal to his SPs of Telepathy + his SPs of INS or Super-Intelligence. Increase the Base Cost by 20 and the Variable Cost by 2, and record the Power as High Bandwidth Telepathy.

**Long Range Modifier:** The Telepathy has a Range greater than normal. Increase the Base Cost by 5 per SP of additional Range. Record the Power as Long Range (+#) Telepathy, where # is the SP increase in Range.

**Sensitive Modifier:** The character can detect sources of Psychic Transmitting Blindsight, Scrying, Telepathy, and all Mental Powers that use a Challenge Action to affect another creature, within Range of his Power as if it were an object with a Height equal to its SPs. He can pinpoint the exact direction and distance to the source of the Power with a Challenge Check. The AV of the Challenge Check is his SPs of Telepathy. The DV of the Challenge Check is the Range to the source of the Blindsight or Mental Power minus the SPs of the Blindsight or Mental Power. Increase the Base Cost by 10 and the Variable Cost by 1, and record the Power as Sensitive Telepathy.

# NEW SKILLS

## AQUATIC COMBAT

**Base Cost:** 0      **Variable Cost:** 3      **Base Score:** AGI  
**Range:** Self      **Duration:** Permanent

The character is skilled in using aquatic maneuvers to dodge attacks and evade harm. He can substitute his SPs of Aquatic Combat in lieu of his SPs of AGI for Actions related to precision swimming. He can substitute his SPs of Aquatic Combat in lieu of his SPs of AGI as the DV for any Ranged Attacks, Ramming Attacks, Bangs, Flashes, Explosions, Gusts, and Snares provided he is in water and took a Movement Action on his most recent Panel using the Swimming Power.

# NEW PERKS

## GUN-FU

**Base Cost:** 30 CP

The character can make more than one Challenge Action during his Panel. For each 30 CP invested, the character gains an additional Challenge Action. The additional Challenge Action can only be used to make a Ranged Attack with a real-world firearm and the character cannot use Gun-Fu to Team Attack (either with himself or other characters) unless all of the other attacks are also Ranged Attacks with real-world firearms. For each 30 CP invested in Gun-Fu, the character must add 2 to the sum of his Ranged Attack Limit with real-world firearms. Gun-Fu does not add to the sum of his Ranged Attack Limit with other Effect Values.

**EXAMPLE:** Nolan Cross has 15 SPs of Marksmanship and 14 SPs of Agile Telekinesis, putting him at a Ranged Attack Limit of 29. If he didn't have Telekinesis, he'd measure his Ranged Attack Limit as 15 SPs (Marksmanship) + 6 SPs (Submachinegun EV). However, he also has 120 CP invested in Gun-Fu. Therefore his Ranged Attack Limit with real-world firearms is  $15 + 6 + (120/30 \times 2) = 29$ . Note that the +2 penalty to Ranged Attack Limit does not apply to Telekinesis. Effectively he can make one AV 15/EV 14 attack with Telekinesis or five AV 15/EV 6 attacks with a firearm.

## HARD TO PIN

**Base Cost:** 6 CP

Whether due to physiology, reflexes, or training, the character is more difficult to grapple than ordinary combatants of his skill. If he is the target of a successful Wrestling Attack, he reduces color result achieved by one color (to a minimum of Green). If he succeeds on an Escape, he improves the color result achieved by one color.

## LUCID DREAMER

**Base Cost:** 10 CP

The character can sustain Sustained powers when enjoying natural sleep. He cannot sustain his powers when knocked Unconscious by damage or effects, however.

## PEAK ATTRIBUTE

**Base Cost:** 10 CP

Through talent, training, and dedication, the character has achieved the absolute peak of human performance in every aspect of a particular Primary Attribute. Choose from AGI, VAL, RES, INS, or CHA (but not MIG). If the character is not an ascendant, his ordinary human maximum of 5 SPs is raised to 9 SPs in the designed Primary Attribute. The character's SPs of the designated Primary Attribute cannot be Power Dampened to fewer than 9 SPs. The character must still purchase SPs of the Primary Attribute at its normal cost in CPs. The character's Skills in the Peak Attribute are still capped at 9 SPs if he is not an ascendant. A character may purchase Peak Attribute once for each of the five eligible Primary Attributes.

**Designer's Note:** Imagine a character like James Bond, who is not an ascendant yet seems to function at peak human talent in firearms, piloting, parkour, golf, tennis, and any other physical endeavor. Normally Mr. Bond would be built with AGI 5 and a number of Skills at 9 SPs. With Peak Attribute, 007 can be built with AGI 9. Since he can substitute his AGI for those Skills, it's almost *as if* he had purchased all of the Skills at 9 SPs.



## REMOTE CONTROLLABLE

**Base Cost:** 0

An object with this Perk can be remotely controlled. The object can only be controlled by one character, called the controller. The initial controller is designated when the object is invented or manufactured. The controller can thereafter be swapped out for a different character, but doing so requires either a successful Challenge Check to repair the object or a successful use of Technology Control on the object. Because it is designed to be controlled from afar, any object with this Perk can be hacked with Technology Control (even if it normally couldn't be) and its Security is treated as if it were 2 SP lower.

While in control, a controller can control the object as if he had the Technology Control Power. Both the controller and the controlled object must be in Range of each other's SPs of Radio Communication in order for the controller to control the object. If the controlled object has a Crew Requirement of 1 SP or more (2+ crew), then the controller suffers an AV penalty as if the object had missing crew (*Ascendant*, p. 214). If the controlled object has senses (such as Blindsight or Ultra-Sensitive Vision), the controller must have Digital Scrying (p. 218) in order to receive the object's sensory data. Note that the controller can (and usually is) itself a Crewed Object, such as a remote control device, RC joystick, or a mission control station.

**Designer's Note:** We didn't delve into remote-controlled objects in the *Ascendant* core rulebook, except for the occasional Triggered object. A number of objects in *Ascendant* could have the Remote Controllable perk, including the Alarm System, Security Camera, and the Space Telescope. It doesn't cost any CP to add, but it does make the object more at risk from Technology Control.

## REPAIRABLE

**Base Cost:** 10 CP

The character or object is easy to repair. The maximum DV to repair it is capped at twice its highest SP value. Any object that obeys the real-world object limitations has this Perk for free. This Perk can only be applied to Robotic characters or to objects.

## UNBREATHING

**Base Cost:** 30 CP

The character no longer needs to eat, breathe, or drink. He is immune to Damage from Inhalation Auras and Toxic Fogs and cannot be infected by diseases using Airborne or Droplet modes of transmission.

# NEW DRAWBACKS

## EASILY STARTLED

**Base Refund:** 5 CP

The character has a strong startle reflex that makes him overreact when caught off guard. Anytime the character is attacked while Partially or Totally Surprised, he must spend his next available Automatic Action jumping out of his seat, screaming with shock, and so on.

## IRRESOLUTE

**Base Refund:** 10 CP

The character lacks the resolution to draw upon his full reserves. The maximum number of Hero Points the character can spend on any Challenge is reduced by 1. A character with a Power Limit of 12 or less, or who would be reduced to spending no Hero Points on Challenges if he took this Drawback, cannot take this Drawback.

## MALODOROUS

**Base Refund:**  $\frac{1}{2}$ + CP

A normal human being has a body odor with a Pungency of 4 SPs. The character with this Drawback carries an offensive stench that increase his body odor's Pungency by 1 or more SP. If his body odor's Pungency reaches 9 SPs, the character smells as bad as feces. If it reaches 10 SPs, he smells as bad as a rotting corpse covered with vomit. Anytime he interacts with NPCs in a manner that would expose them to his odor (e.g. in person but not on the phone), the character suffers a penalty to his interaction AV equal to his SPs of Pungency - 4. The CP refund for the Drawback is equal to 1 CP per 2 SPs of additional Pungency.

Unless the character takes other Drawbacks such as Notorious or Unlikeable, Malodorous does not preclude him from having and benefiting from SPs of Reputation. Even a sewer monster who smells like vomit can be famous and popular with the right PR team. If the character's Reputation exceeds 17 SPs and his Wealth is 4 SPs or more, he may be approached to be a spokesmodel for a major deodorant or fragrance brand. "Old Spice gave me my secret identity back!"

## MISFORTUNATE

**Base Refund:** 4+ CP

The character suffers from bad luck. For each 4 CP refunded by this drawback, he gains 1 SP of Misfortune. For each SP, the GM can force the character to re-roll a Challenge Check once per Issue or allow an NPC to re-roll a Challenge Check whose outcome will directly affect the character once per Issue.

## OBLIVIOUS

**Base Refund:** 2 CP

The character is unable to observe social cues. When interacting with NPCs, he never knows their Attitude, and cannot tell the difference between Friendly, Indifferent, Avoidant, and Hostile NPCs. His DVs for Charisma checks to persuade, intimidate, or interrogate NPCs and Crowds are always secret.

## POWER SUSCEPTIBILITY

**Base Refund:** 2+ CP

The character is highly susceptible to being affected by a particular Power. The Power Susceptibility must be to a Power with an AV that could plausibly and detrimentally affect the character. For each 1 SP by which he reduces his DV to the chosen Power, he is refunded 2 CP. A character can select this drawback multiple times to have multiple Power Susceptibilities. Record the Drawback as Power Susceptibility: [Power] #, where # is the penalty to the character's DV.

A character with the Robotic Perk could select Power Susceptibility: Technology Control but not Power Susceptibility: Necromancy because Necromancy cannot detrimentally affect him. Conversely, a character with the Undead Perk could select Power Susceptibility: Necromancy but not Power Susceptibility: Technology Control. Neither the Robotic nor Undead character could select Power Susceptibility: Aura, because Aura does not have an AV; nor could they select Power Susceptibility: Healing, because Healing does not have detrimental effects.

## SPECIAL EFFECT SUSCEPTIBILITY

**Base Refund:** 1+ CP

The character is highly susceptible to one particular Special Effect. Choose from the Bleeding, Burning, Corroding, Disoriented, Disrupted, Disintegration, Knock Back, or Poisoned Special Effects. The extent of the character's Special Effect Susceptibility should be assigned an SP score. Anytime the character is affected by the Special Effect to which he is susceptible, he must add his SPs of Special Effect Susceptibility to the SEV to determine the effect he suffers. The Base Refund for Special Effect Susceptibility is 1 CP per SP. A character does not gain any CP from Damage Susceptibility if he has 13 SPs or more of Regeneration or 11 SPs or more of Resilience effective against that Damage Type or Special Effect, or if he is immune to the Damage Type or Special Effect (e.g. Robotic characters cannot be harmed by the Toxic Damage Type, or Poisoned). Record the Drawback as Special Effect Susceptibility: [Special Effect] #, where # is the SP of the effect.

## UNKNOWN

**Base Refund:** 1+ CP

The character is less well-known than his Charisma score would suggest. For each CP refunded, reduce the character's SPs of Reputation by 1 SP. A character cannot have SPs of both Famous and Unknown, unless they use Alternate Form to have separate Famous and Unknown forms. A character can have SPs of both Unknown and Notoriety; this would represent someone whose good deeds are unknown while his bad deeds are widely publicized.

## VULNERABLE STATE

**Disconnected:** The character's Vulnerable State is triggered if he ever loses Radio Communication with the Internet or an Internet-connected Object. Modifier 5%

## WEAK JUMPER

**Base Refund:** 0.5+ CP

The character cannot jump as high and far as his Might would otherwise suggest. His Jumping Speed is reduced by 1 or more SPs. The refund for this Drawback is 1.5 CP per SP of Jumping Speed until the character's Jumping Speed is equal to his other of his Speeds. Thereafter the refund is 0.5 CP per SP.

Fireball has MIG 14, Weight 4, Jumping Speed 10, and Running Speed 4. If he selected the Weak Jumper drawback, he could reduce his Jumping Speed to, e.g., 8 SPs for a refund of 3 CPs; 6 SPs for a refund of 6 CPs; or 4 SPs for a refund of 9 CPs. If he reduced it below 4, he'd only get 0.5 CP per SP thereafter because he already has an alternative Speed (Running) that he can rely on.

# NEW OBJECTS

## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

### PROTECTIVE EARMUFFS

**Cost:** 12 SP (\$40) / 15 CP **Type:** Worn Object

**Attributes:** Height -3, Weight -5, Toughness 1, Durability 15

**Powers:** Filtered Hearing 4 (9 CP)

**Power Flaws:** Filtered Hearing does not reduce Ambient Noise for purposes of Hearing Clarity (-3 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Bad Hearing 2

**Note:** A character wearing Protective Earmuffs gains two benefits. He can add its SPs of Filtered Hearing to his DV when targeted by Bang or Sound Cloud and he can use its SPs of Filtered Hearing as Protection against a Damaging or Disturbing Sound Cloud. However, his Passive Listening Range is reduced by 2 SPs because sounds are muffled.

## WORKSHOPS

### MISSION CONTROL STATION

**Cost:** 28 SP (\$2,500,000) / 222 CP **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height 1, Weight 10, Toughness 5, Durability 60, Interior Crew Requirement 1 (3 crew), Interior Capacity 9

**Powers:** Degradable Radio Transmitting Blindsight 14 (78 CP), Digital Scrying 14 (43 CP), HF/VFH Radio Communication 14 (24 CP), Memory 39 (98 CP), Structured Data Processing 34 (17 CP)

**Perks:** Extra Attack, Multitool, Multitask

**Notes:** The Mission Control Station is a Crewed Object that enables its crew to control an Unmanned Aerial Combat Vehicle or other object with the Remote Controllable Perk. The Mission Control Station is small enough to be carried in the Interior Capacity of a Heavy Truck or can be built into a Headquarters or other structure.



# PHARMACEUTICAL OBJECTS

## INTRAVENOUS METAPLASTIC DISRUPTOR SERUM

**Cost:** 15 SP (\$325) / 45 CP **Type:** Pharmaceutical Object

**Attributes:** Height -8, Weight -20, Toughness 0, Durability 1, Duration N/A

**Powers:** Linked Delayed Onset (3) Power Drain 9 (102 CP) / Delayed Onset (3) Extended Duration Touch-Range Incapacitating Physical Paralysis 9 (197 CP)

**Note:** The first intravenous metaplastic disruptor serum (colloquially called “d-juice” or “disser”) was developed by Dr. Edward Lister for use by Project Ascension staff at the Guantanamo Bay facility. Approximately 30 seconds after the serum is administered to an ascendant, the victim suffers the effects of an Incapacitating Physical Paralysis and a Power Drain targeted against whichever of his Powers has the lowest remaining SPs. The serum can be delivered in combat but is more typically administered via an IV line once a target is already been captured or incapacitated. Powerful ascendants such as Manticore require high dosages (e.g. Team Attack) on a steady drip. The serum is an Invention, not a real-world object, so it takes a highly-talented biochemical inventor (Absent-Minded Professor or equivalent) to synthesize each dose of serum. In the Ascendant universe, there are typically only a few doses of “d-juice” available to the authorities in any major metropolitan area.

## RANGED WEAPONS

### PNEUMATIC SPEARGUN

**Cost:** 16 SP (\$650) / 55 CP

**Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height -1, Weight -2, Toughness 2, Durability 20, Exterior Crew Requirement 0 (1 speargunner)

**Powers:** Linked No-Multi-Attack Short-Range (-2) Penetrating Blast 5 / No-Multi-Attack Snare 3, Underwater Adaptation 3

**Power Flaws:** Limited Uses (Blast/Snare must be reloaded after 1 shot; reload requires 3 SPs of Time); Miscellaneous (Underwater Adaptation does not allow operator to dive or swim underwater).

**Notes:** The design for the Pneumatic Speargun has Underwater Adaptation to take advantage of the new rules for Ranged Attacks Underwater (p. 207). It can be used to attack targets at a Range of 3 SPs (40 ft) without the water affording the target any Protection.

## GRENADES

### CLAYMORE DIRECTIONAL FRAGMENTATION MINE

**Cost:** 15 SP (\$325) / 22 CP **Type:** Crewed Object  
**Attributes:** Height -3, Weight -3, Toughness 2, Durability 20, Exterior Crew Requirement 0 (1 controller)  
**Powers:** Triggered Flat Penetrating Cone 8 (trigger: signal, 116 CP), Wired Radio Communication 4 (14 CP)  
**Notes:** The claymore is triggered by a remote control connected to the mine by a 100-foot (4 SP) long wire. However, other triggers can be rigged, including trip wires or timers.

## CIVILIAN AIR VEHICLES

### HOVERBIKE

**Cost:** 26 SP (\$640,000) / 100 CP **Type:** Crewed Object  
**Attributes:** Height 0, Weight 5, Toughness 5, Durability 60, Exterior Crew Requirement 0 (1 pilot), Exterior Capacity 3, Flight Speed 6  
**Protection:** Bludgeoning Cryogenic Lacerating Penetrating Thermal Resistance 2 (30 CP)  
**Other Powers:** Augment. Piloting (air) 7 (10.5 CP), Ground-Effect Hovering Flight 6 (30 CP), Sustained Spotlight Illumination 5 (7.5 CP)  
**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Flight becomes unavailable after 9 SPs of Time, -5 CP)  
**Notes:** Based on the Aerwins Xturismo hoverbike, which debuted in Motown at the Detroit Auto Show 2022. It is already for sale in Japan and will go on sale in the US in 2023.

### SKYCAR

**Cost:** 30 SP (\$10,000,000) / 200 CP  
**Type:** Crewed Object  
**Attributes:** Height 1, Weight 7, Toughness 7, Durability 120, Interior Crew Requirement 0 (1 pilot), Interior Capacity 5, Flight Speed 8  
**Protection:** Air Filtration 3 (6.5 CP), Bludgeoning Cryogenic Lacerating Penetrating Thermal Resistance 3 (32.5 CP), Low Pressure Protection 13 (6.5 CP)  
**Other Powers:** Augmentative Piloting (air) 7 (10.5 CP), HF/VHF Radio Communication 15 (25 CP), Hovering Flight 8 (68 CP), Sustained Spotlight Illumination 5 (7.5 CP)  
**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Flight becomes unavailable after 12 SPs of Time)  
**Notes:** Based on the Moller M400 Skycar prototype and similar prototypes expected to go into production this decade. The GM can decide whether to make the Skycar available as a real-world object or restrict it to being an Invention.

### MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIR

**Cost:** 18 SP (\$2,500) / 59 CP **Type:** Crewed Object  
**Attributes:** Height -1, Weight 3, Toughness 4, Durability 40, Exterior Crew Req. 0 (1 operator), Exterior Capacity 3, Running Speed 3  
**Protection:** Bludgeoning Cryogenic Lacerating Penetrating Thermal Resistance 2 (30 CP)  
**Other Powers:** Running 3 (6 CP)  
**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Running becomes unavailable after 12 SPs of Time)  
**Notes:** Based on the Drive Medical Cirrus Plus HD Electric Wheelchair. The 146lbs Cirrus Plus can carry a 300lb operator at a top speed of 5mph and has three hours of charge.



## CIVILIAN LAND VEHICLES

### SNOWCAT

**Cost:** 21 SP (\$20,000) / 131 CP     **Type:** Crewed Object  
**Attributes:** Height 1, Weight 8, Toughness 8, Durability 160, Interior Crew Requirement 0 (1 pilot), Interior Capacity 5, Running Spd. 4  
**Protection:** Air Filtration 5 (7.5 CP), Bludgeoning Cryogenic Lacerating Penetrating Thermal Resistance 5 (37.5 CP),  
**Other Powers:** One-Way MF/HF Radio Communication 13 (18 CP), Snow-Only Running 4 (12 CP), Sust. Spotlight Illumination 5 (7.5 CP)  
**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Running becomes unavailable after 13 SPs of Time)  
**Notes:** Based on the Tucker Sno-Cat 2000XL. The 7,900-lbs Sno-Cat can seat five and reach speeds of up to 18mph over snow.

## CIVILIAN WATER VEHICLES

### SCUBAJET

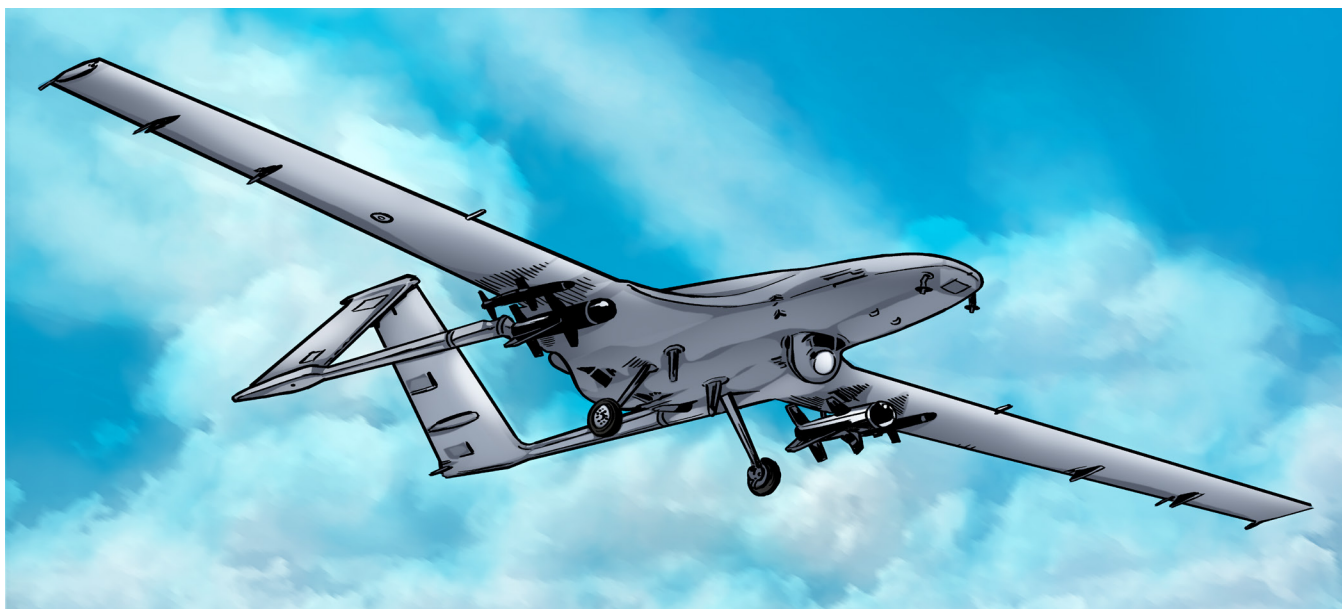
**Cost:** 18 SP (\$2,600) / 62 CP     **Type:** Crewed Object  
**Attributes:** Height -1, Weight -1, Toughness 2, Durability 20, Exterior Crew Requirement 0 (1 pilot), Swimming Speed 3  
**Protection:** Cryogenic Resistance 1 (5.5 CP), High Pressure Protection 6 (1.5 CP)  
**Other Powers:** Sustained Spotlight Illumination 4 (7 CP), Swimming 3 (11 SP)  
**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Swimming becomes unavailable after 12 SPs of Time)  
**Notes:** Based on the SCUBAJET PRO diver propulsion vehicle.

## GOVERNMENT AIR VEHICLES

Any unmanned Government Air Vehicles should be priced as Rotary-Wing Government Air Vehicles (Cost Modifier 8).

### UNMANNED COMBAT AERIAL VEHICLE

**Cost:** 29 (\$5,000,000) / 422 CP  
**Type:** Autonomous Object  
**Attributes:** Height 2, Weight 6, Insight 1, Toughness 7, Durability 120, Flight Speed 7  
**Protection:** Bludgeoning Cryogenic Lacerating Penetrating Thermal Resistance 3 (32.5 CP)  
**Weapons:** Targeted Limited Radius (4 SP) Long-Range (+1) Concussive Thermal Explosion 11 (123 CP, 70mm laser-guided rockets)  
**Other Powers:** Non-Combat Piloting (air vehicles) 5, Dark Vision 6 (17 CP), Degradable Radio Transmitting Blindsight 14 (78 CP), FOV-Limited Telescopic Vision 6 (11 CP), HF/VHF Radio Communication 14 (24 CP), Ultra-Sensitive Vision 6 (18 CP), Winged Flight 7 (50 CP)  
**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Flight becomes unavailable after 14 SPs of Time, -1 CP); Limited Uses (Explosion must be reloaded after 4 uses, -18 CP)  
**Perks:** Extra Attack, Remote Controllable  
**Notes:** Based on the Baykar Bayraktar TB2 UCAV. The TB2 is capable of autonomous takeoff, cruising, and landing but is not capable of autonomous combat operations. It is usually controlled remotely from a Mission Control Station (p. 223).



## GOVERNMENT ACVS

Any Government Air-Cushioned Vehicles should be priced as Rotary-Wing Government Air Vehicles (Cost Modifier 8). ACVs can be piloted using any Piloting specialization (air, ground, or water). The cost is for a US purchaser. A Chinese or Russian manufactured ACAV would cost 1 SP less simply due to their lower cost of production inputs.

### AIR-CUSHIONED LANDING VEHICLE

**Cost:** 36 SP (\$700,000,000) / 773 CP

**Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height 4, Weight 15, Toughness 13, Durability 960, Interior Crew Requirement 5 (33 crew), Interior Capacity 14, Launch Capability (4 Missiles per 4 Pages), Flight Speed 6

**Protection:** Air Filtration 10 (10 CP), Bludgeoning Cryogenic Lacerating Penetrating Thermal Resistance 7 (42 CP), Bombproofing 7 (29 CP), Deflection 7 (42 CP)

**Weapons:** 32 Surface-to-Air Missiles, Long Range (+1) Rapid-Fire Penetrating Thermal Blast 11 (101 CP, dual AK-630 CIWs), Targeted Indirect Intense Concussive Thermal Explosion 11 (250 CP, dual 140mm Ogon launchers)

**Other Powers:** Ground-Effect Hovering Flight 6 (70 CP), Radio Cloaking 4 (28 CP), Sustained Spotlight Illumination 6 (8 CP), VFH/UFH Radio Communication 18 (28 CP)

**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Flight becomes unavailable after 12 SPs of Time, - 4 CP); Limited Use (Explosion must be Reloaded after 2 uses, -51 CP)

**Perks:** Extra Attack, Multitask

**Notes:** Based on the Russian Zubr-class ACV. It can carry approximately 200 tons of cargo in its 8 SP Volume. Common loadouts include three Main Battle Tanks, 10 Armored Personnel Carriers with 140 Infantry, or 500 Infantry.

### AIR-CUSHIONED PATROL VEHICLE

**Cost:** 28 SP (\$3,000,000) / 428 CP **Type:** Crewed Object

**Attributes:** Height 2, Weight 10, Toughness 10, Durability 320, Interior Crew Requirement 1 (1 pilot, 1 gunner), Interior Capacity 6, Flight Speed 6

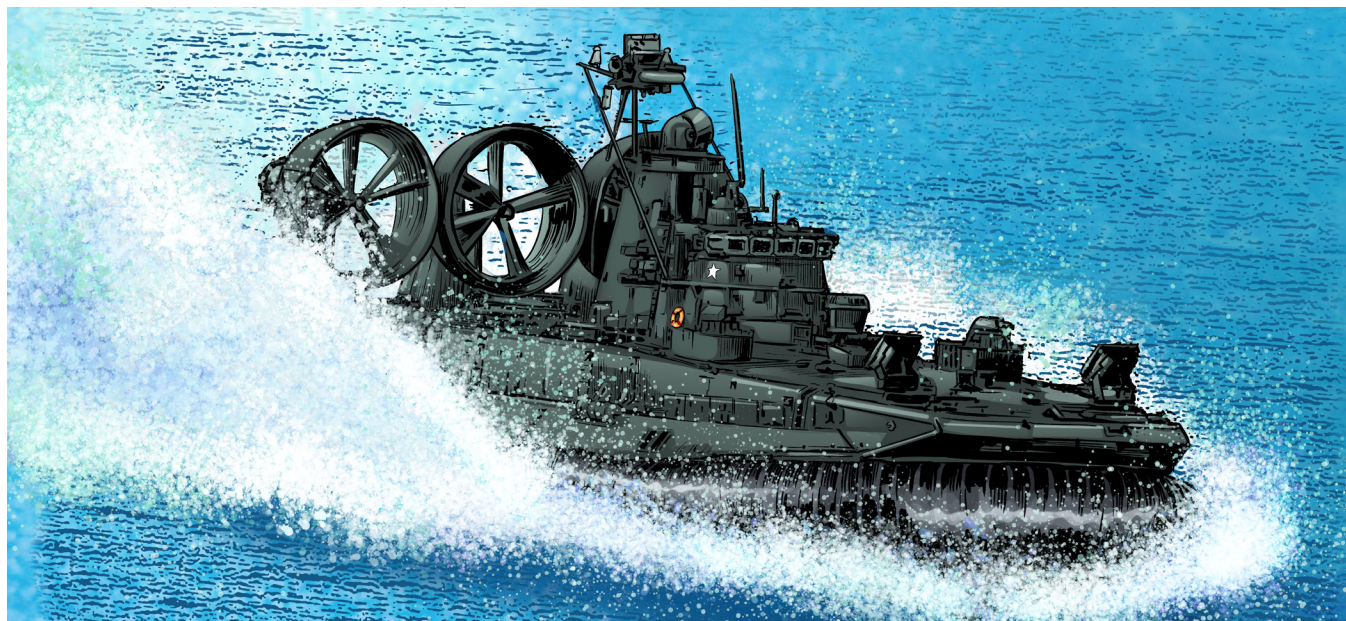
**Protection:** Air Filtration 5 (7.5 CP), Bludgeoning Cryogenic Lacerating Penetrating Thermal Resistance 5 (37.5 CP), Bombproofing 7 (24 CP)

**Weapons:** Rapid-Fire Penetrating Blast 8 (65 CP, 7.62mm Machinegun)

**Other Powers:** Degradable Radio Transmitting Blindsight 12 (75 CP), Ground-Effect Hovering Flight 6 (50 CP), Radio Cloaking 4 (28 CP), Sustained Spotlight Illumination 5 (7.5 CP)

**Power Flaws:** Limited Fuel (Flight becomes unavailable after 12 SPs of Time, -3 CP)

**Notes:** Based on the Russian Czilim-class ACV. It is used for border patrol, carrying a pilot, gunner, and six soldiers with equipment.



## STATIC OBJECTS

### ASCENDANT CONTAINMENT UNIT

**Cost:** 31 SP (\$21,500,000) / 478 CP **Type:** Static Object

**Attributes:** Height 1, Weight 6, Toughness 9, Durability 240, Interior Capacity 4

**Powers:** Bombproofing 9 (26 CP), Invulnerability (Flawed vs. Annihilating & Cosmic) 9 (95 CP), VHF/UHF Radio Communication 10 (20 CP), Triggered Touch-Range Power Dampening 9 (trigger: signal; 300 CP)

**Power Flaw:** Limited Fuel (Power Dampening becomes unavailable after 14 SPs of Time, -15 CP), Miscellaneous Limitation (Power Dampening does not reduce Super-Stamina, -0 CP)

**Perks:** Remote Controllable

**Notes:** An Ascendant Containment Unit (ACU) resembles a 10' tall high-tech coffin made of the same ceramic composites used on high-tech armor. Large enough to hold an ascendant of up to 4 SPs of Weight, an ACU is light enough (1600 lbs) to be portable in a trailer or truck. When turned on, an ACU emits a Casimir effect field that blocks zero-point energy in its vicinity, making it possible to safely confine otherwise-dangerous ascendants. The field is powered by a heavy duty ion-lithium battery sufficient to sustain 16 hours of usage. The Casimir effect field is represented in game as 9 SPs of Touch-Range Power Dampening. The effect can be activated remotely by sending a signal from a designated controller (usually a paired remote control) within Radio Communication range. Because the ACU's Bombproofing, Invulnerability, Radio Communication, and Toughness are within the limits of Real-World Objects, the Power Dampening does not affect those Attributes. ACUs are themselves Inventions, not Real-World Objects. Therefore they require constant maintenance from their inventors to continue functioning – 10 Absent-Minded Professors (or equivalent) can do it. Only organizations with at least 14 SPs of Funds can afford to buy and maintain ACUs. In the Ascendant universe, there are typically only one to four ACUs in any major metropolitan area. We did not grant a CP refund for the ACU's Miscellaneous Limitation because as a containment unit, the Power Flaw actually serves to prevent wounded ascendants from dying when placed within.

### ASCENDANT CONTAINMENT CELL BLOCK

**Cost:** 36 SP (\$700,000,000) / 740 CP

**Type:** Static Object

**Attributes:** Height 3, Weight 16, Toughness 18, Durability 5120, Interior Capacity 15

**Powers:** Air Filtration 10 (10 CP), Bombproofing 12 (40 CP), Flawed (vs. Annihilating & Cosmic) Invulnerability 12 (110 CP), Flawed (vs. all Damage Types) Impermeable Forcefield 15 (12.5 CP), UHF/SHF Radio Communication 25 (35 CP), Triggered Sustained Illumination 5 (50 CP), Triggered Touch-Range Power Dampening 12 (390 CP)

**Drawbacks:** Vulnerable State: Disconnected (loses Air Filtration, Forcefield, Illumination, Power Dampening; -23 CP)

**Perks:** Remote Controllable

**Notes:** The Ascendant Containment Cell Block (ACCB) is a cruiser-sized \$700-million high security prison capable of holding 2,000 man-sized ascendants. Like an ACU, the ACCB emits a Casimir effect field that blocks zero-point energy in its vicinity, making it possible to safely confine ascendants. The ACCB must remain connected to the electrical grid.

The Casimir effect field is represented in game as 12 SPs of Touch-Range Power Dampening. The effect can be activated remotely by sending a signal from a designated controller (usually a secure work station outside the facility) within Radio Communication range. Because the ACU's Air Filtration, Bombproofing, Invulnerability, Radio Communication, Sustained Illumination, and Toughness are within the limits of Real-World Objects, the Power Dampening does not affect those Attributes. It does affect the Impermeable Forcefield, reducing it to 3 SPs. (The Forcefield's primary purpose is to block rescue or escape via Portal and Teleportation.) The ACCB is itself an Invention, not a Real-World Object. Therefore it require constant maintenance from its inventors to continue functioning – 15 Absent-Minded Professors (or equivalent) to remain operational. Only an Organization with at least 19 SPs of Funds could field an ACCB. In the Ascendant universe, the only ACCB is maintained by the elite US Coast Guard.

Because the ACCB is intended for long-term containment, its builders felt that it needed to reduce Super-Stamina so that villains contained there could be more easily dealt with. However, that means that a wounded ascendant placed in an ACCB is at risk of instantly dying if his Super-Stamina drops so low that he has less Health than he's taken damage. Therefore, wounded ascendants are typically kept in ACUs until they have recovered enough Health that transfer to the ACCB does not risk their lives.



# APPENDIX: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## CHAPTER 4

### CONTROL POWERS

#### GENERAL QUESTIONS

*Earth Control, Ice Control, and Water Control all allow you to Run at Power SPs minus weight. Since they are based on the Power Set rules, which would give Running a Base Score of zero (0), I'm not sure why weight is subtracted from the Running speed. It seems you are being penalized twice, the Base Score is already zero (0), why subtract your weight on top of that?*

When simulating the physics, a character who has X SPs of some Control-kinesis can pick up and move a target of Weight Y SPs at a Speed of X - Y SPs. With 12 SPs of Earth Control, you can pick up 4 SPs of earth and move it at a Speed of 8 SPs. Since you are using the same power to move yourself, that same math ought physically to apply. Your Speed is therefore purposefully set to (Power - Weight). All sorts of strange results occur if you ignore this! E.g. a character with Telekinesis becomes able to fly himself carrying an ally faster than he can move the ally using his Telekinesis, even though he is using Telekinesis to move himself and his ally in both cases.

But what about CP Cost? In terms of CP cost, the base cost of a Movement Power is determined by the character who purchases it, partially based on the utility of the movement and partially based on the character's Weight. This, too, is essential – otherwise the Titanic and a minnow pay the same cost for Swimming! However the Control powers are generic - we do not know the character's Weights. Therefore to handle this, from a CP cost perspective, when building those Control Powers, the various Movement Powers usually do not have a Base Cost for Weight applied, often resulting in a Base Cost of 0. All of these Base Costs then feed into the total cost of the Control Power as it is built out.

This has several benefits. It makes the Control Power work sensibly. If Bob weighs 3 SPs, and I weigh 3 SPs, we can both get moved by my Power at the same Speed. It avoids ultra-heavy characters finding a workaround wherein they purchase a Control Power and get cheap, affordable Movement Power that ignores their Weight.

However, two caveats must be added. The first is that this does result in Running being slightly more expensive when purchased via a Control Power. The difference is, however, quite small since Running is so inexpensive and Power Sets are paying only a fraction of that. In general, some Powers are more expensive when purchased via Control Powers (e.g. as noted on *Ascendant* p. 177, you always use the higher Variable Cost for a Power in a Power Set even if the character would normally pay a lower one) and that's the case here.

The second caveat is that when Cosmic Control was set up, it was built with a cost of 15 CP for Flight at Weight 3 because it is supposed to “defy the laws of physics.” That means Cosmic Control is a bargain for an entity of vast Weight. Given how incredibly expensive Cosmic Control is, I deemed this acceptable. If you want to be very strict about it, Cosmic Control lets you fly at a Speed equal to your Power in SPs up to Weight 3, -1 SP per SP of Weight thereafter.

There're many decisions like this hidden behind many aspects of the game, and it would have doubled the size of the book to explain them all. It's why *Ascendant* shouldn't be described as an effects-based point build system. A whole layer of decisions function in between the CP cost and the rules-as-physics. Since this question has come up a lot, we've added a new rule in Chapter 9 for it.

What effect is used in the various Control powers (“move a volume of air,” “move masses of earth,” “extinguish an electrical current,” “modify the magnitude of an electrical current,” “extinguish a fire,” “move a fire,” and so on)?

These effects are modeled with some combination of the following.

- ★ Create Fire (Base Cost 65, Variable Cost 14) is used for creating fires from thin air (first bullet in Fire Control).
- ★ Extract Material (Base Cost 20, Variable Cost 2) is used for transforming atmospheric vapor into ice or water
- ★ Ranged Concentration Noncombatant Superstrength [substance] (Base Cost 10, Variable Cost 2) is used for picking up and moving masses of the substance.
- ★ Ranged Superstrength [substance] (Base Cost 15, Variable Cost 5) is used for hurling objects of the substance.

We do *not* recommend that you make those effects available as powers separately from the Control Powers (and hence do not list them as such). In the context of the physics-based gameplay of *Ascendant*, being able to e.g. create fire should necessarily include the other effects listed. However, it can be useful for GMs who want to reverse-engineer those Powers to devise alternatives.

## FORCE CONTROL

***When a Force Controller makes a construct with Aura, Blast, or Strike, what damage types can it deal?***

A Force Construct will deal either Bludgeon, Lacerating, or Penetrating, depending on the shape of the Construct. A Power Stunt (1 Hero Point) will permit other damage types.

## TECHNOLOGY CONTROL

### ***What is the difference between a hacker using a computer with Deep Networked Tech Control and a hacker using Science (Computers)?***

The intent of the rules was that the hacker has to have SPs of Science (Computers) at least equal to the SPs of Deep Networked Tech Control on his computer or other object, similar to how a doctor using a Methodical Biochemical Lab needs X SPs of Science to use X SPs of the Power. Since this was an error, it was corrected in the errata and second printing.

## DEFENSIVE POWERS

### ABSORPTION FIELD

#### ***If I use Absorption Field for a Power Stunt, do I have to expend points from my Current Capacitance to fuel SPs of the Power I'm stunting?***

It depends. If the Power Stunt is based on and modifying the Absorption Field itself – for instance, projecting it to protect another character, forming the Absorption Field into a shape, or so on – then you would not have to expend Current Capacitance. If the Power Stunt is based on or emulating an Absorption-Fueled Power, then you would have to expend Current Capacitance.

#### ***Can I use an Absorption Field to exceed my Power Limit?***

Your Absorption Field still has to obey your Absolute and Combinatorial Power Limits, except when performing Power Stunts.

#### ***How can I use a Power Stunt from Absorption Field to exceed my Power Limit?***

A Power Stunt can exceed a character's Power Limit, but the Hero Point cost of the Power Stunt is increased by 1 Hero Point per SP over the character's Power Limit.

Imagine a PL20 character that has Combat Sense 7, Marksmanship 10, Absorption Field 13 (Blast). The character can use his Absorption Field at full SPs defensively ( $7+13 = 20$ ), but when charging Blasts from his Absorption Field, he can only use 10 SPs.

If the character declares a Power Stunt to emulate 13 SPs Blast from his 13 SPs of Absorption Field, he would first expend 5 Hero Points (for emulating an Offensive Power from a Defensive Power) and then expend an additional 3 Hero Points for exceeding his Power Limit by 3. Thus, for 8 Hero Points, the character could attack with AV 10, EV 13.

## INVISIBILITY

### ***Does Invisibility affect the Devices, Inventions, or Objects a character carries or picks up?***

It's been left to the GM to decide based on the physical rationale for the character's Invisibility. That said, if you want a blackletter rule, use the following. A character's Devices are always affected by his Invisibility. Other Objects worn or carried by a character when he becomes Invisible, or picked up while Invisible, will be or become Invisible if the following criteria apply:

- ★ The Object has a Weight at least 3 SPs less than the character's Weight
- ★ The Object has a Height no greater than the character's Height
- ★ The Object does not have the Cumbersome or Long Reach modifiers and carrying it does not encumber the character.

For instance, an Invisible character with Height 0 and Weight 3 could wear a ballistic armor suit (Height 0, Weight 0) or a spy catsuit (Height 0, Weight -2) without compromising his stealth, but if he wore a Hazmat Suit (Height 0, Weight 1) the Hazmat Suit would be visible. He could carry a Submachinegun (Height -2, Weight -2) undetected, but a Flamethrower (Height 1, Weight 1) would be visible.

## ENHANCEMENT POWERS

### MICROSCOPIC VISION

***Can my character use Microscopic Vision simultaneously with Telescopic Vision?***

Yes, as long as he has both Powers. It's up to the GM, based on the player's rationalization for his character's powers.

### X-RAY VISION

***How does X-Ray Vision work in the Ascendant universe? It doesn't work like real-world x-rays, that's for sure!***

A character with X-Ray Vision chooses a point some distance and direction away from himself. Everything between him and the endpoint is rendered transparent by the X-Ray Vision (unless blocked for lack of SPs to penetrate). For example, a character with X-Ray Vision who is 20 feet from a villain could use X-Ray Vision to first see through the villain's clothes; then slide the endpoint of his x-rays a bit further, to see the villain's inner organs; then slide it a bit further, to see through the villain entirely. The exact rationalization for how this is accomplished is up to the character and GM. Yes, this is utterly unrealistic for real-world x-rays, but that's how the power works in comic books.

***Can my character use X-Ray Vision in conjunction with real-world objects such as Binoculars or Night Vision Goggles?***

No! To use them, you'd need to set the endpoint of your x-ray vision on the far side of the object, meaning the object would be invisible (seen through).

***Can my character use X-Ray Vision to see Invisible targets?***

No! X-Ray Vision enables you to make characters and objects between you and whatever you want to see invisible. It cannot be used to make things visible except through that means. The GM could allow a Power Stunt to emulate Thermal Dark Vision with X-Ray Vision if he found it plausible.

***If my character has X-Ray Vision, can he see through Illusions?***

No! A character who uses X-Ray Vision does not automatically see through the Illusion because there's nothing to see through – there's just a pattern of energy and a hallucination in his own head. Therefore, the character hallucinates seeing what he'd expect to see if he used X-Ray Vision on whatever he thinks he is seeing. See Illusions, below.

## MENTAL POWERS

### EMOTION ADJUSTMENT

***Why do the Moderately and Extremely Agreeable conditions have the same description?***

They don't! Moderately Agreeable characters will agree to "unusual **or** dangerous requests," while "Extremely Agreeable characters will agree to unusual, dangerous requests."

A Moderately Agreeable soldier might agree to put on a chicken costume (an unusual request) *or* attack the enemy (a dangerous request), while an Extremely Agreeable soldier will agree to wear a chicken costume while attacking the enemy (unusual, dangerous request).

### ILLUSION

***How do Illusions function in the Ascendant universe?***

When a character creates an Illusion, he actually creates a pattern of energy that, by nature of its particular configuration, psychically affects the mind of those who sense it, causing them to experience false impressions. The illusionist only creates the pattern which induces the effect; the effect itself takes place inside the mind of those who sense the pattern. The pattern is like a hypnotic trigger; the mental impression is a hallucination. The reason an Illusion affects everyone who encounters it, even if the illusionist is unaware of them, is because of the objective existence of the pattern. The reason an illusion can psychically harm those who experience it is because it's inside their head.

Likewise, when a character confronted by an Illusion successfully disbelieves it, the effect of the pattern on his mind is loosened. On a Green or better result, the character is intellectually aware the illusion is not real, although the pattern still induces the false impressions – e.g. he continues to hallucinate but he knows he is hallucinating. On a Yellow result, the character can ignore his choice of illusory sounds, sights, or smells. On an Orange result, the character can ignore illusory sights and either sounds or smells. On a Red result, the character can entirely ignore the illusion as if it didn't exist.

## MIND DOMINATION

***If you use Mind Domination and succeed with a particular color (e.g. Yellow), can you try again later in order to get a better color result? If so, would the Dominated character still get to use its RES as the DV? What happens if you get a worse color result? Does the Dominated character have to break free of the original or later color result?"***

Yes, you can try again. The Dominated character can still use its RES as the DV, and can still spend Hero Points to decrease the RV. If you get a worse color result, you still retain your original (better) result. The Dominated character has to break free against the best color result you achieved.

***If a Mind Dominator has Dominated a target, and orders the target to walk into traffic, or otherwise commit self-harm, does the target get an opportunity to break free before it carries out the order, or only at the end of its Panel?***

Normally, a target attempts to break free from Mind Domination at the end of its Panel. If the target is ordered to take an action that will irrevocably harm itself or a loved one, the Gamemaster could permit the target to make its Challenge Check to break free just prior to the action. If the target succeeds, he breaks free and his Panel immediately ends. If the target fails, he carries out the action(s) and his Panel ends. He would not get another attempt to break free at the end of that Panel.

## MIND READING

***Is the target of Mind Reading aware of the attempt?***

By default, the target is not aware of the attempt. (The target may still 'subconsciously' spend Hero Points, however.) A Mind Reader might possess a Power Flaw that makes their Mind Reading obvious to the target, however.

## MOVEMENT POWERS

***How do Powers that permanently affect your Weight interact with the Base Cost of Movement Powers?***

Movement Powers which have a Base Cost modified by your Weight do not have their Speed reduced by permanent effects that increase the character's Weight, such as Permanent Growth or Permanent Hyper-Density. However, their Base Cost must be calculated based on their Weight *after* these Powers are applied. Because this question comes up a lot, we have added a rule to this effect in Chapter 9.

## PORTAL

***Can you place a Portal underneath a stationary target, or right in front of a moving target, in attempt to cause them to involuntarily fall through it?***

Yes. The attempt can be resolved as a Targeted Area of Effect Ranged Attack, using the character's SPs of Portal as the AV. If the Attack Check fails against the target's DV, but would have succeeded against the Distance, then the Portal is still created but the side placed under or in front of the target scatters. Depending on the size of the Portal, it might still end up under or in front of the target. If the Portal ends up under the target, he immediately falls through it. If the portal ends up in front of the moving target, his Movement Action carries him through the Portal. This is how Maximum Leader removed American Eagle from the battlefield in the *Ascendant: Star-Spangled Squadron* graphic novel.

### ATTACKING WITH PORTAL: PORTAL VS. DISTANCE/AGI/SPEED

***Can you attack through a Portal with Blast, Cone, or Explosion?***

Yes. "Powers can used through the Portal, subject to the limitations of Spotting." However, the distinct geometry of a Portal would have interesting implications for the area of effect on the far side, depending on where the attacker is standing when he uses his Power. In general, an Explosion used point-blank at a Portal would manifest as a Cone on the far side of the Portal; the explosive sphere on this side of the Portal would be missing the "pie slice" created by the Portal's obstruction.

## SUPER-SPEED

***Since Superspeed has a Permanent Duration, does that mean that a character with Superspeed can never communicate with other characters?***

No! The rule does state that “the character using Superspeed cannot communicate with other characters.” The key word is “using.” A power with a Permanent duration is always activated (**Ascendant** p. 73) but that does not mean the power is always being used. Using a power occurs when an Action is taken with a Power, when it is used or modifies AV, DV, EV, Protection, or other Attributes, or with each Movement Action (**Ascendant** p. 73). Superspeed is only being used when those conditions apply. The power’s description is clear that this is voluntary on the part of the character – the character “can add” Superspeed to his various Attributes. Anytime the rules use “can” it means the choice is voluntary.

***Can a character with Super-Speed or Time Control undertake several Automatic Actions on his Panel?***

A character with these Powers can add his SPs of Power to his Time spent performing Extended Actions. But, by virtue of the logarithmic math of **Ascendant**, an Extended Action is nothing more than an Instant Action performed repeatedly. For instance, a character with 5 SPs of INS can read 5 SPs of Information (a paragraph) as an Automatic Action in 0 SPs of Time. This can be understood as reading INS SPs of Information per Page, or as reading SPs of Information as an Extended Action equal to INS + Time spent.

Therefore, under the canon that “Physics Fills the Gaps,” it makes sense to allow the character to use his Automatic Action to undertake several sequential Instant Automatic Actions instead of one Extended Automatic Action of 0 SPs, provided the sequential Automatic Actions could be understood as part of a larger Extended Auction. For instance, if it takes one Automatic Action to stack a box in front of a door, a character with 4 SPs of Super-Speed or Time Control might stack 16 boxes in front of a door with his Automatic Action. That’s essentially just saying “stack boxes” is an Extended Action with SPs of boxes stacked equal to Time spent.

Sometimes Automatic Actions are linked to specific game mechanics that relate to the character’s interaction with his own Powers or with other game mechanics. Such examples include (a) concentrating on a Power, (b) changing allocation of SPs in a Power Battery, (c) activating and deactivating a Power, and so on. In these cases, Super-Speed or Time Control *cannot* be used to undertake multiple Actions. It is never permitted to break the action economy for such purposes.

***My speedster wants to drop a line of grenades as he zooms across the battlefield. How would that be handled?***

This would be handled as a Multi-Attack with no EV, meaning you double the Multi-Attack Penalty to the AV. The DV would be based on the average Range from the character to the grenade’s drop-off points; that will always be the character’s Speed -1. The AV will be the character’s AGI or Marksmanship, increased by his SPs of Super-Speed or Time Control. The AV and EV of the grenades, when they detonate, will not be affected – each will go off individually.

For instance, imagine the hero has AGI 5, Super-Speed 7, and Running Speed 12. He wants to drop 8 grenades, one every 20 feet (2 SPs), over a total Distance of  $8 \times 20 = 160$  feet (5 SPs). His AV is  $5+7 = 12$ . Since he’s dropping off 8 grenades, his Multi-Attack penalty is -3, doubled since the EV isn’t affected, to -6, for a final AV of 6. His DV is the average Distance to his grenade drop-offs, which would be  $5 - 1 = 4$  SPs. His RV is +2, meaning he’ll have little problem dropping the grenades off accurately. When they go off, the grenades’ SPs of Explosion will determine the AV/EV, without being affected by his prior Multi-Attack.

If the hero wanted to drop off 32 grenades (-5 Multi-Attack Penalty) over 640 feet (7 SP Distance), his AV would have been  $12 - 10 = 2$ , and his DV would have been 6. With an RV of -4, he’d have likely had many of his grenades scatter as he threw them.

**AV = SPEEDSTER’S AGI/MARKSMANSHIP, APPLY DOUBLE MULTI-ATTACK PENALTY BASED ON # OF GRENADES**

**DV = SPEED -1 TO PLACE GRENADES; THEN GRENADES EXPLODE WITH OWN AV/EV**

## OFFENSIVE POWERS

### CONTINUOUS BLAST

***Imagine a PL18 character built with AGI 6 and Continuous Blast 12. Could that character aim at a point in space or other easy-to-hit target in order to therefore strike harder-to-hit targets in the path of the beam using Blast as the EV, thus getting an AV 12 / EV 12 attack, at PL24?***

No. The AV and EV cannot exceed the character's PL. The SPs of Blast against targets in the Continuous beam would be reduced as necessary (for both AV and EV) until their sum is below the character's PL. In the example above, the primary target would be attacked with AV 6. If the attack hits, the target would be dealt damage at EV 12. If the attack misses, it would scatter. Any targets in the beam would then be attacked at AV 9 and EV 9. It's harder to score a direct hit with the beam, but it does more damage. To avoid such complexities, be sure that when building characters with area-of-effect attacks the Power's SPs are equal to or less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  the character's Power Limit.

***Can a Targeted Intense Explosion be used to circumvent PL by 'targeting' a point in space and then affecting all characters in the blast radius with AV and EV equal to the SPs of Explosion?***

No. The AV and EV cannot exceed the character's PL. Anytime the Explosion power carries both the Intense and Targeted modifiers, the AV and EV used to attack any characters in the blast radius is always the same (before modifiers). The AV is the character's SPs of AGI or AGI-substitute and the EV is the character's SPs of Explosion. It would make no sense for an Intense explosion to massively increase in accuracy by missing!

### GLUE

***If my character is Stuck by Glue such that my Speed is reduced to 0 SPs, is my DV reduced to 0 if I am defending myself with Deflection?***

No, Deflection is not affected by Glue. As noted in the rules, "The foregoing notwithstanding, Glue does not affect Deflection."

### HAZARD

***Can a Hazard be moved?***

Yes, provided it is not an Instant Hazard. Moving a Hazard functions exactly like moving a Fog: As a subsequent Challenge Action, you can move the Hazard you created to another point within Range and LOS.

Note that in some circumstances an opponent might be able to move a character's Hazard using, e.g. Air Control, Earth Control, etc.

### POWER DAMPENING

***If you Power Stunt with a Power that has been Dampened, can you still use the Power's full CP cost to calculate the Power Stunt?***

Yes. However, the Power Stunt is limited to the SPs of the Power after Dampening is applied. For instance, if you use a Power with 15 SPs that costs 200 CP, which has been Dampened to 5 SPs, you still have 200 CP to build your Power Stunt, but your maximum SPs for the Stunt will only be 5 SPs.

# SPECIAL POWERS

## INVENTION

**Imagine a character that has the Invention Power and Singular Invention Perk. Could the character invent his own Singular Inventions, changing them over time? For instance, assume he has 200 CP of Invention and 500 CP worth of Singular Inventions. Could he invent a 200-CP Invention, move it “out” of his Invention pool and into his Singular Invention pool, and then Invent something else, repeating until he has a total of 700 CP of Inventions?**

Yes, he can. Invention + Singular Invention is an excellent combination for such characters. Don't forget, however, that the character's Power Limit will be reduced by having Singular Inventions, so what he gains in breadth he will lose in depth of power.

**My character has crafted an Invention that falls within the real-world limits on ordinary objects. He is now working to create a production blueprint from the prototype in order to mass produce it. If I don't like the result I receive on my Challenge Check to make the blueprint, can I try again with the same prototype, or does my character need to make a new prototype?**

You can only make one blueprint per prototype. If the character gets an Orange or worse color result on his Challenge Check, it means that he discovered some flaw, technological gap, impossible-to-duplicate material, or other element in the prototype that makes it impossible to flawlessly produce his Invention. If he wants to make another blueprint, he needs to go back and create another prototype to work from.

# CHAPTER 5

## PERKS

### ALTERNATE FORM VERSUS VULNERABLE STATE: CAUGHT OUT OF COSTUME

**If I want to build a character like Shazam, would I use Alternate Form or Vulnerable State?**

For a character like Shazam (Captain Marvel), you would use Vulnerable State: Caught out of Costume, as Billy Batson is much weaker than Captain Marvel. You would get a decrease in CP cost because of the fact that you sometimes have to be Billy Batson and not have access to your powers.

## MINIONS

**Is the math for Minions broken? Imagine I have a Power Limit 30 character with a Challenge Rating of 1000. If I spend 80 CP on Minions, I gain Minions with a Challenge Rating of 500. My own character is now Power Limit 28 with a Challenge Rating of 500. So the total Challenge Rating remains 1000, as it should. But if I spend another 80 CP, I gain another set of Minions with a Challenge Rating of 500, while I drop to a Power Limit 26 with a Challenge Rating of 250. The total is now a Challenge Rating of 1,250 – the total Challenge Rating now exceeds my character's Challenge Rating. The problem only gets worse from there.**

It is true that the rules do permit you to spend more than 80 CP on Minions. “A character can spend more than 80 CP on Minions if desired. Each additional 80 CP grants another 80 CP worth of Minions.” However, the next sentence states “Because Minions puts additional characters under the player's control, it affects the character's Power Limit.” In the example above, when you spend another 80 CP on Minions, you gain additional Minions based on having a Power Limit of 28, not a Power Limit of 30 – so you get Minions worth 250 Challenge Rating, not worth 500. The total Challenge Rating is thus 250 (your character) + 500 (your first set of Minions) + 250 (your second set of Minions) = 1,000. Since this was textually unclear (because of the language under Additional Characters on *Ascendant* p.67), we've clarified this in Chapter 9 of this sourcebook.

## DRAWBACKS

### VULNERABLE STATE

*My character has 15 SPs of MIG. His Vulnerable State is supposed to reduce his strength but not his stamina. The easiest way to do this was to have his Vulnerable State reduce his MIG to 5 SPs but add Super-Stamina to 15 SPs. Unfortunately, the rules state that “a character’s Vulnerable State cannot have Perks, Powers, or Skills that his normal state does not, nor can it have higher SP score in any existing Attributes, Powers, or Skills than his normal state.” Is my build in violation of the rules?*

No, your character’s Vulnerable State is perfectly legitimate. Mathematically, what you’ve done is partly reduce MIG; you haven’t gained any new capability. Since this was textually unclear in the rules, we’ve clarified this in the New Rules section of this sourcebook.

## CHAPTER 6

### DAMAGE TO OBJECTS

*If I have an Aura, does it damage my own or other character’s Devices, Inventions, Singular Inventions, and carried or worn Equipment? What about If my character uses a Self-Targeted Explosion against which I am not immune?*

For Devices, your Devices will never be damaged unless you have the Destruction of Device Vulnerable State, and the Device is then targeted mechanically according to the rules that apply to that Vulnerable State.

For Singular Inventions, Inventions, and Ordinary Objects, refer to the rules for Worn Objects and Externally-Crewed Objects carried by the character (*Ascendant* p. 219). Damage and Special Effects from Attacks that affect the wearer only apply to the wearer, except if the Object gives the wearer Protection. In this case the Object’s Protection applies to the wearer, but the Object simultaneously takes Durability Damage equal to the amount of Damage it stops.

Thus, an effect that does damage to you will not damage any of your Carried or Worn Objects unless they are separately targeted (in a Multi-Attack) or those Objects provide Protection against the effect.

If you want a slightly more realistic rule, then Area of Effect Attacks should damage your Carried or Worn Ordinary Objects. This will allow a grenade to blow up your assault rifle, for instance. This can prevent heroes from carrying absurd amounts of equipment in an unheroic manner. However, I do not recommend having Area of Effect Attacks damage Carried or Worn Singular Inventions or Inventions, as it doesn’t seem to work that way in comic books.

### REPAIRING OBJECTS

*Could I build a self-repairing wearable object by purchasing Regeneration that applies to the object, even if I have already purchased Regeneration as a power that applies to the object’s wearer?*

Yes. You’d purchase Regeneration twice, paying the additional cost for the SPs of Regeneration that would repair the object itself.

# CHAPTER 7

## TAKING ACTIONS

***Can a character undertake a Challenge Action, spend Hero Points to increase his RV to where he can automatically succeed, and thereby only expend an Automatic Action?***

Yes. This use of Hero Points is an excellent way to gain a temporary boost of Speed, for instance, by Moving All-Out automatically.

**Is a character required to use his full SPs of his Attributes, Powers, or Skills when taking Actions?**

No. A character can usually use less than his full SPs if he wants to. Remember canon #2: "Physics Fills the Gaps." A person capable of slapping someone enough to break a brick is certainly also capable of just gently patting his dog on the back. We offer the following as guidelines to keep things plausible:

- ★ You cannot simultaneously reduce the SPs of a Power for one aspect of the Power while treating it as full SP in another aspect (absent some modifier such as Variable Volume). For instance, if you have Blast at 12 SPs, you cannot reduce its EV to 4 SPs while still claiming it has a Range of 12 SPs.
- ★ You cannot reduce the SPs of a Transformation power with the Permanent modifier.
- ★ You cannot reduce the SPs of any Permanent power if the Power's description states that the SPs of the Power "are added" to Attributes. You can do so if the Power's description states that the SPs of Power "can" apply to particular Attributes.
- ★ You cannot reduce the SPs of Super-Intelligence. You are forced to accept the existential dread that comes with being smart enough to see the world as it truly is at all times with no respite save the certainty of your own mortality.

The GM should use his judgment with regard to Objects. You can certainly drive slower than maximum speed or turn the radio down. You cannot make the fragmentation grenade blow up with less power.

**Can a character undertaking an Extended Action spend Hero Points to increase his RV beyond +1?**

Yes. Using Hero Points to exceed the normal limit on an Extended Action's RV is one of the best ways to succeed at difficult Extended Actions.

## POWER STUNTS

***Can my character make a Power Stunt using a Skill?***

Yes, you can Power Stunt with a Skill as if you were Power Stunting with an Enhanced Attribute, using the CP cost of the Primary Attribute plus the CP cost of the Skill. The maximum SP of the Power Stunt is equal to the Skill. The plausible Power Stunts will, of course, be limited by the Skill used.

For instance, you might plausibly use Intimidation to Power Stunt Emotion Adjustment (fear) and Persuasion to Power Stunt Emotion Adjustment (agreeableness) but not vice versa.

## MOVEMENT

***If I have Jumping, can I move in a series of small jumps rather than one big jump?***

Yes. When doing so, he moves at the lesser of his Running Speed -1 or his Jumping Speed +1. He can make a single running jump, a jump followed by a moment of running, a series of jumps, or any other combination desired provided that the longest individual jump is no more than his Jumping Speed and his highest individual Jump is no more than his Jumping Speed -1. See Combining Jumping and Running with a Movement Action (*Ascendant*, p. 285).

## BREAKING AND ENTERING

*Imagine I'm playing a character with MIG 12 and I've encountered a 3' thick concrete-and-steel wall with Break DV 10. I can use an Automatic Action to break through it. Next I encounter a 6' concrete-and-steel wall with Break DV 11. Again, I can use a single Automatic Action to break through it. Then I encounter a 12' concrete-and-steel wall with DV 12. Then I encounter a series of 4 ¼" glass doors with Break DV 2. Do I actually need to spend FOUR automatic actions to break down these four walls?*

No, you don't need to do that. If you want to break through multiple walls, doors, or windows with one Automatic Action, just add the Break DVs together using the rules for adding SPs. Four glass doors would have Break DV 4, so that would be no problem.

## SPOTTING, LISTENING, HIDING, AND SNEAKING

*How many SPs of Flash/Illumination or Noise does an Aura, Blast, Explosion, or Strike make?*

Because these Powers can take on many physical forms, it depends – “Physics Fills the Gaps” in most cases. Here are some possible rulings that might be useful:

- ★ An Aura might produce SPs of Illumination and Noise equal to its SPs - 12 while it is active.
- ★ A Blast such as a gun might produce momentary SPs of Illumination equal to its SPs/2 and momentary SPs of Noise equal to its SPs x 1.5. A firearm with 8 SPs of Penetrating Blast might produce 4 SPs of Illumination and 12 SPs of Noise for an Instant. (A real-world firearm is about 12 SPs of Noise or 135 decibels.)
- ★ A Blast such as a lightning bolt might produce momentary SPs of Illumination equal to its SPs and momentary SPs of Noise equal to its SPs. 10 SPs of Electrical Blast might produce 10 SPs of Illumination and 10 SPs of Noise for an instant - about 24 million candelas and 120 decibels.
- ★ A Cone or Explosion might produce momentary SPs of Illumination and Noise equal to its SPs.
- ★ A Strike might produce momentary SPs of Illumination and Noise equal to one-half their SPs each, or just one of the two at equal to SPs. For instance, a Bludgeoning Strike of 3 SPs might produce 3 SPs of Noise (e.g. 80dB fight sounds) while a Bludgeoning Strike of 10 SPs might produce 10 SPs of Noise (e.g. 120dB thunderclap).

These are just guidelines and the GM should be the adjudicator of the light and sound produced by effects, following canon #2. If they are used, characters who have purchased Invisibility and Inaudibility should be able to reduce the SPs of the incidental Illumination and Noise produced by their Powers just as they reduce their own image and sound's presence.

*How should I, as GM, handle characters with powers such as Flight and Telescopic Vision when their players argue that they can spot targets in an entire city at an Effective Range of 0?*

The sheer amount of “stuff” in the character's field of vision will be so enormous that it will swamp the character's ability to comprehend it – it will be looking for a mouse on a cluttered desk that's 500 miles in diameter. The human eye can only ingest about 15 SPs of Information per Page. We know from the Investigation rules that the difficulty of finding things in forensic sites is determined by the site's Complexity, and that Complexity and Information are interchangeable. A restaurant table is about 0 SPs in Area and has 6 SPs of Clutter, for a total of 0 + 6 SPs of Complexity. If we assume the landscape is a bit less cluttered than a restaurant table, say 5 SPs of Clutter, then a character could scan an Area of 15 - 5 = 10 SPs without penalty. 10 SPs of Area is about 25,000 sf, and it's the size of one 5 SP x 5 SP Battle Area on the Capital City Gazetteer map. If using Battle Areas, trying to Spot across multiple Battle Regions could then be handled as a Multi-Attack or the target(s) could simply be assigned SPs of Cover equal to the Area scanned - 10. Since this issue has come up very frequently we have made it an official rule in Chapter 9.

## STOPPING MOVING OBJECTS

*My character wants to stop an enemy car on a highway. In the example in the rules, the object is a train on rails so it cannot really prevent itself from being stopped. But e.g. a car driven by a hostile driver can try to avoid the character. How do I resolve that?*

Your character would make a Clamber Trick Attack using his AGI vs. the target's AGI/Speed. If he succeeds, the color result indicates how long the character can slow down the target. Actually slowing down the target would then be a separate Automatic or Challenge Action.

# CHAPTER 8

## COLLISIONS

### ***What would happen if a Totally Surprised character were knocked back into an obstacle?***

A character knocked back into an unintentional Collision with an object conducts a Ramming Attack using the Speed of the knockback as the AV and his own AGI as the DV. However, if the character were Totally Surprised, his DV would (barring Intuitive Combat Sense, etc.) be reduced to 0.

### ***If my character rams a really huge Object, it feels unrealistic to me to use the Weight of that Object as the EV I suffer. After all, it's full Weight isn't bearing down on me, just part of it. Is there a realistic way to handle that?***

Yes! If the character or object collides with a stationary object, just use the character's own Weight to calculate the Damage he suffers. If the character or object collides with or rams a moving target with fewer SPs of Height than itself, subtract 2 times the difference in Height from the taller character or object's Weight for purposes of the EV. For instance, if a hero (Height 0, Weight 3) collides with a kaiju (Height 7, Weight 24) at Speed 4, the EV of the ram would normally be calculated as 28 SPs. Using this optional rule, you would subtract  $(7 \times 2) = 4$  SPs, putting the collision EV at 14 SPs.

Since this has come up frequently we have made it an official rule in Chapter 9. Not only does it address size discrepancy, it also addresses the discrepancy I noted in the Designer's Notes between damage being based on the square root of kinetic energy for projectiles and on momentum for collisions.

## OBSTACLES

### ***What are the mechanics for breaking through an obstacle to attack someone?***

If you want to break through an obstacle to ram a target, you compare your MIG/Super-Strength or your Weight + Speed versus the obstacle's Break DV. If your AV is equal to or greater than the DV, then you can simply expend an Automatic Action to break through the obstacle and continue your movement.

Alternatively, you can make a Ramming Attack against the obstacle, using your Ramming AV against its DV (usually 0). If you deal enough Damage to Destroy the target, you can continue to move at your current Speed -2 to ram the target behind it. Note that this results in a -2 penalty to your Ramming EV and is equivalent mathematically to multi-attacking the wall and your actual target simultaneously (-1/-1).

### ***What are the mechanics for shooting through an obstacle to hurt someone taking cover?***

If you want to shoot or stab through an obstacle, then the obstacle's SPs of TOU is simply treated as SPs of Protection against your attack. (If the obstacle itself has SPs of Protection that are higher than its own TOU, then use the obstacle's Protection instead.) In this case the obstacle is just acting like armor.

If the "obstacle" is actually a vehicle, and the target is actually Crew inside its Interior Capacity, then the target is better protected by space, chassis, etc. The EV of your attack is reduced by the difference between the vehicle's Weight and its Interior Capacity, and then Protection is applied based on the vehicle's Protection. (The EV is not reduced if the attack is an Area of Effect attack.)

If you cannot see the target on the other side of the obstacle when you make your attack, the attack will count as a Blind Attack, suffering a -2 AV if Melee and -4 AV if Ranged.

### ***What happens if I am caught in the area of effect of an attack, but am sheltering behind an obstacle?***

Both you and the obstacle you are sheltering behind are attacked. The obstacle is attacked and damaged using its own DV, Protection, TOU, and Durability. You are attacked using your own Attributes, but the damage you take is also reduced by SPs of Protection equal to the object's SPs of TOU/Protection.

For example, imagine a rubble-downtown warzone. You are sheltering behind a 5' x 5' wall from a brownstone townhouse. The wall has TOU 7, Durability 120, Protection 5. An 8 SP grenade blows up next to the wall. The wall is attacked at AV 8 vs DV 0, for a Red result that deals 256 Damage. After subtracting its 5 Protection, 244 Damage destroys the wall. Meanwhile, you are attacked at AV 8 vs your AGI/Combat Sense. You will receive an additional 24 points of Protection from the wall's 7 SPs of TOU.

## RESERVING ACTIONS

### ***Am I allowed to take my Automatic Action and/or Challenge Actions at any point during my Movement Action?***

Not usually. By default, each of your Actions takes place sequentially. However, you can Reserve one (and only one) Action to take place when a trigger condition is met. By Reserving an Automatic or Challenge Action to do X when Y occurs prior to undertaking your Movement Action, you can interrupt your Movement Action when the trigger occurs, take the triggered Action, and then complete your Movement Action.

### ***Can I have more than one Action reserved? Can I have more than one trigger?***

You cannot reserve more than one Action at a time. However, you can have multiple triggers used in conjunction such as “If X or Y, then...” or “if X and Y, then...”

### ***When I undertake a Movement Action, do I have to decide my destination before I start moving, or can I just roam around as desired, deciding each SP or Battle Area I move what I’ll do next?***

You have to decide your destination before you start moving.

However, you can make your destination conditional on what happens as you move. E.g. “I will fly across Capital City until I reach the Statue of Fortune or until I spot Maximum Leader, whichever comes first.”

You can also Reserve an Action to undertake during your Movement and condition your Movement on the trigger for that Reserve Action. E.g. “I will reserve my Challenge Action to blast Maximum Leader with my Annihilating Blast, then I will fly across Capital City until I reach the Statue of Fortune or until I spot Maximum Leader.”

### ***The rules state that a character with a Reserved Action can interrupt a Movement Action but not a Challenge Action. Can a character with a Reserved Action interrupt a Challenge Movement Action like a Ram?***

Yes. The Reserve Action is triggered at the end of the Movement or just before the Challenge Action, whichever comes first. For instance, if Stronghold took a Challenge Movement Action to Ram Helen Killer, who had a Challenge Action reserved to stab anyone who approached her, Stronghold would complete his movement up to Helen; then Helen would take her Reserved Action to stab Stronghold; then Stronghold would take his Challenge Action to ram her.

## WRESTLING ATTACKS

### ***Can an opponent be simultaneously subjected to one of the four Wrestling Attack conditions (Engaged, Grappled, Held, Pinned) by more than one attacker? If so, how is it mechanically addressed?***

Yes, an opponent can be subjected to multiple conditions by attacks from multiple attackers. The opponent is Encumbered as if he were carrying an object with a Weight equal to the greatest of the attacker’s MIG or Weight + Speed, increased by a Team Attack bonus based on the number of attackers.

All of the attackers are also Encumbered. If the attackers are cooperating, they are considered Encumbered by the opponent’s MIG or Weight + Speed, decreased by the Multi-Attack modifier based on the number of attackers. If they are not cooperating, then each attacker is Encumbered as if all the other attackers were opponents! This can result in nobody being able to move.

Apart from Encumbrance, the opponent just suffers the effects of whichever attacker has scored the best color result. If two or more attackers have both scored the same color result, their opponent suffers the effect of whichever attacker has the greater SPs of MIG or Weight + Speed. If two or more attackers with the same color result have the same SPs, then their opponent suffers the effects of whichever attacker wrestled him first. The most important implication of this rule is that it determines which of the attackers the opponent is permitted to target.

### ***Can I attempt to Escape from multiple attackers who are Engaging, Grappling, Holding, or Pinning me?***

Yes. Just resolve it using the Multi-Attack rules.

## TEAM ATTACKS

***Character 1 has Extra Attack. Character 2 has reserved his Challenge Action to Team Attack with Character 1. If Character 1 Team Attacks with Character 2, can Character 1 still use his Extra Attack afterwards?***

Yes. Character 1 can use his Extra Attack after his Team Attack with Character 2. Character 1 could also use his Extra Attack as part of the Team Attack, if that were advantageous.

## TRICK ATTACKS

***How do I strangle somebody?***

Choking or Strangulation isn't explicitly addressed in the rules. In some cases, it could be handled as a Touch-Range Targeted Physical Incapacitating Paralysis power stunt. In general, you have to reduce a character's Health to 0 to knock them out; it can't be bypassed without a Power.

***How do I dismember a foe, or break his back, or otherwise permanently disable someone?***

The rules do not explicitly describe how to permanently cripple your enemies, but the means to do so can be inferred from *Not The Hero He Once Was* (**Ascendant** p. 444). In lieu of slaying a target, you may instead maim the target in some manner, permanently reducing his Character Point total by 10 CP or more (usually by inflicting a Drawback).

For example, imagine that Helen Killer ambushes Aurora and reduces her to -320 Health. Instead of slaying her, Helen Killer stabs out her eyes. Aurora is left at -319 Health and gains the Blindness drawback, effectively losing 20 CP.

Whether or not this is appropriate to your Series will depend on the tone the GM establishes. Check with your GM about the Combat Lethality rules being used in their campaign.

# APPENDIX

## ANIMALS

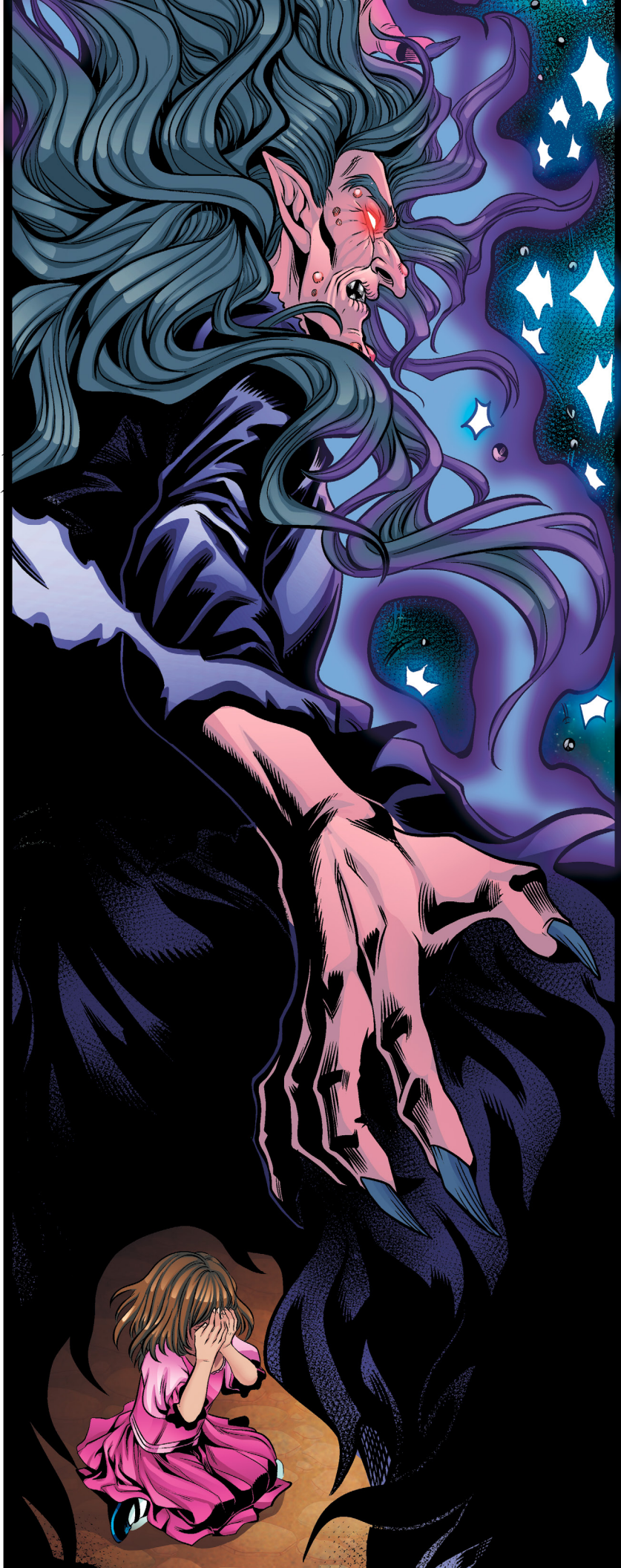
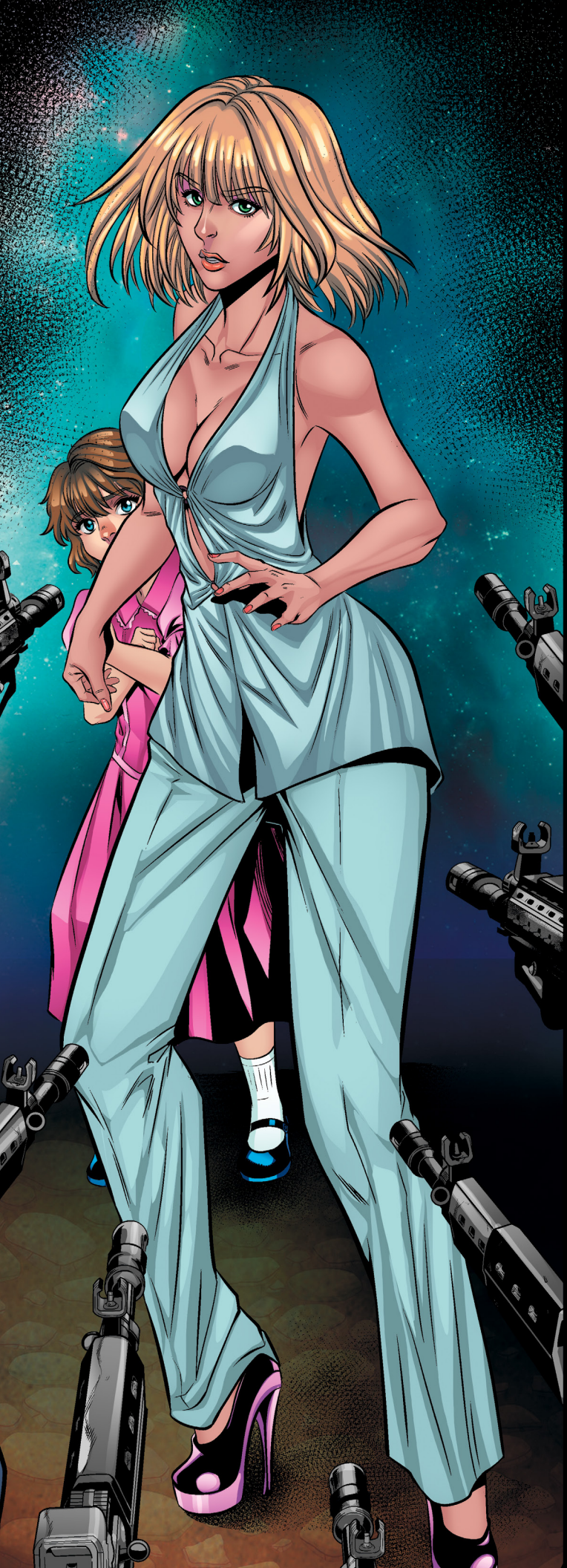
***Some of the Attributes for animals seem too low. Shouldn't they be 1 to 2 SPs higher?***

The animal templates are primarily designed for you to use with Skinchanging. The way the Skinchanging power works, when you transform you add the animal's attributes -3 to your own attributes, because 3 SPs is the human average. Therefore, the animals are all their species' equivalent of an average human with 3 SPs. They are NOT necessarily the biggest and toughest of its kind of the sort that get used as benchmarks, just as a 3 SP human isn't the biggest and toughest human. Animals at the peak of their species based on age, sex, weight, and dominance hierarchy can be up to 2 SPs more than what's shown in MIG, AGI, or VAL, just as peak humans can be up to 2 SPs more than average. (Some animals might be even more variant than that, if one believes in the allegations of 30ft+ great white sharks and so on.)

As an example, most lions are female and weigh 275-350 lbs, even though a huge male lion could be up to 575 lbs. But that 575 lb lion could have MIG 6 and Lacerating Penetrating Strike 7. Female grizzlies weigh 290 lbs to 400 lbs even though a huge male grizzly could weigh 800 lbs. And that 800 lb grizzly could have MIG 7 and Lacerating Penetrating Strike 8. A chimpanzee can range from 60 to 110 lbs (female) or 90 to 150 lbs (male), with Super-Strength 5 – so a 110 lb chimp is four times as strong as an average 150 lb person. The 150 lb Arnold Schwarzenegger of chimps will have Super-Strength 7.















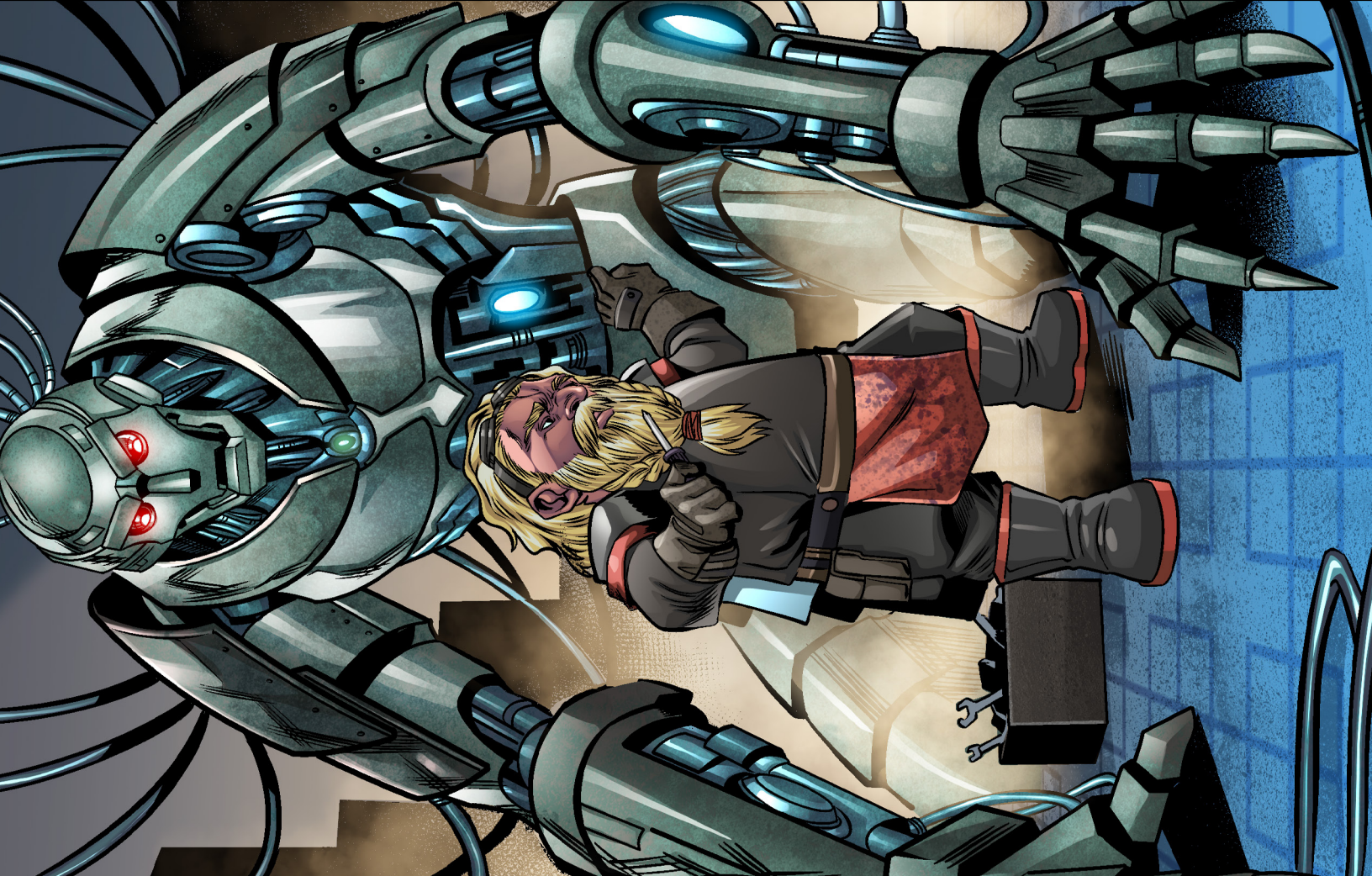
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# ASCENDANT

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