

WILD TALENTS PROGENITOR



By Greg Stolze

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PROGENITOR

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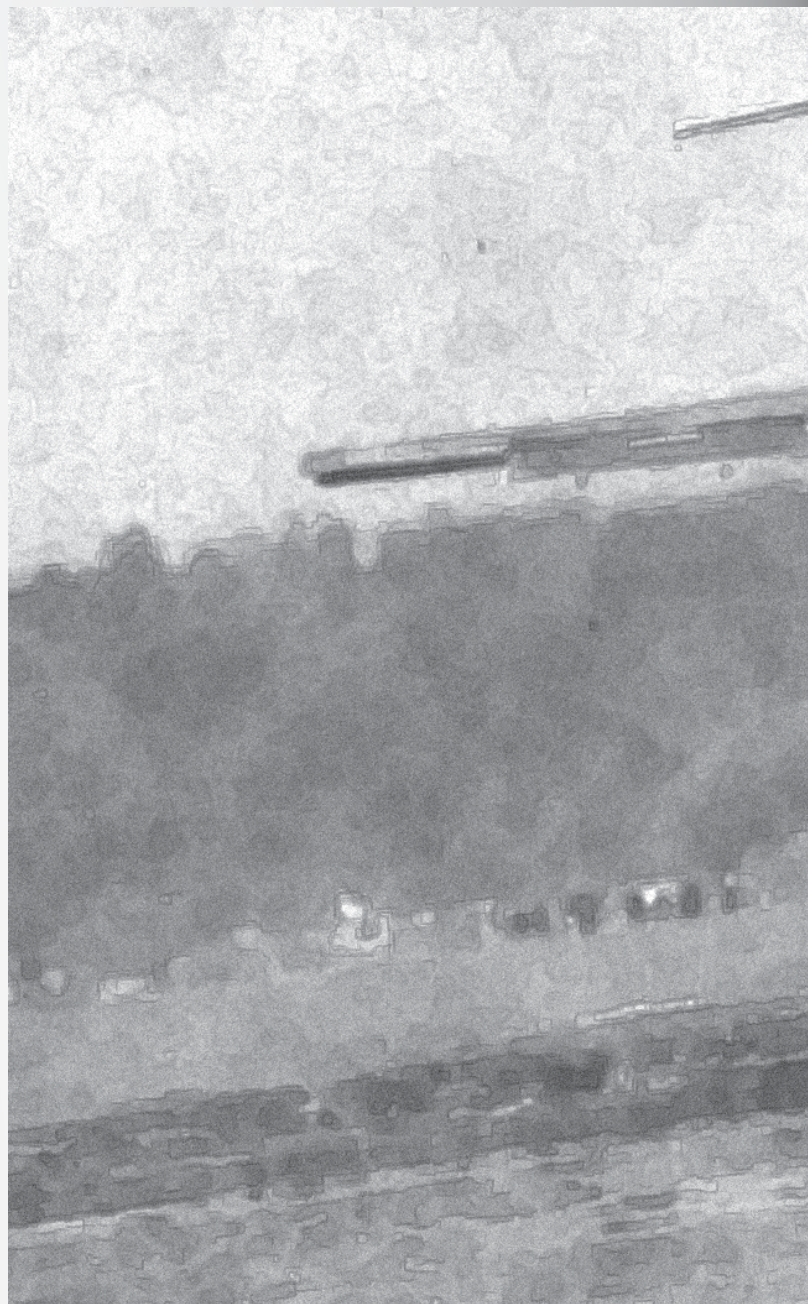
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Not Talking About the War

by Owen Creed
Special to Life Magazine



The most powerful person on the planet touches my arm. It's so natural that I don't notice, don't think about it until afterwards, typing up my interview notes. I've seen the footage of her throwing a car engine, lifting with the appearance of effort even though she's upended tanks, raised planes, levitated buildings with no grunts or grimaces. When I ask her how much she can carry, she shrugs.

"I've never found anything I couldn't lift, if I wanted to enough." But her arm has no exceptional weight, it isn't immobile, it isn't anything but the hand of a nice Kansas lady in her early forties, not as far as I can tell.

She's about five feet, three inches tall in sandals. For our interview she's wearing light blue capri pants and a short



sleeved white blouse. Her hair is somewhere between ash blonde and mouse brown. It's collar length, with bangs parted in the middle and held back with a white band. She is pretty in an ordinary way, with healthy teeth and bright green eyes. She can create a sonic boom when she flies and is able to survive alone in outer space.

"Want coffee?" With that, Amanda Sykes hops up and bustles to the kitchen, returning with a tray, sugar and a cow-shaped jug of cream.

We're in her house, a spacious and comfy farm house in the middle of rolling fields. It's autumn and the plants in the soil are just stubs, harvested last month. The sky is overcast and I have to wonder if she did it. There are no clocks, no

way of telling what time zone I'm in. We met in at the Ritz-Carlton in New York. She told me to close my eyes and step through the doorway, and then we were here. It has green shag carpet and an overstuffed plaid sofa. It's not night, so still in America I guess. Cold enough to be in the northern hemisphere, but she doesn't want people to know where she lives. Understandably. It could be anywhere in the USA, or I suppose anywhere in North America.

I turn on my tape recorder and ask if it's OK to start.

"I don't want to talk about the war," she says. "We agreed on that."

"Absolutely."

“Cigarette?”

The world’s most feared, adored and famous human being
smokes Silva Thins.



“The Days of Rage,” she says, when the topic comes up, shaking her head. “What a joke. What did they think was going to happen? They, what, they blew up a statue of the police because they were fascists for getting involved with the Haymarket riots? A symbolic gesture, I guess. I’m not really impressed with symbolic gestures.”

“It’s interesting that you say that,” I say.

“Hm?”

“Well, everything you do becomes a symbolic gesture.”

“What?” She shakes her head. “No, no. What I do, the things I do... they’re real. I’m not trying to...” She waves her hands aimlessly. “I’m trying to help people, not make a point.”

“You restored the statue though.”

“Abe did that,” she says. Then she looks away and takes a deep drag. “Probably felt bad for the sculptor.”

“The Weathermen tried to use you as a lightning rod,” I say. “Claimed that you were the government made manifest, hovering over them.”

“Yeah, John Jacobs called me a ‘tool of the warfare state.’ ‘They say you can do anything,’ he said. ‘You couldn’t think of anything better than helping Johnson destroy Vietnam?’ He acted like I was validating them by being there, that I showed what a real threat they were to the government. I wanted to tell him he didn’t know anything, I was there to keep people from getting hurt.”

“But you didn’t answer him. You just floated there in midair, staring down at them.”

“Honestly? I couldn’t think of anything to say. I’m not...” She shrugs. “I’ve never done any speaking in public, really. What was I going to tell them, that they couldn’t be angry about the war? The whole point of America is that they can be angry about anything they want. But I wanted them to know they were being watched, that they couldn’t get away with anything.”

“When they started to march, you went with them.”

“Abbie Hoffman joked that I must be agreeing with them. I would have let them do their march, but then they started smashing windows and... you know, destroying property. Sorry, in my eyes that’s a crime and I wasn’t going to let that happen.”

“So you froze them in a block of... what?” I ask.

“I’m not sure how to explain what I did. Here, watch.” She takes a deep drag, breathes it out, then waves her nearly-done cigarette, looking at the lazy trail of smoke rising from it.

In midair the smoke stops, halts, falls like a curl of stiff paper through the air and hits the table top, puffing into dust. I can’t help myself. I jump, I’m startled.

“Inhibiting movement,” she says. “You just draw the energy out of it. I didn’t intend to drop the temperature around them, though I guess it makes sense that it felt like that. I wanted them to stop moving so I stopped their movement.”

“Then dragged them back to Lincoln Park,” I prompt her.

“I didn’t really know where else I ought to take them.”

“Could you have flown them to jail?”

“I suppose but... it seemed too much, you know? And then some of them tried to do the same thing again, Jones and Gilbert I guess, and I froze them and dragged them back again. The crowd really started to disperse after that. Some of them were... well.”

“What?”

"I shouldn't say, it's not... not relevant. Some of them were upset and yelling horrible things at me, and few of them threw things, bottles mostly, a couple rocks."

"But you didn't retaliate."

"Would you?" she asks. "They couldn't hurt me. Would you retaliate against a toddler throwing a fit?"

"Is that really how you see the Weathermen, the Black Panthers, the anti-war movement?"

"We're not going to talk about the war, remember?"

"What went wrong with Japan Air 351?" I ask.

"I guess that's fair game." She sounds resigned. "I... ugh, I don't really know. I heard about the hijacking on April first, the day after it happened. I got to Japan and they'd released some of the hostages, but not all of them, so I waited. I was trying to get a handle on what was happening but things were already in motion and the plane got back in the air before I could get out of a meeting with the police, the men from the Japanese government, the men from our Navy and State Department and Air Force. Everyone had an opinion. I wanted to just go in and make everyone safe, but they were worried about what North Korea would do if we didn't let the plane go there, about whether I could do it safely, they kept making all these proposals and plans and then it took off and I just went after it."

"Did you know what you were going to do?"

"I planned to turn invisible, phase through the wall of the plane, find the hijackers and stop them."

When I ask her again what failed, she's silent for some time. "I didn't know exactly how many hijackers there were. I didn't identify them all when I was scouting the plane, I saw the ones with the swords and pipes but I missed the bomb." She frowns and taps at the ashtray with her finger.

"I thought about just teleporting them out over the ocean, you know. It would have been just as easy as putting them to sleep but... well, maybe it would have been a symbolic gesture. I wanted them to see that I could not only stop their crummy little scheme, I could do it clean. And when one of them realized what was going on, he set off the bomb."

"You were able to save some of the hostages and crew."

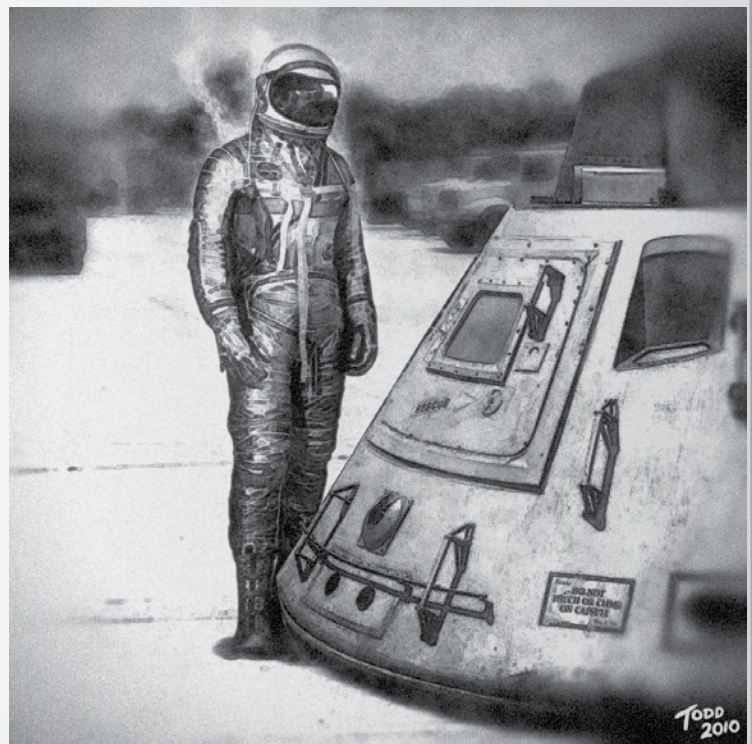
"Four of them. I wasn't ready for the explosion, I was... I hadn't gotten a lot of sleep, which sounds ridiculous I know, but... I guess I was overconfident, too." She fiddles with her fingernails. "I thought I could handle it. I'm really sorry to everyone whose family didn't make it. I screwed up."

There's a long silence then.

"I don't know what else you want me to say. I screwed up. At least I learned from it though. That September, Pan Am 93, I made sure I knew all the hijackers, knew exactly who they were before I showed myself. I was able to bring Abe with me too, which was a big help."

"How so?"

"He can hold things together, you know? If I'd brought him to the Japanese plane, maybe... I don't suppose there's much point thinking about it, though. We got on those planes heading to Jordan and the hijackers were asleep before they knew what hit them. We're a good team, Abe and me. Or, I guess I should say we were. Just having a second set of eyes, someone to watch your back, catch the things you miss... people think I can do everything."



"Can't you?"

"I get so tired of hearing that."

I apologize, and her gracious acceptance is a reflex.

"I haven't... found many things that I couldn't do if I thought of it. But that's the big if. Can I do just about anything? I guess. But everything? Not all at the same time."

She stands up and stretches, demurely, asks if I want anything else, more coffee, a snack. I shake my head.

"Abe couldn't be with me all the time. We were starting to... ah, I don't know. When John Cross got kidnapped that October, Abe said he could handle it himself."

"You mean James Cross?" I ask.



"James, of course. I knew a fellow named John Cross back in school, I always make that mistake. James Cross, those Quebec separatists kidnapped him and Abe went up there to find him. I only found out later that he didn't even talk to the police, or I guess the mounties, or... he didn't talk to anyone! He just went up there and followed the kidnappers to their hideout."

"Can you tell me how he did that?"

"There's this... Abe sees matter through time. Well, not 'sees' exactly. Knows it. That's how he can rewind things, make them like they were before, like he did with the Haymarket statue. So of course he can understand how things used to be. He just looked into the past to when the kidnapping happened, then followed events forward, took a taxi right to the house where Cross was being held."

She's pacing as she tells this story, walking back and forth between a bookshelf and the TV cabinet.

"Cross had been locked up for about three days at that point. And God bless him, Abe didn't call the police or anything, just watched the house for a little bit and went up to knock on the door. When no one answered, he tried to open it and of course it blew up. Just blew up right in his face, they had it booby-trapped. He said they started shooting at him then and in he went because nothing hurts Abe, or if it does he just gets right better, he went in and tried to explain to them that it was over. They tried to shoot Cross and Abe didn't let that happen."

"When you say he didn't let it happen...?"

"Well, I wasn't there, was I? I only heard about this after. But like I said, Abe can hold things together. I can't think it was pleasant for Mr. Cross to get shot in the head when he didn't know it couldn't hurt him. I don't like getting shot, I don't know anyone who really does." Here she pauses, closes her eyes and grins a little. "That sounded pretty stupid, I bet."

"Um..."

"Anyhow, Abe wasn't even armed. He said he started punching them and trying to grab their guns because he didn't want anybody to get shot by accident. Most of them ran away, the two who stayed and tried to fight him got arrested and Abe tracked down the rest as well. The whole thing was just a mess."

"He got what he wanted," I say, "Didn't he?"

"What? You mean finding Cross and getting him out with no one hurt?" She tilts her head back, standing by that book case, thinking about it. "I guess you're right, but still. If I'd been there I could have gone in first, looked around, or brought him in, or just teleported Cross once I found him. The bomb wouldn't have gone off and everything would have been less... chaotic."

"Shouldn't one expect a little chaos in a hostage rescue?"

"Smart alec."

The world's most important person sticks her tongue out at me.

I ask her about Apollo 13 and she blushes.

"The astronauts amaze me," she says. "I mean, the effort and the time and work they put in, it's just incredible. To get up to the moon, inch by inch really, it's..."

"You've walked on the moon, though, haven't you?"

"It's different for me. I mean..." She bites her lower lip. "This just fell in my lap. I didn't earn or work for what I have. I never felt like I deserve to be able to do all the things I can. If anything, it's the other way around, I keep trying to live up to what... live up to my potential, I guess."

"What's it like up there, though?"

"Cold," she says. "Cold and dry. And more lonesome than you can imagine. I mean, it's beautiful out there, you can see more stars than you could ever think there were, everything's so clear and then the Earth down below you..." She shakes her head. "I'd need to be a poet or something to really tell you."

There's a pause, then.

"Anyhow, I got a call about the space mission on April 13, I was told there'd been an explosion on the, the space ship and I thought about Sét, but of course it wasn't him, it was way too small. I guess there was an oxygen tank that had been dropped two years earlier and that somehow knocked something a-wiggle and, up there, there's no room for mistakes."

"So what did you do?"

"First I flew to mission control. They were pretty glad to see me, I have to say, but mostly they were trying to figure out what to do. Which is only proper, of course. And they wanted to know what I could do to help them and I said, 'What do you need?' and we kind of went back and forth for a bit, actually."

"Why didn't you teleport?" I ask, and it brings her up short.

"Excuse me?"

"You've mentioned teleporting before. If you knew this was an emergency, why did you fly to Houston instead of teleporting? It's faster, right?"

"I, well..." She looks a little flustered. Then she stops and gives me a smile, but it's a hard smile. "The generals didn't want me to give this interview, you know."

"I'm sorry?"

"They're worried that the Russians or the Koreans will read it and figure something out. A weakness. Something to exploit."

"I certainly don't... if you want me to..."

"No, you know what? It's fine. They already know who I am, my name, they already know how I've failed. I didn't

teleport straight there because it's harder than flying. Draining. I thought I'd keep my powder dry for the mission, that I'd need to be at my best. I thought about it. If I'd teleported, I could have brought Abe, and God knows he'd have made himself useful, but I would have had to bring him into space with me and I didn't know how hard that would be... didn't even know if I could survive in space at that point. There were a lot of uncertainties, we tried to talk to..." She stops again, shakes her head again. "No, that one's not my secret to tell."

I just wait.

"I flew there and they asked if I could go into space. I said I didn't know but I went outside and tried and it turned out I could. So then it was just a question of, um, configuring the... well, myself..." She trails off, looking frustrated. Like a word's on the tip of her tongue.

"I wound up using teleportation, you'll be happy to know," she says at last. "You've seen the tapes and pictures? The big green flash, that was me leaving, and then three hours later I was back with the capsule."

"What happened in those three hours?"

"Honestly? A lot of it was just getting my bearings. It's huge and dark until you're in the sunlight, and then it's huge and bright and I had to set things up to detect earthly life out there in the void. Once I could do that, I teleported to where the capsule was, they disconnected it, and we teleported home."

"You make it sound so simple," I say.

"It wasn't."

"I know. On the tapes, you look... hurt. Afterwards."

"I was."

"What happened?"

"The energies are... pretty vast, right? I mean, compared to the power that's going through me, the actual 'me' is just a speck. And keeping that speck safe from those energies means tying them up a lot, putting them in check so they don't just rip me apart when I'm distorting space or uncoupling energy from matter or what have you." She says this in such a matter of fact tone, like she's talking about going to the store for a jug of milk. "Sometimes that balance gets a little bit off."

"And when that happens, you materialize with holes in your chest and back with green fire shooting out of them?"

She frowns, tight and small. "It's not like it took me any time at all to put myself back in place." She gathers up the empty coffee cups and takes them into the kitchen.

"I suppose you want to hear about Ancash next," she says.

"If that's what you want to talk about."

She sighs out a big cloud of smoke. "Well. The generals were worried I'd show weak, but anyone who can read a paper already knows I've got limits. Those limits showed up in Peru."

"By all reports, you did a lot of good... just restoring the Pan-American highway, letting the food and medical supplies get in..."

"Twenty-four seconds," she says and there's a bitter tone there. She's looking out the window now and lightning flashes in the distance. "They say the quake under the sea took twenty-four seconds, and then Mount Huascarán just fell on them. Two towns, buried under snow and ice and rock before they had a chance to know what happened. Luckily, I was in the States when it happened, Abe and I were... taking a little breather, you know? But we heard about it and we went, as soon as we could. But it was too late before we even got there."

"Some reports say you healed... thousands."

"Yeah."

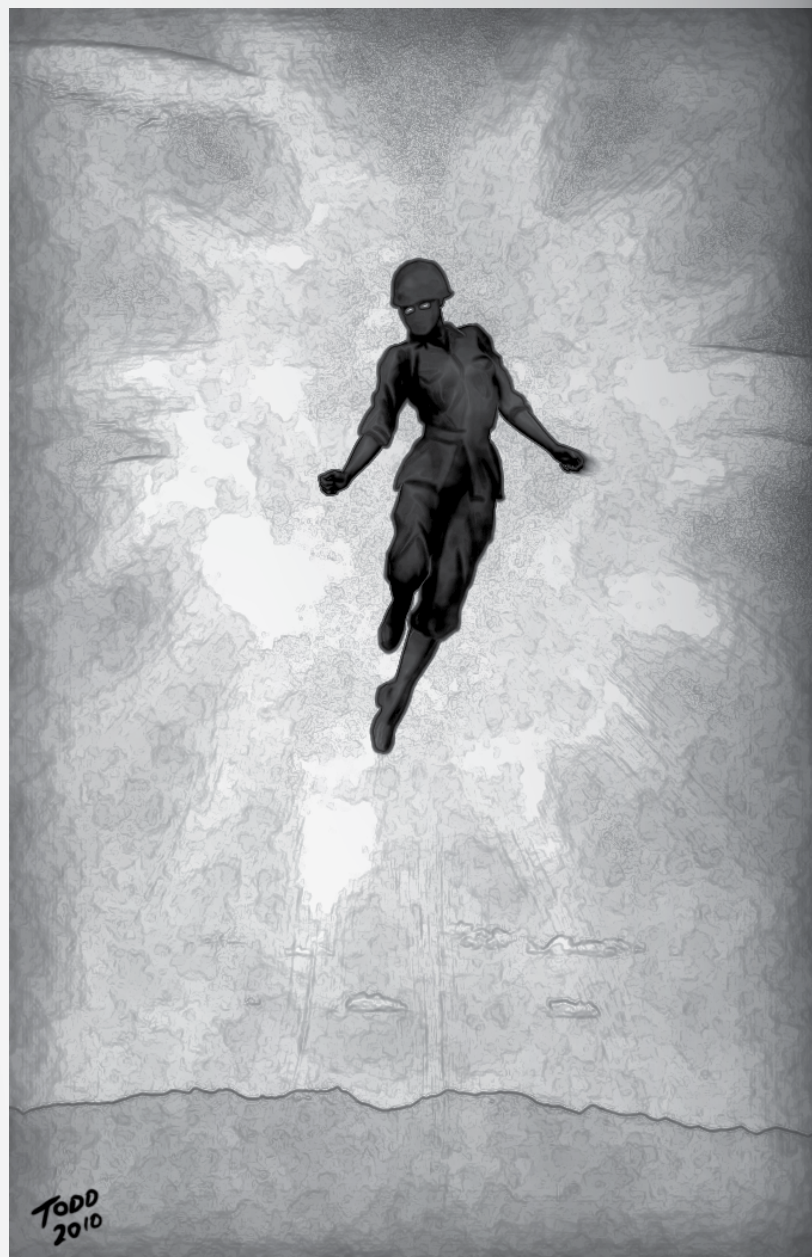
"I mean, the pictures, that glowing sphere a thousand feet across and everyone in it..."

"I remember, I was there." Amanda Sykes barks it at me, her delicate nostrils flaring, face grim. This is not a woman remembering a success.

"People called it a miracle," I say quietly.

"Some miracle. You want to know what I remember about the Ancash disaster? The bodies. Just bodies everywhere, bodies stacked up like firewood, broken, some of them in pieces and you had to look twice to realize that was an arm, a foot, part of a head! It's like that, that French artwork, the surrealism, where things are where they don't belong. I saw some horrible things in Vietnam, just... just terrors, and I thought I'd seen it all, but Peru, my God!"

She puts a hand to her face, pinching her eyes shut and collecting herself.



"Could you excuse me for a moment?" I say.

"That's a fine idea."

"Your restroom...?"

"Second door on the left."

The most powerful woman in the world has a perfectly ordinary bathroom. Yellow mat on the floor, claw-foot tub in pristine condition. I'm tempted to look in the medicine cabinet but I don't dare.

When I come back, she has collected herself.

"I'm sorry," she says. "That earthquake just... defeated me. I went to Yungay, which was right in the path of the landslide, and 200,000 people died there. Six hundred lived. There was a place there where... it was so quiet. Perfectly desolate.



It was like the moon, but even lonelier because you could see... see where the people had been. Once.”

Her eyes are red and she picks up a tissue. Mine are starting to tear up too.

“So I had to do what I could. I really... really pushed myself, as much as I can, or as much as I could...”

“You were exhausted.”

“That stupid picture.”

“You mean the Donayre photo?”

“Of course.”

Of course she means the Donayre photo, the Pulitzer Prize winner, the center of a string of images now familiar world

wide. First, her in the air, radiant, shedding her healing rays on the people below. Then her fall. Finally, her kneeling in the ruins, her helmet askew so that we see her face, her human face, for the first time. The invincible mystery on all fours in the wreckage, looking lost and baffled and confused.

“I remember just what I was thinking as he took that picture, you know,” she says. Her arms are crossed, holding herself, cigarette smoldering by her shoulder. “I was thinking ‘What went wrong? I should be fixing this.’ The people picked me up and I recovered a bit, I was able to fly back to Abe and he...”

She breaks off again.



"This is harder than I thought," she sniffs. But she goes on. "I hadn't ever pushed myself that far, before. He said I needed to pace myself, to take it easy. I was terrified. I thought I'd wrecked it for good, you know? Permanently blown out half my... half of whatever it is I have, I guess."

"But you hadn't."

"Hm? Oh no, no. I was pretty shook up for a while. But I had most of June to recover. There was some talk of sending me to Cambodia, but I just said no. I wouldn't do it. Abe really encouraged me to turn them down you know, and they weren't at all happy about it. There are some people who say everything that the Khmer Rouge do now is my fault, can you believe that!"

"But we're not going to talk about the war," I said.

She sighs.

"That picture was seen all over the world and everyone knew I couldn't do it all. That my powers could fail, even more than I could. I

mean, the hijacking, that was human error, but this was... I just ran out of gas. Abe kept going, of course. He can't change, he's not the Swiss Army Knife like me, but what he does he does better than anyone in the world."

"Including you?"

"Oh, absolutely. He couldn't radiate it out a hundred feet, but he just traveled around for days, days laying hands upon anyone he found who was hurt. Little cuts and scratches, colds, up to full on severed limbs and crushed skulls, it's all the same to him. Putting buildings back together. I mean, I know we did a lot of good. Given what we can do, God, how could we avoid doing a lot? But still. I wish I'd done more."

"You pushed yourself until you collapsed."

"That doesn't take those twenty-four seconds back."

We're quiet for a moment.

"Moreover," I add, softly, "In the picture you could be identified."

She takes a big drag and lets it out in a long stream. "You know, I felt bad about how angry I was at that. I mean, why I even thought I could... It's the secret of the century, isn't it? The mystery woman, the superhuman, the scourge of the Vietcong and savior of Peru. Someone was bound to figure it out and I, I felt bad about feeling bad."

"You missed your privacy."

"Privacy? Look, I can get all the g... all the privacy I want. I want privacy, I'll fly to Mars or something. No, what I missed was not having greedy b... greedy men trying to kidnap my daughter or manipulate my husband or get at me through my relatives and friends!"

Another sigh. "I can't have my friends back, you know. Once the cat was out of the bag it just... well, of course it wasn't the same, how the heck could it be? You find out that the woman you were trading hot-dish recipes with in 1967 can fly, break boulders, cure cancer or fly to the

moon? It changes the relationship,” she says, with a sardonic little chuckle.

“Were people... asking you for...?”

“Oh, not directly. Never directly, but it’s hard not to read it into things when they talk about their crops going dry or their old backache or money troubles from unexpected tractor repairs. Abe, it doesn’t bother him, anyone who needs anything he just goes and does it. Our old neighbors, they have the best preserved homes and bodies and farm equipment you can imagine. Or, I guess, that Abe can imagine. But it’s different for Abe, he’s the saintly one, the healer and repairer and they look at me and it’s like they see...”

She trails off and I keep silent until she says, “It’s like they see a monster. I’m not a monster. I killed... oh God, I tried to kill as few people as I could. Over there, in the war. I took out so much equipment, you know. Tore the tanks apart and smashed the anti-aircraft guns and found the ammo dumps, waited until people were away from them before lighting them up but... but yeah, people got hurt, they got killed, it was war! That’s what war is and if they couldn’t hurt me it doesn’t mean they weren’t golly well trying! And you know who they could hurt? Our troops, our G.I.s, those poor draftees with sore feet and sleepless nights and malaria. I didn’t get into the war because I hate communism, or because I’m a racist or a Johnson nut or for anything ideological like that. I saw Tet, the Tet offensive on TV and I... I just couldn’t sit and do nothing.” She looks away and bites her lip, and I almost miss the next part.

“...especially since I can do anything.”

It’s nearing the end of the interview and I’m wondering if teleportation is more disorienting or less, when it’s expected. The exchange has sort of trailed off into talk about inconsequential things

like her home décor, or things she doesn’t want published like information about her daughter.

We stand and as I check if I’ve forgotten any equipment, tapes or a notepad, she says, “Oh, let me,” and she closes her eyes for a moment. “No, you have everything,” she says.

It’s unnerving. I’m not even sure what she did or how, but the combination of certainty and casual thoughtlessness makes this display of power somehow chilling, alienating. She not only did something impossible (Looked through the walls? Mentally rewound time? Read my mind to determine what I brought and what I had?) she did it with the automatic neglect of someone getting water from a tap or turning the ignition of a car.

It’s then that I realize that this woman is not normal, cannot be normal, and will never be normal. No matter the show she makes of reserving that unimaginable power for only emergencies, wars, disasters, big events... it’s there all the time. It’s waiting for a moment of weakness or carelessness.

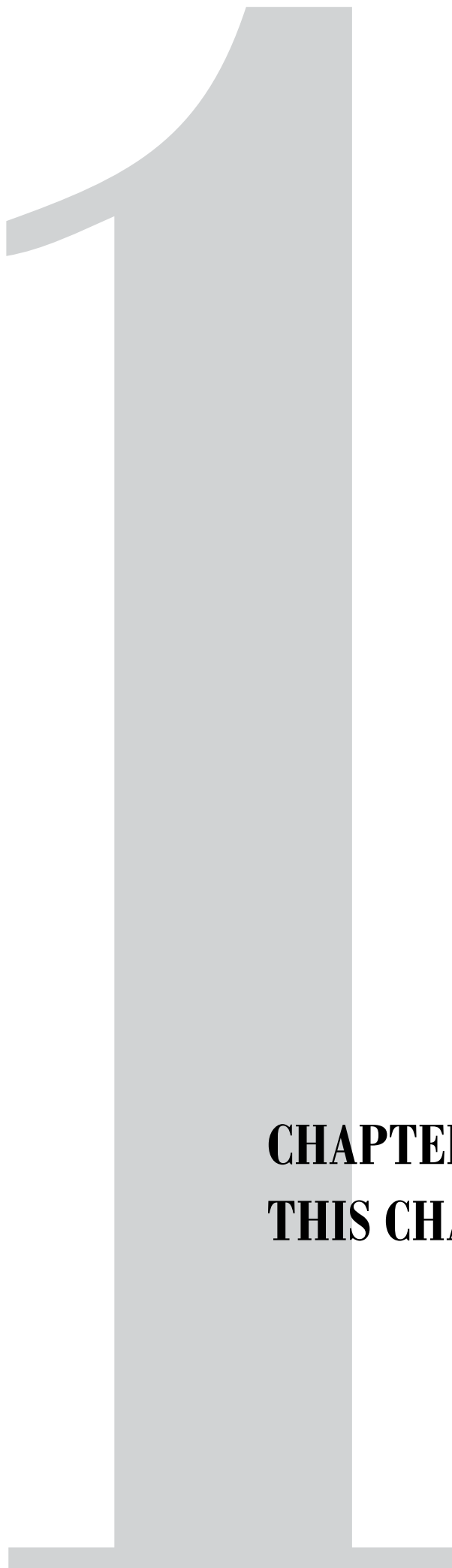
But at the same time, having interviewed the famous and powerful, movie stars and presidents and hereditary kings, I must say this. Terrified as I am by the thought of any one person with the responsibility of that earthshaking might... I’d rather see it in the hands of Amanda Sykes than anyone else I’ve met.

Still, she scares me, a lot. It isn’t easy to ask the last question, bring up the last topic, but I knew it would be hard and I swore I’d do it. As we’re heading to the door, I just blurt it out.

“You’re not together with Abe,” I say. “What happened?”

She turns on me suddenly, and I flinch, and the look I get is so wounded, so raw... no different from the look any housewife might give a relative stranger who presumed to pry into her divorce. She looks at me and I’m ashamed.

“We’re not,” she says at last, “talking about the war.”



CHAPTER ONE: THIS CHANGING WORLD

The Big Idea

Progenitor is a setting for Wild Talents, and it's a game of big ideas. In any superhero game, there are characters who can do things no normal human can. In Progenitor, there are individuals who can do things that no country can accomplish.

Most superhero stories presume what Wild Talents calls a 'high-Red' setting, meaning it maintains fidelity to the history we know. It may have flying gorillas and people who could vaporize the planet's atmosphere if they wanted, but George Bush still won a contested election in 2000 and the iPhone was the hot gadget of the 00s, not the 80s or 90s.

Progenitor isn't one of those.

It starts out red enough, branching off normal history in 1968 with the mysterious empowerment of one woman, Amanda Sykes. Gifted with great and versatile abilities, Amanda sets out to make the world a better place. She does not, initially, suspect that her power is contagious and that as she acts, she creates more superhumens only a little less mighty than herself. They, in turn, create others, with the power—eventually named 'dark energy' by physicists who don't know what else to call it—spreading through the population like a pandemic, getting individually weaker even as the numbers involved get larger and larger.

Looking at the Wild Talents Second Edition color metrics of superheroic histories, if Progenitor is Red Five (close to actual history) before 1968, it rapidly slides down to Red Three by 1975, and by 1983 it's Red Two at best. Things get different. Some improve, some are far worse, but despite Amanda's best intentions, she may well be paving a road to hell. It's not her choice.

It's the players' choice.

Maybe not solely their choice, and maybe they dither or disagree to the point that their influence is negated, but the base assumptions of Progenitor are (1) the PCs get dark energy and (2) they change history.

The notion of PCs grabbing the last third of the twentieth century by the huevos and twisting is, for many GMs, alarming. But it's also exhilarating. There's no reason to hold back, hand-wave or fudge the result. If Progenitor PCs want to overthrow the sovereign state of North Carolina and declare it their own personal fiefdom (and for Amanda's close descendants, that's not at all impossible), they can. The GM may not make it easy, but this book gives GMs the tools to operate a story on that scale. Those tools are discussed in more length starting on page 32, but the basic idea is to answer the "Now what?" questions raised when PCs can directly interfere with historical trends. Possibly with malice aforethought.

Progenitor in Four Colors

Using the Ken Hite system from the hardcover Wild Talents Second Edition, the color levels for Progenitor are set as follows.

RED: As mentioned, starts at Five but rapidly degrades to Two just from the canonical actions. Your PCs are probably going to knock that into negative numbers or die trying.

GOLD: Put it around Two. People expect metahumans to be bigger than life, richer, handsomer and more likely to get good seats at restaurants. They also half expect them to flip out and murder everyone if their soup shows up with a hair in it. Paranoia and prejudice are pretty common, though the possibility that anyone could catch it mitigates the bigotry among the sensible, while heightening hysteria among the foolish.

BLUE: It starts around Blue One (not much weirdness) in 1968, jumps to Blue Two by the end of the year, hits Blue Three in 1969 sometime between Atlantis' creation and the one-man robbery of Fort Knox. That first year of transition is a great time for PCs—even relatively low-Tier ones, if they're at the bottom of a chain of rapid spread metahumans—to influence the perception of the new normal. After 1969, it pretty much stays at Blue Three.

BLACK: It's Black Three, though it could sink to Black Two pretty easily.

Intersections

Amanda Sykes' dark energy passes from her (the titular Progenitor) to ten descendants on whom her powers are used. Those ten are the Second Tier, second only to Amanda herself in raw power. Each of them has the potential to spread the contagion to nine Third Tiers, and the Third Tiers could each, conceivably, pass it along to eight others. The development of active, reality-defying powers ends with Tier Ten, though there are persistent rumors of 'marks' whose trace amounts of dark energy give them unusual focus, luck or strength of will.

The math and mechanics of the spread is described on 26. What I'd like to address here is its impact, not on the characters of the game, but on the game itself. It goes back to a powerful comic book trope.

Heroes and villains alike create their own nemeses.

In some versions of the Superman origin, Clark and Lex Luthor are buddies until Superman

accidentally pushes Lex over the edge. A gunman in Gotham city turns Bruce Wayne into Batman, tying their destinies together forever after. Batman, in turn, makes the Joker possible, in some versions of the tale actually disfiguring him personally. Spiderman creates a second Green Goblin out of his friend Harry Osborn, and there's a similar tie between him and Venom. It comes up again and again. The hero creates the villain who dogs his heels. The villain's victim returns, seeking justice.

This makes for some kick ass stories, because it enables character development beyond "this week's masked freak." It makes it personal, justifies recurring characters, and permits both heroes and villains to show sides of themselves that don't get a chance to shine when they're just brawling with a stranger.

Characters in Progenitor all have a power ancestor, someone who used dark energy on them and, in the process, filled them with it. If this character is a hero, do the PCs feel obligated to help the hero's mission? If it's a villain, do they

People, Places and Recurring Concepts

As you read through this extensive and involved setting, you may find a brief summation of the major ideas and people useful.

Å—Pronounced "Ah," it's the adopted name of a metahuman who founds a religion ("Åism") based around dark energy.

Dark Energy—The source of metahuman abilities.

Davis, Jean—The fountainhead and controller of Selarosis Maxillae. She's also known as "The Disease."

Global Human University—Jason Weeks' string of educational and research facilities.

ID/EA—Short for "International Disaster/Emergency Assistance." Abe Sykes' first team of metahumans. Later he forms a reorganized group, "New ID/EA."

IEG—The Indochinese Economic Gestalt, a group consisting initially of the Progressive Harmony nations Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Metapocalypse—A metahuman gambit that escalates into global warfare in 1983. It kills a billion people.

Nuryarya—An artificial language/psychological tool designed to maximize rational thought.

Progressive Harmony—A caste-based government system relying on Hyperbrain planning and syntergenic population control.

Selarosis Maxillae—A sexually-transmitted psychic disease controlled by Jean Davis. Also called Selar M.

Shavians—Artificial, mostly indestructible, unique and hideous creatures created from dark energy, originally made by Tina Shaw. Each is about the size of a teddy bear.

Sykes, Amanda—The first and most powerful metahuman, originally a Kansas farmwife.

Syntergenic—The principles behind social fads taken to the nth degree and used as a soft form of brainwashing; memetic science writ large.

Weeks, Jason—A supergenius, clairvoyant and syntergenic pioneer.

want to get even? If it's someone in between, what are their obligations? How do they handle social interactions when they're entangled by a relationship with no historical precedent?

Similarly, characters in *Progenitor* often run the risk of creating power children. If they throw themselves into conflict with normal people (who are often easily managed with dark energy powers), they run the risk of making their enemies into supervillains. But can they be sure that a 'good person' gifted with unimaginable abilities is going to stay good? You know what they say about power corrupting.

The factors that make this trope useful for comic writers make it powerful in games as well. It gives the GM an automatic stable of people connected to the PCs, and makes it easier to answer the perennial question, "Why should I get involved? What business is it of mine?" If the superheroine being crucified at the top of the Eiffel Tower is the sister you empowered

by mistake, that's your business. It's also the business of the well-meaning guy who empowered her tormentor.

The *Passions and Loyalties* in *Wild Talents* can offer a useful handle for GMs to create gripping foils for their PCs. Giving power to, or receiving it from someone with diametrically opposite *Loyalties* (like Amanda Sykes and Nguyet Cam) is a recipe for ongoing conflict, but when spiced with similar *Passions*, it creates a dynamic where the characters can work together if the circumstances are right. Or, someone with the same *Loyalties* but drastically different *Passions* can form a dark reflection of the PC, unless he's serving as a frustrating or unreliable ally. Someone with his heart in the right place, seeking the same ends but with very different means can also provoke good questions (or interesting actions) from a PC. Power choices that play up or contrast with these different opinions just help move the conflict from words to deeds.

Superlawyers!

Metahumanity opens up vast expanses of concern and confusion for lawyers, particularly in the United States. While physical powers are greatly varied, their legal adjudication (as determined in 1973's *Kawasaki vs. the Ashland, Wisconsin Board of Planning and Development*) falls into three broad categories.

1. **Unity of Presence.** Anything your powers do or perceive at your direction is considered as if it was done or perceived by you yourself. Watching someone in the shower with clairvoyance is a home invasion, just as if you'd entered the home physically.
2. **Meta-potential Consideration.** When dark energy is used in the commission of a crime, its degree of restraint is immaterial in the eyes of the law. If, in your meta bank robbery, you only used heat vision to open the safe, you can still be charged with armed robbery because you could have harmed the bank employees with it. This is decried by many metahumans as placing an undue burden of proof on those accused of meta-crimes, but their numbers are insufficient to force legislation.
3. **Individual Inequality of Force in Armed Confrontation.** Because "superpowers" are so idiosyncratic and individual, legal precedents are to be considered imperfect unless the precedent was set by the metahuman in question. Moreover, claims of self-defense require the metahuman to demonstrate that he was indeed endangered. Thus, if someone walks up to Amy Sykes and hits her with a machete, she cannot kill him and claim self-defense because he was not able to harm her. In fact, if she injures him "to an undue extent" she can be sued.

But while the physical powers are imperfectly codified, they can at least be firmly quantified. Mental powers, especially *Hypercharm* and *Hypercommand*, are far more difficult to legislate. In compensation for the acknowledged rarity of cases in which these powers can be proven to have been in use, the 1971 *Federal Cognitive Sovereignty Act* places heavy penalties on the use of dark energy to control behavior, alter opinions, or interfere with cognitive activity. Information gleaned by dark energy powers is inadmissible in court, though in 1989 the Supreme Court rules in *The People vs. Blanche "Roadkill" Williams* that if the police use dark energy powers to gain information, then confirm that information with mundane investigation, the information is admissible.

Metahuman convicts are a disproportionate problem, considering their relative rarity. As of 1976, the courts uphold a law allowing Tennessee's prison system to take "any and all measures required to hold harmless metahuman prisoners, regardless of the severity of their crime." This isn't overturned until 1981 when a similar law in South Dakota is used to justify keeping a suspected metahuman serial killer in medically-induced coma for the six months of his sentence—even though he had only been convicted of jaywalking.

Character Generation

If you have some version of the Wild Talents rules, you already know how to build a character. You get your points and you spend them. But I recommend breaking that into two phases.

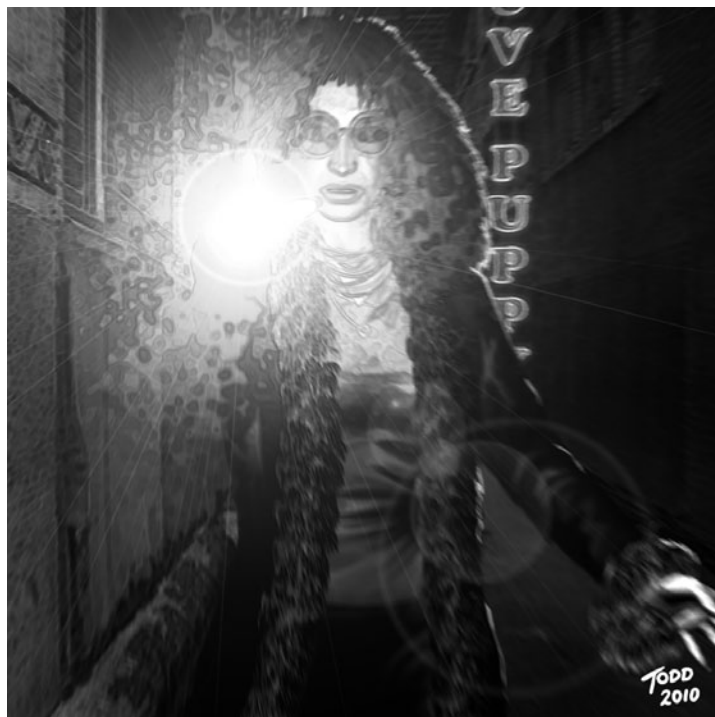
In the first phase, build the pre-exposure character with an agreed-upon point total. Stats, Skills, but no Archetype or superpowers.

How many points you get is entirely up to the players and the GM, but here are some good baselines, with examples of each from “Careers” on page 156.

Character Type	Starting Points	Career Examples
Still in school or training	90 points	Layabout, Student
Skilled and experienced	100 points	Laborer, Professional, Soldier
Specialist	110 points	Crook, Politician

To allow for customization you could give every character an extra 10 points or so to spend on any Stats or Skills they wish.

If you want to have a mix of character types, some in school and some experts, start with a common baseline of points—120, say, including that 10-point bonus—and give the ones with fewer starting points the difference to spend on Base Will and Willpower when they gain their superpowers.



When that’s done (and possibly after playing a session or even two as a ‘mere mortal’) get the points from exposure and spend those on Archetype (if your GM uses them) and superpowers. This sort of decisive break really enforces the idea of how life-changing these powers are.

Of course, these powers don’t just happen in a vacuum. Your character has a forebear and, quite possibly, he’s going to have offspring.

While one of the charms of Wild Talents in general is custom tailoring your powers, we’ve included sidebars of the most common powers of the Progenitor setting, broken down by Tier. Many prefer to come up with powers that are a reflection of their PC’s history, psychology and circumstances, but if you just want to be “the fast guy,” that’s cool too. Or if you’re a GM and you need a power write-up in a hurry.

The Metahuman Archetype

This is by far the most common superhuman Archetype in Progenitor. I suppose you could go for someone with just high stats, billions of dollars and loads of high tech stuff, but that’s so vanishingly scarce as to merit no discussion. Here’s what metahumans are in the broader context of Wild Talents.

Source: Unknown (-5 Points). They call it ‘dark energy’ but that’s really just a name. Normally the first source is free, but I’ll throw in the price break on this one.

Permission: Super (+15 Points).

Intrinsic: Immutable (-5 Points). This is a new Intrinsic and it means that, when your powers are set, they are set. You can’t gain new powers (barring outside interference), you can’t gain dice in your powers and you can’t develop or strengthen your powers. What you have is what you have. (You can still increase Base Will and your ordinary Stats and Skills, though.)

(If this notion is intolerable to you, take it up with the GM, but there’s a reason and here it is. Progenitor metahumans tend to be pretty powerful as-is, so pumping up your powers further as you go is gilding the lily. It can also turn into an arms race pretty quickly. Rather

than deepening the game's attention to powers that are already pretty great, then, the character-broadening choice is to improve the Skills and Stats, finding ways to make them enhance the powers... or to let the character achieve things in arenas where their powers do no good.)

Intrinsic: Contagious (-5). This is another new Intrinsic, and it means that if you use your powers on someone, it's possible that the target of your powers gains powers as well. The exact odds of this depend on what type of vector you are, as discussed at length on page 26. But basically the possibilities are...

Strong Vector: You automatically create a metahuman, one tier down, every time you use your power on someone. This happens the first X times that you use powers on people (and they survive). X is a number equal to eleven minus your Tier.

Stable Vector: Your chance of creating a metahuman is equal to 110%, less 10% times your Tier. So if you're Tier Four, every time you use your power on someone there's a 70% chance that person catches it — 110% — $(4 \times 10\%) = 70\%$. You run this risk every time you use powers on a person (assuming the person survives the powers) until you've created your progeny — a number of offspring equal to eleven minus your Tier.

Weak Vector: Your chance of creating a metahuman is between 1% and 10% every time someone survives having your powers used on them. Pick a number (or get one randomly, or GM decides) and take the chance until you've created offspring in numbers equal to eleven minus your Tier.

Closed Vector: If your powers do not work on human beings directly, in any circumstances, you can't pass on your powers and you're a closed vector.

Hypermind in Progenitor

Many games of Wild Talents focus on hypertrophic super-bodies pounding on one another. (At least, many of mine have.) Progenitor can certainly play that way, and without any particular modifications. But

Progenitor also plays at the level of the social tones and metrics, where metahumans can make the world a smarter or more trusting or far more violent place.

Where Hyperbody and Hypercoordination are the obvious go-to Stats for personal combat, Hypercommand and Hypercharm are the clearest tools for dominating (or at least influencing) the world on a global scale.

But what about Hypermind? Well, there you run into the issue of a player or GM, with a mere mortal brain, trying to imagine what a supergenius would do when he just doesn't have the equipment. It's like a dog looking at Nobel Prize winner at work and thinking, "I wonder what's on his mind?"

One way to handle it is through outcomes. "I know Thomas Edison was smart because he invented stuff." But there are problems with having every Hyperbrain automatically be a gadgeteer, one being that it renders the Gadgeteering miracle redundant except for purposes of price-fiddling. The other problem, more relevant perhaps, is that there are plenty of geniuses who never turn their thoughts to technology. The Mind Stat is a broad abstraction, there are many different ways to be a genius and we've had to shoehorn them into one container.

To remedy this somewhat, I've made a few additions to Hypermind that are particularly germane to Progenitor. These benefits kick in at different levels.

7d Mind—Casual Riches

Once a character is smarter than the smartest smartypants in smart history, the grimy issues of commerce that so often plague the less gifted cease to be a problem. If you have seven dice of Mind, you're comfortably well off or, if you aren't, you can get that way with a minimum of effort simply by trading on your brilliance. Counting cards is a paltry trick for a Hypermind, as is reorganizing an assembly line to be 12% more efficient, or playing the stock market or analyzing sales data or auditing a business' accounts receivable in a fraction of the time it would take an ordinary accountant. It's all just too easy. GMs should assume someone with 7d in Mind has

sufficient cash for a decent place to stay, trendy clothes, and a reliable means of transportation. Things like APCs, private yachts and personal space stations are going to require more doing, but just assume that if a Hypermind might be able to afford something, he can afford it. Really. You could drop a Hypermind naked in a Third World bazaar and, within twelve months, he'd be back in the US enjoying a comfortable middle class existence. Probably getting ready to sell his memoirs, too.

8d Mind—Unfathomability

Imagine picking up the spare phone in the bedroom and listening in on a private conversation. That's what it's like using telepathy on a regular mind with 7d or less. Now imagine that you thought you were picking up a spare phone, but were actually pressing your ear right up against an air raid siren a half second before it went off. That's what using telepathy on a Hypermind is like.

The Hyperbrain doesn't even have to do anything. The telepath does it to himself. By reading that magnificent mind, the telepath exposes himself to supergenius thought-forms. His mind begins to mirror those forms in the process of scanning them. In a Hyperbrain, however, those ideas are so advanced and complex that, under the right conditions, they can develop self-awareness and reshape themselves in order to become viral ideas in a new host. "Getting mind-read" is one of those conditions.

So instead of just getting a snapshot of the Hypermind's superficial thoughts, telepaths who interface with supergeniuses run the risk of turning themselves into copies of the Hyperbrain's personality. At least, temporarily.

The kicker is, the original Hypermind doesn't feel this or realize it's happening, any more than you feel it when a security camera films you at a gas station.

Here's how it works with the rules. Any time someone receives a Hypermind's thoughts, be it to read her memories, flick through her surface attention or try to dig out her ATM code, the Hypermind rolls a pool equal only to her Mind stat. The telepath rolls whatever he's using to perform the scan. It's an opposed roll, so the mind reader is forming Gobble Dice. If the telepath can ruin

all the genius' sets, it's fine, he can get in there, dig around and find whatever he finds. Furthermore, he can go back later and not have to worry about being subsumed (though many who get subsumed don't know this and are justifiably unwilling to try again).

If the Hypermind's set gets through, however, the telepath becomes convinced that he is that genius. His personality has been overwritten, at least temporarily. The possession's duration depends on the height of the set.

Height Duration

1-2	Rounds
3-6	Hours
7-10	Days

The number of units is equal to Width.

Example: J. Edgar Hoover tries to read the mind of Nguyet Cam. She has +10HD in Mind. He's lucky to roll a 2x10. Because the Height is 10, she's going to be in charge for days. Because he reduced her Width by two, she's controlling him for eight days.

If a telepath gets passively overridden by a Hyperbrain and, on a later occasion, tries to read that scary mind again, he runs the same risk of being subsumed. Note that the Hypermind's control is not sufficient to overcome the body's instinct for self-preservation, but the first thing most duplicate Hyperbrains do is try to inform the original.

9d Mind—Primal Linguistics

There are fundamental structures underlying human thought, and nowhere is this more true than in the matter of language. At Mind 9, all human language becomes increasingly transparent to the Hypermind. If such a supergenius wants to learn a foreign language, a couple days of having the TV or radio playing in that tongue is sufficient to let her get the gist of conversations and make herself understood most of the time. After a week of tourism anywhere on Earth, she can speak the language like a native.

(This is a nice perk and, moreover, it can make a global game much simpler if you don't have to constantly hire translators and worry that they're enemy agents. They so often are, you know.)

10d Mind—Seeing the Big Picture

You know those global metrics from page 29? Supergeniuses know them in game. Oh, maybe not by name and number, but they have that same kind of perspective.

It's not automatic, but a player with 10d in Mind can, once per game week, ask the GM about (1) one of the four STEW metrics or (2) one of the six tones. The GM assembles a pool equal to the metric or

tone's current rating and rolls it in secret. The PC rolls unadulterated Mind. If the PC's roll is wider than the GM's secret roll, the GM gives the player some insight into how things are going. (Simply telling the number is boring, and not recommended, but I can't stop you.) Hypergeniuses can even ask hypothetical questions like, "If we succeed at deposing Å and ruining his religion, how will that affect the economy?" and, with a set, get the GM's idea of a straight answer.

Zippermen

Perhaps it's the enduring legacy of Siegel and Shuster, or perhaps they were only tuned in to some common human longing, but Alphonse Russo is only the first human to use dark energy for flight, strength and armor. At each successive tier, configurations of these powers can be found. Eventually, they come to be called "Zippermen."

Tier Powers

3	7d+3WD in Hyperbody with No Upward Limit and No Physics (133 Points), 5HD Invulnerability (200 Points), 10d Flight that Attacks, Defends and is Useful (60 Points), +7d Perception (7 Points)
4	5d+2HD+2WD in Hyperbody with Booster 6 (170 Points), 10HD Heavy Armor (120 Points), 10d Flight that Attacks, Defends and is Useful (60 Points)
5	6d+3HD+2WD in Hyperbody with Booster 2 (120 Points), 10HD Heavy Armor (120 Points), 10d Flight that Attacks, Defends and is Useful (60 Points)
6	6d+4HD in Hyperbody with Booster 1 (70 Points), 10HD Heavy Armor (120 Points), 10d Flight that Attacks, Defends and is Useful (60 Points)
7	5d Hyperbody (20 Points), 10HD Heavy Armor (120 Points), 10d Flight that Attacks, Defends and is Useful (60 Points)
8	6d Hyperbody (24 Points), 8HD Heavy Armor (96 Points), 7d Flight that Defends and is Useful (28 Points), 2d Endurance (2 Points)
9	4d+1WD Hyperbody (32 Points), 3HD Heavy Armor (36 Points), 8d Flight that Defends and is Useful (32 Points)
10	4d Hyperbody (16 Points), 2HD Heavy Armor (24 Points), 5d Useful Flight (10 Points)

Inventors

Gadgeteering in Progenitor is, by default, the version possessed by Nguyet Cam (p. 164)—mostly standard, but everything built needs to be Manufacturable. You may notice the huge boosts of Base Will that these gadgeteers receive: I put that on with the expectation that many, if not most of them, would be most interested in inventing something they can produce and make millions of dollars. A few might go the Bruce Wayne route, and in that case, having tons of Willpower and Base Will to spend goes a long way towards supplementing high-tech gadgetry with grit and determination.

Tier Powers

3	Manufacturable Gadgeteering 10d+2HD (196 Points), +68 Base Will (204 Points)
4	Manufacturable Gadgeteering 9d+2HD (196 Points), +56 Base Will (168 Points)
5	Manufacturable Gadgeteering 8d+2HD (168 Points), +44 Base Will (132 Points)
6	Manufacturable Gadgeteering 5d+2HD (126 Points), +41 Base Will (123 Points), Knowledge (Engineering) (Hyperskill) 1, (1 Point)
7	Manufacturable Gadgeteering 7d (98 Points), +34 Base Will (102 Points)
8	Manufacturable Gadgeteering 6d (84 Points), +22 Base Will (66 Points)
9	Manufacturable Gadgeteering 3d (42 Points), +19 Base Will (57 Points) Knowledge (Engineering) (Hyperskill) 1, (1 Point)
10	Manufacturable Gadgeteering 2d (28 Points), +7 Base Will (21 Points), Knowledge (Engineering) (Hyperskill) 1, (1 Point)

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Superstatters

Some take the idea of being “super human” literally. They can’t fly or transform matter. They can only do things normal people can do... many, many times better. These superstatters are modeled with Hyperstats and Base Will, clean and simple. Maybe a point or two of Hyperskills just to tidy up the math. Note that these Hyperstats (and Hyperskills) get added on to any scores the character already has.

Tier	Powers
3	4d+3WD for each Stat (64 Points each), +5 Base Will (15 Points) and 1 Hyperskill of choice (1 Point)
4	2d+2WD for each Stat (40 Points each), +36 Base Will (108 Points) and 2 Hyperskill(s) of choice (2 Points)
5	3d+2HD+1WD for each Stat (44 Points each), +12 Base Will (36 Points)
6	6d+1WD for each Stat (40 Points each), +3 Base Will (9 Points) and 1 Hyperskill of choice (1 Point)
7	4d+1WD for each Stat (32 Points each), +2 Base Will (6 Points) and 2 Hyperskills of choice (2 Points)
8	6d for each Stat (24 Points each), +2 Base Will (6 Points)
9	4d or 2HD or WD for each Stat (16 Points each), +1 Base Will (3 Points) and 1 Hyperskill of choice (1 Point)
10	2d or HD for each Stat (8 Points each) and 2 Hyperskills of choice (2 Points)

Healers

“Healer” is a category that holds a lot of variety, ranging from people who can simply cast out illness on a one-on-one consulting basis, up through those who can turn back the clock on damaged buildings or even hold them together. (This power—Molecular Restoration—is described in full in the entry for Abe Sykes, page 173.) The other powers on the list all lack Molecular Restoration’s Defensive element. Rectoperception also pops up and is also described in Abe’s entry.

Health Zap heals diseases and toxins with one Useful element, and repairs injuries with a second. Both are ranged and have the On Sight extra (permitting it to work across quarantine) and the damage-healing element also has Engulfs, so it heals WSK to each location when used.

Radiant Repair is a Useful power that can heal disease and toxins, but not injuries or congenital birth defects. It has the Flaw Touch Only, but this is offset by the Radius 10 Extra. When switched on, then, its sets cleanse everyone within a 160 yard radius.

Radiant Regeneration is another Useful power, but it heals damage and not illness. It has Controlled Effect, Engulfs, Go First 3 and a Radius 2 Extra, so it heals WSK on every location, for every ally in a 10 yard radius, timed as if its activation set was three wider.

Best Medicine is a Useful power that heals disease and toxins, but only on one person at a time. It has the Flaw Obvious.

Tier	Powers
3	10HD Molecular Restoration (280 Points), 8d+2HD Radiant Repair (120 Points)
4	10HD Molecular Restoration (280 Points), 7d Radiant Repair (70 Points)
5	5HD Molecular Restoration (140 Points), 8HD Radiant Repair (160 Points)
6	10HD Health Zap (140 Points), 1d+4HD Radiant Regeneration (90 Points)
7	10HD Health Zap (140 Points), 6HD Extra Tough (as per Wild Talents) (60 Points)
8	1d+6HD Health Zap (91 Points), 2HD Regeneration (20 Points), 2HD Heavy Armor (24 Points), 2HD Light Armor (12 Points) (all as per Wild Talents), +1 Base Will (3 Points)
9	10d Health Zap (70 Points), 3HD Regeneration (30 Points)
10	2HD (40 Points) Radiant Regeneration, 10d Best Medicine (10 Points)

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Speeders

Insanely fast characters are modeled with three powers in Progenitor. The first is Multi-Act from Wild Talents, unchanged—you get Width in regular bonus dice to help with multiple actions. The second is a Hyperskill at running, often with Booster. The third is called “Me First” and it comes rated from 1 to 3. It’s a Variable Effect based power (you can see its DNA on page 216 in the Lin Wen writeup) that applies the Go First Extra to ordinary Skill rolls. You can’t use Multi-Act with Me First—a character is either trying to do one thing right away or several things simultaneously. If you use Me First with a Skill, you either roll the Me First pool or the Skill pool, whichever is lower. If you get a set, it’s timed as if it had an extra points of Width equal to the power’s rating. If you have Me First 2, your action is timed as if it was 2 Wider.

Tier	Powers
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3	10HD Multiple Actions (40 Points), 10d Hyperrun with Power Capacity (Speed), Booster 1 and No Physics (50 Points), 10d Me First 7 (310 Points)
4	10HD Multiple Actions (40 Points), 6d Hyperrun with Power Capacity (Speed), Booster 1 and No Physics (30 Points), 10d Me First 6 (280 Points)
5	10HD Multiple Actions (40 Points), 10d Hyperrun with Power Capacity (Speed) and No Physics (40 Points), 10d Me First 4 (220 Points)
6	10HD Multiple Actions (40 Points), 5d Hyperrun with Power Capacity (Speed) and No Physics (20 Points), 10d Me First 3 (190 Points)
7	10HD Multiple Actions (40 Points), 6d Hyperrun with Power Capacity (Speed), Booster 1 and No Physics (30 Points), 10d Me First 1 (130 Points)
8	10HD Multiple Actions (40 Points), 4d+3HD+3WD Hyperrun with Power Capacity (Speed), Booster 1 and No Physics (110 Points)
9	10HD Multiple Actions (40 Points), 10d Hyperrun with Power Capacity (Speed), Booster 2 and No Physics (60 Points)
10	8HD Multiple Actions (32 Points), 6d Hyperrun with Power Capacity (Speed) (18 Points) (Note that the physics of rrunning at 80mph can provide lots of interesting challenges if you’re aware, or a fast and smeary death if you’re not. I recommend very thick soles on your shoes, along with plenty of stopping space and a good turn radius.)

How Powers Spread

Dark energy is contagious. Everyone who becomes metahuman catches it via exposure to another metahuman, all the way back to the Progenitor, Amanda Sykes. But the transmission is not always smooth or easy. Nor is it unlimited.

The Limits of Power Descent

Every metahuman has the potential to create a number of offspring (though in the case of closed vectors, described below, that potential is blocked). The more energy he's carrying, the stronger and more numerous his direct offspring. Amanda, the first and most potent superhuman, can produce ten offspring. Because she's Tier One, her ten power descendants make up Tier Two. Each of those Tier Twos can create nine offspring at Tier Three. The Tier Threes can each make eight Tier Fours, and so forth.

Tier	Points for Powers	Number of Descendants Before Equilibrium	Transmission Odds for		Tier's Actual Population	Actual Total Global Pop with Tier & Previous Tiers Included
			Stable Vector Tier's	Potential Population		
One	500	10	100%	1	1	1
Two	450	9	90%	10	10	11
Three	400	8	80%	90	72	83
Four	350	7	70%	720	461	544
Five	300	6	60%	5,040	2,582	3,126
Six	250	5	50%	30,240	12,394	15,520
Seven	200	4	40%	151,200	49,576	65,096
Eight	150	3	30%	604,800	158,643	223,739
Nine	100	2	20%	1,814,400	380,743	604,482
Ten	50	1?	10%?	3,628,800	609,189	1,213,671

Amanda (p. 159) is a strong vector. Every time she applies her power to someone, they catch it, until she reaches equilibrium. Some strong vectors persist even at the more populous, low-power Tiers. If you're having Tier Tens create Marks (see page 27), a strong vector Tier Ten automatically creates a Mark from the first person who winds up at the receiving end of her powers.

Strong vectors are rare, however. Most metahumans, whether they understand it or not, are stable vectors. Until they've created their allotment of power-offspring (that is, until they reach equilibrium), there's a chance of contagion every time they use their power. The chance depends on their Tier. At Amanda's level, there's no difference between being a strong vector and a stable one: There's just too much power sparking away off of her. But at Tier Five, there's only a sixty percent chance of altering someone who gets exposed—still pretty good, but hardly a sure thing. Before equilibrium, stable vectors can have a tricky time of it. If their powers are aggressive or dangerous, they risk creating a meta-enemy every time they use them on someone who isn't already super. (If someone already has dark energy powers, they can never get more or push someone towards equilibrium through simple exposure.) At Tier Ten, there's only a ten percent chance of 'reproducing'—and then only once, and then only if you have Marks in play.

Optional Rules: Markup and Backwash

If you want to keep PCs on their toes, you can rule that even after they've spent all their progeny slots—that is, after that, that Tier Eight has three offspring and is at equilibrium—there's still a chance of 'marking' (see page 27) any non-metahuman on whom they use a power. Keep it at a 1% for an effect that's negligible. Raise it up to 10% to keep them a bit more cautious. Of course, the higher the character's Tier, the less of an issue it seems to turn someone excellent. But that's where you get the Superman/Lex Luthor dynamic.

Alternately, you could have it that when a metahuman dies, there's a 10% chance that his energy returns to his direct ancestor. Now that ancestor is, unwittingly, off equilibrium and ready to spawn again.

Closed vectors are also fairly common. They are, quite simply, metahumans whose powers don't ever affect human beings. Cynthia Carls (p. 214) is a closed vector because she can only work her will on earth and stone, not flesh and bone. Even if she causes the earth to open and swallow somebody (which would be rather out of character) her power is acting on the soil, not on the person getting crushed. Zipperneck (p. 210) on the other hand, applies his powers to everyone who feels his horrendous strength. Some Zippermen (p. 23) or others with colossal strength are closed vectors because apparently their power only operates by changing their own bodies, regardless of whether they're lifting a boulder or a jailhouse snitch. But others are, apparently, only mimicking inhuman strength by using dark energy to alter the positions of those things and people they lift. People whose strength defies Newtonian physics (like Steelsuit Dowd, or anyone with the "No Physics" extra on their Hyperbody) are never closed vectors.

There are no closed vectors whose powers work on human beings, period.

Dead Heroes?

Strangely, dark energy never seems to transfer to people who die immediately thereafter (usually from the application of that power). Consider, for example, all those Vietnamese that Amanda kills in 1968. Presumably there's a point, even if it's a fraction of a second, between when her laser eye bolts puncture an enemy soldier's chest, and when he actually clinically experiences brain-stem termination and death. But none of those dead soldiers developed powers—particularly powers like "immunity to laser eye bolts," which one presumes they ardently desired. Even geniuses like Jason Weeks (p. 195) are puzzled by this conundrum, leading to speculation that dark energy has some kind of prescient function that precludes symbiosis with a doomed consciousness. Ngyuet Cam (p. 164) leans towards a more practical theory that those who die immediately after exposure simply hemorrhage their power back into their original host. But she was unwilling to experiment with pre-equilibrium metahumans to get relevant data.

Finally, there are weak vectors like the feckless and ruthless Jarvis West (p. 203). Even though he's a mighty Tier Three, West almost never spreads his power, and the fact that he eventually reaches equilibrium with eight descendants is just a testament to the appalling size of his victim pool. When a weak vector uses his power on someone, there is at best a 10% chance of transmission, and possibly as low as 1%. (Mileage varies between individual PCs and GMCs.)

If every metahuman could pass power, and did so until hitting equilibrium, by the time they were all done there would be close to 10,000,000 metahumans worldwide (not counting Marks). But the actual numbers are nowhere near that high. First off, there are closed vectors. Secondly, there are metahumans who die (or simply give up using human-focused powers) before hitting equilibrium. Someone who's Tier Four and a weak vector runs a decent chance of dying before making his seven spawn. Especially if his power is the kind that makes him enemies.

Optional Rule: Marks

What happens to when a Tier Ten successfully passes on dark energy to a previously-normal person? If you follow the curve of the math, that person gets exactly zero points to spend on superpowers. Marks are people who have done just that: Caught super, but only in a trace amount insufficient to realize their power fantasies. (It's also possible to create Marks by using metahuman powers, as described on page 26.)

Marks get the advantage of automatically developing Willpower, even if their personality is that of an apathetic sofa slug. On the other hand, they set off detectors set to sniff out the presence of passive dark energy.

A very challenging, and possibly frustrating game would have a set of PCs who are Marks, trying to make a difference in the superhuman demimonde with nothing but their native abilities, the occasional dice boost, and a very mild resistance to mind control. This sort of low-power premise could make for an interesting one-shot side game, perhaps one where the Marks have to deal with the fallout that's beneath the notice of normal PCs. Or perhaps a Mark pops up the one time a PC might derail the game simply because a nameless GMC can't resist a Hypercommand.

PC Vector Types and Their Effects

Who decides whether a PC is a strong or weak or stable vector? That depends. (If he chooses powers that don't affect people, he's a closed vector by default.) If the players pick, that lets them control one more aspect of their character and provides another avenue for developing or examining what kind of person he or she is. If the GM picks, that's another lever for plot development.

If a PC is a strong vector, he has a powerful advantage, especially later in the timeline when the process of power descent is better understood. Quite simply, he knows when he's going to produce an offspring. (I.E. the next time he uses his power on a person.) The value of catching super is immense, and the higher tier the character is, the more he can extort in exchange for transforming someone into a metahuman. If a GM isn't comfortable with a PC having this source of influence on top of whatever metahuman powers he has, she has every right to say "No, PCs can't be strong vectors." On the other hand, "controlled vector" is a canonical power, so she may have to forbid that as well.

A weak vector PC can set his transmission odds anywhere between 1% and 10%, and this lets him use his powers with much less concern. On the other hand, just about the time you're used to using your powers without progeny, the numbers line up. Someone's gotta lotto.

Stable vectors are the middle ground, and their tier determines whether their plot impact is closer to weak or strong. Of course, early in the timeline, power transmission isn't understood, and that's when strong vectors are going to be leaving byblows promiscuously scattered across the landscape. Same thing for stable vectors of high tier. This is, of course, one of the game's central issues: How much responsibility do you have for the behavior (good and bad) of the metahumans you create?

How Many of Each?

It's not clear what percentages of metahumans are strong, weak, closed, stable or controlled vectors. This gives GMs wiggle room to decide how commonplace metahumans are.

Obviously there are going to be heavy concentrations in some cities and nations, with thin populations elsewhere. Given the contagious nature of dark energy, population density tends to reinforce itself, but that can be offset if an area just happens to get a lot of weak or closed vectors.

If the GM decides that most metahumans are weak vectors, or closed, then the population is smaller and metahumans are seen more as unique and special snowflakes. (Or, in some cases, simply special flakes.) This is the explanation you use when you want costumed heroes and people who are surprised by dark energy manifestations.

On the other hand, if most are stable or even strong vectors, then the use of dark energy is a bit more normalized. It's hard to be blasé about that guy who makes zombies or shoots power bolts from his eyes, but the idea of dark energy is more common, most people have seen a metahuman doing something (and it's more likely to be rescue work or political fund raising than "crime fighting") and dark energy is more likely to be commodified and, therefore, concentrated in the hands of people who can afford to offer millions of dollars in exchange for superpowers. This is the explanation you use for government, military and corporate employment of metahumans.

Changing the World

Progenitor is about big characters, huge powers, and the ability of a handful of people to kick history into entirely new channels. As a GM, that degree of power can be intimidating, so some tools are included to ease the burden.

The first tool is the timelines: One is the actual historical timeline, for reference in the unlikely event that your PCs' actions make things more normal. It's also available if you ditch the Progenitor setting altogether and run your homebrew game of world-kicking superheroes.

The other timeline is the Progenitor timeline, describing the even less likely possibility that the PCs do nothing at all while the other dark-energy infused metahumans are running around writing their names in the snow from orbit.

And by “snow” I mean, “seething masses of unempowered humanity.”

The timelines help and they’re pretty self-explanatory. But along with those specific details, the timelines measure global progress (or regress) along four metrics. Some years, the world is unusually peaceful. Some, it’s heinously violent. More typically it cruises along in a grumpy, grumbling haze of low-intensity conflict. That mood of savagery or exhaustion doesn’t exist in a vacuum. It arises from the sum total of many actions, many too small to capture global attention but all contributing to a total sense that cracking someone on the skull with an axe handle is a perfectly fine way to settle your differences.

The Four Metrics

Measuring these global moods occurs along four metrics: Warfare, Economy, Suspicion and Technology. If you want a mnemonic, the first letters of the metrics spell out “STEW.”

Suspicion: Sometimes, the world seems to be shrinking into a global village where you can hop next door to borrow a recipe from Sri Lanka before exchanging bon mots with a pen pal in Australia. Other times, we seem to inhabit a globe of fortresses, cultures closed off like crabs in shells, baring pincers for outsiders. Fear of the outsider and the immigrant fuel global suspicion, throwing up walls and driving divisions deeper. But curiosity, the urge to find new markets or new products, and the good-old fashioned erotic pull of exoticism can all pull people into new lands, as McDonalds, Disney and Nike pull the world into one homogenized culture. When Suspicion increases, people look uneasily at their neighbors, they seek control and information and the security that justifies the sacrifice of freedoms and rights.

Technology: Technology always cruises on from strength to strength, doesn’t it? From the atom bomb to the hydrogen bomb to the neutron bomb. It’s impossible to put the juice back in the orange, so you might as well use it to wash down this year’s wonder drug. When technology surges, things get better and worse and more confusing, but when it doesn’t they can be so dull.

Economy: The global economy is large and hard-edged and possessed of tremendous inertia.

It takes a lot to get it moving and it takes a lot to get it stopped. When it’s rolling along, the smart and lucky can hitch a ride and get pulled to the top. The slow and the foolish and the unfortunate? Well, they get ground underneath it. But that’s inevitable, and much as people suffer when it’s moving, more people suffer when it stops. At least, that’s what the powerful people who can move it say...

Warfare: The last, loudest and showiest of the global metrics simply measures how much violence is favored as a method of problem resolution. This tends to move in cycles, of course. When fresh off a quagmire, mediation and diplomacy and realistic approaches are in favor. But when it’s been a while, then ideology, triumphalism and national pride can demand a war. And sometimes, you just need the space.

	Suspicion	Technology	Economy	Warfare
Suspicion	—	Authoritarianism	Espionage	Tribalism
Technology	Authoritarianism	—	Globalism	Conflict
Economy	Espionage	Globalism	—	Imperialism
Warfare	Tribalism	Conflict	Imperialism	—

The Six Tones

In the timelines, each year has a rating for each metric. Your game does not have to stick to those numbers. If your PCs pull off something really big—like turning the USSR Christian (see page 207) or hurtling the world’s nuclear weapons into the sun (see Superman IV: The Quest for Peace)—move two of the metrics a point, or even two. (Two point shifts should be the stuff of once-in-a-campaign big, hairy, chucking-the-One-Ring-in-Mount-Doom events.) Move them up, move them down, just have a rationale for why the PCs’ actions are influencing world events. As a general rule, have the dips and peaks created by the PCs as alterations of the timeline you use... until things get completely derailed and have their own momentum. (You’ll know it when it happens.)

Once per game year, see which two gauges are highest. That combination sets the tone for the year. There are six possible mixes.

Authoritarianism (Suspicion+Technology): Suspicious authorities—religious, secular and political—all seek to regulate the lives of those under their purview. The ideal is to govern even thought. Using informants and secret police has always been one authoritarian tactic but as science marches forward, options arise that are strictly technological, and therefore immune to ill-timed attacks of conscience.

Conflict (Warfare+Technology): Where Tribalism is about personal connections and impersonal prejudices, Conflict is straight up, organized, deliberate war. It moves on a level of nations more than subcultures, and while there may be nationalist (or religious, or philosophical) rhetoric, in the end it's almost certainly about "They have it and we kinda want it."

Espionage (Suspicion+Economy): When money's tight, the powers that be often clamp down on those who are subservient. But when there's enough financial lubricant, the temptation arises to look over one's neighbors. Espionage is premised on fear that the other guy has an advantage, and the natural desire to take that advantage away. When it works, of course, the other guy may realize that you have an advantage—the espionage advantage—which he wants to take away. This turns into a vicious cycle very quickly.

Globalism (Technology+Economy): Where Imperialism is inevitably concerned with dominance, winners and losers, Globalism is a little more evenhanded. Many of the same issues come up as with Imperialism, but it's more mutual and less intentional. Events in Globalism are as likely to involve a developing nation somehow harming a first world country as vice versa. But no matter who's getting hurt, there's no turning back the clock. Once nations are internationally entangled, there's little chance of cutting them loose.

Imperialism (Warfare+Economy): Warfare doesn't just mean guns and bombs are going off. It also means there's a culture of violence and an infrastructure of violence available. Coupled

with an economic expansion, you inevitably get businessmen who tie their fortunes to conflict—either because their ideology supports the conflict and they see their involvement as a necessity, or because they're just greedy and know which way the wind blows. When foreigners take advantage of volatile conditions, or create them in order to take advantage, what you get is Imperialism.

Tribalism (Warfare+Suspicion): Any time Suspicion is high, people are operating on all kinds of crazy stereotypes, they're getting bombarded with propaganda about The Enemy and they're constantly wondering who they can trust. When blood's in the water, that kind of attitude gets toxic and deadly fast. Walls go up, hate crimes skyrocket, rights become luxuries and atrocities become justified by "Us or Them."

Rolling the Dice

When you know what the tone for the year is, roll a pool equal to the combined metrics and look for sets. The sets are compared to the relevant chart, and the result shows what happens on the global stage.

Any loose dice are compared to the "Personal Event" chart for the appropriate tone. What comes up there are small scale events that might impact an individual PC or his home town.

Some entries have modifications to the gauges. These are suggested outcomes if the event goes off unchallenged. PC action can forestall these events if they're decisive, but it shouldn't be easy.

Example: Thanks in part to a PC's invention of room-temperature superconductors, Technology and Economy both surge up to 4 in 1979. When the GM decides the current adventure is winding down and it's time to brew up the next batch of crazy plot juice, she rolls 8d (4 for Technology and 4 for Economy). She gets 1,1,2,2,3,3,6,10.

Technology+Economy=Globalism, so let's see what she gets.

2x1 = A new drug smuggling method.

2x2 = A fringe cult is scattered by a diaspora.

2x3 = A first world cult evangelizes in the third world.

Interesting, and a strong religious angle. Looking at the timelines, in 1980 you've got the Shah getting deposed in Iran and Sandinistas forcing Somoza out of Nicaragua. Jews and followers of Bah'ai left Iran early in the revolutionary process, so if the GM wants to create a religion of her own to flee, it's entirely plausible. Or she could fictionalize an extremist and secret perversion of Islam, Christianity, even the Yazidi religion if she wanted. If her closet cultists were entangled with the hugely corrupt government, whose excesses provoked the revolution? All the better. If that's the case, they're probably rich and determined to restore the Shah. This could readily lead them trying to hire, recruit or coerce metahumans to fight the Islamic revolution or assassinate Khomeini.

Now let's look at 2x3. What about hard-line Christians who think Nicaragua is a sign of the coming apocalypse and who want to prove their faith by fighting on the front lines? Since America's a hotbed of dark energy empowerment, their numbers could include some mid-tier supers whose involvement is hard to disguise. Is Reagan covertly helping these whackos? Even to the extent of just staying out of their way? Of course the US denies responsibility for their actions, but is that going to be believed? So PCs could get involved, either hired to go and keep a lid on the lunatics, or to cover their tracks, or simply to observe and report.

The drug smuggling? Mm, doesn't do much for the GM. Religious fanatics are more appealing, and she decides to focus on that, unless she wants to have the Christians smuggling something up from South America to fund their activities... but fundamentalist Christianity has traditionally gone hand-in-hand with opposition to drug culture. Unless what they're smuggling is some kind of psychoactive hallucinogen that, when ingested, makes people receptive to the brainwashing of the Tier Seven psychic leading the cult? Maybe.

Regardless of the big global movements, let's look at the personal events. That six means "Killer robot attacks. All parts made in... China!?" As for the ten, it's "A scientist seeks a PC to study his powers." All right. Let's blend these. The scientist thinks something about how

the PC manipulates dark energy could be key to unlocking... um, er... something really cool. If the PC goes along with getting studied, then the giant robot attacks trying to either foil the scientist's plans because China is afraid of the outcome. Or if the PC resists, the robot attacks at the scientist's behest—he probably built it for that purpose, at the behest of his Chinese partners.

So. Drug smuggling psychic Christians in Nicaragua, corrupt devil-worshipping Persians fleeing the Shah and looking for supers to hire or manipulate, and a scientist (possibly with Chinese backing) who wants the PC as his lab rat. That should be good for a couple sessions, right?

Escalation!

It's far from unlikely that your PCs' powers and proclivities leave them pushing the same metrics time after time, year after year. So you might roll up the same result more than once. That's OK. All you do is, the second time you hit it, treat it as if it's one wider.

Example: After going through all the robot/Iranian/psychic Christians in Nicaragua plots, the PCs have managed to increase Economy and Technology again. Now they're both at 5, so the GM rolls once more. Shockingly, she only gets one set, a 2x3. (Her events, on 1,2,4,5,6,7,9 and 10, offer a smorgasbord of possibilities, but we'll ignore them for the time being.) She's already hit 2x3 with her psychic eschatologists, so it gets pushed up to 3x3, which reads "Brainwash the hungry." Well, this fits perfectly as a continuation of the previous plot. The First Church of Jesus Christ, Psychic may have lost its mind-controlling leader, but apparently some super somewhere spawned in the process and that progeny is using mind control again. Is it a cynical manipulator who saw the PCs cut the head off the church and who decided to put his own noggin in as a replacement? Or is it a true believer who, with the death of the first demagogue, has ascended to lead? Either way, they're probably spreading beyond Nicaragua...

The Charts

Authoritarianism (Suspicion + Technology)

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| 2x1: In response to terrorist attacks, governments begin keeping more detailed and organized records of their citizens. | abilities, only people who test negative for dark energy are permitted to run for public office. | 5x4: Metahumans battle for enfranchisement, using means ranging from peaceful, ethical and legal protests to open rebellion. |
| 3x1: States begin legislating travel restrictions on people who fit "high risk profiles." | 3x4: Riots and demonstrations erupt nationwide with passionate partisans on both sides. | 2x5: Limited firearm control legislation passes. |
| 4x1: High-tech devices can recognize faces, voices, and distinctive movements. Nationwide push for a thumbprint database of all citizens. +1 TECHNOLOGY | 4x4: Many states enact ballot measures to deny the vote to individuals "infected" with dark energy. Some of them pass. | 3x5: Registration and inspection of all firearms becomes legally mandatory. |
| 5x1: Cameras are everywhere. It is nearly impossible to hide from the government or conceal your location from a dedicated hacker. | | 4x5: Legal gun ownership requires a photo ID and results in a special notation on the owners drivers' license. -1 WARFARE |
| 2x2: There's a health scare. | | |
| 3x2: Access to health records broadens. | | |
| 4x2: The government mandates inoculations for all citizens and visitors. Refusal is a misdemeanor with a mandatory sentence of "health probation." People on "HP" have to come in twice a month to be tested. | | |
| 5x2: The courts decide it's OK to refuse certain 'sensitive' jobs to people with particular illnesses or a genetic predisposition to get them. | | |
| 2x3: The media plays up a syntergene release with serious scare tactics. | | |
| 3x3: The government engages in prior censorship to weed out 'pernicious syntergenes.' This sparks demonstrations both for and against. | | |
| 4x3: After a protracted court battle opens the door for prior censorship, a "Bureau of Ideological Countermeasures" is formed to protect the public from syntergenes and undo any 'social misinformation' they have caused. | | |
| 5x3: The government develops and releases loyalty syntergenes for its citizens as a form of 'preemptive synergenic prophylaxis.' +1 ECONOMY | | |
| 2x4: After well publicized abuses by people with Hypercharm and Hypercommand | | |



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| 5x5: Private handgun ownership is banned for all but police officers and members of the judiciary. | 4x7: The metahuman lawyers square off over a controversial case (a child abduction with no corpse ever found). Three jurors commit suicide. | purposes of criminal prosecution. |
| 2x6: The idea of a hidden fifth column of "sleeper agents" (after the fashion of The Manchurian Candidate) gains increasing traction and widespread acceptance (possibly after a few well-publicized cases of high level brainwashing and sabotage). | 5x7: There's a jury crisis as citizens refuse to serve. Meanwhile, bar associations start a witch-hunt for supersuasive attorneys. | 3x9: Civil suits are filed in great numbers, and some very sketchy pleas of self-defense are when people use weapons against metahumans whose powers are useless in a conflict. +1 WARFARE |
| 3x6: The government illegally taps phones, searching for foreign agents. | 2x8: Hackers or spies obtain records of ideological /political donations or activity. | 4x9: Police in a major city shoot and kill a known metahuman who was cooperating with a traffic stop. |
| 4x6: Scandal and upheaval attends when the phone taps are uncovered. | 3x8: A calculated program of nationwide harassment begins, based on the stolen list. -1 ECONOMY | 5x9: Dark energy riots in major cities. |
| 5x6: The government nationalizes the phone system in the name of security. | 4x8: Massive credit fraud and/or identity theft, targeting the people on the stolen records. | 2x10: A dark energy detection device is patented. |
| 2x7: A defense lawyer uses Hypercharm on juries to free criminal clients. | 5x8: The thieves responsible for the initial theft are found, tortured, murdered and then publicly outed for their crimes. | 3x10: Dark energy detectors can be purchased with an appropriate license. |
| 3x7: A prosecuting attorney with Hypercommand is brought in to counter the defense lawyer. | 2x9: Legislation passes declaring that all people possessing dark energy are considered 'armed' at all times for the | 4x10: Dark energy is prohibited at airports. |
| | | 5x10: Dark energy is prohibited at stadiums, some shopping malls, and many movie theaters. |

Authoritarian Events

- 1: The PCs are followed, spied on, and their residences are broken into. Nothing's taken, but listening devices might turn up. Complaints to the cops gain nothing, as it's the government that's tailing them. What do they do?
- 2: If a PC has a secret identity, it's discovered by a blackmailer. Initially, the blackmailer's requests are quite simple, but if he convinces the PC to do something illegal, the blackmailer then has something else to blackmail with. Lather, rinse, repeat...
- 3: If a PC has a secret identity, his normal identity gets stolen and results in unwanted attention.
- 4: Someone builds an artificial intelligence that can predict a PC's every move. But what would prompt such an effort? Revenge? Clinical curiosity? A deep and manipulative game? Creepy stalker fascination?
- 5: A PC is jailed on trumped-up charges. (Or at least there's an arrest warrant and a game attempt made.) Why? It won't hold up in court. Is it simple harassment, or does someone want him out of the way?
- 6: A Shaw monster (p. 205) becomes fixated on the PC and won't leave him alone.
- 7: Someone in the PCs' power lineage (either an ancestor or descendant) is jailed on unlikely evidence.
- 8: Stolen DNA is used to create a clone of the PC.
- 9: Someone constructs android "evil twins" of the PCs (and of several GMCs). Do they have the PCs' powers? Different ones? No powers at all, other than the power to make the PCs look like villains, chumps or cads?
- 10: A serial killer starts stalking local metahumans. Is he empowered himself, or just someone who really, really enjoys a challenge?

Imperialism (War + Economy)

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| 2x1: Warlords in the African "blood diamond" regions begin consolidating instead of competing. -1 WARFARE | 4x1: The warlords use germ warfare and the monopoly responds with syntergenes. | 2x2: An offshore oil spill ravages a coastal ecology. |
| 3x1: A 'legitimate' diamond consortium deploys super-mercenaries against the warlords to protect their monopoly. | 5x1: When the carnage has become extreme, a neighboring nation invades, trying to seize the warlords' holdings, now that the monopoly is too weak to continue the fight. | 3x2: The local fishermen turn pirate, precipitating at least one hostage standoff. |
| | | 4x2: Oil companies send mercenary assassins to kill off the pirates. |

5x2: The pirates respond with attacks on oil tankers in the Straits of Hormuz, both hit-and-run style and a few suicide attacks. While they can't close the Straits, it does force up oil costs worldwide.

2x3: A totalitarian state begins providing narcotizing drugs (or direct stimulation of the brain's pleasure centers) to citizens at 'reward booths.'

3x3: Widespread vandalization of reward booths results in overdoses (for the vandals) and angry demonstrations (from people who don't get 'rewarded').

4x3: The reward booths are permanently removed and the people rise up and riot.

5x3: Soldiers who are ordered to contain the riots are, themselves, heavily 'rewarded' and, unexpectedly, go completely psycho on the citizens in a horrendous bloodbath.

2x4: A totalitarian dictator defaults on his foreign debt.

3x4: An attempted international asset freeze prompts the tyrant to arm terrorists.

4x4: Air strikes are levied against the tyrant's palaces and the terrorist training camps.

5x4: Destabilized by the attacks and by the ruler's death (or rumored death, or disappearance), the nation crumbles into civil war.

2x5: Women in a repressive state protest and organize for legal equality. -1 SUSPICION

3x5: Their protests prompt violent reprisals, both from the men in their personal lives and from crowds during demonstrations.

4x5: Female metahumans become involved, calming the violence by pushing back and disarming both police and army units.

5x5: A neighboring country invades. The invaded country blames the super-females for emasculating them in front of their enemies.

2x6: Experts in human smuggling begin sneaking war refugees into the west, where they are kept prisoner in brothels and used as sex slaves.

3x6: A law enforcement probe embarrasses some powerful people (who were either clients, smugglers, looking the other way or authorities who were asleep at the switch) who try to downplay the extent of the problem and cast doubt on its authenticity.

4x6: The losing side on the war producing the refugees begins using terrorist tactics in the name of "protecting their women." Eventually they escalate to germ and/or synergenic warfare.

5x6: International forces (possibly metahuman) are compelled by public opinion to go get involved in the war. Their mandate is to protect women, prevent terrorism and settle the war.

2x7: A former colony fails less than a decade after becoming independent. The government dissolves and civil order collapses.

3x7: Warlords arise to fill the anarchic power vacuum.

4x7: In order to fund their militias, the warlords become drug lords.

5x7: In order to protect their drug operations, the drug lords become landlords for fugitive supervillains. Now the most powerful individual enemies of humanity have an armed and lawless camp in which to ensconce themselves.

2x8: A drought or clean water crisis enflames a territorial dispute.

3x8: One side gets a metahuman who can create great quantities of fresh water.

4x8: The other side invades hoping to capture the metahuman (or at least some of the water).

5x8: Metahumans become involved on both sides. No matter which side winds up with him, the water-maker becomes a prisoner in a gilded cage, compelled to produce the needed drinking and irrigation water.

2x9: A radical Atheist Progressive Front blames religion for all humankind's woes and underscores the release of its manifesto with well-orchestrated

assassinations of a number of bishops, rabbis and imams.

3x9: Widespread violence and intimidation directed against known or suspected atheists and agnostics. +1 SUSPICION

4x9: The APF begins committing targeted atrocities against one religion in the name of the other. (Murdering buddhists and leaving rosaries strewn on their bodies, for example.)

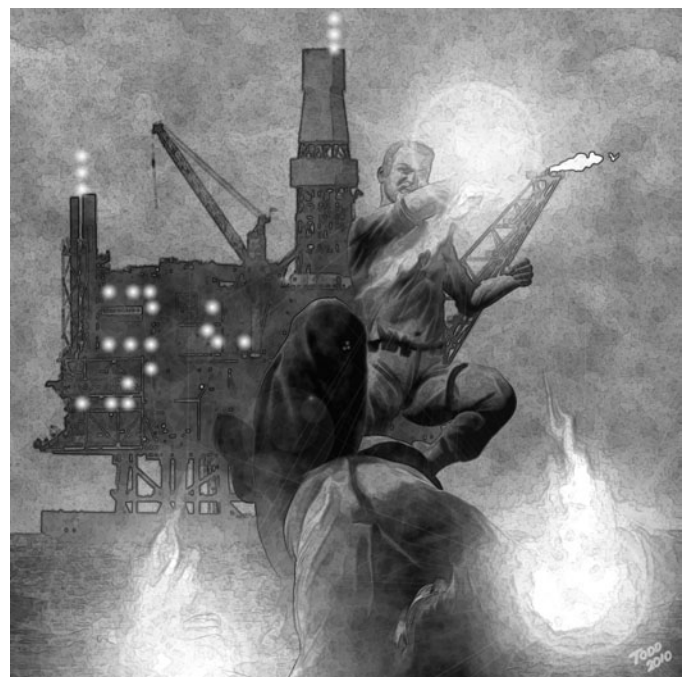
5x9: The APF attempts simultaneous gas attacks on the Vatican, the Dome of the Rock, the Wailing Wall and the Temple of the Reclining Buddha.

2x10: A corporation with resource interests in a developing nation tacitly supports the murder of indigenous people.

3x10: There's a huge media reveal with a Pulitzer-winning photo of a militia fighter shooting a pregnant woman. Coincidentally, he's wearing a cap with the corporation's logo. -1 WARFARE

4x10: There's global blowback against the corporation, starting with boycotts but escalating to violence against its property and employees. -1 ECONOMY

5x10: The government that carried out the murders attempts a complete pogrom against the indigenous people. If foreign metahumans intervene, the whole nation collapses into civil war and, eventually, anarchy.



Colonial Events

- 1: When the PCs' home nation agrees to accept political refugees from a despised rival, the rival country exports many of its worst criminals under bogus political beefs. Once in the PCs' town, they fall back on their old habits of vice, smuggling, racketeering and theft.
- 2: A diplomat with immunity from prosecution abuses his privileges to smuggle in drugs. Can the PCs uncover this? If they do, and even if they have proof, does that change anything? If they hold court in the streets by killing or brainwashing or otherwise 'dealing with' the smuggler, does it cause an international incident?
- 3: A self-aware supertech weapon escapes from captivity and flees to the PCs' area. Is it smart enough to hope for an existence beyond conflict, or is it just an incredibly cunning and dangerous predator?
- 4: A corporation wants metahuman help securing an offshore oil rig. They claim it's just for publicity, but are they hiding something? Terrorist threats or concerns about dangerously substandard construction, perhaps?
- 5: A foreign criminal in the PCs' city preys on members of his own ethnic group—a group who (rightly or wrongly) are afraid or reluctant to involve the police.
- 6: A distant investor is hiring criminals to destabilize neighborhoods in the PCs' city so that their property values drop and he can buy them up cheaply.
- 7: A government offers to hire the PCs to "repatriate" stolen historical treasures. The problem is, these treasures are on display in secure museums in the countries that stole them. Their provenance is murky enough that a lawsuit is dicey, so they'd rather just have the PCs steal them and then fall back on "possession is 9/10 of the law."
- 8: Someone new moves in near the PCs, and he's a nascent suicide bomber. (String this out over several sessions, perhaps... can the PCs inadvertently seduce him to 'decadent western values' like TV, rock music, and not killing scores of innocent people?)
- 9: The PCs meet a deposed noble whose country recently rose up and threw off the monarchy. Penniless, this sheltered blueblood is utterly ill equipped to get by in a middle (or lower) class world. (If needed, the noble may be a Tier Nine dark energy wielder.)
- 10: A teleporter in the third world keeps dumping refugees in the PCs' city. They're sad, desperate people with no papers, no status and no English.

Conflict (War+Technology)

2x1: A minority group agitates for secession. This could be anything from peaceful marches up through riots.	The main victims of both sides are noncombatants, whose plight keeps the UN forces in place doing little besides keeping the situation a stable morass instead of letting it blow up into a civilian massacres and violent uprisings. -1 WARFARE	2x5: A nation uses chemical warfare on a minority group.
3x1: The authorities crack down on the secessionists with excessive force.		3x5: The poisoned minority group gets a metahuman champion on their side.
4x1: The secessionists go underground and resort to terrorism.	2x3: A nation sponsors a major act of terrorism, or several lesser ones, while consistently denying its involvement.	4x5: More superhumans join up on both sides.
5x1: The conflict produces a new metahuman terrorist with hugely destructive powers.	3x3: Air power is deployed against the sponsor—cruise missiles or long-range bombers.	5x5: Chemical stockpiles go missing from the attacking nation. Were they destroyed, hidden or stolen?
2x2: A government engages in (or permits a native company to engage in) a blatant resource grab—slant drilling, overfishing in someone else's territorial waters, damming a shared river or the like. +1 ECONOMY	4x3: Small groups globally engage in "sympathy terror" to protest the air strikes.	2x6: An ethnic enclave claims kinship with a rival neighbor, thereby justifying a 'limited' war of 'liberation.'
3x2: UN sanctions are levied against the grabby government.	5x3: Both sides resort to major syntergenic warfare. -1 SUSPICION	3x6: Suspicion of the ethnic group spurs hate crimes outside the enclave, against moderates who were assimilating into the majority culture. This leads to broader clashes with the enclave.
4x2: The situation escalates to the point that one of the countries invades the other. A multinational "peacekeeping" force is hastily assembled and deployed to the region.	2x4: There's a flareup on a border that has been tense and built-up for a long time.	4x6: The entire border between the enclave, its disputed claim, and the original nation turns into a chaotic free-fire zone.
5x2: Quagmire. The invaded area can't throw off the occupying force, but the occupiers can't prevent frequent guerrilla attacks.	3x4: Other nations get involved in the border dispute through proxies.	5x6: Both sides begin making indiscriminate attacks on population centers. The nation whose land got absorbed starts rounding up the ethnics and putting them in camps.
	4x4: The proxy troops get slaughtered, escalating the situation to more direct involvement.	
	5x4: Both the border nations spur further proxy battles and regional conflicts.	

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| 2x7: Widespread riots over accusations of a rigged election. | 5x8: Orbital strikes launched against ground targets. +1 TECHNOLOGY | 2x10: A minor conflict between two large armed forces involves conventional weapons. (For example, a few battleships exchanging fire or planes clashing in disputed airspace.) |
| 3x7: Civil war. | 2x9: Using unknown means, an unknown group or actor destroys several military and research targets. -1 TECHNOLOGY | |
| 4x7: Opportunistic invasion by a neighbor. | | |
| 5x7: Mass graves discovered. International peacekeeping force deployed to both countries. | 3x9: Unconventional technologies are used to assassinate several political leaders. Conventional means are useless for detecting the source of the attacks. | 3x10: The conflict ripens with the employment of super-mercenaries on each side, along with native metahumans and a moderate-sized commitment of conventional weapons. |
| 2x8: A nation conducts ballistic missile tests. +1 TECHNOLOGY | 4x9: The same means are used to attack cities. | 4x10: A full scale war pulls in allies on both sides. |
| 3x8: With orbital capacity, the nation begins launching and testing suspected orbital weapons. | 5x9: The technologies' master is revealed with a blitzkrieg attack and invasion against a suitably softened enemy. | 5x10: Massive exchange of WMD. |
| 4x8: Orbital clash involving high-tech weapons and metahumans. | | |

Conflict Events

- 1: A onetime ally is brainwashed to attack the PCs. Can they restrain him nonfatally? If so, can they break his conditioning?
- 2: A raving schizophrenic acquires a machinegun and two clips of ammo. Tragedy ensues unless the PCs can avert it.
- 3: A syntergene is released causing hatred for a PC in one particular segment of society. What's the group, and what do they do about it? Who hates both the PC and that segment, or is the syntergineer neutral to the group but just feels they're easily led against the PC?
- 4: An impostor disguised as a PC (with or without duplicate powers?) commits an atrocity. Who would take this risk, or go this far, just for a frame?
- 5: A dangerous psycho (probably a metahuman) gets into a standoff with hostages and says he will only surrender to the PCs. (Perhaps he's already killed a cop disguised as one of the characters.) Is this because he trusts their ethics? Because he considers them the only equals to whom he can honorably give in? Is there a personal connection, making this a cry for help, or is it all a setup for an ambush?
- 6: A friend, ally or relative gets stuck in the middle of a foreign terrorism (or full-on revolution) clusterfuck. Can the PCs get there in time to make a difference? If they can, what's the fallout?
- 7: Some local mastermind is seeking WMD. His plan is to rig them to release or explode when his heart stops. (Yeah, he read Snow Crash.)



- 8: A badly injured veteran of a recent war moves in near the PCs and has trouble adjusting to civilian life and his new disabilities.
- 9: A conspiracy (or, if you prefer, "independent political action committee" or "ideological think tank") tries to hire or persuade the PCs to go overseas and provide deniable support to a coup d'etat. If the PCs are unwilling, how far are their would-be employers willing to go to persuade them? If they do it, what's the outcome? Do they get away clean or get blamed for the whole thing? Can they trust their bosses not to give them up if pressured?
- 10: Two high-tier metahumans get into a brawl in the PCs' stomping grounds. They're the kind with high potential for collateral damage, like Zipperneck (p. 210), Closterman (p. 235), Jarvis West (p. 203), Steelsuit Dowd (p. 206) or Amy Sykes (p. 177). Do the PCs pick a side and make an enemy? Can they protect the civilians and infrastructure of their home town?

Espionage (Suspicion + Economy)

2x1: A spy plane, piloted by a metahuman, crashes after flying over enemy airspace.	2x4: A prominent politician dies.	fiasco with no closure, millions spent and a number of criminal cases being dismissed, becoming mistrials, or being overturned on appeal.
3x1: The military mobilizes in pursuit of the spy pilot.	3x4: It turns out the politician was cunningly assassinated.	
4x1: The pilot is captured and the two nations involved get into a big "he said/she said" in the courts of diplomacy and public opinion. +1 WARFARE	4x4: The prime suspects for the murder are other politicians.	2x8: A nation claims to have landed a manned mission on Mars, without the aid of metahumans.
5x1: The metahuman is reported killed during an escape attempt, generating heavy political ill will.	5x4: Unless the PCs can solve the mystery, there's a huge political stink, possibly one that can hobble a national party for years.	3x8: Fraud is suspected and denied.
2x2: A phone company begins using data mining techniques on its customers.	2x5: A politician is targeted with accusations of sexual impropriety.	4x8: The "Mars landing" is revealed as a hoax, resulting in national humiliation. -1 TECHNOLOGY.
3x2: The phone company starts spying on its' parent company's competitors through its phone infrastructure.	3x5: Publicly, the politician is indignant, while privately he's furiously covering it up.	5x8: The humiliated nation is economically ravaged by outsiders who scent weakness and decide it's open season.
4x2: Phone company executives commit or arrange a murder to cover up their spying. +1 SUSPICION	4x5: There's a trial with high moral dudgeon on both sides.	2x9: An isolated pariah nation kidnaps citizens of a rival, in order to conduct psychological experiments.
5x2: The murders come to light and the entire multinational collapses.	5x5: One way or another, it all ends in a national humiliation.	3x9: The kidnappers deny everything, even in the face of mounting evidence.
2x3: When a corporation hires a known Hypercharmer, accusations of brain washing and Syntergenic Engineering start flying. (This also works with Hypermind.)	2x6: A new technology emerges, promising reduced ecological impact from an everyday activity.	4x9: Hypercharm is used to negotiate the prisoners' release.
3x3: Protests against the company turn ugly. The metahuman uses his powers against the protesters.	3x6: A concerted program of sabotage is applied to the new device, along with intimidation attempts against its creators. -1 TECHNOLOGY	5x9: When the pariah nation realizes the trick, the result is crazed suspicion, purges, and assassinations of enemies both real and imagined.
4x3: There are many lawsuits and countersuits, entangling many people. Metahumans are particularly targeted for torts and subpoenas, even when their connections to the events are distant or marginal.	4x6: As it's implemented, unexpected negative results emerge.	2x10: A small nation has a bloodless coup. The new junta nationalizes a number of industries.
5x3: A powerful organization (company or nation) starts a secret metahuman registry as a result of the fallout.	5x6: Now unpalatable to either support or oppose, the device sits at the center of a huge, angry controversy.	3x10: Multinational corporations sue over their nationalized assets.
	2x7: A politician flip-flops his vote on an issue that has a small but passionate single-issue constituency.	4x10: The junta refuses to recognize the authority of any court decisions against them, claiming that the corporation is using mind control and corruption to fix the outcome.
	3x7: Accusations of bribes and payoffs abound.	5x10: The corporation engages in economic warfare against the nation.
	4x7: Multiple people get blackmailed over the issue.	
	5x7: It all turns into a costly and lengthy public	

Espionage Events

- 1: Syntergenerically controlled normals try to help the PCs and are constantly getting underfoot or putting themselves in danger. Who released the syntergene programming their helpfulness? Was it a genuine attempt to help the PCs, or a cunningly deniable impediment?
- 2: A foreign nation attempts to blackmail and/or coerce the PCs into becoming its agents.
- 3: Nude photos of a PC show up, either in tabloids or (if the internet has been invented) on the internet. Are they fakes? Taken with a spycam? The fruit of a youthful indiscretion? (Note: Only have the pictures be legitimate if they were taken when the PC was unaware, or when the player is OK with there being dirty pictures in his characters' past.)
- 4: A PC gets a stalker. If the PC has a secret identity, the stalker is probably focussed on the non-meta persona.
- 5: If a PC has a hidden identity, someone comes forward claiming to be the "normal persona" of their superhero self. (To clarify, it would be like someone other than Bruce Wayne coming forward and saying, "Yeah, I'm the Batman. Any questions?")
- 6: If a PC has a secret identity, someone claims to have figured it out. They're wrong in the most disastrous way.
- 7: A prominent and controversial citizen of the PCs' hometown is kidnapped—or so it seems. In fact, the citizen is planning to fake his own death and disappear.
- 8: A PCs' assets are frozen as part of an "international investigation."
- 9: If a PC has a GMC love interest, the lover turns out to be a spy operating undercover.
- 10: A PC gets kidnapped.

Globalism (Technology+Ecology)

2x1: A new method of smuggling drugs is developed and employed.	developed nations, either through legal sponsorship of work visas, or smuggled.	keep a monopoly on it, then everyone—especially terrorists—get it.
3x1: Street prices for drugs drop, quality rises and violence over market share increases.	5x3: In the first world, the recruits are essentially slaves. Ironically, many of their conditions are still better than they were before they were recruited.	2x6: A small nation is in crisis. Journalists and aid workers who go there get kidnapped.
4x1: Conflicts over territory temporarily take precedence over profitability as drug gangs struggle to be the last one standing on a soaring profit margin. +1 ECONOMY	2x4: The most conservative and fundamentalist wing of a major religion backlashes against Hollywood for 'glamorizing sinful behavior.' A film depiction of their religion becomes the flashpoint for this conflict.	3x6: When ransoms are paid, the kidnappers become bolder.
5x1: The cartel conflicts become severe enough to destabilize a government—either of the drugs' nation of origin, or where they end up.	3x4: There are riots over the movie's release, and attacks are made on foreigners who were involved in its production.	4x6: The rising numbers of kidnappings results in a broad government crackdown that represses the kidnappers by punishing the entire economic underclass.
2x2: A fringe cult is scattered by a diaspora.	4x4: The stars of the offending film are kidnapped.	5x6: Enraged at being punished for the actions of a few criminals, the nation's poor laborers call a general strike. This prompts a coup d'etat which fails, but not before plunging the country into anarchy.
3x2: Individuals begin recruiting in the new places they end up. -1 SUSPICION	5x4: The kidnapped actors are brainwashed. They recant their actions on camera and then kill themselves.	2x7: A criminal organization makes a deal with agents of a legitimate government authority. The crooks get a free pass in return for their help against a third party. (This could be terrorists, a dictator or a rival band of criminals.)
4x2: With new members and a compelling narrative of persecution, the sect reconstitutes itself and establishes a headquarters in a thinly populated region. The compound there soon becomes ground zero for brainwashing new recruits.	2x5: A small nation's tyrant acquires a powerful new technology from an ambitious inventor.	3x7: The criminals abuse their privileges grievously, but the agency that let them get away with it has to keep protecting them or risk exposure. Naturally, the more the crooks do, the worse the eventual reveal would be.
5x2: The cult develops heavy political pull and legal protection in its new homeland.	3x5: Declaring the innovation too dangerous, a major regional power invades. -1 TECHNOLOGY	4x7: A law enforcement agency pursuing the criminals comes into conflict with the agency that's protecting them.
2x3: A first world cult sends missionaries to evangelize in the third world.	4x5: The invader bogs down in an insurgent resistance.	
3x3: They begin brainwashing the hungry and desperate after luring them in with promises of food and aid.	5x5: The technology escapes the tyrant's grasp, but he makes sure that if he can't	
4x3: The indoctrinated recruits are brought to		

5x7: The scandal comes out into the open and tells the government under whose aegis it occurred.	5x8: Declaring himself dictator for life, the supervillain begins menacing his neighbors and regional stability in general.	metahuman assassins and, in the ensuing chaos, the entire country becomes destabilized.
2x8: Farmers in developing nations are forced to compete in a global market and rapidly go broke.	2x9: A multinational corporation provides valuable services (money laundering, a skien of legitimacy, a façade to operate behind, sweetheart deals on infrastructure development) to a tyrannical dictator.	2x10: A small country is the site of a massive mineral strike.
3x8: The farmers turn to an ideologue supervillain for aid, which he cheerfully provides in return for legitimacy. +1 ECONOMY	3x9: The dictator screws over his corporate allies when payday rolls around.	3x10: Like a new gold rush, investors and speculators rush to the town. Corruption and repression follow in train.
4x8: Using his base among the rural poor, the supervillain becomes a politician and, in time, takes over the country. -1 SUSPICION	4x9: The company sabotages the nation's infrastructure.	4x10: After a regime change, the mines are nationalized and foreigners (guilty or not) are expelled.
	5x9: The dictator and the company both hire	5x10: The newly wealthy nation is governed by total paranoia and a persecution complex.

Global Events

- 1: A cyber-stalker from far away is obsessed with the PC. (If this comes up in the pre-internet days of actual privacy, roll again.)
- 2: People smugglers are taking advantage of circumstances near the PCs. (If they're near a border, it's porous. If they're far from the border, the smugglers are using fast trains or trucks to get their illegal immigrants there where detection and enforcement are lax.)
- 3: A PC with a job loses it when it's outsourced to a foreign nation.
- 4: A PC becomes, for whatever reason, famous in New Zealand. He's invited to an event there. Can he attend? Is it a setup? What will happen while he's gone?
- 5: An economic summit is being held in town, and the demonstrations could get ugly.
- 6: Killer robot attacks. All parts made in... China?!?
- 7: The region is plagued by giant, destructive plants. They hit the soil, burrow in (often damaging foundations or sidewalks), mature in mere hours and then explode in a spray of seeds that repeat the process. (The stalks and leaves left behind, however, make a delicious salad.) Who created these seeds, and for what purpose? Can they be stopped?
- 8: A foreign metahuman publicly mocks and challenges one of the PCs.
- 9: Someone living in the PCs' area is accused of being a fugitive war criminal. Is it true? If it is and the police won't act, do the PCs?
- 10: A scientist seeks out one of the PCs to study his powers. This could result in (1) power increases for the character, (2) duplication of his powers, (3) violations of the character's privacy or (4) countermeasures for the powers—effective ones.

Tribalism (War+Suspicion)

2x1: A prejudiced idea about a certain group, religion, subculture or ethnic class gains traction in the lunatic fringe.	2x2: A prejudicial practice that is technically illegal is, in practical terms, permitted. The laws prohibiting it are simply not enforced.	are carried out sporadically.
3x1: The prejudice finds a few supporters in the mainstream media, though it's mainly derided or dismissed.	3x2: Prejudice in the government becomes normalized. It is expected, and its absence comes as a surprise.	4x3: Hysteria and intolerance become core tenets of the ideology.
4x1: The propaganda is taken seriously in the mainstream. It may not be universally accepted, but it cannot be dismissed out of hand like "flat earth" theories.	4x2: Volubly unjust laws are passed, targeting an ostracized or marginalized group.	5x3: The ideology gains enough government authority that lives are ruined by tribunals, witch-hunts, smear campaigns and unfounded accusations.
5x1: A large mainstream group (like a national political party or a very large union) adopts and endorses the theory. +1 SUSPICION, -1 TECHNOLOGY	5x2: The government sanctions the exile of the group and/or the seizure of their property	2x4: A fringe religion claims it's being persecuted.
	2x3: Someone with an ideological axe to grind starts scare-mongering. +1 SUSPICION	3x4: The religion's lawsuits get it tabloid attention.
	3x3: Ideological murders, lynch-mob fashion,	4x4: There's a disaster at a religious enclave (in the fashion of Jonestown or Waco).

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 5x4: The religion engages in practical eschatology (in the fashion of Aum Shinrikyo in Japan) | eventually, a crackdown. | charts a course of economic warfare against the embargoing country or countries. |
| 2x5: A religious scandal is suppressed. | 5x6: There is open violence between the police, the repressed and bystanders on both sides. | 2x9: Rhetoric about economic injustice is more frequent in both the news and in common day conversation. |
| 3x5: The religious scandal explodes. | 2x7: A racist ideologue gains prominence. | 3x9: A splashy cross-class crime (either someone desperately poor against the ostentatious rich or vice versa) gives the issue a flashpoint. |
| 4x5: There's widespread religious humiliation, both among the faithful and their leaders. | 3x7: A racist group commits a major crime or a series of lesser felonies. | 4x9: Class warfare. |
| 5x5: Violent reprisals against those seen as responsible causes the faith to retreat into greater insular fundamentalism. | 4x7: There's a major rally, drawing racists and counter-demonstrators from far and wide. | 5x9: Land and property redistribution. |
| 2x6: There is a cultural grievance—feelings of repression among a loose social grouping such as Sikhs in Seattle or Buddhists in Dallas or hip-hop fans in Kansas. | 5x7: Race riots. +1 WARFARE, -1 ECONOMY | 2x10: Race-based violent episodes meet with government indifference. +1 WARFARE |
| 3x6: Members of the culture begin demonstrating to display outrage and agitate for redress. | 2x8: One nation places a trade embargo on another. -1 ECONOMY | 3x10: Race riots. |
| 4x6: The protests spur backlash and, | 3x8: The opprobrium over the embargo causes increased economic isolationism. | 4x10: Widespread civil disorder. |
| | 4x8: The embargoed nation experiences a famine as a result. | 5x10: Genocide. |
| | 5x8: A hyperbrain from the starving nation | |

Tribalistic Events

Tools, Not Rules

Don't think of the charts and events as rules. They aren't mandatory. If you have a plot planned, don't toss it in the waste bin because of some words on paper.

Instead, consider them tools. If you're stuck for a plot, roll one up. If you have an idea but it feels half-baked, roll up a random ingredient to give it some spice.

As given, the events are only isolated incidents, but you don't have to leave them detached. If it is at all possible to attach them back to something the PCs have previously done, do it! If you can take three disparate elements that came up and weave them into a single cause and effect situation, that's a lot stronger than having them remain isolated. It hangs together better, it's more sophisticated and (perhaps best of all) it implies multiple ways to get involved and multiple ways to progress through events.

But most importantly, remember that this is here to inspire you, not constrain you.

- Someone in the neighborhood is ranting and raving about his enemies. Is he paranoid or genuinely persecuted?
- A house of worship is vandalized. Who did it? Why? Is this an isolated act or the precursor of greater violence?
- A PC is personally denounced on ideological grounds. Who does it? Why? What does the PC do in response? If the PC has a secret identity, which 'self' is denounced? Does his other identity dare protect the maligned one?
- A GMC experiences an ideological conversion. Does this change how he interacts with the PCs? If it's an old enemy who has seen the light, do the PCs trust him? If it's a friend turning to a questionable belief, can the PCs persuade him to give it up?
- The media turns the public against the PCs. What are the grounds for the libel and/or slander? What's the motivation? Simple sensationalism, or something more sinister? Can the PCs repair the damage?
- Rumors fly about one of the PCs. Are they true? If so, who leaked? If not, how can the PC disprove them (assuming he even wants to)? If not disproved, what unexpected outcomes might result?
- A cult focussed around a superhuman (hero or villain) takes hostages and there's a big standoff. Who's the superhuman? What does the cult want? How do they respond to an unexpected response from their idol?
- An ideological purgative syntergene (that is, one that changes people's opinions against some particular belief or idea) is being spread in the PCs' home town. Who has it in for an idea? If it's something the PCs oppose, are they OK with low-key brainwashing being used against it? Can they find who's responsible and do anything about it?
- A GMC is victimized by ideo-extremists. How does this change the GMC's beliefs and behavior? Do the PCs take revenge?
- A student at a school brings guns, shoots, and holes himself up in a sniper perch with hostages. Can the PCs resolve the situation without more loss of life? If they have to kill a 13-year-old gunman to do it, are they willing to go that far?

The View From Above

The setting for Progenitor is both sweeping and detailed, along with complex and multi-tiered and... while these are good qualities, I hope, I know that following along may be a little tough, whether you go person to person (through character writeups) or in historical order. So before you get into the details, here's the executive summary.

Each year in the three-decade timeline gets a highlight (or several), with the really critical events in boldface.

A Short History

1967: Amanda Sykes absorbs 'dark energy' and unwittingly passes it on to her husband and daughter.

1968: Amanda reveals her powers and goes to fight in Vietnam, accidentally passing on dark energy to several highly-placed people in the US government and military, along with several others in the Vietcong and NVA. Those Vietnamese use their powers to bring the war to the US mainland.

1969: A metahuman named Cynthia Carls creates her own island, calling it Atlantis. Tina Shaw creates 'Shavians' or 'Shaw Monsters' as a side effect of her healing powers.

1970: Atlantis grows as a criminal named Jack Grimes, bearing the power to transform matter on a massive scale, claims to be 'Carlos Moses,' an Atlantean ambassador to the world. North Vietnam is effectively under the control of Nguyet Cam and the philosophy of Progressive Harmony.

1971: Atlantis factionalizes. The US passes laws against using dark energy to alter opinions and consciousness. The Vietnam war spills over into Laos, precipitating a massive battle called "The Laotian Götterdämmerung."

1972: After a Vietnamese metahuman kills the First Lady, the US threatens nuclear retaliation. With the election of Richard Nixon, and the show trial and execution of the Vietnamese assassin, tensions ease between the nations.

1973: Jack Grimes is forcibly deported and imprisoned in the US as a prelude to democratic Atlantean elections. The Irish Republican Army fields its own metahuman assault force, "Glóir."

1974: A terrorist group called "Remember November" murders Tina Shaw, the sole creator of Shaw Monsters.

1975: The USSR deploys troops armed with laser pistols. Amanda's daughter, Amy Sykes, attacks a millionaire she believes to be the driving force behind "Remember November." Abe Sykes organizes a group of metahumans for disaster relief. It eventually takes the name ID/EA.

1976: A US corporation begins building light-based computer chips. Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia form the "Indochinese Economic Gestalt" or IEG.

1977: The USSR deploys a satellite capable of redirecting sunlight.

1978: Åism begins taking action in Africa. The IEG goes to war against Indonesia, seizing Halmahera island.

1979: Amanda Sykes attempts to intervene during the Iranian hostage crisis, instead precipitating a bloodbath.

1980: The market for home computers grows massively. The IEG begins building a space elevator on Halmahera island.

1981: Provoked by the psychic disease Selar M., a group of metahumans attacks Amanda Sykes.

1982: The IEG completes its space elevator. It's self-sufficient in food, water, and oxygen, all of which helps its crew survive for years when its tethers to earth are destroyed in the war a year after its completion.

1983: A single low-powered metahuman provokes a conflict between the US and USSR. Though Amanda Sykes prevents any nuclear warheads from detonating, the combination of conventional weapons, bio-warfare, synergetic attacks and metahuman clashes produces a body count of roughly 1 billion people. It's known as "The Metapocalypse."

1984: The world rebuilds. The US president suspends the elections. Atlantis falls into anarchy. A synergetic attack on the US drastically increases the population of bisexual men.

1985: The US government organizes “Patriot Spring” by soliciting many metahumans to use their powers to rebuild.

1986: Violence escalates on Atlantis. Amanda Sykes shows signs of paranoia and megalomania.

1987: The middle east convulses with violence. A group of psychics attempts to form a ‘shared mindspace’ which instead produces mad, broken, psychic gang-entities.

1988: Amanda Sykes creates her own Atlantis-like island. The US attacks Iran.

1989: The Åites announce their intention to spread beyond Earth and colonize the stars.

1990: Jason Weeks offers the world a high-temperature superconductor and a device that permits Shavians to reproduce, and says he will release both if human-on-Shavian violence ceases for six months.

1991: The space elevator gets reconnected after its base was destroyed in 1983. Amanda gets in the middle between the US and occupied Iran. Shavians reproduce after another Hyperbrain figures out how to build the ‘brood chamber’ Weeks described in 1990. Airborne HIV breaks out in the Dakotas.

1992: Laos and the Åites both find treatments or inoculations against A-HIV. Atlantis becomes the frontline of the battle between Shavians and their human enemies.

1993: Amanda Sykes makes herself the most beautiful woman in the world, or possibly forces the global beauty standard to confirm to her. She also condemns Progressive Harmony.

1994: The IEG nations join with other Progressive Harmony countries to form the Global Philosophical Alliance or “GPhA.” GPhA forces head for Atlantis on a “peacekeeping” mission.

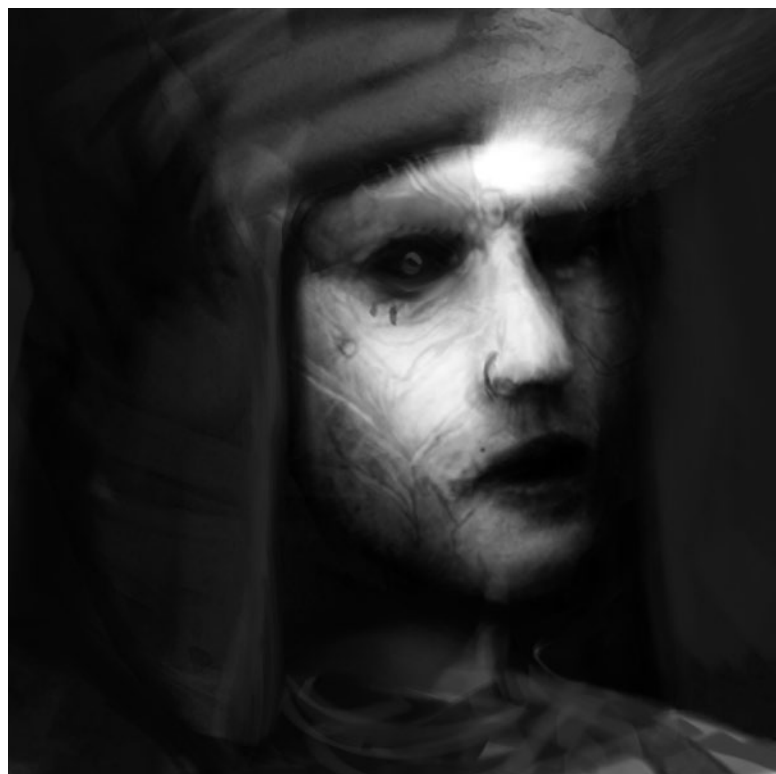
1995: Å is assassinated and Åism schisms. GPhA forces seize the Atlantean brood chamber.

1996: The massive Åite “world-ship” launches. China invades Taiwan. Violence flares on Atlantis against GPhA occupation. Amanda announces her intention to evacuate and sink the island if they can’t reach a consensus. After the brood chamber is destroyed, peace is doomed. In November, Amanda sinks Atlantis. Atlantean refugees flood the US, many settling in San Francisco.

1997: Amanda declares herself a living goddess and heir to the Åite church. A Vietnamese psychic encounters another intelligence during a deep space probe and is so horrified she kills herself.

1998: Defying a State Department request that she travel through official channels, Amanda teleports herself to San Francisco, transforms into a giant and declaims about her divinity. Jason Weeks, having foreseen her madness, deploys 35 metahumans against her and her dozen most powerful followers. The US military also gets involved in The Battle of San Francisco, which knocks Amanda into a coma. As soon as she’s comatose, all metahuman powers fail, throughout the world. When she recovers and powers return, Abe Sykes physically and psychically regresses her to the ‘self’ she was in 1970.

1999: Amanda Sykes leaves Earth. So do the Shavians.



Major Characters

The world-shaking powers of Progenitor are as likely to be nebbishy masterminds working behind the scenes as they are to be power-houses who can shift a billion tons of rock in an afternoon. But they offset one another. With one use of his powers, Jack Grimes can upend a global commodities market that Nguyet Cam has been manipulating for months. On the other hand, Cam is far more likely to predict Grimes' whims than Grimes is to even understand that Cam is at work.

Amanda Sykes is the first and most powerful metahuman, the Progenitor from whom all the others descend. While her common-sense Kansas upbringing spends about as much time getting her into trouble as it does keeping her out, it ultimately is just not sufficient to deal with being one ordinary woman with the power of a mighty nation.

Nguyet Cam goes from being a simple Vietnamese villager to being one of the smartest people alive in the course of one encounter with Amanda. Smarter than most and more ruthless than any, Cam believes that only she can re-forge the human race into their destiny among the stars. It is a process that only begins with the musical nightmare utopia of Progressive Harmony.

Jason Weeks is the kind and softhearted genius counterpart to Nguyet Cam. He believes the universe is too fundamentally chaotic to be predicted long-term, even by an intellect as staggering as his own. Rather than leash the people into obedience, Weeks tries to encourage them to pursue their own best interests. It's emblematic that while Nguyet Cam takes over a country, Jason Weeks forms a school.

Tina Shaw is just a little girl who wants to make sick people better. Unfortunately, her understanding of disease means that when she forces it out of someone, it takes the form of a small (usually about 12-24 inches high), unique, hideous homunculus. These creatures, eventually called "Shaw monsters" or "Shavians" become a flashpoint for the issue of consciousness in the eyes of the law. The fact that they're alien in mindset, difficult to harm, and armed with dark energy powers complicates the discussion tremendously.

Cynthia Carls is a dreamer who makes Jason Weeks look steeped in realpolitik. But given that she can form a thousand tons of matter into any shape she wants, in seconds, her dreams have more weight than many politician's decrees. Dissatisfied with America's society, she creates her own island in the Atlantic ocean, calls it "Atlantis" and declares a do-over.

Jack Grimes is a cynical, ruthless and very smart criminal. He doesn't like killing, but he'll do it without much dithering and without any regret. When he gains the power to permanently transform twelve million tons of matter into any chemical or compound her wants, he sees no reason to stop short of total power, comfort, luxury and authority over some island paradise. Cynthia's looks ripe for the picking.

Å has a mystic vision encompassing the origin of all the metahuman powers and shares it in the form of a religion. While he has the voice of a prophet and power over the earth and sky, it's perhaps more important that he can cure psychological confusion with a touch. More crucial than that in his plans is his ability to choose when he shares his powers and control what powers his descendants develop.

We Have Taken Liberties With History

Obviously, there was no superpowered farmwife zipping around Vietnam and derailing the course of a traditional quagmire. However, there are some familiar names in this document—famed leaders whose position in history allows us to play "what if" games with their personalities and fates in a world of mysterious cosmic energies. Names of deceased politicians—Ho Chi Minh, J. Edgar Hoover and the like—are unaltered because of their positions as conduits of history.

Other characters in this and other chapters are based on people who aren't so prominent in history books. Some famous criminals from the FBI's Most Wanted list become high-tier characters. While the histories of these criminals have been used for inspiration, their names have been changed. In some cases, there is doubt from some quarters over their guilt or innocence of accused crimes. Many of them are (or may be) still alive. And finally, many of them have left surviving victims. Rather than get entangled with charges of disrespect to either the falsely jailed or those killed by the quite properly jailed, I'm changing names and sitting on the fence.

A large, light gray, stylized number '2' serves as a background for the page. It is positioned on the right side, with its top loop extending towards the top right and its base extending towards the bottom right.

CHAPTER TWO: THESE CHANGING TIMES

Throughout the text there are sections of two side-by-side timelines. One is for events that occurred in actual history and one for the events in the Progenitor setting. This first, and longest section of the timeline goes up to 1982. Up to that point, Progenitor events magnify historical trends. But 1983 is the point at which the influence of dark energy on human affairs simply grows too great. Instead of changing the normal course of unpowered humanity, it completely supplants it. 1983 is when events go off the rails

Hopefully, something in this history (either real or alternate) grabs you as an excellent point to start your game and set your characters meddling. To that effect, the events listed in the real history pages are emphatically not meant to reflect any judgment of “the most important events.” There’s a heavy slant towards disasters because that’s something that might interest a lot of different groups. There’s an emphasis on the US above other nations for very much the same reason: That’s where a lot of gamers are.

Moreover, these events are presented in a compact and truncated fashion. This list won’t let you understand the events on it to any meaningful degree, and that’s not its intent. If you know what these things are or mean, this is an ordering of them to place them in relation to one another. If you don’t know what a particular event is, but it sounds interesting, by all means look it up. You don’t need exhaustive research for a game (though more generally yields better results) and you don’t even need accuracy because it’s an alternate history game. You only need enough to interest yourself and your players.

If an event doesn’t sound interesting and you don’t know what it is? Probably safe to ignore, then. In real history, these things are important to a lot of people, but for one group’s game, it’s okay to have a different focus. You have my permission.

Warfare Zero in 1968?!?

The global change metrics are listed at the beginning of each year, in each of the timelines. In 1968, they’re all set at zero. This isn’t because the year had nothing going on that impacted technology or the world economy, but rather as a convenience for following the changes wrought by dark energy (or the march of time). The metrics are zero only because that’s the first year on the line.

SUSPICION	0	TECHNOLOGY	0	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	0
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Jan 21 - Vietnam: The Battle of Khe Sanh.	Mar 31 - LBJ declares that he will not seek re-election.	Aug 5 - Nixon nominated.
Jan 30 - Vietnam: The Tet Offensive begins.	Apr 2 - The movie “2001: A Space Odyssey” premiers	Aug 20 - The USSR invades Czechoslovakia.
February (throughout) - Civil rights demonstrations in the Carolinas.	Apr 4 - MLK shot dead.	Aug 24 - France detonates its first atom bomb.
Feb 1 - Vietnam: Eddie Adams’ pictures of an ARVN officer executing one of the Vietcong is published.	Apr 6 - Shootout between Black Panthers and police in Oakland, CA.	Sep 7 - First Hot Wheels cars released.
Feb 6-18 - Winter Olympics in Grenoble, France.	Apr 11 - LBJ signs the 1968 Civil Rights Act into law.	Sep 24 - “60 Minutes” premiers on ABC.
Feb 11 - Armies clash on the Jordan/Israel border.	Apr 23 - First human heart transplant.	Oct 3 - Revolution in Peru.
Feb 24 - Vietnam: Tet Offensive ends.	Apr 23-30 - Protesters against the Vietnam War seize the administration building at Columbia College.	Oct 5 - The Troubles: “The Troubles” begin in Northern Ireland.
Feb 24 - Kidnapper Ruth Eisemann Shier becomes the first woman on the FBI’s most wanted list.	May 14 - The Beatles form Apple Records.	Oct 11 - Apollo 7 launched.
Mar 12 - Johnson edges out Eugene McCarthy in Democratic primary in New Hampshire.	Jun 3 - Andy Warhol survives being shot by Valerie Solanas.	Oct 11 - Coup d’etat in Panama.
Mar 16 - Vietnam: My Lai massacre.	Jun 5 - Sirhan Sirhan shoots and kills RFK.	Oct 12-27 - Summer Olympics in Mexico City.
Mar 16 - RFK enters the presidential race.	Jun 8 - James Earl Ray arrested for killing MLK.	Oct 31 - Vietnam: LBJ halts all bombing of Vietnam.
Mar 21 - Black Power disturbances at Howard University.	Jul 1 - Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty signed.	Nov 5 - Nixon wins the election.
	Jul 17 - Ba’ath party takes over Iraq in bloodless coup.	Nov 11 - Vietnam: The US bombs Laos to disrupt the Ho Chi Minh trail.
	Jul 25 - The pope condemns birth control.	Nov 14 - Yale begins admitting women.
		Nov 22 - The Beatles release “the White Album.”
		Dec 24 - Apollo 8 orbits the moon.

1968—Progenitor

SUSPICION	0	TECHNOLOGY	0	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	0
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February

Sykes Family: After seeing footage of Tet on television, Amanda Sykes (p. 159) reveals her capabilities to Sergeant Christopher Marshall (p. 171), the local Army recruiter. He rapidly brings her to the attention of General Andrew Colt (p. 168). Colt introduces her to the president, Lyndon Baines Johnson (p. 169). Although they don’t know it, all three men receive dark energies of their own from Amanda as she demonstrates her powers on them. At this point, Abe and Amy Sykes are both exposed, though only Abe suspects his powers.

Hoover: Johnson develops massive persuasion powers, but they’re subtle enough that he uses them without realizing it. He rapidly spreads dark energy to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover (p. 189), his secretary Brenda Harkness (p. 206), a staffer named Bryson Maas-Thierry (p. 206), a few other aides, and some bystanders at public events.

The Four-Color Commencement

In 1968-1983, as mentioned earlier, the changes are big and visible, but they aren’t yet terribly deep. If something killed the Progenitor in 1980, human history would gradually change back to its original course. It shifts to Red Four when Amanda attacks Vietnam. It goes to Red Three between 1969-70, between the raising of Atlantis and the growth of Progressive Harmony. It stays at that level until the Metapocalypse of 1983.

In the early metahuman era, Gold Two is the presumption. People are fascinated and afraid in some proportion, but they don’t hold them to higher or lower levels than their other prejudices. This only starts to erode in the 1990s, when the population of metahumans is much higher... and the population of normal people a bit lower.

Blue Three hits early in 1969, and that’s where the weirdness stays until the 1980s and even a bit beyond. It starts at Black Three and hovers there for most of the timeline. The only exceptions might be the Progressive Harmony nations, which purport to be Black Four while, at the highest levels, they’re at best Black Two.

Sykes Family, Atlantis, Shavians, Jason Weeks: Left behind in Kansas, Abe Sykes (p. 173) asks friends to watch his daughter while he gets to Washington DC on his own. Frustrated with the separation from his wife, Abe centers himself by focussing on the less fortunate. He goes into a hospital and empties it of its most helpless cases. The first nine patients healed all become empowered. They are LeRoi Mathers (p. 207), Cynthia Carls (p. 214), Jarvis West (p. 203), Lin Wen (p. 216), Deionne Bright (p. 192), Tina Shaw (p. 205), Boris Mizurski (p. 217), Barbara French (p. 218) and Jason Weeks (p. 195). In this one night, Abe Sykes creates all of his direct power descendants.

March

Hoover, the Dream: In the wake of disturbances in the Carolinas, J. Edgar Hoover discovers his powers. By using a form of telepathy on Martin Luther King Jr. (p. 229), Hoover passes on dark energy to one of the men he fears and suspects most in the world. Unaware that he is contagious, Hoover rapidly moves on to delve into the criminal minds of revolutionary Howard March (p. 225), kidnapper Judith Weissman (p. 232) and fugitive cop James Closterman (p. 235). A monstrous psychopath named Tyler Ford (p. 228), however, traumatizes the FBI man into temporarily abandoning his powers.

Armed with Hypercharm, Johnson buries Eugene McCarthy in the primaries—and in the process, transforms both George McGovern and Robert Kennedy (described briefly on page 189) into metahumans. They are the last two people he infects.

Sykes Family: Amanda Sykes begins fighting in Vietnam.

Jarvis West begins abusing his powers, though initially in minor ways.

April

The Dream: Three days after being shot by James Earl Ray, MLK appears briefly to his wife and children. While they all see him, he seems unable to speak and they cannot touch him. Nevertheless, they are left with a great sense of comfort and love.

Sykes Family: Blurry photos of Amanda are published. The military declines to comment on rumors of a “superhero” fighting in Vietnam until blurry footage of Amanda is televised. After that they admit to using “metahuman soldiers.” Amanda spares the life of a young Vietcong soldier who eventually becomes the dreaded Sét (p. 182).

Sykes Family, ProgHarm: Villager Nguyet Cam (p. 164) survives an encounter with Amanda Sykes when Amanda witnesses US soldiers killing unarmed villagers in the hamlet of My Lai. Temporarily unhinged, Amanda kills the soldiers, burns the bodies and flees. Moreover, she erases her own memories of the events. Her involvement at My Lai is not initially known and is chalked up to particularly thorough enemy action. Meanwhile, Cam’s rapidly expanding intellect is laying the foundations for “Progressive Harmony” or “ProgHarm,” her tool for total social control at a national level.

May

General Colt begins to accept that his powers are real, and starts to apply them to the war. In short order, Sergeant Marshall does the same.

Sykes Family: Amanda’s presence has a profound psychological impact on both Vietnams. But Sét is beginning to apply his abilities as well, to devastating effect. Dac Kien Truc (p. 183) surrenders to Amanda, is empowered, and escapes American captivity the very next day. Ngoc Vo (p. 186) is spared during Amanda’s raid on Hanoi, and soon learns of her own abilities.

US Culture

The big films of 1968 include *The Graduate*, *In the Heat of the Night*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?* Some of the year’s hit songs are Otis Redding’s “Sittin’ on the Dock of the Bay,” “Dance to the Music” by Sly and the Family Stone, “Mony Mony” by Tommy James and the Shondells, Mason Williams’ “Classical Gas” and Aretha Franklin’s “Chain of Fools.”



Campaign Framework: Fourth Tier, Last Chance

Tina Shaw (p. 205) heals people, and as early as 1968 her parents could be checking the phone books, seeking therapy groups for the terminally ill. How do PCs who were trying to make their peace with an inevitable end deal with a second lease on life—life plus superpowers?

Sét, still learning the parameters of his powers, leaves the only survivors of his military career. They are Achille Riitzi (p. 207), Joe Smith (p. 220), Henry Dowd (p. 206), Ian Kraus (p. 222) and Hector Faran (p. 223). Dac Kien grows and grows.

June

ProgHarm: By this time, Nguyet Cam has gotten access to the NVA leader General Giap. She has also created her Progress Cadre of Mai Thi Chung (p. 356), Duc Van Ho (p. 357), An Toán Do (p. 353), Bao Verong (p. 355), Linh Thi Le (p. 353), Dinh Quang Phung (p. 356), Tuan Cong Thach (353) and Tuyet Thi Dang (p. 356). Between Cam's genius and the might of the Progress Cadre, even Colt's clairvoyance and telepathy can't lead US troops to a decisive victory. (Colt does empower Bich Thi Nguyen, as described on page 207, however.) Indeed, the only thing that keeps Sét from decimating American forces pushing north from Khe Sahn is the unexpected arrival of 300,000 of Chris Marshall's turf warriors marching out of the Gulf of Tonkin, requiring Cam to pull Sét and her other forces back to prevent a tireless march to Hanoi. General Colt eventually identifies Sét and nearly kills him with a psychic attack. Nearly.

Hoover: Lin Wen clashes with Jarvis West in Boston. Shortly thereafter, Hoover reluctantly scans West and attempts to apprehend him. It's close, but West escapes.

Jason Weeks, Sykes Family: Jason Weeks gets back in touch with Abe Sykes to thank him and to discuss the ethical use of superpowers in a violent world.

July

Jason Weeks: Jason Weeks, Lin Wen and Barbara French all try to stop Jarvis West in New York City, but are stymied not only by his psychic armor, but by his casual willingness to send dozens of people marching off bridges, onto third rails, or in front of busses to distract them. They are, however, able to make him flee.

August

Ngoc Vo and Sét teleport into the US and destroy an empty munitions factory and rail yard full of newly-built jeeps. No citizens are harmed. Sét is once again psychically attacked and, once again, survives. NVA and Vietcong forces on the other side of the world take strictly defensive positions.

President Johnson convinces the Soviet ambassador that it's urgently necessary for the USSR to withdraw from Czechoslovakia, but the unwillingness of Soviet leaders to speak to him face to face hinders his ability to persuade them.

September

ProgHarm: Johnson negotiates with emissaries from North Vietnam, but protected by Duc Van Ho and their own language barrier, they prove shockingly difficult for him to sway.

October

ProgHarm: Ngoc Vo continues to teleport Vietnamese metahumans into the US to attack military materiel. Boats and planes are destroyed on their assembly lines and, when the attacks are covered up by the factory owners, Vo teleports Monument to St. Louis where he crumples hand prints into the Gateway Arch in front of hundreds or thousands of screaming witnesses. Amazingly, there are no fatalities, due in part to Ngoc's habit of scanning for people in danger and teleporting them to safety. In Vietnam, there are no such niceties as Amanda and the American metahumans clash repeatedly with the Progress Cadre. Finally, at the end of the month, Johnson calls off all bombing.

November

Lyndon Baines Johnson is elected for the second time, beginning a third term in office. Soon after the election, he sends Amanda to attack the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos.

December

Sirhan Sirhan attempts to kill Lyndon Johnson, but is unable to make himself pull the trigger until Johnson looks him in the eye and says, “You should shoot yourself instead. Go die now, fellah.”

On the last day of the year, Bich Thi Nguen slips across the border into the USSR.

1969—Our History

SUSPICION 0 TECHNOLOGY 1 ECONOMY 0 WARFARE 1

Jan 1 - Rupert Murdoch purchases British Newspaper “The News of the World.”	May 10 - Vietnam: The battle of Hamburger Hill.	Aug 15 - 18 - Woodstock Music Festival in Bethal, New York.
Jan 1-5 - The Troubles: Protest and ugliness increases in Northern Ireland.	May 20 - Vietnam: The National Guard sprays a skin irritant on protesters in California.	Aug 17 - Hurricane Camille hits Mississippi, killing 248 people.
Jan 5 - The USSR launches a Venus probe.	May 26-Jun 2 - John Lennon and Yoko Ono hold their “bed in” for peace.	Sep 1 - Gadaffi seizes power in Libya.
Jan 12 - Led Zeppelin I released.	Jun 1 - John Lennon records “Give Peace a Chance.”	Sep 5 - Vietnam: The My Lai trial begins.
Jan 20 - Richard Nixon is sworn in as president.	Jun 8 - Vietnam: Nixon and Van Thien meet on Midway island.	Sep 24 - Vietnam: The Chicago 8 trial begins.
Jan 30 - The Beatles’ farewell performance.	Jun 18-22 - The Weathermen become the most prominent faction using the name SDS.	Sep 26 - “Abbey Road” released.
Feb 4 - Yassir Arafat, in the US, is elected president of the PLO.	Jun 28 - Stonewall riots in New York City.	Oct 5 - “Monty Python’s Flying Circus” debuts.
Feb 9 - The first 747 flies.	July 8 - Vietnam: The first troops are withdrawn from Vietnam.	Oct 9-12 - Vietnam: Days of Rage in Chicago.
Feb 24 - NASA launches the Mariner 6 probe to Mars.	July 18 - Edward Kennedy’s car goes off a bridge from Chappaquiddick island.	Oct 15 - Vietnam: Massive antiwar protests.
Mar 2 - Soviet and Chinese forces clash at Ussuri.	July 20 - Neil Armstrong is the first human to step on the moon.	Oct 31 - Wal-Mart incorporates.
Mar 3 - Sirhan Sirhan confesses to killing RFK.	July 30 - Vietnam: Nixon visits Vietnam.	Nov 3 - Richard Nixon makes an appeal to the Silent Majority.
Mar 3 - Apollo 9 launches.	Aug 4 - Secret Kissinger peace talks in Paris.	Nov 10 - “Sesame Street” premieres.
Mar 10 - James Earl Ray pleads guilty to killing MLK (only to later recant).	Aug 9 - The Manson Family murders Sharon Tate.	Nov 12 - Seymour Hersh breaks the My Lai story.
Mar 17 - Golda Meir elected PM of Israel.	Aug 12 - The Troubles: Three day riot in Northern Ireland.	Nov 17 - Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty I talks begin.
Mar 18 - Secret bombing runs in Cambodia begin.	Aug 13 - Border clashes between the USSR and China.	Dec 1 - Vietnam: The lottery draft begins.
Apr 4 - First temporary artificial heart implanted.		Dec 4 - Black Panther leader Fred Hampton is shot dead in his sleep by Chicago police.
Apr 9 - SDS seizes the Harvard University administration building.		Dec 6 - The Altamont Free concert ends with violence and death.

1969

US Culture

Oscar winners in 1969 include Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice, Midnight Cowboy, True Grit, Goodbye Mr. Chips and Easy Rider.

The radio plays “Get Back” from the Beatles, the Rolling Stones’ “Honky Tonk Woman,” “Sugar Sugar” by the Archies, Elvis Presley’s “Suspicious Minds,” and “Cloud 9” by the Temptations.

1969—Progenitor

SUSPICION 0

TECHNOLOGY 1

ECONOMY 0

WARFARE 1

January

Vietnam: January is surprisingly quiet and peaceful, except for the ongoing metahuman battles in Vietnam. Even those are short and hesitant. The domestic attacks on the US are temporarily halted, but Ngoc Vo (p. 186) is teleporting Nguyet Cam (p. 164) into the country so that Cam can brainwash citizens.

February

Sykes Family: Jack Grimes (p. 213) and Alphonse “Zipperneck” Russo (p. 210), along with three associates, attempt to kidnap Amy Sykes (p. 177). Only Grimes and Russo survive, but they get exposed to dark energy.

March

President Johnson goes on a speaking tour to tighten his faltering grip on the American population.

Atlantis: Cynthia Carls (p. 214) walks out into the Atlantic ocean and drags up matter from the ocean floor, forming the island of Atlantis. Once she has proven to herself that she can do it, she leaves the island and returns to the US, quietly looking for a few trustworthy people to help her found her Utopia.

April

Vietnam: Nguet Cam’s brainwashed minions carry out a string of bombings and suicide attacks, all timed simultaneously.

Jarvis West (p. 203) heads to Mexico.

Jack Grimes resists arrest.

May

Jason Weeks: Weeks (p. 195) releases Inoculus (p. 320). It primarily causes confusion and anger, as people find themselves concerned about the president but unsure exactly why.

Zipperneck Russo robs a bank.

Sixteen survivors of Jarvis West’s antics form “Metavictims Advocacy and Support.”

Vietnam: Nguyet Cam does what she can to increase anti-American sentiment in Vietnam and its neighbors. She can do quite a bit.

Atlantis: Cynthia Carls returns to her island, this time on a boat with supplies and about twenty carefully chosen recruits.

June

Sykes Family, The Dream, Jason Weeks: A team of conventional assassins sent to take down Jason Weeks is stopped by MLK, Amy Sykes, and her father Abe.

Vietnam: Nguyet Cam meddles with politics in Laos, attempting to destabilize its regime.

July

Jason Weeks: His synergetic book *Inoculus* is translated and released in Vietnam.

Atlantis: Carls' followers return to the US to—quietly and selectively—recruit more Atlanteans.

Shavians: The first Shaw Monster appears on TV, astonishing and disgusting millions of Americans. At this point, Tina Shaw has only used her power a dozen times or so.

August

Hoover, Vietnam: J. Edgar Hoover (p. 189) scans Nguyet Cam (p. 164) successfully and fails to return to his normal form for eight days, during which this “second Cam” does tremendous damage to the FBI and gathers a great deal of damning information about US politicians. Not all of it makes it back to the original Nguyet (who remained unaware what Hoover-as-Cam was doing on her behalf) but there's enough. The information includes his dossier on the My Lai episode.

Zipperneck jacks an armored car.

September

Vietnam, Jason Weeks: Weeks' synergene *Fog in the Swamps of Free Will* is initially released in Vietnamese. American agents Joe Smith (p. 220), Achille Riitzi (p. 207) and Hector Faran (p. 223) make sure to get copies to as many dark-energized Vietnamese as they can. While the Progress Cadre (p. 353) resists it with the aid of Duc Van Ho (p. 357), Cam's tier-mates Vo (p. 186), Truc (p. 183) and Thientong (p. 182) remain outside Duc's psychic linkage and realize how Cam has been molding their actions and opinions. Ky Thientong accepts it, but Vo and Truc flee to Australia.

In return for a hefty payoff from the Mexican government, Jarvis West (p. 203) agrees to leave the country. He heads to Brazil.

Atlantis: About a hundred people, including two fugitives from justice, arrive on Atlantis to attempt urban planning and development. They bring with them supplies for the winter, along with generators and gasoline.

October

A drunken Ngoc Vo teleports tons and tons of antarctic ice into the Australian desert in an attempt to green it. It doesn't work.

Vietnam: Nguyet Cam releases a refutation of *Inoculus* in both English and Vietnamese.

Atlantis: Early in the month, Barb French (p. 218) makes it to Atlantis, but her presence there is sufficiently alarming to established governments that warships from the US and Great Britain—already watching the area—blockade the island. Whenever the ships attempt to land, the ground rises alarmingly beneath their hulls and streams of lava erupt, hissing, to arc over their bows.

November

Jason Weeks, The Dream: Johnson attempts to meet with world leaders, including those of Russia and China, to draft a comprehensive plan for dealing with dark energy. The conference is successfully



disrupted by Closterman, Grimes, Bright and MLK. (Weeks, while not present, contributes his insights to their plans.)

Shavians: Tina Shaw (aged 13 and a half at this point) decides that the benefits of healing terminal illness outweigh the risks of creating Shaw Monsters.

December

Atlantis: Zipperneck robs Fort Knox, flies over the naval blockade to Atlantis, knocks a couple airplanes out of the sky when they try to intercept him and, upon landing, gets into a loud argument with Cynthia Carls. When this escalates to violence, Russo fights Carls and Barbara French to a stalemate. Cursing them both, he flees straight up (knocking a British plane out of his way during his ascent) and hurtles the Fort Knox gold into space.

1970

1970—Our History

SUSPICION	0	TECHNOLOGY	1	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	1
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Jan 5 - First episode of "All My Children" airs.	May 8 - Vietnam: Union members clash with protesters in New York City.	Oct 4 - Singer Janis Joplin dies.
Jan 5 - Earthquake in Yunan, China, kills 15,600+.	May 9 - Vietnam: 100,000 demonstrate against the war in DC.	Oct 5 - James Cross kidnapped in Canada, part of Quebec's October Crisis.
Feb 13 - Black Sabbath's self-titled first album is released.	May 14 - Ulrike Meinhoff helps Andreas Baader escape from prison.	Oct 8 - Vietnam: Vietnamese in Paris reject peace proposal.
Feb 18 - The Chicago Seven are found not guilty of conspiracy to incite a riot, but five are found guilty of crossing state lines to incite a riot.	May 31 - The Ancash earthquake kills 47,000 in Peru.	Oct 9 - Khmer Republic proclaimed in Cambodia.
Mar 5 - The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty goes into effect.	Jun 1 - The USSR launches Soyuz I.	Oct 30 - Vietnam: A monsoon pauses the war and leaves 200,000 people homeless.
Mar 6 - A cell of Weathermen accidentally blow themselves up.	Jun 10 - The voting age drops to 18 in the USA.	Nov 3 - Democrats take majority control of Congress.
Mar 17 - Vietnam: Fourteen officers charged in the My Lai coverup.	Jun 28 - Vietnam: The US withdraws from Cambodia.	Nov 4-10 Vietnam: The policy of 'Vietnamization' appears to decrease US casualties.
Mar 31 - Japan Air flight 351 is hijacked.	Aug 7 - Judge Harold Haley is kidnapped and murdered.	Nov 13 - Cyclone kills 500,000 in East Pakistan.
Apr 11-13 - The Apollo 13 disaster and rescue.	Aug 26 - Women protest for equality in NYC.	Nov 25 - Japanese author Yuko Mishima attempts a right-wing uprising and kills himself when it fails.
Apr 24 - China launches its first satellite.	Sep 1 - Assassination attempt on the king of Jordan.	Nov 27 - Assassination attempt on Pope Paul VI.
Apr 29 - Vietnam: The US enters Cambodia looking for Vietcong.	Sep 3-6 - Israeli forces clash with Palestinians.	Dec 3 - James Cross is swapped for prisoners.
May 1 - Huge demonstrations at the trial of the New Haven Nine.	Sep 6 - Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine hijacks four planes.	Dec 7 - The Swiss ambassador to Brazil is kidnapped.
May 4 - Vietnam: National Guard troops fire into a crowd at Kent State, killing four.	Sept 15-30 - Syria fights Jordan.	Dec 12 - A landslide in Columbia kills 200.
	Sept 29 - US Congress approves of weapon sales to Israel.	
	Sept 29 - Baader-Meinhoff gang robs three banks.	

US Culture

Patton is the big winner at the Oscars, while Airport tops the box office. Other noteworthy films include M*A*S*H, Love Story, The Aristocats, and Tora! Tora! Tora!

The deaths of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin sadden music fans worldwide, but the music industry continues to produce songs like "Bridge Over Troubled Water" by Simon & Garfunkel, "Close to You" by the Carpenters, "War" by Edwin Starr, Rare Earth's "Get Ready," "Green Eyed Lady" by Sugarloaf and "Woodstock" by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.

1970—Progenitor

SUSPICION 0

TECHNOLOGY 1

ECONOMY 0

WARFARE 2

January

Atlantis: Jack Grimes (p. 213), claiming to be an “Atlantean Ambassador” named Carlos Moses, negotiates with the US government. He agrees to replace the gold in Fort Knox. In return, he’s guaranteed safe conduct to Atlantis; permission for shipments of food and other essential supplies to pass the blockade; and permission for anyone who wants to leave Atlantis to return to their nation of birth, with the understanding that any claims of Atlantean citizenship will not be honored.

February

Vietnam, Hoover: Johnson (p. 169) and Hoover (p. 189) begin actively spying on Nguyet Cam (p. 164) with the assistance of General Colt (p. 168).

Jason Weeks: Weeks unexpectedly flees the US.

Howard March (p. 225) publicly decries Johnson’s mind control and attempts to assassinate the president. He’s foiled by Henry Dowd (p. 206) and Boris Mizurski (p. 217), both heavily conditioned by President Johnson.

Atlantis: Grimes quickly becomes a hero to many of the residents for his ability to generate food and fuel as needed. Knowledge of his previous connection to Zipperneck (p. 210) and his criminal record might heavily reduce their admiration, but Atlantis remains ignorant.

March

Atlantis: Ngoc Vo (p. 186) arrives in Atlantis, requests citizenship, and begins teleporting people and supplies back and forth between Atlantis, Europe, South America and Australia. Grimes, perceiving her as a threat to his popularity, begins spreading rumors and subtly turning people against her. He points out that a North Vietnamese telepath and teleporter was probably heavily involved in the deep strikes of 1968. What, then (he asks) is she doing in Atlantis?

Sykes Family: The military opens an investigation into My Lai as the fog of war starts to clear and it seems likely that she was there when the soldiers died. Abe (p. 173) confronts Judith Weissman (p. 232) in Honduras.

James Closterman (p. 235) secretly accepts a \$500,000 retainer from Metavictims Advocacy and Support but fails to kill Jarvis West (p. 203). Their battle produces immense collateral damage of property and some civilian injuries and deaths. West flees, leaving behind the small fortune he’d amassed. Closterman does not receive the rest of his payment, and the executives at the top levels of the group his sponsoring organization are bitterly divided over the death toll.

April

Vietnam: Under heavy pressure from President Johnson, Cambodia declares war on North Vietnam and attempts to eject the NVA troops moving within its borders. Without Ngoc Vo, precision strikes inside the US are difficult. While Sét (p. 182) is capable of shelling the US with his power, he can only target it randomly unless he sees a location on live TV. One hundred and four Americans die when he’s able target Chicago, and later historians believe the toll could have been much higher had he been permitted to strike full strength. The US stops all live broadcasts, reducing Sét to random launches that, often as not, strike corn or wheat fields. Despite the promise of pinpoint accuracy for his strikes in America, Sét refuses to become part of Duc Van Ho’s (p. 357) psychic gestalt. Weighing the odds of getting herself

Campaign Framework: So No Shit, There I Was...

Superpowers spread the most rapidly in two loci at the beginning: The US and Vietnam. A Vietnam War story of GIs in the shit, clearing out spider holes and clashing with enemy metahumans (or just entrenched machine gun emplacements, snipers and man traps) can give characters a focus, a reason to stick together, and all the blood and guts anyone could want. The only thing Rambo lacked was heat vision, right? Start with the Laotian Götterdämmerung in 1971 and run it right up to Nixon’s ceasefire. Then you can muster them out and bring them home to a dazed and suspicious US in the middle of the Mindcrime investigation and Amanda Sykes’ My Lai testimony.



blown up, Nguyet decides there's a fifty/fifty chance of Sét resisting and turning on her if she attempts to convince him. She accepts his decision to remain separate.

May

Atlantis: With close to a thousand citizens from all over the world, many of them Vietnamese refugees from both sides of the conflict, Atlantis is a hotbed of simmering resentments. The people who first came out with Cynthia (p. 214) and their carefully chosen initial recruits see themselves as the civilization's elders and feel they aren't getting enough respect. The Vietnamese are by turns insular (separated from the Americans by language barriers) and vicious to one another (over the unresolved political issues of their homeland). They're all grateful to Ngoc Vo, and after she teleports a few of the worst troublemakers back to Vietnam they stick to harsh language and social snubs. But Grimes is a savvy political operator and his ability to provide just about anything to his followers ensures that he retains clout.

Metavictims Advocacy and Support schisms between those who insist that the group pursue its aims nonviolently and a more radical faction calling itself the Meta-Defense League.

Vietnam: Johnson begins using metahumans extensively against protesters, leading to a showdown at Kent State between one of Johnson's former aides (a woman called Midge O'Hara) and a metahuman protester who is never identified. O'Hara and the protester kill each other, and three Kent State protesters are killed in the crossfire. The National Guard goes on to wound six more while restoring order.

June

Sykes Family: Amanda and Abe travel to Ancash, Peru to do disaster repair work after the earthquake there. Amanda is publicly identified two weeks after returning to the US, when photos of her from Peru are confirmed in American papers. The family is besieged by media, well-wishers, assassins (both political, religious, and maniac) and people on the make.

July

Sykes Family: Amy Sykes, age 13, runs away from home but is quickly found.

August

Atlantis: Amidst charges that Atlantis is kidnapping foreign citizens, an international embargo is imposed. It barely impacts the comfort of the Atlanteans, nor does it slow Vo as she continues to import people who want to be there. But now Grimes can point to Vo's immigration policy and blame it for the world's fear and hostility towards Atlantis.

September

Vietnam: A team of US commandoes provokes an international incident when they attempt to assassinate Bao Verong (p. 355). In the intense metahuman clash that follows, Sét (p. 182) is killed, along with Achille Riitzi (p. 207) and Mike Kurlansky (p. 189).

October

Atlantis: Grimes and his followers begin to agitate for some kind of formal governing body.

Sykes Family, Vietnam: In the wake of the October 30 monsoon, Abe Sykes (p. 173) and Dac Kien Truc (p. 183) go to Vietnam to do repair and recovery work. Both are captured and delivered to Nguyet Cam (p. 164).

November

Sykes Family, Vietnam: Amanda demands the return of Abe Sykes, but Abe appears and publicly refuses to leave "the greatness that is the emerging Vietnamese social order." He asks that his daughter be allowed to join him in Vietnam but, of course, that's denied.

In the wake of the East Pakistan cyclone, a group of Tier Four metahumans transport in needed supplies in the face of the Pakistani government's dismal relief failures.

December

Vietnam: Cambodia surrenders, Bao Verong starts a goodwill tour of the country with Tuyet Thi Dang (p. 356) and Tuan Cong Thach (p. 353) coming along to aid in repairs. He starts assembling a puppet government.

Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207) has, by this point, gained access to the highest levels of authority within the Kremlin.

Shavians: Having used her power throughout the year, fourteen-year-old Tina Shaw has raised the worldwide population of Shaw Monsters to 1,811.

Campaign Framework: Searching for Model T

Bryson Maas-Thierry and Brenda Harkness (p. 206) aren't the only dark energy wielders working for (and unintentionally created by) the US government. Between the two of them, or Robert Kennedy and Spiro Agnew (pages 189 and 167, and who mysteriously fall out of the timeline early, don't they?) they could create a number of power-progeny within federal law enforcement. That's the PCs. They're flying G-Men.

Unfortunately for them, their new job description is to find people whose superpowers are 'can't be found.' How do you track down James Closterman (p. 235), or Hoover's most reviled offspring, Tyler Ford (p. 228)? With footwork, deductive power, traps a psycho can't resist and lots of overtime. In between, of course, they get called on for any metahuman law-breakers that the Feds would like discretely managed.

SUSPICION	1	TECHNOLOGY	1	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	1
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Jan 2 - The US bans cigarette ads on radio and TV.

Jan 9 - Tupamaro guerillas kidnap the British ambassador to Uruguay.

Jan 9 - The president of Uruguay is granted emergency powers.

Jan 12 - All in the Family debuts.

Jan 18 - Polish workers go on strike.

Jan 25 - Idi Amin takes power in Uganda.

Jan 25 - The Manson family is convicted of murdering Sharon Tate.

Jan 25 - Intelsat II launches.

Jan 13 - Apollo 14 lifts off.

Feb 7 - An earthquake in Tuscany, Italy kills 23.

Feb 9 - The Sylmar quake strikes near San Francisco.

Feb 9 - Apollo 14 returns.

Feb 11-12 - Palestinians clash with Jordanians.

Feb 13 - Vietnam: South Vietnam invades Laos.

Feb 20 - Fifty tornadoes ravage Mississippi.

Feb 28 - Stuntman Evel Knievel jumps over 19 cars.

Mar 1 - Vietnam: A bomb goes off in the US Capitol building; The Weathermen claim responsibility.

Mar 1 - East Pakistan is rocked by civil disobedience.

Mar 12 - The Allman Brothers play the Fillmore East.

Mar 18 - A landslide in Peru kills 200.

Mar 23 - Coup in Argentina.

Mar 27 - East Pakistan becomes Bangladesh.

Apr 9 - Charles Manson sentenced to death.

Apr 19 - Salyut I satellite launched.

Apr 20 - The US Supreme Court decides that desegregation should proceed through bussing.

Apr 24 - Vietnam: Widespread marches against the war in the US.

May 3 - Vietnam: Mass arrests in Washington DC.

May 15 - Israel's ambassador to Turkey is kidnapped.

May 16 - A coup is foiled in Egypt.

May 22 - Earthquake in Turkey.

May 25 - The kidnapped Israeli ambassador is found dead in Istanbul.

May 27 - A Romanian plane is hijacked.

Jun 13 - Vietnam: The New York Times begins publishing the Pentagon Papers

Jun 30 - Vietnam: The US Supreme Court rules to permit the publishing of the Pentagon Papers.

Jul 3 - Jim Morrison dies.

Jul 5 - Nixon signs a bill lowering the voting age from 21 to 18.

Jul 10 - Coup attempt in Morocco.

Jul 19 - The south tower of the World Trade Center is finished.

Aug 1 - George Harrison and Ravi Shankar's concert for Bangladesh.

Aug 9-14 - The Troubles: Violence in Northern Ireland escalates.

Aug 18 - Vietnam: Australia and New Zealand withdraw.

Sep 9-13 - Riots at Attica prison kill 42.

Sep 29 - Cyclone in India kills 10,000.

Oct 1 - Walt Disney World opens.

Oct 21 - Nixon nominates Powell and Rhenquist to the Supreme Court.

Oct 25 - The United Nations recognizes the People's Republic of China and expels Taiwan.

Oct 29 - Vietnam: The US troop presence in Vietnam is down to 196,700, the lowest since 1966.

Oct 31 - A bomb explodes in London's Post Office Tower.

Nov 10 - Khmer Rouge attack Phnom Penh.

Nov 12 - Vietnam: Nixon declares that 45,000 more troops will be withdrawn by February of 1972.

Nov 24 - 'D.B. Cooper' hijacks a plane and parachutes off it with a \$200,000 ransom. He is never seen again.

Dec 1 - The Khmer Rouge intensify their attacks.

Dec 3 - War begins between India and Pakistan.

Dec 8 - Nixon sends the Seventh Fleet to the Indian Ocean.

Dec 14 - Pakistan's army kills 1,500 Bangladeshi intellectuals.

US Culture

Filmgoers of 1971 see greater violence in pictures like A Clockwork Orange, Dirty Harry and Straw Dogs. The Andromeda Strain and The Omega Man lend an apocalyptic tone to the popular culture, while Bedknobs and Broomsticks and Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory play more to whimsy. Other notable films include Carnal Knowledge, Last Picture Show and, of course, Shaft.



1971—Progenitor

SUSPICION	1	TECHNOLOGY	1	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	2
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January

ProgHarm: An Toán Do (p. 353) finds out that Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207) is active in the USSR. While he is unable to strike her directly, he kills a number of her followers, forcing her to spread her dark energies randomly, instead of in a planned fashion as Nguyet Cam (p. 164) did with An Toán himself. One of her offspring breaks free of Bich's synergenic conditioning and plots against her from within the Kremlin.

Sykes Family: The Church of the Emerald Virgin starts in Peru, worshipping Amanda Sykes (p. 159) as an incarnation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

February

ProgHarm: North Vietnam pushes into Laos. Linh Thi Le and Tuan Cong Thach (p. 353) are sent first. It's a risky maneuver, but their powers are incredibly destructive and demoralizing to the Laotians. Meanwhile, An Toán Do assassinates several US Senators as a warning to the US not to get involved.

Jason Weeks: Jason unveils the SuperHealthScreen!™ (p. 320).

James Closterman battles twisters in Mississippi.

Atlantis: Tension steadily rises between the followers of Cynthia Carls (p. 214), "Carlos Moses" (p. 213) and Ngoc Vo (p. 186). While there's no violence beyond shoving and insults, petty slights and sabotage are common. All three leaders are constantly badgered by their followers, coming to them for answers and aid.

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As for music, Led Zeppelin releases IV, the Doors release L.A. Woman and B.B. King plays Live in Cook County Jail. Popular singles include "Joy to the World" by Three Dog Night, "It's Too Late" by Carole King, "Maggie May" from Rod Stewart, "Want Ads" by Honey Cone, "What's Going On" by Marvin Gaye, and Tom Jones' "She's a Lady."

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Campaign Framework: Go Big Red! Smash State!

Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207) gives the USSR what it needs to avoid dissolving, but she dies before she can fully transform it into her dream of socialist theocracy. This means the Commies are around even to the end. Your PCs become their premier team of KGB troublemakers (or problem-solvers). Between crushing capitalism and fighting off Progressive Harmony, there's plenty on their plates, right up to the Metapocalypse. What happens then? Are they sent to the front line metahuman fights? (Do they go?) Do they help rebuild the USSR, or carve out their own meta-fiefdom? Or do they head to Europe to make sure that it re-forms in a shape Marx would approve?

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March

Sykes Family, ProgHarm: General Colt (p. 168) guides Christopher Marshall's turf warriors (p. 171), Amanda Sykes (p. 159) Joe Smith (p. 220) and Henry Dowd (p. 206) into Laos, along with a number of regular human soldiers. Their battles against Monument (p. 183) and the Progress Cadre (except for Bao Verong, page 355 and Dinh Quang Phung, page 356) ravage the landscape. It comes to be known as "The Laotian Götterdämmerung" and it claims the lives of Linh Thi Le and Tuan Cong Thach. An Toán Do threatens Marshall's fiancée and Marshall halts his forces. Andrew Colt is terribly shaken after co-experiencing the death of an American officer. Henry Dowd barely escapes with his life. As for the Monument, his sanity crumbles under the conflicts between the syntergenes controlling him, his own confused identity, and Colt's mental assaults. Killing hundreds on both sides of the conflict, he rampages off into the wilderness.

April

A massive march against the war and against President Johnson's (p. 169) policies is dispersed when LBJ comes out in person to 'reason with the crowd.' Seen on television, it's widely agreed that the President seems to be using some kind of 'mass hypnotism.' In response, the Congress begins discussing laws against the use of dark energy 'for the purposes of manipulating the thoughts or emotions of another.'

ProgHarms, Shavians: At Nguyet Cam's request, An Toán Do begins killing Shaw Monsters. He also threatens to kill Tina Shaw's parents if the 14-year-old continues to create them. Tina agrees to stop.

May

Sykes Family, Vietnam, Jason Weeks, the Dream: Jason Weeks (p. 195) dupes Amanda (p. 159) into an attack on Hanoi and uses it as a distraction to let Lin Wen (p. 216), Boris Mizurski (p. 217), Barbara French (p. 218), and LeRoi Mathers (p. 207) get to Abe Sykes (p. 173). (It was Weeks' judgment that if Amanda knew her action was a feint, Cam would see through it immediately.) The rescue team subdues Abe after a short struggle and exfiltrates him to the Philippines and, eventually, Hawaii. Weeks and the Dream begin the process of disentangling Abe's mind from Cam's syntergenes.

Howard "Reddy" March (p. 225) escapes from prison.

Atlantis: Jack Grimes, aka "Carlos Moses," formalizes his clique by having his followers explicitly and formally swear their loyalty to him. Grimes declares that he is no longer using his powers on the behalf of anyone but himself and his sworn followers.

June

Abbie Hoffman, who's gained anti-mind-control powers courtesy of J. Edgar Hoover, addresses both houses of Congress and rids them of President Johnson's influence right before powerful testimony from members of Metavictims Advocacy and Support. They vote to outlaw "alteration of consciousness, morals, beliefs, behavior or intent via dark energy" along with banning the study of syntergenic science. This landmark legislation is known as "The Federal Cognitive Sovereignty Act."

Atlantis: Ngoc Vo stops using her powers to benefit anyone who has sworn Grimes' oath. Moreover, she informs the people that "Mr. Moses" is actually an American criminal named Jack Grimes who served two felony prison terms, probably tried to kidnap Amy Sykes (p. 177), and is wanted for questioning in the matter of a murdered police officer.

ProgHarm: Nguyet Cam (p. 164) presents the principles of Progressive Harmony, a caste-based bureaucracy (secretly founded on subtly brainwashing the entire population) to the public in Vietnam. Within a few months, her book on the subject is translated into English as "Social Harmony and Social Dissonance."

July

Hoover: “Reddy” March flees the cops and the FBI, with Hoover in close pursuit.

Tyler Ford (p. 228) telephones a reporter who has published articles about his crimes. They have a long and disturbing chat, which the reporter duly publishes.

Sykes Family: Abe and Amanda reunite.

An unknown person sabotages the World Trade Center tower, turning its walls into gas the day before it’s scheduled to be inspected prior to its opening. Eleven people are killed when they inhale too many of the fumes.

Atlantis: Jack Grimes lies to some Atlanteans (“Ngoc Vo is totally mistaken!”) and tells half truths to others (“I’m reformed,” or “It was self defense, that pig was going to gun me down” depending on his judgment). He also begins to recruit, and arm, a secret inner cabal of “pragmatists.”

August

Shavians, Jason Weeks, Sykes Family: Questions persist about My Lai. Amanda gives her first press conference, in which, although she’s clearly uncomfortable, she convinces most Americans of her sincerity when she says she knows nothing about My Lai. (Which, indeed, she does not.) Abe sees it all from an estate in Vermont, where Amy (p. 177) is visiting with her friend Tina Shaw. During a visit from Jason Weeks, Amanda reluctantly forgives him for deceiving her. Weeks talks with Tina about An Toán Do’s threats and promises to think up a solution. He also suggests “Shavians” as a name for the creatures she creates.

A man in a flamboyant costume, calling himself “Buster Two-Fist,” savagely and publicly batters suspected racketeer Peter Artuso before leaping into the sky and flying away. It is the first documented case of costumed vigilantism in the USA using metahuman powers.

September

Howard “Reddy” March shows up at Attica and turns it into a mass jailbreak. The National Guard is called in, as are Boris Mizurski and Henry Dowd. Afterwards, however, Mizurski refuses to report back to Johnson, instead fleeing westward.

Sykes Family: Amanda insists that Abe leave India alone after the cyclone, insisting that he’d be in too much danger and that his sense of self is still too fragile. He reluctantly agrees to stay.

October

ProgHarm: Dinh Quang Phung improves on Nguyet Cam’s original dark energy monitor, making it simpler and man-portable.

November

Jason Weeks, Shavians: A Shavian named “Juniper” disrupts a sixth grade classroom in Los Angeles, insisting it has as much right as any of the children present to an education. When the teacher yells at it, it kills her and everyone else in the class. A long-stalled bill in Congress relating to “dark energy entities” emerges from committee, propelled into passage both by the massacre and by concern about how to deal with Christopher Marshall’s creations, some of whom refuse to fight without their maker. The public distrust of Shavians gathers tremendous momentum when it becomes clear that they cannot be killed or (in some cases) even constrained without extraordinary measures. Metavictims’ Advocacy and Support explicitly condemns their creation and sees its membership swell. Weeks advises Tina to hide out and not perform any more cures until the death of An Toán Do.



Boris Mizurski gives an interview in which he describes, in detail, his conditioning at the hands of the president. He is extensively lambasted in the press for disloyalty.

Paige Rampling (p. 236) displays her powers on-air and is immediately funded by the Meta-Defense League.

December

Sykes Family: An argument over Christmas dinner ends with Abe and Amanda shouting at one another, until Amy begins screaming at both of them. Then she explodes.

Shavians, Vietnam: A Shaw Monster calling itself “Bargle” declares a world-wide revolution against humanity and leads an attack on North Vietnam, having determined that An Toán Do has been killing Shavians. Though Do eventually stops Bargle and its followers (aided by Duc Van Ho (p. 357)’s psychic attacks), the Shavians inflict considerable damage on the nascent infrastructure of Nguyet Cam’s new society (p. 343).

1972

1972—Our History

SUSPICION	2	TECHNOLOGY	2	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	1
Jan 5 - Nixon starts the Space Shuttle program.		Jan 25 - Shirley Chisholm declares her candidacy for President of the USA.		Feb 19-28 - United Red Army takes hostages at the Asama-Sanso lodge in Japan.			
Jan 10 - Bangladesh achieves independence.		Jan 28 - Richard Chanfray claims to be the Compte Saint Germain in France.		Feb 22 - An IRA bomb explodes in Aldershot, England, killing seven.			
Jan 13 - Military coup in Ghana.		Jan 30 - The Troubles: Bloody Sunday in Ireland.		Feb 23 - Jailed civil rights activist Angela Davis makes bail.			
Jan 19 - A Libertarian group, led by millionaire Michael Oliver, declares the sovereignty over an artificial micro-nation built on the Minerva Reefs. Tonga quickly annexes the territory.		Feb 2 - The Troubles: Riots in Northern Ireland against the British.		Feb 23 - Lufthansa plane hijacked.			
		Feb 3 - The Winter Olympics begin in Sapporo, Japan.		Mar 22 - The Equal Rights Amendment is sent to the states for ratification.			

Mar 24 - The Godfather hits movie theaters.	including Andreas Baader, are arrested in Germany.	presidential candidate. Protesters riot in Miami Beach.
Mar 30 - Vietnam: The Easter Offensive begins.	Jun 4 - Angela Davis is acquitted of conspiracy to commit murder.	Aug 22 - Seventeen hour bank hostage standoff in Brooklyn.
Apr 7 - Vietnam veteran Rich McCoy Jr. hijacks a plane to Cuba.	Jun 8 - A hijacked plane is redirected from West Germany to Czechoslovakia.	Aug 26 - The Summer Olympics are held in Munich, Germany.
Apr 10 - Seventy nations, including the US and USSR, agree to ban biological warfare.	Jun 9 - The Black Hills flood in South Dakota kills 238.	Sep 5-6 - Terrorist group Black September massacres Israeli olympians.
Apr 10 - An earthquake in Iran kills 5,000.	Jun 14 - Hurricane Agnes kills 117 on the east coast of the United States.	Sep 19 - A bomb is sent to the Israeli embassy in London.
Apr 16 - Vietnam: The US bombs Hanoi and Haiphong as part of the Nguyen Hué offensive.	Jun 15 - More Red Army Faction arrests in Germany.	Sep 21 - Ferdinand Marcos puts the Philippines under martial law.
May 1 - The first ever videogame system, the Magnavox Odyssey, is released.	Jun 17 - Watergate: Five White House operatives are arrested for burglarizing Democratic National Headquarters.	Oct 1 - Recombinant DNA first described by Crick and Watson.
May 2 - An Idaho silver mine fire kills 91.	Jun 23 - Watergate: Nixon and Halderman taped as they discuss using the CIA to block the FBI Watergate probe.	Oct 12 - A race riot occurs on the warship USS Kitty Hawk.
May 2 - J. Edgar Hoover dies of high blood pressure.	Jun 28 - Nixon vows to send no new draftees to Vietnam.	Oct 13 - A plane crashes in the Andes. Sixteen passengers survive until their rescue on December 20 of 1973, but they have to resort to cannibalism.
May 8 - Vietnam: Nixon orders the mining of Haiphong harbor.	Jun 29 - The US Supreme Court finds the death penalty unconstitutional.	Oct 25 - The FBI hires its first female agents.
May 15 - Alabama governor and presidential candidate George Wallace is shot and paralyzed from the waist down.	July, ongoing - Vietnam: Jane Fonda tours North Vietnam, posing on an anti-aircraft gun.	Oct 29 - Black September hijacks a plane over Turkey, demanding the release of three prisoners arrested for the Munich massacre.
May 18 - A bomb threat against the ocean liner Queen Elizabeth II turns out to be a hoax.	Jul 10 - George McGovern gets the Democratic party nomination for president.	Nov 7 - Richard Nixon is re-elected.
May 19 - The Red Army Faction bombs the Springer Press building in Hamburg, wounding 19.	Jul 21 - The Troubles: Bloody Friday in Northern Ireland.	Dec 7 - The last Apollo space mission is launched.
May 21 - A vandal damages the Pietà.	Aug 1 - Thomas Eagleton, the Democratic candidate for Vice President, withdraws after it's revealed he was treated for mental illness.	Dec 7 - The IRA kidnaps Jean McConville and later kills her.
May 24 - The Red Army Faction bombs a US military base in Heidelberg.	Aug 12 - Vietnam: The last US ground troops are out of Vietnam.	Dec 23 - Earthquake in Nicaragua kills at least 5,000, possibly as many as 12,000.
May 26 - Nixon and Brezhnev sign the SALT I and ABM treaty.	Aug 21 - Nixon gets the Republican nomination for President. Agnew is vice	Dec 25 - Vietnam: Christmas bombing of North Vietnam.
May 30 - The Japanese Red Army kills 24 and injures 100 during an airport attack in Israel.		
Jun 2 - After a shootout, members of the Red Army Faction,		

US Culture

In addition to The Godfather, notable films of 1972 include Cabaret, Blackula, Deliverance, Last House on the Left, Last Tango in Paris, Pink Flamingos, The Poseidon Adventure, Superfly and What's Up, Doc?

On the radio, listeners hear Don McLean's "American Pie," "Brandy" by The Looking Glass, "My Ding-A-Ling" by Chuck Berry, Neil Young's "Heart of Gold," the Hollies' "Long Cool Woman" and "Back Stabbers" by the O'Jays.

1972

1972—Progenitor

SUSPICION	2	TECHNOLOGY	2	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	2
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January

NASA hires two Hyperbrains to contribute to space ship design, even though neither has any aerospace experience.

The Troubles: A Tier 4 empowered by Deionne Bright (p. 192) joins the IRA and carefully spreads his powers among them.

Atlantis: At the request of Cynthia Carls (p. 214), Ngoc Vo (p. 186) stops importing people to Atlantis. Many of Vo’s followers, and Carls’, are upset over this, but not enough to join Grimes (p. 213). They form a small, disgruntled, impotent fourth faction.

February

Alyssa Veronne (p. 233) and Paige Rampling (p. 236) corner Jarvis West (p. 203) in Brisbane, Australia. He threatens to massacre hostages, but they kill him anyway.

Atlantis: “Carlos Moses” (p. 213) travels to Europe and spends a great deal of time in private negotiations with UN delegates and foreign heads of state, many of whom are later found to own curiously shaped diamonds, solid-platinum cinderblocks and, in one case, a quantity of refined plutonium.

President Johnson announces that, in the face of continued questions about his use of dark energy persuasion, he will not stand for re-election.

March

Sykes Family: General Andrew Colt (p. 168) and Amanda Sykes (p. 159) travel to Great Britain to deal with rising numbers of IRA super-terrorists. They are quite effective, removing, imprisoning or “neutralizing” fifteen of them. But others go into hiding, and Colt comes close to a nervous breakdown.

ProgHarm: The US Easter Offensive has mixed results, as both sides now have dark energy manipulators. Paige Rampling, and Alyssa Veronne’s host, are declared “undesirable aliens” by the Australian government.

Shavians, Atlantis: Carlos Moses proposes that the UN recognize Atlantis as a homeland for Shaw Monsters—although he insists that they be called by the more respectful name “Shavians.” To the great surprise of many who were unaware of his behind-the-scenes bribery and lobbying the month previous, the proposal gets accepted.

April

Sykes Family: Abe goes to Iran to heal earthquake victims and help rebuild.

Vietnam: On his own initiative, An Toán Do (p. 353) assassinates President Johnson’s wife.

Atlantis: The Red Cross opens the island’s first clinic. Its overworked mid-Tier healer moves back to Japan, exhausted and disillusioned.

A mid-tier Hyperbrain founds “Mama Schone’s Finest Foods” to apply some of his ideas about streamlining factory farming and vertically integrating food distribution.

May

Though distracted and mourning, President Johnson (p. 169), alarmed by the Red Army Faction bombings in Germany, dispatches some of his power-descendants— Maas-Thierry and Harkness (p.

206)—to deal with it. It's a disaster. Only two Red Army Faction conspirators are found, and the German government formally complains about interference with its investigation.

Hoover: After collapsing in his office, J. Edgar Hoover (p. 189) goes home and is never seen again in the same form. Two days later, Clyde Tolson receives a letter purporting to be from a post-Hoover identity calling itself "Jedgar."

Atlantis, Shavians: Shaw Monsters begin flocking to Atlantis.

Shavians: Paige Rampling joins Metavictims Advocacy and Support—the first metahuman to do so. Hundreds resign in protest, some going over to the Meta-Defense League, with a small group forming "Remember November," an organization dedicated to the destruction of Shavians and all metahumans.

The Tolson Letter

Dear Clyde,

I can no longer be J. ~~Edgar~~ Hoover. The health problems are too severe and I won't be indebted to ~~Abe~~ Sykes. Not when I have another option.

You know I've been able to become other people - March King, Closterman, Ford and Weissman too, God help me. But I've gone further. It's not just on or off, black or white, Hoover or someone else. I can blend them, make myself into half-Hoover and half-Other. Or, with my blood pressure being what it is, maybe a quarter Hoover or a third.

But it's more than survival. Being other people is compelling, Clyde. It's almost addictive, and I'm not sure I want to be only J. ~~Edgar~~ Hoover any more. None of them were happy, you know. None of the others were anything approaching 'content.' I'm going traveling, Clyde. I'm fine for money. I've invested wisely, you know that. I'm going to try to find someone I can stand being.

But I won't forget you. I'm trying to keep my memories, Hoover memories, as much as possible. I'll be at our vacation spot on your birthday. I hope I'll see you there, whoever I am by then. But whoever it is I become, know that I'll keep a tight grip on our friendship. It means a lot to me.

Your friend,

Jedgar

June

ProgHarm: Johnson requests a Congressional resolution authorizing the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam if there are continued strikes in the United States. The USSR is outraged and threatens "retaliation in type" if US missiles cross Soviet airspace, pollute Soviet land, or contaminate Soviet waters.

Boris Mizurski (p. 217) endorses Richard Nixon.

Sykes Family: Abe Sykes heals George Wallace's paralysis, to protests from the radical fringe of the New Left. Giving a rare, and brief, television appearance, Abe states that while he opposes the segregation that Wallace once supported, he also opposes assassination. "If Mr. Wallace is grateful to me for freeing him from his chair, perhaps I can persuade him to fight for different freedoms to some other people."

July

ProgHarm: The "Territorial Integrity Act" passes in the House, giving the President a specific endorsement to use nuclear weapons against Vietnam "or any nation governed by the so-called principles of 'Progressive Harmony'." The UN Security Council issues a stern reprimand.

1972

ProgHarm, Sykes Family: Several newspapers are publishing stories about My Lai and the Army investigation, keeping it in the news.

George McGovern receives the Democratic nomination for President.

Atlantis, Shavians: Shavians begin to integrate into Atlantean society. Some are pests or menaces, but many are willing to work. They find themselves particularly attracted to “Faction Four,” the stubborn humans who refuse to align with a metahuman leader. It’s unclear which comes first, the Shavian attraction to the outsiders, or the outsiders’ willingness to ally with powerful (albeit disgusting) creatures.

August

ProgHarm: Bao Verong (p. 355) publicly praises the service and sacrifices of An Toán Do (p. 353) in the struggle against imperialism. Nevertheless, he insists that if, indeed, Do killed the First Lady, it was a crime against all decency, “and an excess of revolutionary zeal cannot excuse it.” Do is arrested and a dramatic show trial ensues. The Territorial Integrity Act is narrowly defeated in the Senate.

Richard Nixon receives the Republican nomination for president. Two days later, his vice-presidential pick, Spiro Agnew publicly announces proof that George McGovern is a dark energy manipulator.

Atlantis: The island’s first cash crop of marijuana is ready for export, but neither Ngoc Vo (p. 186) nor Barb French (p. 218) are willing to transport it off the island and, without dark energy, the only way to export it past the blockade would be by confronting the navy patrols directly.

September

ProgHarm: Despite public indignation over the arrest of An Toán Do, the trial continues. After Bao Verlong speaks at several of mass rallies, the tide of opinion turns against Do.

Hoover: Rumors begin to float around Minneapolis, Minnesota, about a shape shifting, racially ambiguous man called Jedgar prowling the streets at night, harassing left-wing students and busting street criminals.

Atlantis: The first tourists arrive.

October

Jason Weeks: Working with Deionne Bright (p. 192), Jason Weeks (p. 195) embeds a free-thought syntergene into Bright’s single “Little Green Man.”

ProgHarm: Phung the Great Designer (p. 356) unveils what he calls a “Dark Entity Disintegrator,” ultimately sold in the West as the “DEntity DEFender!™” Harmless to humans, it disrupts the patterns holding creatures animated solely by dark energy, making it deadly to Shaw Monsters and Turf Warriors.

November

Richard Nixon is elected President of the United States.

ProgHarm: An Toán Do is executed the day after the election is called for Nixon. Tensions ease between Vietnam and the US.

December

Shavians: Tina Shaw (p. 205) is named in a lawsuit, seeking damages for the Shavian Juniper’s attack in November of 1971.

Atlantis, Jason Weeks, Sykes Family: Jason Weeks and Deionne Bright arrange a partial reunion of Abe Sykes’ direct power descendants: Tina Shaw and her family, LeRoi Mathers (p. 207), Lin Wen (p. 216), Barb French (p. 218) and Boris Mizurski (p. 217).

Sykes Family: Both Abe and Amanda work together in Nicaragua to alleviate suffering in the earthquake aftermath.

1973—Our History

SUSPICION	1	TECHNOLOGY	2	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	0
Jan 14 - Elvis Presley performs in Hawaii.		Mar 21 - Mine disaster in West Yorkshire. Of seven missing miners, only one body is found.		Jun 25 - John Dean begins testifying in Watergate hearing.			
Jan 15 - Vietnam: Nixon suspends offensive actions in North Vietnam.		Mar 23 - One of the Watergate burglars names Attorney General John Mitchell as “overall boss” of the operation.		Aug 5 - Black September opens fire in the Athens airport, killing 3.			
Jan 17 - In the Philippines, Marcos declares himself President For Life.				Aug 8 - South Korean politician Kim Dae-Jung kidnapped in Japan.			
Jan 20 - Nixon begins his second term.		Apr 4 - The World Trade Center opens.		Aug 15 - The bombing of Cambodia ends.			
Jan 22 - US Supreme Court tackles Roe vs. Wade.		Apr 10 - Israeli commandoes in Beirut kill three Palestinian Resistance Movement leaders.		Sep 11 - A coup in Chile installs pro-US dictator Pinochet.			
Jan 22 - Lyndon Johnson dies.				Sep 28 - ITT is bombed in NYC.			
Jan 23 - Vietnam: Nixon announces peace in Vietnam.		Apr 28 - The Troubles; Six Irishmen are arrested smuggling weapons to the IRA.		Oct 6 - Yom Kippur war in Israel.			
Jan 27 - Vietnam: The Paris Peace Accords are signed.				Oct 10 - Spiro Agnew resigns, pleading no contest to tax evasion.			
Feb 11 - Vietnam: The first American prisoners of war are released from Vietnam.		Apr 30 - Nixon announces resignation of several top aides because of Watergate.		Oct 17 - OAPEC oil embargo begins.			
Feb 22 - Nixon opens China.		May 3 - The Sears Tower is completed.		Oct 20 - Power struggle over Watergate special prosecutor ends in Nixon’s “Saturday Night Massacre.”			
Feb 27 - American Indian Movement occupies Wounded Knee.		May 8 - AIM militants surrender at Wounded Knee.		Oct 26 - Yom Kippur war ends.			
Mar 8 - The Troubles: In the ‘Border Poll,’ Northern Ireland votes to remain in the UK. IRA bombs go off in Whitehall and Old Bailey.		May 14 - Skylab reaches apogee.		Oct 31 - The Troubles: A hijacked helicopter frees three IRA prisoners.			
		May 17 - Televised Watergate hearings begin in the US Senate.		Nov 11 - Egypt-Israel cease-fire.			
Mar 17 - Vietnam: More US soldiers return home, as immortalized in the photo “Burst of Joy.”		Jun 10 - A grandson of J. Paul Getty is kidnapped in Rome.		Nov 17 - Nixon declares “I am not a crook!”			
		Jun 16 - Nixon/Brezhnev talks.		Dec 6 - Ford sworn in as VP.			
				Dec 23 - OPEC doubles the price of crude oil.			

1973—Progenitor

SUSPICION 2	TECHNOLOGY 2	ECONOMY 1	WARFARE 1
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January

James Closterman moves to New Orleans, where he devotes his time to fighting fires, protecting drunks from getting rolled, rescuing kittens from trees and getting laid a lot by virtue of his copious heroism.

Sykes Family: When President Johnson (p. 169) falls ill, he calls for Abe Sykes (p. 173) who responds by healing him.

1973

US Culture

The Exorcist is the top grossing film of 1973, followed by Academy Award darling The Sting. Other popular and noteworthy films from the year include American Graffiti, Papillon, Magnum Force and Disney’s cartoon version of Robin Hood.

The radio waves carry “Tie A Yellow Ribbon ‘Round The Ole Oak Tree” by Tony Orlando and Dawn, “Killing Me Softly With His Song” by Roberta Flack and “The Night The Lights Went Out In Georgia” by Vicki Lawrence. Bucking the trend of long song names are Paul McCartney and Wings with “My Love,” “You’re So Vain” by Carly Simon, “Frankenstein” by the Edgar Winter Group and “Superstition” by Stevie Wonder.

Richard Nixon begins his first term as President of the US.

ProgHarm: The US and the Progressive Republic of North Vietnam agree to a ceasefire.

Atlantis: A group of Atlanteans attempts to assassinate Cynthia Carls (p. 214). The survivors are identified as followers of Jack Grimes (p. 213). Both Grimes and the assassins insist that he wasn't involved, though Ngoc Vo (p. 186) does telepathically determine that all the survivors consider themselves part of Grimes' "pragmatist" inner circle. Carls responds to the attack by splitting the island, isolating the territory of Grimes' faction across a 100 yard causeway.

February

Nixon approaches the Chinese about opening negotiations. So does Bao Verong (p. 355).

Atlantis: Missionaries from the Roman Catholic Church arrive on mainland Atlantis. Several nations, including the United States, Great Britain, Cuba, Morocco and Portugal, attempt to claim the split-off island for themselves. Jack Grimes responds by registering a formal claim that his island is, legally, Atlantis.

Shavians: Tina Shaw is arrested for violating the so-called "Dark Entity" law by creating more Shavians. She is tried as an adult, despite being only 16 years old.

March

A coordinated team of IRA metahumans attacks London. Lin Wen (p. 216) and Paige Rampling (p. 236) agree to protect the city in return for an undisclosed yearly salary.

The Justice Department begins an investigation into Lyndon Johnson's use of mind control.

Shavians: Tina Shaw is convicted and sentenced to ten years without parole—the minimum sentence permitted under federal law.

Atlantis: After secret negotiations with Andrew Colt (p. 168), Ngoc Vo teleports Jack Grimes directly to Fort Leavenworth, where he is promptly arrested for the murder of State Trooper Clarence Fredericks and the maiming of Trooper Thomas Moley. Once Grimes is imprisoned, Cynthia Carls reconnects the islands.

April

The raid on Beirut is led by a Tier Six Israeli commando.

Atlantis: The Vo and Carls factions agree to the Moses group and Faction Four's long-standing request for a constitutional convention.

Because of the damage done in 1971, the World Trade Center does not open on schedule. Several metahumans are hired to protect it and aid in construction, however.

ProgHarm: The Progressive Republic of North Vietnam begins construction on several coastal installations. It insists that they are for desalinization.

Jean Davis (p. 250) founds Inimos Advertising.

May

Sascha Michnik (p. 260) receives \$2 million for a half-hour's work reinforcing the Sears Tower.

Abbie Hoffman (p. 58) negotiates a peaceful settlement at Wounded Knee.

Jason Weeks: Bich Thi Ngyuen (p. 207) contacts Jason Weeks (p. 195).

Sykes Family: Amy Sykes (p. 177) goes to live with cousins after adopting an assumed name.

ProgHarm: A sleeper assassin dispatched by Nguyet Cam (p. 164) tries to kill Deionne Bright (p. 192), whom Cam has identified as a potential musical rival to the functioning of Progressive Harmony. Her mid-tier killer is foiled by intervention from Deionne's friend "The Devil."

June

Nixon approaches the USSR about the peaceful restriction of dark energy entities and devices.

The Justice Department probe into use of mind control and influence during the Johnson presidency is dubbed "Mindcrime" in the press.

Sykes Family: A Tier Six criminal attempts to extort West Germany for \$5 million, but Boris Mizurski (p. 217) and Abe Sykes track down and capture him.

Atlantis: Jack Grimes gets out on bail.

July

After his intercession in a domestic abuse report-turned-siege, the New Orleans police department pointedly refuses to arrest James Closterman, despite ample opportunity.

An unknown assailant attacks the White House. Wreathed in electricity and invulnerable to conventional weapons, the Tier Five assassin is stopped only when Vice President Spiro Agnew transforms the man's head into antimony. This is the first indication that Agnew is metahuman. Democrats decry the secrecy around it in light of the accusations the Nixon team made against Johnson's metahumanity during the election. The Republicans respond that the secrecy probably saved Nixon's life, and that matter transformation is a far less dangerous power for a politician than mind control. The presence or absence of dark energy in candidates becomes the subject of much political rhetoric.

August

An unknown individual uses dark energy powers to steal \$3 million from a Spanish bank. The crime is never solved.

ProgHarm: The US and the Progressive Republic of North Vietnam sign a formal truce.

Shavians: On appeal, Tina Shaw's case goes to the Supreme Court, which overturns the "Dark Entity" law and orders her release.

Atlantis: Jack Grimes' murder and meta-assault trial begins. His followers successfully manipulate the rules of the Atlantean constitutional convention to delay the progress, hoping to sandbag it until Grimes can return.

September

No charges are filed in the "Mindcrime" probe, but extensive legislative controls are recommended.

Sykes Family: The Senate convenes a trial to investigate My Lai. Amanda, when subpoenaed, testifies that she remembers nothing of the incident. Even when pressed and presented with military records showing that she was deployed to the area on that date, she tearfully insists she knows nothing. A former Johnson aide named Bryson Maas-Thierry (p. 206) suggests to the chairman that it's well within Amanda's abilities to not only suppress, but psychically remove her own memories. When this speculation hits the papers, editorials express unease with the notion that the world's most powerful woman is could be hysterically altering her own consciousness, without being aware of it later.

In the Yom Kippur war, metahumans fight on both sides.

The IRA metahuman team, now calling itself “Glóir,” assaults Mountjoy Prison. Lin Wen and Paige Rampling respond. One member of Glóir is killed, one arrested. Fifty-two prisoners escape, eleven are killed, along with six prison guards and five policemen.

November

The press and the Democrats begin asking questions about the remarkable speed with which Nixon came to terms with North Vietnam. Perhaps as a distraction, Richard Nixon pardons James Closterman.

Atlantis: With the full knowledge and permission of his judge, Jack Grimes transforms seawater into oil and sells it to West Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy and Spain. He modestly says that he’d do the same for the US, except that he’s concerned it might be seen as an attempt to influence the outcome of his trial. Back on the island, the constitutional delays are finally overcome and Cynthia Carls is appointed pro-tem executive until elections can be held in ‘74.

Sykes Family: Abe Sykes heals Thomas Moley, the state trooper maimed by Jack Grimes.

December

Atlantis: When OPEC doubles the global price of crude oil, Grimes lets it be known that his services are available to both sides, but that whoever makes the best deal will get his undivided loyalty. The House of Saud hires Judith Weissman (p. 232) to negotiate on their behalf. Lyndon Johnson, “acting as an interested private citizen,” tries to sway Grimes towards aiding the US. Twisted between two Hypercharmers, Grimes has a minor nervous breakdown.

1974

1974—Our History

SUSPICION	2	TECHNOLOGY	2	ECONOMY	-1	WARFARE	0
Jan 4 - Nixon refuses to give up tapes of White House conversations.		Mar 20 - An attempt to kidnap England's Princess Anne fails.		May 17 - Six members of the SLA are killed in a police raid.			
Jan 4 - Ted Bundy attacks Joni Lenz.		Mar 29 - Mariner 10 approaches Mercury.		May 17 - The Troubles: Bombings in northern Ireland, possibly with the aid of British Intelligence, kill 33 and wound 300.			
Jan 6 - In response to the energy crisis, daylight savings is started four months early.		April 3 - "Super Outbreak" tornadoes hit 13 US states and a Canadian province. 315 people die, 5,000 are injured.		May 18 - India enters the Nuclear Club.			
Jan 30 - G. Gordon Liddy found guilty in Watergate break-in.		April 15 - Patty Hearst helps the SLA rob a bank.		May 28 - Italian fascists bomb Brescia and kill six.			
Feb 4 - Symbionese Liberation Army kidnaps Patty Hearst.		April 25 - The Carnation Revolution in Portugal.		Jun 1 - Chemical plant in Fixborough explodes, killing 28.			
Feb 13 - Solzhenitsen expelled from the USSR.		May 4 - The World's Fair in Spokane, Washington.		Jun 15 - The National Front clashes with the police in the Red Lion Square Disorders.			
Feb 22 - Second Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore.		May 9 - Nixon's impeachment begins.		Jun 17 - The Troubles: IRA bombs Houses of Parliament.			
Feb 23 - The SLA demands \$23m for Patty Hearst's return.		May 15 - Arab terrorists enter a school in M'alot and kill 31, including 22 children.					
Mar 18 - Oil embargo ends after five months.							

Jun 30 - The mother of Martin Luther King is killed in her church by Marcus Wayne Chenault.	Aug 5 - Nixon releases a tape with damning evidence.	Nov 8 - The seventh Earl of Lucan vanishes after the murder of his children's nanny.
Jul 14 - Ted Bundy abducts two women in broad daylight.	Aug 8 - Nixon resigns.	Nov 10 - Movement 2 June tries to kidnap a German judge and kills him instead.
Jul 15 - Christine Chubbuck shoots herself on live TV, dies 14 hours later.	Aug 30 - Bomb in Mitsubishi HQ kills eight, wounds 378. Left wing culprits arrested in May '75.	Nov 17 - The Troubles: In Dublin, President Erskine Childers dies in mid-speech.
Jul 15 - Coup in Cyprus.	Sep 8 - TWA Flight 841 is bombed.	Nov 19 - Bridge collapse in Nepal kills 140.
Jul 17 - The Troubles: IRA bombs the Tower of London, killing one and injuring 41.	Sep 13 - Japanese Red Army seizes the French embassy in The Hague.	Nov 21 - The Troubles: Two pubs bombed in Birmingham, England.
Jul 20 - Turkey invades Cyprus.	Oct 5 - The Troubles: Guilford pub bombings.	Dec 24-25 - Cyclone Tracy hits Darwin, Australia, killing 71 and leaving 20,000 homeless.
Jul 23 - Greek military junta collapses.	Oct 8 - Franklin National Bank fails.	
Aug 4 - Italian neo-fascists bomb a train.	Nov 5 - Democrats enjoy an electoral surge, thanks to Watergate scandal.	
	Nov 7 - The Troubles: IRA bomb in Kings Arms.	

1974—Progenitor

SUSPICION 3 TECHNOLOGY 3 ECONOMY 1 WARFARE 0

January

ProgHarm: Nixon stonewalls about whether he negotiated with Vietnam before the election, arguing that the peace process is too fragile to disturb with such partisan accusations.

Nixon signs the Mental Liberty and Security Act into law. Under it, it is a federal offense to use “direct psychic interference” to control or persuade US citizens or any person on US soil. Some protesters argue that this takes a valuable tool out of the hands of law enforcement, citing several successful uses of Hypercharm and Hypercommand in hostage situations.

February

The Sykes Family: Abe Sykes (p. 173) begins searching for Patty Hearst within 24 hours of her disappearance. Amanda (p. 159) shows up unexpectedly just as Abe starts talking with members of the SLA. They open fire and she kills two of them, prompting a loud and lengthy public argument between the two Sykes.

Atlantis, Shavians: Tina Shaw (p. 205) and her family move to Atlantis.

March

ProgHarm: Nixon and Bao Verong pose together and sign a peace treaty.

Hendrik Ten Broeck, a businessman from the Netherlands working in Calcutta, unveils a diode that can convert electricity into laser light with 72% efficiency.

Atlantis: Jack Grimes is convicted of murder and escapes in transit between maximum security facilities.

US Culture

On the radio, listeners frequently request Lynyrd Skynyrd's “Sweet Home Alabama” and Billy Joel's “Piano Man.” Mike Oldfield's “Tubular Bells” is also popular, as is Barry White's “Can't Get Enough of Your Love, Baby.” Grammy awards go to Olivia Newton John and Paul McCartney's band Wings. Academy awards go to The Godfather, Part II and Chinatown while film viewers also flock to Blazing Saddles, The Man with the Golden Gun and The Texas Chain Saw Massacre.

April

The Sykes Family: Amanda (p. 159) talks to Christopher Marshall (p. 171) and mobilizes his remaining Turf Warriors and metal officers to help with reconstruction after the Super Outbreak tornadoes.

A Utah housewife named Norma Mae Lewis invents ZRI glass (p. 321).

May

An Israeli metahuman intervenes at Ma'alot, drawing a Palestinian metahuman into the conflict as well.

The IRA bombings kill a high-Tier American hypercharmer (one of Johnson's progeny).

The Sykes Family: Reporters find 17-year-old Amy (p. 177) going to school under an assumed name. They publish her location, along with the information that she's falsely been registered as a 16-year-old because she needs to repeat a grade. Within hours of the paper getting printed, Zipperneck (p. 210) hears of it and attacks. Twenty-two bystanders are killed and 102 wounded before Ian Kraus (p. 222) arrives and drives Zipperneck off. Amy is enraged that her parents had Kraus "spying" on her.

June

Glóir attacks the Houses of Parliament, met by Lin Wen (p. 216), Barb French (p. 218) and several lower-tier allies. Surprisingly, while members of Glóir and several of the British defenders are injured (as well as dozens of bystanders) there are no fatalities.

Shavians, The Dream: Aware of the impending nuclear tests in India, The Dream leads LeRoi Mathers (p. 207), two Shavians, and a Tier Seven Zipperman on a public action against the test site. The device is destroyed before it can be detonated, but the Indian army kills the Zipperman.

July

The Sykes Family, Shavians, Atlantis: Amy takes advantage of a brushfire local to her new placement and runs away. By the time her parents arrive, she's successfully traveled twenty miles underwater to elude pursuit and made a "Don't worry, I'll be fine, I'm invulnerable" phone call. Within two days, she's in Atlantis, staying with the Shaw family.

Atlantis: Atlantis holds its first election, in which anyone who can read and write is permitted to cast a ballot. A nine-person legislative congress called the "People's Voice" is elected, along with an executive "People's Servant." Jack Grimes' "Progressive" party wins two seats, Ngoc Vo's "Atlantean Socialists" gets three, Cynthia Carls' "One World Energy" party gets three, and "Faction Four" gets one. The People's Servant is Dith Ngyuen, an unpowered former pharmacist from Vietnam and an Atlantean Socialist.

August

ProgHarm: A Tier Five teleporter testifies that she brought Vietnamese diplomats into the United States to meet with Richard Nixon at the Watergate hotel in August of 1972.

The New Hampshire Supreme Court overturns an arrest warrant sworn out for "The Northwester," a costumed vigilante identified in the documents only through his uniform and "superhero name." When the warrant is re-written to meticulously document the Northwester's known powers, the court deems it a sufficient identification.

September

The French Embassy seizure is a trap. Zipperneck (p. 210) and a sadistic Shavian are waiting in ambush, along with two Vietnamese metahumans spawned by Andrew Colt (p. 168) and purged by

Nguyet Cam (p. 164) for ideological instability. Lin Wen, Barbara French and Amanda Sykes are all dragged into the conflict, which ends with the death of one of the Vietnamese rogues. Seeing the numbers shift, the remaining supervillains flee. The collateral damage is severe, causing 29 deaths and over a thousand civilian injuries.

October

Spiro Agnew's tax crimes come to light. He pleads no contest and Nixon pardons him, permitting him to continue to work at the White House.

Atlantis: Keeping his primary campaign promise, Dith Nguyen oversees the construction of Atlantis' first hospital.

November

Atlantis, Shavians, the Sykes Family: A well-coordinated group of over a dozen men, including several supposed 'tourists' and eight international mercenaries, stages an attack on the Shaw household. Despite Amy Sykes' presence and the efforts of dozens of Shavians, the group "Remember November" achieves its primary goal of assassinating 18-year-old Tina Shaw. At the time of her death, the global Shavian population is 3,414. In shock over the attack, Faction Four and the Progressive party begin agitating for the formation of an army. In her New York Post obituary, the over 5,000 lives she personally saved are compared with a claim that Shavians have killed "twice that number."

December

Shavians, the Sykes Family: Amy Sykes and Ian Kraus successfully track back two of the "Remember November" attackers and start seeking the organization's leaders.

1975—Our History

1975

SUSPICION 2 TECHNOLOGY 3 ECONOMY -1 WARFARE 0

Jan - The first personal computer is available for purchase.	strikes Haicheng, China. 2,041 people are killed.	6 March Group claims responsibility and wants amnesty for Baader and Meinhof.
Jan 1 - Three are convicted in the Watergate break-in.	Feb 11 - Margaret Thatcher elected Prime Minister of England.	Mar 7 - Leslie Whittle found dead. The involvement of the Black Panther party is suspected.
Jan 1 - Work on the British side of the Channel Tunnel abandoned.	Feb 13 - Fire breaks out in the World Trade Center.	Mar 13 - Vietnam: South Vietnam attempts to evacuate its central highway in the "Convoy of Tears."
Jan 7 - OPEC raises oil prices 10%.	Feb 23 - Daylight Savings is started early in response to the energy crisis.	Mar 25 - King Faisal of Saudi Arabia dies at the hand of his nephew.
Jan 14 - Donald Neilson kidnaps Leslie Whittle in England.	Feb 26 - The Troubles: An IRA member shoots and kills a policeman.	Apr 4 - Vietnam: The first attempted helicopter evacuation of Vietnamese children crashes.
Jan 20 - Vietnam: North Vietnam launches what turns out to be its final offensive against the south.	Feb 27 - Movement 2 June kidnaps West German politician Peter Lorenz. He's released March 4.	Apr 13 - The Kataeb militia attacks a Palestinian bus and
Jan 29 - The Weather Underground bombs the State Department.	Mar 6 - Iran and Iraq settle their border dispute.	
Feb 4 - The first successfully predicted earthquake	Mar 6 - A bomb goes off in a Paris newspaper office. The	

	starts the Lebanese Civil War.	American Indian Movement at Pine Ridge Reservation.	Oct 29 - The first murder by the “Yorkshire Ripper.”
Apr 17 -	The Khmer Rouge seize Phnom Penh.	July 17 - Apollo and Soyuz dock in orbit.	Nov 10 - The wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald.
Apr 24 -	Red Army Faction takes over a West German embassy in Sweden, but all the attackers are captured.	July 31 - Jimmy Hoffa disappears.	Nov 11 - Angola becomes independent of Portugal and falls into civil war.
Apr 30 -	Vietnam: The fall of Saigon.	Aug 8 - After a typhoon, Banquiao Dam in China fails and kills 200,000.	Nov 20 - Ronald Reagan enters the presidential race.
May 12 -	The Khmer Rouge seize the US ship Mayaguez, later released.	Aug 8 - Sam Bronfman kidnapped in New York.	Nov 25 - The IRA is outlawed in Britain.
Jun 5 -	The Suez canal finally re-opens after the 1967 Six Day War.	Sep 5 - “Squeaky” Fromme tries to kill President Ford.	Nov 28 - East Timor declares independence from Portugal.
Jun 10 -	A report on CIA abuses is released.	Sep 5 - The Troubles: The IRA bombs the London Hilton.	Nov 29 - The sub tender USS Proteus drops radioactive water near Guam.
Jun 12 -	Indira Gandhi is found guilty of misusing government machinery in her 1971 election campaign. Strikes and protests sweep India.	Sep 6 - An earthquake in Turkey kills 2,035.	Dec 2 - Pathet Lao communist movement takes power in Laos.
Jun 25 -	Indira Gandhi suspends civil liberties after a state of emergency is declared.	Sep 18 - Patty Hearst is arrested.	Dec 7 - Indonesia invades East Timor.
Jun 26 -	The FBI gets into a shootout with the	Sep 22 - Sarah Jane Moore attempts to kill President Ford.	Dec 21 - Carlos the Jackal and five other terrorists kidnap OPEC delegates.
		Sep 28 - Three gunmen seize the Spaghetti House in Knightsbridge, beginning a six-day siege.	Dec 29 - A bomb at LaGuardia airport kills 11.
		Oct 9 - A bomb in the Green Park tube station kills one and injures nine.	Dec 30 - The Jehova’s Witnesses prepare for Armageddon.

US Culture

Oscars go to *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* and *Jaws*, the highest grossing movie of all time by this point. While *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* fail to get Oscar nominations, they start lengthy cult careers. As for music, Grammys go to Paul Simon, Natalie Cole and Ray Charles. Popular songs include “Thank God I’m a Country Boy” by John Denver, “That’s the Way (I Like It)” by KC and the Sunshine Band, and Stevie Wonder’s “Boogie On Reggae Woman.”

1975—Progenitor

SUSPICION	2	TECHNOLOGY	4	ECONOMY	1	WARFARE	0
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January

ProgHarm: The last vestiges of South Vietnam’s old government is swept away as Saigon is incorporated into the Progressive Union of Greater Vietnam.

Sykes Family: Amanda (p. 159) buys commercial time on Amy’s (p. 177) favorite TV show (*Laverne & Shirley*) to publicly beg her to come home. Privately, she asks Andrew Colt (p. 168) to search for Amy psychically, but he claims he is unable to find her.

February

Shavians, Sykes Family: Amy (p. 177) emerges from hiding when she and two Shavians attack the Martha’s Vineyard home of Tracy Mayhew, a millionaire laser tycoon whom she considers the mastermind behind “Remember November.” At this time she reveals that she is in possession of a fast and powerful armored jet-pack (which would burn any non-invulnerable user to a crisp). Despite this, Mayhew escapes to South America.

Sykes Family: As Abe (p. 173) and Amanda search for their daughter, the earthquake in Haicheng is left for others to deal with. Their search becomes more urgent when the state of Massachusetts issues a warrant for Amy’s arrest on charges of assault, arson and unlawful use of dark energy.

March

Sykes Family: Richard Nixon promises to pardon Amy if she just turns herself in. This proves to be a huge misjudgment, as public opinion steadily comes to regard her as a rogue metahuman who considers herself above the law. (George Will compares her to Jarvis West, page 203.)

The USSR deploys the first troops armed with laser pistols.

April

Sykes Family: Amy corners Tracy Mayhew in French Guyana. Officially, he is declared missing, as no body is recovered, but it's widely assumed that Amy killed him. When the police close in, she resists arrest (nonviolently) until her mother arrives on the scene. After Amanda pulls Amy to a distant mountaintop where they talk for hours, Amy agrees to turn herself in.

ProgHarm: The Khmer Rouge in Cambodia embrace the principles of Progressive Harmony and are rewarded with devices engineered by Dinh Quan Phung (p. 356), strategic advice from Nguyet Cam (p. 164) and intelligence from Mai Thi Chung (p. 356).

Terrence “Holocaust” O’Shay (p. 242) agrees to aid the Red Army Faction in Sweden. With his aid, the embassy seizure is no more successful—he’s the only one of the terrorists to escape unharmed—but is far deadlier. When he returns to Ireland, he describes a conflagration that killed 141 Swedes, injured close to a thousand, and did millions of dollars of damage as “a proper lark.” He’s terribly disappointed when several healers and repairers of various Tiers volunteer to help rebuild.

May

ProgHarm: Former president LBJ (p. 169) intervenes during the Mayaguez crisis, personally negotiating the release of the ship and its crew. While Bao Verong (p. 355) refuses to go as far as to say the Khmer Rouge overstepped, he does praise the good sense of everyone involved for “negotiating to a tranquil resolution.”

June

Jason Weeks, The Dream: Jason Weeks (p. 195), Abbie Hoffman (p. 58) and The Dream (p. 229) team up to intercede in the showdown between the American Indian Movement and the FBI at Pine Ridge. Between Hoffman’s ability to open minds, The Dream’s power to influence emotions and Weeks’ capacity for calculating compromises, the situation is resolved nonviolently, and with only minor criminal charges levied.

Jack Grimes (p. 213), still going by the name Carlos Moses, seeks asylum and employment in Japan, where he begins by transforming sea water into bedrock to create new island real-estate branching off the main island.

July

The Sykes Family: Nixon reconsiders his promise to pardon Amy, citing the escalation of her crimes from property damage in the United States to international destruction and possibly murder. She is convicted of the charges in Massachusetts and sentenced to 15 years in the Arizona Maximum Security “superjail.” French Guyana (in a move that, later, looks like pure genius) declines to request extradition. Abe and Amanda, despite their feelings of outrage and betrayal, say nothing in public, initially afraid of making things worse, ultimately trapped by their early silence.

Atlantis, ProgHarm: The Atlantean Progressive Harmony party formally announces its creation.

August

Sykes Family, Jason Weeks: Jason Weeks' clairvoyance indicates the Banquaio Dam failure a mere seven hours before it occurs. He is able to coordinate the arrival of Amanda Sykes, Christopher Marshall (p. 171), and James Closterman (p. 235). Amanda's presence at the dam is her last public act for 11 months.

September

Hector Faran (p. 223) easily stops Squeaky Fromme's attack on president Nixon. Later, when Sarah Jane Moore attempts an assassination, Faran isn't on duty and she has to be stopped by conventional Secret Service agents. She succeeds in wounding Nixon, but he gets healed within seconds of being struck.

The Sykes Family: The group Abe assembled for previous earthquakes reunites to aid Turkey.

October

The Sykes Family, Shavians: Fifty-two Shavians attack the Arizona Maximum Security penitentiary. Seventeen of them die at the hands of well-armed guards, but they succeed in freeing Amy Sykes without inflicting any human fatalities. Amy flees to Atlantis. Abe publicly opines that if Nixon had kept his promise, the destruction could have been avoided.

A syntergene that, when identified, comes to be known as "Burning Spear" is released in the US. Extremely subtle, it encourages tolerance for legalized marijuana.

November

A Tier Seven teleporter succeeds in saving the crew of the Edmund Fitzgerald, though the ship itself goes down.

The first light-based computer chip to incorporate the Ten Broeck diode is unveiled by a company in France. Although many nations are rumored to have similar devices, the number of orders that the US and USSR place for the new chips seems to indicate otherwise.

December

ProgHarm: The government of Laos reorganizes itself along a Progressive Harmony trajectory.

Atlantis: The Atlantean government votes against issuing currency, but does make stamps and open a post office.

1976

1976—Our History

SUSPICION 2	TECHNOLOGY 3	ECONOMY 0	WARFARE 0
Jan 1 - The Cray-1, the first supercomputer, is switched on.	Jan 27 - The US vetoes the UN resolution for an independent Palestine.	Feb 5 - A race riot in Pensacola, Florida involves approximately 2,000 students.	
Jan 5 - The Khmer Rouge declare their republic, "Democratic Kampuchea."	Jan 29 - The Troubles: Twelve IRA bombs go off in London.	Mar 4 - The Troubles: London dissolves the Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention.	
Jan 19 - Jimmy Carter wins the Iowa Democratic Caucus.	Feb 4 - An earthquake in Guatemala and Honduras kills 22,000+.	Mar 20 - Patty Hearst convicted.	

- Mar 29 - Jorge Videla begins a military dictatorship in Argentina.
- Mar 31 - New Jersey Supreme Court OKs the disconnect of Karen Ann Quinlan from life support.
- Apr 1 - Apple Computers founded.
- Apr 2-4 - Norodom Sihanouk is edged out of Cambodia.
- Apr 23 - The Ramones release their first album.
- May 4 - The first geosynchronous orbital satellite goes up.
- May 6 - An earthquake in Italy kills 900+, leaves 100,000 homeless.
- May 9 - Ulrike Meinhof dies in prison, possibly a suicide.
- May 25 - Ford beats Reagan in three primaries.
- May 31 - Syria intervenes in the Lebanese civil war, against its old allies, the PLO.
- Jun 5 - The Teton Dam collapse in Idaho kills five.
- Jun 13 - A tornado completely destroys Jordan, Iowa.
- Jun 16 - The Soweto riots.
- Jun 20 - After the US ambassador in Beirut is assassinated, hundreds of tourists are evacuated to Syria.
- Jun 25 - Polish strikes after food prices rise.
- Jun 27 - Palestinians hijack an Air France plane in Greece and go to Uganda.
- Jul 2 - Vietnam: The Vietnams unite.
- Jul 3 - The UK suffers under a terrible heat wave.
- Jul 4 - The US celebrates its bicentennial.
- Jul 4 - Israeli commandoes free the Air France hijack victims.
- Jul 7 - German left wing terrorists escape Lehrterstrasse prison.
- Jul 10 - An explosion in Seveso, Italy, kills ten.
- Jul 15 - Jimmy Carter gets the Democratic nomination for president.
- Jul 21 - The Troubles: A bomb kills the British Ambassador to Ireland.
- Jul 28 - The Tangshan earthquake in China kills 242,769.
- Jul 29 - The Son of Sam commits his first murder.
- Aug 4 - The first outbreak of Legionnaire's Disease in Philadelphia.
- Aug 14 - The Troubles: 10,000 Catholic and Protestant women protest for peace in Ireland.
- Aug 19 - Ford is the Republican candidate for president.
- Aug 26 - The first Ebola outbreak in Zaire.
- Sep 6 - A pilot from the USSR defects via Japan.
- Sep 9 - Mao Tse Tung dies.
- Sep 17 - The US Space Shuttle Enterprise enters service, destined to fly in a few months.
- Oct 6 - A bomb fells Cubana Flight 455.
- Oct 6 - Bangkok student massacre.
- Oct 10 - A letter bomb injures the governor of Taiwan.
- Oct 19 - The Battle of Aishiya in Lebanon.
- Nov 2 - Jimmy Carter elected President.
- Nov 24 - An earthquake in Turkey kills 3,840 people.
- Dec 3 - Bob Marley is shot.
- Dec 23 - A new volcano erupts in Zaire.

US Culture

Music for this year includes "Sara Smile" by Hall and Oates, the Starland Vocal Band's "Afternoon Delight," "Play That Funky Music" by Wild Cherry and Grammy winner "I Write the Songs," by Barry Manilow. At the box office, viewers are treated to Rocky, Taxi Driver, The Omen, and Mother, Jugs and Speed.

1976—Progenitor

SUSPICION 3 TECHNOLOGY 4 ECONOMY 2 WARFARE 0

January

Warned in advance of a planned attack by Glóir, London is evacuated of civilians and garrisoned with troops and metahumans. Led by Lin Wen (p. 216), Barbara French (p. 218), Alyssa Veronne (p. 233), Boris Mizurski (p. 217) and Paige Rampling (p. 236), the British repulse Glóir and kill two of its members. During the battle, Glóir destroys the Tower Bridge, Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. They also kill 73 British soldiers, police officers, and fire fighters, and lose one more of their own members to friendly fire. Both sides claim victory.



The First Bank of Atlantis opens and issues its own currency, but is forced to close within a year due to demonstrations, harassment, and low numbers of accounts.

Roy Kilpatrick attains national attention with the publication of *God's Will Manifest*, a book claiming that dark energy is divine in origin. He stresses that, like free will itself, it can be twisted to evil ends, but ends the book on a hopeful note that 'light energy' (as he renames it) tends to draw out the best in its bearers.

February

Sykes Family, Jason Weeks, Atlantis: Abe Sykes (p. 173) restores the destroyed structures of London mere days before traveling to Guatemala on the advice of Jason Weeks, who foresees the earthquake before it occurs. Aided by The Dream (p. 229), Ngoc Vo (p. 186), Cynthia Carls (p. 214), Boris Mizurski, Lin Wen and Steelsuit Dowd (p. 206), Abe is able to reduce the force of the quake, evacuate the citizens, preserve or restore most of the buildings, and maintain civil order.

March

The United Kingdom passes a law making the willful use of dark energy illegal in Northern Ireland without a government permit.

Jack Grimes travels to China.

April

A group of scientist/entrepreneurs at Cal-Tech goes into business producing computers based on fiber-optics and high-efficiency diodes. They incorporate under the name "Apollo Computers."

ProgHarm: Intelligence agents spot strange, lightweight cars in Vietnam. (See page 324.)

Atlantis: Thirteen Atlanteans die when a bomb goes off in a fish market. Within twenty-four hours, three people are lynched in retaliation, despite the best efforts of Atlantean leaders to maintain order. This massive failure of 'laissez-faire justice' prompts an island-wide debate over law and order. No one is ever charged in any court over the incidents, despite concrete proof after the fact that two of the lynching victims couldn't have planted the bomb.

May

Sykes Family, Atlantis: When Abe mobilizes his associates to provide relief in Italy after its earthquake, hundreds protest the presence of Cynthia Carls, Boris Mizurski and Henry Dowd. The fact that the Italian quake was not predicted and prevented leads to conspiracy theories, the wildest being that Carls was causing earthquakes in order to create indebtedness to herself and, by extension, Atlantis.

Shavians: The sinking population of Shavians is noted, with best UN estimates placing their population at 3,000 worldwide.

June

When the US Ambassador in Beirut is assassinated, General Andrew Colt (p. 168) is enlisted to find and 'deal with' the perpetrators 'in an oblique and deniable fashion.' Despite his hesitation, Colt is ordered to act and he succeeds magnificently, from a military and political standpoint. Those closest to him, however, note how withdrawn and distracted he is, even at work. He begins drinking heavily and spending more and more time "inert," traveling the world with clairvoyance or communicating telepathically with Ngoc Vo.

The world is stunned when a hijacking is performed without metahuman interference.

July

German left wing terrorists escape with the aid of Zelda Estillón (p. 258).

ProgHarm: Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia form the “Indochinese Economic Gestalt” or IEG.

Sykes Family, Atlantis, ID/EA: Abe’s group of quake relief metahumans formally names itself “International Disaster/Emergency Assistance” or “ID/EA.”

August

Sykes Family: Amanda (p. 159) files for divorce, citing irreconcilable differences.

Richard Nixon gets nominated for the presidency.

The August 14th peace protests are marred by violence as Glóir members clash with British metahumans, but the battle is entirely fought in the sky, preventing civilian casualties.

September

The US launches “Enterprise Station”—a floating airport intended as a staging station for higher-altitude zeppelin flights.

Jack Grimes leaves China and enters the USSR.

ProgHarm: The Progressive Republic of Vietnam unveils its Tu Do power plant. The world is unimpressed (p. 323).

Atlantis: The People’s Voice of Atlantis declares that instead of police officers, the defense of Atlantis and its citizens will be entrusted to carefully screened and appointed superheroes.

October

Lyndon Johnson dies from a bomb at a Democratic Party fundraiser. It is determined that the bomb was put in place almost as soon as Johnson was confirmed as a speaker at the event, six months previous. The trigger is linked to a dark energy detector, ensuring that it only goes off when a power is used nearby.

Åism: Howard March uses his race-reversal power on Winston Koetke, beginning the process that ultimately turns Winston into “Å.”

November

Jimmy Carter is elected president of the US.

Sykes Family, ID/EA: Responding to a tip from a low-tier clairvoyant, the ID/EA attempts to prevent a Turkish earthquake but is refused entry to the country. After the quake strikes on schedule, ID/EA is allowed in, only to be assaulted by a mixed group of metahumans and heavily-armed normals. Amanda Sykes unexpectedly appears in mid-battle, killing several of the attackers.

December

Jason Weeks: Jason Weeks predicts the eruption in Zaire and is able to purchase a large stretch of land, including the volcano itself, cheaply.

1976

SUSPICION 2 TECHNOLOGY 4
ECONOMY 1 WARFARE 0

US Culture

Science fiction is big at the box office, with both Star Wars and Close Encounters of the Third Kind premiering. Annie Hall is the big Academy Award winner, but film fans also see Smokey and the Bandit, Airport '77 and Oh God! Music is dominated by the likes of ABBA, Barbara Streisand and Rod Stewart.

Jan 3 - Apple Computers incorporates.

Jan 10 - Volcanic eruption in Zaire.

Jan 18 - Scientists identify the Legionnaire's Disease bacteria.

Jan 19 - It snows in Miami for the first time in recorded history.

Jan 20 - Jimmy Carter becomes president of the US.

Jan 21 - Carter pardons draft dodgers.

Jan 24 - Massacre of Atocha occurs during Spain's transition to democracy.

Jan 31 - The Centre Georges Pompidou opens in Paris.

Feb 4 - Fleetwood Mac releases Rumors.

Feb 7 - The USSR launches Soyuz 24 to dock with Salyut 5.

Feb 18 - The shuttle Enterprise "flies" atop a 747.

Mar 4 - Bucharest earthquake kills 4,000.

Mar 9-13 - A dozen Hanafi Muslims take over three buildings in Washington DC and take 149 hostages. Two hostages are killed and Mayor Marion Barry is badly wounded.

Mar 26 - Dr. James Dobson founds Focus on the Family.

Apr 4 - Grundy, VA, floods with no fatalities but tremendous property damage.

Apr 7 - Red Army Faction kills Sigfried Buback.

April 8 - The Clash puts out their debut album.

April 28 - Captive leaders of the Red Army Faction are sentenced.

May 1 - Taksim Square Massacre in Turkey results in 34 deaths.

May 14 - A policeman is shot dead during a far left demonstration in Milan, Italy.

May 23 - Scientists use bacteria to make insulin in the laboratory.

May 23 - Moluccan terrorists take over a Netherlands school and a nearby train, holding both until June 11 when Dutch marines storm the train. Six terrorists and two hostages die.

May 25 - Star Wars debuts.

May 26 - George Willig climbs the World Trade Center south tower.

Jun 5 - Coup in the Seychelles.

Jun 5 - First Apple][on sale.

Jun 7 - Anita Bryant, supporting repeal of an anti-discrimination law, wins a political battle against homosexuals in Miami.

Jun 10 - James Earl Ray escapes (recaptured on Jun 13).

Jun 16 - Oracle 6 incorporates.

Jun 26 - Elvis' last concert.

Jun 26 - 200,000 protest Anita Bryant in San Francisco.

Jul 5 - Mohammad Zia ul-Haq overthrows Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan.

Jul 19-20 - Massive flooding in Johnstown PA.

Jul 22 - In China, Deng's back in, the Gang of Four is out.

Jul 24 - Final Led Zeppelin concert with the original members.

Jul 30 - Left wing German extremists assassinate bank chair Jürgen Ponto.

Aug 3 - US Senate holds hearings about MKULTRA.

Aug 3 - TRS-80 computer goes on sale.

Aug 10 - "Son of Sam" killer Berkowitz is captured.

Aug 15 - Elvis dies.

Sep 5 - Industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer is kidnapped and his escort murdered. Red Army Faction prisoners are demanded in exchange.

Sep 21 - Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty signed.

Sep 29 - The modern era of food stamps begins in the US.

Oct 13 - Four Palestinians hijack a flight to Somalia and demand the freedom of Red Army Faction leaders. The plane is stormed on Oct 17.

Oct 26 - The last natural case of smallpox is reported.

Nov 6 - Dam failure in Tocca GA kills 39.

Nov 8 - Harvey Milk elected in San Francisco.

Nov 22 - TCP/IP connects three ARPANET nodes.

Dec 1 - US stealth prototype "Have Blue," takes its first flight.

Dec 4 - Malaysia Airlines Flight 653 crashes during hijack.

1977—Progenitor

SUSPICION 3 TECHNOLOGY 5 ECONOMY 3 WARFARE 0

January

In an unclear falling-out, Zipperneck (p. 210) kills Jack Grimes (p. 213) in Bucharest.

The US begins an earnest national debate over legalizing marijuana.

February

Sykes Family: Amanda makes an unconsidered public crack about Carter pardoning draft dodgers. In reply, John Kerry heatedly points out that “Some of us who fought weren’t bulletproof.”

The USSR unveils Znamya (“the Banner,”) a space-based mirror capable of redirecting sunlight (see page 325).

A series of lighter-than-air craft takes American astronauts from the ground, to Enterprise skybase, and then to the stratosphere.

March

ProgHarm: The IEG begins a vigorous expansion of its navy.

Sykes Family, Atlantis, ID/EA: At the request of Bucharest’s government, Henry Dowd (p. 206) stays behind when ID/EA deploys there. Cynthia Carls (p. 214) also refrains from going.

Supported by metahuman mercenaries, the March 9 Hanafi attackers clash with Dowd and Hector Faran (p. 223). All the Hanafi metahumans die in the conflict, along with 117 civilians and Faran himself.

April

Sykes Family: Abe goes to the Grundy flood alone.

Atlantis: “Remember November” releases a biological attack on Atlantis, killing two and sickening over a hundred.

Jason Weeks: Weeks begins construction of a large structure on his volcano in Zaire.

May

Sykes Family: The Moluccan terrorists in the Netherlands are overwhelmed by a coalition of high-tier metahumans including Amy Sykes (p. 177), Amanda Sykes (p. 159), General Colt (p. 168) and Jedgar (p. 189).

The USSR announces a policy shift towards openness and tolerance called “The New Diversity.”

June

The first Apollo][computer is released.

Protests in San Francisco are marred by a massive, long-distance energy attack, similar in effect to those of Sét (p. 182), though smaller in scale. Two hundred and eleven people are killed and close to three thousand others injured. The energy launch is determined to have originated somewhere in the American midwest, and in an anonymous call from Cedar Rapids, a man calling himself “The Basher” claims responsibility.

July

James Earl Ray escapes and is smuggled to Europe, where Howard March (p. 225) finds and kills him.

August

The case against Richard Nixon for illegally negotiating with Vietnam is dismissed.

Åism: Howard March imbues Winston Koetke with dark energy.

Campaign Framework: Taking Up (Outer) Space

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It’s not hard, especially at high Tiers, to make a metahuman who can survive in outer space and move through it faster than any vehicle. The USSR and the US both use metahumans heavily in their attempts to explore (and control) the world beyond the atmosphere. Atlantis has its space-traveling metahumans as well, and Å’s doctrine of “solar destiny” soon catapults his followers beyond the stratosphere in vast numbers. But perhaps the most space-focused of all is Nguyet Cam and her Progressive Harmony nations. The PCs could be the tip of the space-spear for any of these factions. For although it’s never reported, there are deadly conflicts taking place out in the vast, inky darkness.

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1977

September

Paige Rampling (p. 236) announces that she's leaving the employ of Great Britain for West Germany.

October

Sykes Family: Amy and Amanda have a loud argument over retaliation for the April Atlantis attacks. Amy is sure that "Remember November" is behind it, while Amanda insists on finding proof that doesn't rely on any form of dark energy scan or intuition. "Proof that normal people will accept," she calls it, prompting Amy to take exception to the word 'normal.' Amanda briefly restrains Amy as Amy tries to walk away, but when Amy threatens to blow up the house, Amanda relents.

Jason Weeks: With his compound inhabitable, Weeks invites many metahumans to visit. Notably, both Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207) and Nguyet Cam (p. 164) accept. The three of them spend part of a week together and agree to assemble Nuryarya (p. 325).

Åism: Å (p. 238) begins assembling his Wisdom Council.

November

Atlantis, Sykes Family: Amy accepts a position as a professional Atlantean superhero. Amanda goes 'on retreat' in Peru, hiding out and avoiding the press.

ProgHarm: Indonesia complains to the UN Security Council about IEG ships performing maneuvers in the Java Sea, claiming that they consistently harass Indonesian-flagged cargo vessels and violate Indonesian territorial waters.

Åism: Å creates the final member of his Wisdom Council.

December

The United States repeals its federal ban on marijuana.

Atlantis: Dith Nguyen announces that he is not running for re-election as People's Servant.

Sykes Family: Persistent rumors claim Abe Sykes is dating Jacqueline Bisset.

1978

1978—Our History

SUSPICION	3	TECHNOLOGY	4	ECONOMY	1	WARFARE	0
Jan 1 - Sweeping US copyright changes take effect.		Feb 1 - Hilton bombing in Sydney kills 2.		Mar 3 - Ethiopia admits to having Cuban aid against Somalia in Ogaden.			
Jan 10 - A critic of the Nicaraguan government is assassinated, sparking anti-Somoza riots.		Feb 1 - Film maker Roman Polanski, awaiting sentencing for statutory rape, flees the country.		Mar 3 - Rhodesia attacks Zambia.			
Jan 14 - Hubert Humphrey dies of cancer.		Feb 6 - The Burmese military oppresses the Muslim minority in Sakkipara.		Mar 6 - Porn publisher Larry Flynt is shot and paralyzed.			
Jan 18 - The Troubles: The European Court of Human Rights finds the UK guilty of mistreating prisoners in Northern Ireland, but stops short of calling it torture.		Feb 11 - Somalia mobilizes in response to Ethiopia.		Mar 11 - Palestinian terrorists kill 34 in the Coastal Road Massacre.			
Jan 30 - Blizzards in the US kill 90.		Feb 16 - The first computer BBS goes live in Chicago.		Mar 14 - Israel invades Lebanon.			
		Feb 21 - The great Temple of Tenochtitlan unearthed below Mexico City.		Mar 16 - Red Brigades kidnap Aldo Moro, former premier of Italy, killing five of his bodyguards.			

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| Mar 17 - An oil tanker runs aground off the coast of Brittany. | May 12-13 - Mercenaries take over the Comoros. | Aug 26 - Pope John Paul I installed. |
| Mar 18 - The Prime Minister of Pakistan is sentenced to death for ordering the assassination of an opponent. | May 12 - Zaire asks for help with rebels. | Sep 5 - Anwar Sadat and Menachim Begin sign the Camp David peace accords. |
| Apr 7 - Carter delays production of the neutron bomb. | May 25 - The first Unibomber attack at Northwestern University. | Sep 8 - Iranian army shoots protesters, kills 122 and wounds 4,000. |
| Apr 9 - Coup fails in Somalia. | Jun 19 - The comic strip Garfield debuts. | Sep 28 - Pope John Paul I dies. |
| Apr 14 - Demonstration in Georgia over Soviet changes to the status of its official language. | Jun 20 - Earthquake in Thessaloniki kills 45. | Oct 1 - Vietnam attacks Cambodia. |
| Apr 22 - Musician Bob Marley eases political strife in Kingston. | Jun 21 - The Troubles: IRA shootout. | Oct 16 - Pope John Paul II installed. |
| Apr 25 - Anita Bryant comes to St. Paul, MN. | Jun 23 - In Yugoslavia, President-for-Life Tito takes charge. | Oct 27 - Sadat and Begin share a Nobel Peace Prize. |
| Apr 27-30 - Afghan coup puts in a new, pro-Soviet leader. | Jun 24 - The president of the Yemen Arab Republic is killed. | Nov 5 - Rioters sack the British Embassy in Tehran. |
| May 9 - Aldo Moro found dead in Rome. | Jun 26 - A bomb damages Versailles. | Nov 18 - The Jonestown Massacre. |
| | Jun 30 - Ethiopia attacks Eritrea. | Nov 27 - Dan White assassinates Milk and Moscone. |
| | Jul 25 - The first test tube baby is born. | Dec 11 - Two million demonstrate against the Shah in Iran. |
| | Aug 6 - Pope Paul VI dies. | Dec 25 - Vietnam launches a major offensive against the Khmer Rouge. |

US Culture

In addition to comedies like *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* and *The Bad News Bears Go to Japan*, theaters also show more serious fare like the Vietnam war films *Coming Home* and *The Deer Hunter*. In music, A Taste of Honey beats out Elvis Costello for the best new artist Grammy, but it's an honor just to be nominated. Billy Joel's "Just the Way You Are" wins awards and radio play, and the songs "Lay Down Sally" and "Dust in the Wind" provide an occasional respite from the Bee Gees.

1978—Progenitor

SUSPICION 2 TECHNOLOGY 6 ECONOMY 3 WARFARE 1

January

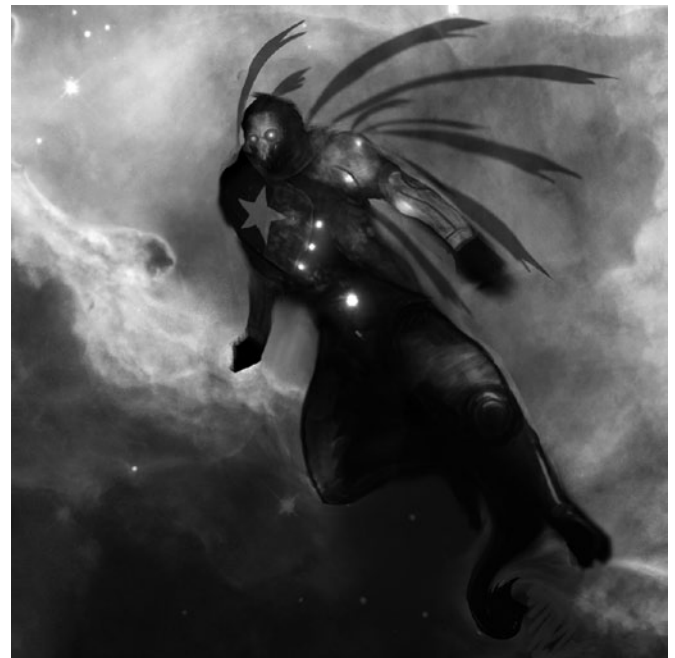
ProgHarm: To the great shock of many westerners, a hastily-convened diplomatic meeting between Indonesia's President Suharto and IEG leader Bao Verong (p. 355) ends abruptly when Suharto begins screaming threats and invective about the IEG's "mind control music" and "territorial appetite." After storming out of the meeting in Manila, Suharto immediately throws the full weight of the Indonesian navy against Vietnam and Cambodia.

Atlantis: The US formally recognizes Atlantis as a sovereign nation and begins negotiating to establish an embassy. Rather than cede part of the island, Cynthia Carls (p. 214) simply offers to "put up a new island" nearby.

February

Sykes Family: The Sakkipara muslims publicly plead for Amanda Sykes (p. 159) to save them from the Burmese. She declines with a curt statement issued through a spokesman. The most pertinent quote is, "Miss Sykes does not consider it wise for a US citizen to take sides in a foreign nation's internal affairs."

ProgHarm: Lured into a trap near Phu Quoc island, a large Indonesian expeditionary force striking at IEG shipyards is scuttled by a cloud of small, fast and maneuverable short-range attack boats. Two



1978

days later, IEG's larger ships shell the city of Ibu on Halmahera island, leaving it shaken and unable to respond to amphibious landings to the north and south. Within two days, Ibu is overrun, occupied and locked down.

In the USSR, official restraints on religious practice are eased and numerous public statements assure the public that under the New Diversity, the only position government is taking on matters of faith or faithlessness is that of a disinterested neutral peacemaker pursuing social order and freedom for all.

March

Jason Weeks, Åism: Å (p. 238) and several members of his Wisdom Council meet with Jason Weeks (p. 195) in Algiers. Their discussions last for hours, but neither party ever describes what was talked about.

April

Sykes Family: Abe (p. 173) heals Penthouse publisher Larry Flynt after an attacker's gunshot puts him in a wheelchair. Despite many jokes ("Whoa, you wouldn't think a superhero would be so eager for his porn!") Abe clearly explains that he objects to "assassination as a form of... social statement, really. I don't stand for what Mr. Flynt does. I don't agree with all his decisions. But I don't think he deserved to be shot and crippled. Really, I just want people to think that shooting public figures they dislike is a waste of time. Maybe then they'll stop doing it."

Atlantis: Atlantis announces a space exploration program based entirely on the use of dark energy manipulation.

May

Åism: The mercenary coup against Ali Soilih in the Comoros is immediately followed by an influx of Åist foreigners, who begin agitating against the regime of Ahmed Abdallah and Bob Denard.

June

The IRA attack on a Royal Ulster Constabulary patrol car kills one policeman and seizes another, but the kidnapped officer is found and freed by Lin Wen (p. 216) and Paige Rampling (p. 236)

Psychologists report that a marijuana-legalization syntergene has been at play in the US for at least twenty months. The so called "Burning Spear" syntergene is found to be carried in an 8x11 color image that, seen from one direction, is a winged lion and, seen upside down, is a snake coiling around a tree.

July

Åism: The Comoros dissolve into anarchy. Å invites Denard and Abdallah to a summit in Zaire, but they send a representative, and no binding agreement is reached. Å then travels to Paris to discuss matters with Denard and Abdallah's French backers.

Microbos Incorporated unveils the first fully biological computer circuit.

Jason Weeks: Jason Weeks announces that he is opening Global Human University in Zaire. He begins traveling the globe issuing personal invitations to professors and academics. One of the first to accept is outgoing Atlantean leader Dith Ngyuen.

Atlantis: In the second Atlantean election, Ngoc Vo (p. 186) is elected People's Servant. Her Atlantean Socialist party retains its three seats on the People's Voice, while the island's Progressive Harmony party takes a seat from Cynthia Carls' One World Energy, leaving them with two. With a

more coherent policy leaning towards libertarianism (as opposed to simply being the “none of the above” party), Faction Four keeps a seat and gains one. Jack Grimes’ (p. 213) old Progressive party is the big loser, barely holding onto a single seat after the death of their founder “Carlos Moses.”

August

ProgHarm: Completely ignoring UN condemnation and American saber-rattling, the IEG transports a massive invasion force to Halmahera and convincingly demonstrates several “super weapons” against Indonesian guerillas there. At the request of the Secretary of Defense, General Colt (p. 168) reads minds of the invasion force to find they’d been training to take Halmahera since March 1977.

Chicago launches a service for wireless, portable telephones operating on a “cell” network.

Despite the government’s public statements, there are several ugly incidents involving religion in the USSR. In the most telling episode, a newly opened mosque is raided by police and shut down, though later permitted to re-open once “certain zoning irregularities” are “tidied up.” During the raid, four men are injured, allegedly while resisting arrest.

September

Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207) drops dead of completely asymptomatic hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Her aides and allies immediately suspect either KGB skullduggery or a dark energy assassination. The animosity between hardline atheist communists and truculent Russian believers deepens with marked speed.

October

ProgHarm: After fending off abortive Indonesian attacks on Kampong Saom and Krong Kaoh Kong in Cambodia, both cities are rocked by large, though peaceful, demonstrations against the Progressive Harmony regime. Bao Verong himself travels to Cambodia to “address the concerns of the protesters.”

Atlantis: Investigations into the “Burning Spear” syntergene trace its New York City debut to a ship that arrived from Atlantis.

November

ProgHarm, Sykes Family: The Cambodian anti-Harmony movement goes underground to avoid Bao Verong’s control, and begins to engage in sabotage and vandalism. Amanda Sykes travels to Cambodia to aid and protect the rebels, helping them spread their message from the cities to the countryside and helping them organize and communicate.

Atlantis: Voting almost unanimously, the US repeals its cannabis legalization laws. The vote to break off diplomatic contact with Atlantis, however, is narrowly defeated after Deionne Bright (p. 192) hurriedly releases a single pointing out that there’s no way to know whether Atlantis did it or just one Atlantean.

December

Sykes Family, ProgHarm: Amanda finds that even her powers are overtaxed trying to single-handedly support the Cambodian revolution. She asks her old army allies for help, but General Colt (p. 168) retires rather than, as he puts it, “start that old wound bleeding again.” Steelsuit Dowd (p. 206) and Joe Smith (p. 220) both agree to infiltrate and assist.

SUSPICION	3	TECHNOLOGY	3	ECONOMY	1	WARFARE	1
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Jan 1 - The US and China agree to full diplomatic relations.	Mar 28 - The Three Mile Island meltdown.	Jul 3 - Cater sends secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul.
Jan 4 - Ohio pays \$675,000 to the families of the Kent State shooting victims.	Mar 30 - The Troubles: A conservative member of parliament from Northern Ireland is killed by a car bomb.	Jul 11 - SKYLAB returns to Earth.
Jan 7 - The Vietnamese army announces the fall of Pol Pot.	Apr 2 - Anthrax leak in Sverdlovsk.	Jul 12 - Crime Boss Carmine Galante killed.
Jan 16 - The Shah of Iran flees.	Apr 10 - Texas tornado kills 42.	Jul 16 - Saddam Hussein takes power in Iraq.
Jan 19 - Former US Attorney General Mitchell is released.	Apr 11 - Tanzanian troops take the capital of Uganda. Idi Amin flees.	Jul 17 - Somoza flees Nicaragua for Florida.
Jan 31 - The West Bengal massacre at Morichjapi island.	Apr 15 - Montenegro earthquake kills 136.	Jul 19 - Marxist Sandinistas in Nicaragua.
Feb 1 - President Carter commutes Patti Hearst's sentence.	Apr 20 - Jimmy Carter is attacked by a rabbit.	Aug 27 - The Troubles: Lord Mountbatten and three others killed by the IRA, and an IRA ambush kills 27 soldiers.
Feb 1 - Ayatollah Khomeini returns to Iran after a fifteen-year exile.	May 4 - Margaret Thatcher becomes PM of Great Britain.	Oct 1-6 - Pope John Paul II visits the US.
Feb 7 - The Ayatollah's followers rise up to seize Iran.	May 9 - Unabomb at Northwestern U.	Oct 16 - Tsunami kills 23 in France.
Feb 10-11 - The Iranian army joins the Islamic Revolution.	May 21 - San Francisco riot over the White/Milk not guilty verdict.	Oct 26 - President of South Korea assassinated.
Feb 11 - Khomeini takes power in Iran.	Jun 2 - Pope John Paul II in Poland, the first pope to visit a communist land.	Nov 1 - The Iran hostage crisis begins.
Feb 12 - The PM of Chad attempts to overthrow its President.	Jun 3 - Ixtoc I oil spill in Mexico.	Nov 7 - Ted Kennedy announces a challenge to Carter for the Democrat nomination.
Feb 14 - The US Ambassador to Afghanistan is killed.	Jun 4 - Jerry Rawlings takes over in Ghana after a military coup.	Nov 20 - Two hundred militants occupy Mecca. French troops are permitted inside to expel them.
Feb 17 - Vietnam: China invades Vietnam.	Jun 18 - Carter and Brezhnev sign the SALT II treaty.	Nov 21 - The US Embassy in Pakistan is attacked.
Feb 18 - Snow in the Sahara.	Jun 25 - The Red Army Faction tries to kill NATO commander Al Haig.	Dec 21 - Rhodesian ceasefire.
Mar 8 - The first CD is released.		Dec 24 - The Soviets invade Afghanistan.
Mar 13 - Coup in Grenada.		
Mar 25 - The first functional space shuttle goes to Cape Kennedy.		

US Culture

1979 Oscar nominations favor serious fare like *Apocalypse Now*, *Kramer vs. Kramer* and *Breaking Away*, but theatergoers can also take in *Alien*, *The Muppet Movie* or *The Jerk*.

Music fans can get The Knack's "My Sharona," "Ring My Bell" by Anita Ward or Blondie's "Heart of Glass" on either vinyl or 8-Track.

1979—Progenitor

SUSPICION	2	TECHNOLOGY	5	ECONOMY	3	WARFARE	2
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January

ProgHarm: The US backs the Shah of Iran by sending in Brenda Harkness and Bryson Maas-Thierry (p. 206). The IEG counters by sending its own metahuman tacticians to covertly aid the Islamic Revolution.

ProgHarm: "Steelsuit" Dowd (p. 206) dies fighting in Cambodia and his body is dragged through the streets. The resulting international furor (and weak US claims that Dowd was acting on his own)

culminates with the US being censured by the UN, Bao Verong (p. 355) demanding an apology, and widespread protests in Minnesota and California.

Sykes Family: Abe's (p. 173) group ID/EA disbands in the wake of Dowd's death and disgrace.

February

The army revolts against the Shah in Iran, and the US withdraws its support in the face of the Dowd scandal. The Shah flees.

March

ProgHarm: China attacks Vietnam and is quickly rebuffed by superior Vietnamese organization and technology.

Khomeini takes over in Iran.

Sykes Family, Jason Weeks: Weeks perceives the impending Three Mile Island disaster in time to issue a warning. When it's ignored, Amanda Sykes (p. 159) has to come in to purify the radiation.

April

Sykes Family: Without ID/EA, Abe is pretty much on his own for Motenegro and the Texas twister. Amanda is photographed with Joe Namath, though both later insist that they're "just friendly." Astute observers notice that Amanda looks younger than she did in 1978, but many chalk it up to the effects of a divorce, a different haircut, or nigh-omnipotence.

Atlantis: Ngoc Vo (p. 186), struggling with economic difficulties, personally uncovers a minor hyperbrain named Trudy Newhouse as the source of the "Burning Spear" syntergene and remands her to US law enforcement. While this eases tensions between the US and Atlantis, it's poison for her domestic popularity.

May

A metahuman called "Slugger" breaks Dan White out of prison. White turns himself back in and alerts the police to Slugger's location and identity.

Metapocalypse: "Metal Virus" (p. 283) begins construction of his seed cache.

June

"The Basher" who attacked San Francisco in 1977 is uncovered in Des Moines by the concerted efforts of three metahumans individually based in Wisconsin, Nebraska and Kansas. After a massive battle, the Basher and two of his opponents die, along with seventeen Des Moines residents.

In concert with the Red Army Faction, Terrence O'Shay (p. 242) kills Al Haig.

July

Zipperneck Russo (p. 210) ravages the New York Mafia in an attempt to unify it under his control, until a mid-tier teleporter sends him far, far away from Earth. He doesn't find his way back until 1981.

August

Terrence O'Shay and Glóir sink two British battleships.

In a backlash against "New Diversity" policies, the USSR cracks down on "unauthorized religious displays and activities."

September

Atlantis: Ngoc Vo's aggressive push for taxation as a solution to Atlantis' ongoing economic woes culminates with a recall election. A Faction Four candidate replaces her.

October

Scientists in India isolate a bioengineered virus in Chinese inoculations, apparently intended to sterilize women who have already had children. The claims are disparaged and receive little public attention.

The USSR suffers a series of public demonstrations and peaceful work stoppages, but the crowds disperse before the police use force.

November

Sykes Family: The Iranian hostage crisis turns into a bloodbath when Amanda attempts to intervene, only to trigger a number of explosives wired to dark-energy proximity fuses. For the first time, criticism of her intervention seems to be mainstream, not only from the ideological fringes.

An internal struggle within the Kremlin results in a large turnover, putting supporters of the "New Diversity" back in authority.

December

The USSR's invasion of Afghanistan is brutal, with the widespread deployment of laser weaponry and reputed "metabolic enhancers" allowing the Soviet army to move swiftly, unseen, and strike silently.

1980

1980—Our History

SUSPICION	4	TECHNOLOGY	3	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	1
Jan 4 - Carter puts a grain embargo on the USSR.		Jan 7 - Carter signs a \$1.5 billion Chrysler bailout.		Mar 18 - Vostok-2M Rocket blows up on the pad at the Plesetsk Cosmodome.			
Jan 6 - The Mafia kills the president of Sicily.		Jan 9 - Sixty-three Muslims are beheaded in Mecca for their siege of the Great Mosque in November 1979.		Mar 24 - Archbishop Romero killed during mass in San Salvador. 42 killed six days later at his funeral.			
		Jan 21 - Gold hits a record high price.		Mar 27 - Norwegian oil platform collapses, killing 123.			
		Jan 26 - Israel and Egypt establish diplomatic relations.		Mar 27 - Silver Thursday market crash.			
		Jan 27 - Six US diplomats escape Iran by claiming Canadian citizenship.		Apr 1 - Mariel boatlift from Cuba starts.			
		Jan 31 - Guatemala's Spanish embassy is invaded and burned, with 36 deaths.		Apr 2 - St. Paul's riot in Bristol.			
		Feb 2 - FBI conducts its ABSCAM sting.		Apr 12 - Coup in Liberia.			
		Feb 2-3 - New Mexico State Penitentiary riot.		Apr 18 - Robert Mugabe takes over in Zimbabwe.			
		Feb 27 - M-19 Guerillas besiege the Dominican embassy in Columbia, taking 60 hostages.		Apr 24-25 - The US attempts to rescue the Iranian hostages with "Operation Eagle Claw." It fails.			
				Apr 30 - Iranian embassy siege in London.			



May 4 - Yugoslavian president Tito dies.	Jun 3 - Nebraska tornadoes kill 5.	Aug 2 - Bombing in Italy kills 85.
May 9 - Norco, CA shootout. Five heavily-armed bank robbers eventually damaged 33 police vehicles, including a chopper. One cop dies, eight are wounded. Two robbers die, three are captured.	Jun 3 - Ted Kennedy can't overtake Carter in the polls.	Aug 14 - Carter secures the Democrat nomination.
May 17 - A Miami court acquits four police officers of shooting Arthur McDuffie. Three days of race riots ensue.	Jun 10 - An airline president receives a Unabomb but escapes with minor injuries.	Sep 12 - Military coup in Turkey.
May 17 - Shining Path attack on Peruvian polling station.	Jun 23-Sep 6 - Heat wave in the US kills 1,700.	Sep 17 - Solidarity movement gains strength in Poland.
May 18 - Mount Saint Helens erupts, killing 57 in the northwestern US.	Jun 25 - A Muslim Brotherhood attempt on the life of the Syrian president fails, inviting army reprisals.	Sep 22 - The Iran-Iraq war begins.
May 22 - Pac-Man video game released.	Jul 8 - Widespread strikes in Poland.	Sep 26 - Mariel boatlift ends.
May 18-27 - 2,000 pro-democracy protesters killed in Gwangju, South Korea.	Jul 10 - Alexandra Palace burns in London.	Oct 10 - Algerian quake at El Asnam kills 2,600.
	Jul 16 - The Republicans nominate Ronald Reagan.	Oct 28 - Reagan beats Carter in a presidential debate.
	Jul 19 - The retired PM of Turkey is killed.	Oct 31 - The Shah's son claims the peacock throne of Iran.
	Jul 27 - The deposed Shah of Iran dies.	Nov 4 - Ronald Reagan elected.
		Nov 21 - Fire at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.
		Nov 23 - Quake in Italy kills over 3,000.
		Dec 8 - John Lennon is shot in New York City.

US Culture

Movies in 1980 include The Empire Strikes Back, 9 to 5, Friday the 13th and Herbie Goes Bananas. But Oscar snubs those films in favor of Raging Bull and Ordinary People. Music hits include "Rock With You" by Michael Jackson, "Another Brick in the Wall" by Pink Floyd, and Christopher Cross' "Ride Like the Wind."

1980—Progenitor

SUSPICION	3	TECHNOLOGY	6	ECONOMY	2	WARFARE	2
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January

Russian metahumans ensure the failure of the US grain embargo.

The home computer market is flooded from all directions. Low-end computers are dominated by Microbos' Corporation's biochips. The lion's share of the mid-range market falls to IBM's electronic computers. Optical chips are the basis of the most expensive and powerful machines, and Apollo computing is paramount there. OS incompatibilities are rife.

Paige Rampling's contract with West Germany ends and, when they're unable to meet her price, she takes a job working for Great Britain.

February

ProgHarm: The IEG begins constructing the space elevator Thien The Thang Máy (p. 328) on Halmahera island.

Metapocalypse: Metal Virus (p. 283) starts traveling.

Áism: Áites demonstrate peacefully in South West Africa, insisting that consciousness in conflict is an abomination.

Roy Kilpatrick (p. 76) mounts a US Senate bid. It's ultimately unsuccessful but gathers many disparate elements together with its emphasis on metahuman issues as an expression of culture war.

1980

March

A secret Russian launch is scuttled by The Dream (p. 229), Hector Faran (p. 223), Joe Smith (p. 220), and Louis Vaux (p. 189). The payload, a nuclear-powered particle beam, irradiates the surrounding region, but within hours the radioactivity is cleared by an unknown metahuman.

A Catholic equipped with time control foils the San Salvador assassination. Despite what later conspiracy theorists claim, she maintains until her death that her presence there was entirely providential.

Mama Schone's Finest Foods, Inc., is brought up on several antitrust charges. They are eventually dropped.

April

Jason Weeks, Sykes Family: Organized by Jean Davis (p. 250), a mob of twenty-one Tier 7 through 10 metahumans attempts to ambush and assassinate Amanda Sykes (p. 159). All of them are infected, dangerous and (in Jean's opinion) disposable. The most powerful member of the group is probably the time-controlling rapist, Evan Broward (power-father to Veronica O'Malley, page 280), but The Fantasmobile (p. 294) is also involved. Jason Weeks' (p. 195) investigations uncover the plot and he alerts Andrew Colt, who brings in law enforcement, warns Amanda, and recruits Ian Kraus (p. 222), The Energy (p. 244) and The Dream (p. 229) to help defend her. As a result, all twenty-one attackers survive being subdued and arrested.

May

Hoover, Åism: The riots in Florida are inflamed when Howard March (p. 225) returns to the US and mingles with the crowds, attacking police officers, race-switching wantonly, and offsetting The Dream's efforts at pacification. A few followers of Å accompany him, but Jedgar is aware of their goals and manages to get many of the most destructive or influential Åite metahumans stopped at the border. Afterwards, Reddy March flees to Mexico.

Cynthia Carls (p. 214) is permitted into the US to "soothe" Mount Saint Helens' and restructure the clashing tectonic plates beneath to prevent sudden expulsions.

June

Pearl (p. 272) realizes that she was being pushed towards participation in the April Sykes attack and begins trying to figure out what's going on.

Congress funds a project to deploy space mirrors to prevent another heat wave.

AT&T's monopoly is broken up into the "Baby Bells," setting the stage for widespread cell phone speculation.

Andrew Colt's wife divorces him.

July

Sykes Family: Abe Sykes goes to London to repair the burned palace. While there, he agrees to heal the Shah of Iran.

August

Andrew Colt's ex-wife tracks down Ngoc Vo (p. 186) in Paris and makes a loud, humiliating public scene shrieking at her. There is much speculation over whether Ms. Colt has a power that prevents Vo from escaping, or whether Ngoc is fixed in place by sheer mortification.

Jason Weeks: Global Human University begins offering free Nuryarya (p. 325) classes.

ProgHarm: Progressive Harmony gets a foothold in Nicaragua.

September

ID/EA, Sykes Family: Abe Sykes quietly begins putting together a “New ID/EA”—essentially a communication tree of willing metahumans in various regions throughout the world who can respond to emergencies or metahuman conundrums. Ngoc Vo is a primary component, serving as the communication and transport hub.

October

Sykes Family, Åism: Unwelcome in Algeria, Abe goes in secret. A suspected American spy, he gets trapped and attacked by Shi’ite metahumans before Å (p. 238) intercedes personally. Å hosts Abe graciously for a week before helping him return to the US.

November

Personal GEVs (p. 329) go onto the market.

Pearl finds and kills Jean Davis, who reincarnates in West Germany.

Reagan wins the US presidential election.

December

Small cell phones hit the market.

1981—Our History

1981

SUSPICION	3	TECHNOLOGY	3	ECONOMY	1	WARFARE	1
Jan 5 - Margaret Thatcher reshuffles her cabinet.		Feb 23 - Spanish coup attempt.		May 13 - Pope John Paul II shot.			
Jan 17 - Ferdinand Marcos lifts martial law in the Philippines.		Mar 1 - The Troubles: Bobby Sands begins a hunger strike.		May 30 - The President of Bangladesh is assassinated.			
Jan 20 - Ronald Reagan takes office.		Mar 6 - Walter Cronkite retires.		Jun 5 - First recognized cases of AIDS.			
Jan 21 - The first DeLorean automobile is made in Dunmurry, North Ireland.		Mar 11 - Pinochet gets elected for eight more years in Chile.		Jun 7 - Israel destroys an Iraqi nuclear reactor.			
Jan 25 - The British Social Democratic Party forms.		Mar 19 - Three workers killed during a test of the Columbia space shuttle.		Jun 12 - Major League Baseball strike.			
Jan 25 - Madame Mao sentenced to death in China.		Mar 30 - Robert Hinckley Jr. shoots Ronald Reagan.		Jun 22 - Iranian president deposed.			
Feb 8 - Pireus sports stampede.		Apr 10 - The Troubles: Bobby Sands is elected a member of the House of Commons.		Jun 29 - A man armed with a machine gun takes hostages at the FBI office in Atlanta for three hours before dying in a shootout.			
Feb 13 - Rupert Murdoch buys the Times and the Sunday Times.		Apr 11 - Brixton riot in South London.		Jul 3 - Toxteth & Chapeltown race riots in the UK.			
Feb 14 - Australia refuses to recognize the Pol Pot regime.		May 5 - The Troubles: Bobby Sands dies.		Jul 17 - Israel attacks Beirut, earning global condemnation.			
		May 10 - François Mitterand elected in France.					

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US Culture

Top grossing films in 1981 include Raiders of the Lost Ark and Porky's, along with serious releases Chariots of Fire and My Dinner With Andre. On the radio, one hears "Bette Davis Eyes" by Kim Carnes, "Celebration" by Kool and the Gang, and "Theme From 'The Greatest American Hero'" by Joey Scarbury. Also, Devo's "Whip It."

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| Jul 17 - Bloody coup d'etat in Bolivia. | Sep 19 - A half-million people attend a free Simon & Garfunkel concert in Central Park. | but nothing gets accomplished. |
| Jul 29 - Lady Diana Spencer weds Prince Charles. | | Dec 11 - Muhamad Ali's last fight—a loss to Trevor Berbick. |
| Aug 1 - MTV launch. | Oct 6 - Anwar Sadat assassinated. | |
| Aug 3 - Air traffic controllers go on strike. | Oct 10 - The Troubles: IRA bomb in London. | Dec 11 - An Army massacre in El Salvador kills 900. |
| Aug 5 - Reagan fires 11,000 air traffic controllers. | Oct 27 - A Soviet sub runs aground near a Swedish military base. | Dec 13 - Martial law declared in Poland. |
| Aug 19 - American jets shoot down Libyan jets. | Nov 23 - Reagan authorizes the CIA to recruit and support the Contras. | Dec 15 - Car bomb in front of the Iraqi embassy in Lebanon. |
| Aug 28 - South Africa invades Angola. | Nov 25 - Mercenaries attempt a coup in the Seychelles. | Dec 28 - The first U.S. test tube baby is born. (The first in the world was born in 1978.) |
| Aug 31 - A bomb goes off at a USAF base in Germany. | Nov 30 - The US and USSR negotiate in Geneva, | Dec 31 - Coup d'etat in Ghana. |

1981—Progenitor

SUSPICION	2	TECHNOLOGY	6	ECONOMY	2	WARFARE	2
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January

ProgHarm: The Progressive Harmony party of the USA forms.

Atlantis: Atlantean population grows. The dominant political questions concern immigration reform and social justice.

February

ProgHarm: Australia refuses to recognize the IEG. The Australian Progressive Harmony party offers Nuryarya (p. 325) classes.

Howard “Reddy” March (p. 225) gets married.

March

Thanks to a Tier Ten Secret Service agent who can detect metal, Robert Hinckley Jr. is intercepted before he shoots President Reagan.

The plan for the next US foray into space is revealed: A higher altitude air station (p. 321) featuring a mass driver cannon to launch material out of Earth’s gravity well. The offensive capacities of the cannon are decried by China, the USSR and the IEG.

April

ProgHarm: The IEG announces a deep space probe program.

Competition begins between phone companies as they attempt to settle on a single standard for information linkage. The three primary systems depend heavily on hardware implementation either through biological computing, optic circuits, or silicon chips.

May

ProgHarm: The Israeli Progressive Harmony party forms after a visit from Bao Verong (p. 355).

Though ill, the pope declines offers of healing from metahumans.

The first computer virus in history is detected.

June

ProgHarm: Ronald Reagan meets face to face with Bao Verong in Paris.

Atlantis, Åism: A “Temple of the Truth of Å” opens on Atlantis, on the same day as a scheduled celebration over Atlantis’ main settlement (Carlsville) reaching a population of 2,500.

July

Lin Wen (p. 216) provides security for Deionne Bright (p. 192) and Brenda Harkness (p. 206) as they calm the UK race riots.

Jason Weeks: Weeks writes a cover story for The Economist warning that unless HIV, the AIDS virus, is not quickly contained, it has the potential to become a global disaster.

Memetic warfare is uncovered in Israel. Operating through a popular advertising jingle, it encourages Israeli men to abuse their wives. Evidence indicates it originated in Iran, but nothing is conclusively proven.

August

After the Libyan and American jets clash, a second engagement occurs between American and Arab metahumans, though all states involved insist the combatants are simply hot-headed individuals and not at all acting on covert government orders.

Zipperneck (p. 210) returns from outer space, finds the family of the teleporter who exiled him, and starts killing them one by one until the teleporter agrees to blow his own brains out in public.

September

Atlantis, Shavians: The USSR announces a manned mission to Mars. So does a group of Atlantean Shaw Monsters.

Jason Weeks, Shavians: At Global Human University, Jason begins a secret project to enable Shavians to reproduce.

October

The IRA releases a syntergene in London that causes massive traffic jams.

Jason Weeks: Weeks identifies a previously unidentified germ as the common factor between all the attackers in the April 1980 attempt on Amanda Sykes’ life. Upon isolating the disease, he names it Selarosis Maxilliae.

November

ProgHarm: Reagan authorizes the CIA to recruit and support the Contras against the Progressive Harmony organization in Nicaragua.

General Andrew Colt (p. 168) is quietly encouraged to retire after his drinking becomes an undeniable issue. His failure to find General James Dozier after the Italian Red Brigades kidnap him makes his problem one too big to ignore.

Campaign Framework: Tomb Råbbers

Njabulo, the Åite Seeker of the Dead, has the ability to harvest energy from dead metahumans and bestow it on others. By himself he’s a pretty powerful, but when you’re trying to find the corpses of murdered superheroes and steal their power, you face very powerful opposition. So the PCs are Njabulo’s backup as he travels the globe looking for dark energy to harvest.

If you have a group that responds well to missions from a GMC patron, you could do a lot worse than the Seeker of the Dead. His best role in a fight is making the PCs more awesome, by nature he’s taciturn and he’s not all that cosmopolitan. With some care, you can have him follow PC advice (hell, make ‘em powers behind his throne!) while still giving you a good way to cut down on nonproductive debate. And you can blindside the gang with the Metapocalypse in 1983 and leave them all the dead metahumans they could want... if they can get back home to Africa.

Shavians, ProgHarm: The IEG announces its formal recognition of Shavians as sentient creatures deserving of all legal protections offered to humans. It issues an apology for the past and makes overtures of offering national citizenship to interested “Children of Shaw.”

Åism, Jason Weeks: Working closely with Garfield Moloi (p. 369), Jason Weeks and the Åites create an inoculation for Selarosis Maxilliae.

Howard March’s first child, a son named Howard Junior, is born.

1982

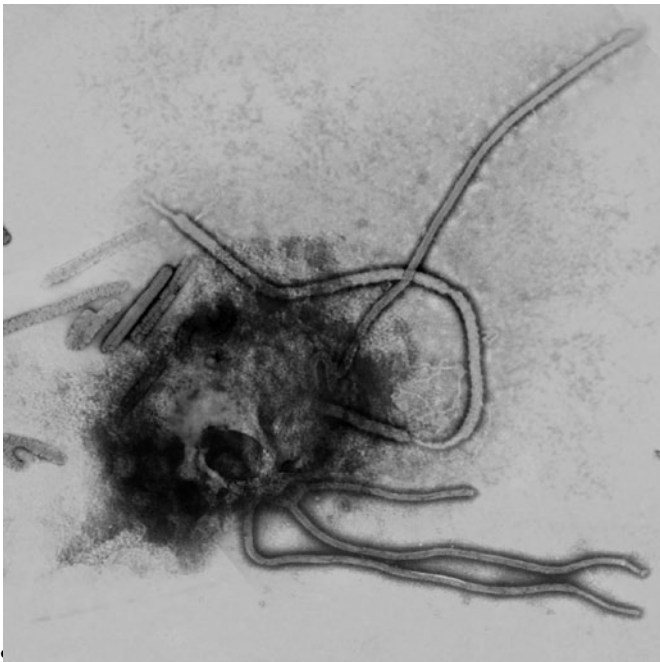
1982—Our History

SUSPICION 3 TECHNOLOGY 3 ECONOMY 0 WARFARE 1

US Culture

Recognizable eighties classics like “Who Can It Be Now?” from Men At Work, “867-5309/Jenny” by Tommy Tutone and “Eye of the Tiger” by Survivor hit the airwaves, along with Willie Nelson’s “Always on My Mind” and the Rolling Stones’ “Waiting on a Friend.” Movie fans go see E.T.—The Extra-Terrestrial, Sophie’s Choice, An Officer and a Gentleman, and The Road Warrior.

Jan 8 - AT&T breaks up into 22 subdivisions.	goal. Sets a new scoring record of 96 for the ‘82 season.	Jul 9 - Michael Fagan breaks into Queen Elizabeth II’s bedroom.
Jan 11 - Margaret Thatcher’s son disappears in the Sahara. He’s found on Jan 14.	Mar 9 - Charles Haughey becomes Taoiseach of the Republic of Ireland.	Jul 20 - The Troubles: Two IRA bombs in London kill eight soldiers.
Jan 11-17 - The US midwest experiences a brutal cold snap.	Mar 18-19 - Argentines deploy to South Georgia island, a small UK holding near South America.	Jul 24 - Torrential rains and mudslides in Nagasaki kill close to 300 people.
Jan 13 - Washington DC is shaken by a plane crash and a metro train derailment on the same day.	Apr 2 - The Falkland Islands war begins.	Aug 4 - The UN censures Israel.
Jan 28 - US General Dozier rescued from Italy’s Red Brigades after 42 days.	Apr 17 - Canada becomes fully independent of the UK.	Aug 12 - Mexico’s inability to pay its debts prompts a latin American economic crisis.
Feb 2 - Hama Massacre in Syria.	Apr 25 - Israel withdraws from the Sinai in accordance with a peace treaty.	Sep 3 - The Mafia murders an Italian general, Carlo Albert Dalla Chiesa.
Feb 15 - Oil platform sinks off Newfoundland.	May 1 - World’s Fair in Knoxville TN.	Sep 14 - The President-Elect of Lebanon is assassinated.
Feb 19 - Delorean’s car factory goes into receivership.	May 5 - Unabomb at Vanderbilt U.	Sep 18 - Lebanese Christians massacre thousands of refugees.
Feb 24 - Wayne Gretsky breaks his own record with his 773d	May 12 - A priest tries to stab the pope at Fatima.	Sep 25 - 400,000 marchers in Israel want Menachem Begin out.
	May 24 - KGB chief Andropov appointed to the Secretariat of the Communist Party in the USSR.	Sep 29-Oct 1 - Chicago Tylenol poisonings.
	May 30 - Spain joins NATO.	Oct 1 - EPCOT opens in FL.
	Jun 6 - Israel invades Lebanon, to UN condemnation.	Oct 8 - Poland bans Solidarity.
	Jun 12 - Anti-nuclear rally in NYC’s Central Park draws 750,000.	Oct 15 - Savings and Loans deregulated in the US.
	Jun 13 - Fahd becomes king of Saudi Arabia.	Nov 3 - Dow hits a record high.
	Jun 14 - The Falklands war ends.	Nov 14 - Lech Walesa is released from prison.
	Jun 30 - The ERA fails to get amended to the US Constitution.	Nov 30 - Michael Jackson’s Thriller premieres.
	Jul 6 - Lunar eclipse.	Dec 2 - The first artificial heart is implanted.
		Dec 12 - 30,000 women demonstrate for peace at Greenham Common.



1982—Progenitor

SUSPICION 2	TECHNOLOGY 6	ECONOMY 2	WARFARE 2
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January

Fierce competition in the phone business. Influential executives from electronic and optical product companies meet in secret to discuss how to edge out the biological phones.

ProgHarm: In a gesture of goodwill, Mai Thi Chung (p. 356) finds Margaret Thatcher's missing son.

February

The US deploys space mirrors in an attempt to influence the weather.

New ID/EA saves the Newfoundland oil platform when a metacognitive warns Ngoc Vo (p. 186) who is able to teleport James Closterman (p. 235) to the scene.

Hendrik Ten Broek vanishes after his plane from Calcutta to Paris gets hijacked.

March

Atlantis: One of Vo's appointees is caught in a corruption sting. She teleports him back to Vietnam.

Åism: Å is turned away at the Italian border when he attempts to enter the country.

April

ProgHarm: The US and USSR convene a summit in Berne, Switzerland. Publicly, it's a disarmament discussion, but in reality the primary topic is how to deal with Progressive Harmony.

Paige Rampling (p. 236) refuses to fight in the Falklands, asserting that her contract stipulates defense of British cities only.

A midair collision between a rising shuttle and one returning destroys both, including the rising shuttle's satellite payload. A low-tier Air Force teleporter working at the air station (p. 321) is able to pull both crews to safety and is awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor.

May

Zipperneck (p. 210) recruits El Cucuy (p. 253) and The Fantasmobile (p. 294) to hold the World's Fair hostage. They demand \$30 million and a ban on gays holding public office in the US. Ian Kraus (p. 222) and LeRoi Mathers (p. 207) successfully fight them off.

June

ProgHarm: The IEG completes its space elevator, Thien The Thang Máy (p. 328).

In the USSR, Antonin Yerbachev becomes premier and rolls back the previous 'openness reforms.'

The Equal Rights Amendment passes.

July

Atlantis, ProgHarm: In the third Atlantean election, Progressive Harmony candidate Brenda Mills is elected Peoples' Servant. Atlantean Socialism drops to two seats on People's Voice, Progressive Harmony gains one (for two seats total), One World Energy stays at two, as does Faction Four. Despite the flagging fortunes of the Progressive party, its Voice member is personally popular and retains his seat.



Glóir assassinates Barbara French (p. 218).

Lin Wen (p. 216) beats Michael Fagan unconscious before he's able to reach the Queen's chamber.

August

Japan hires James Closterman (p. 235) as its official national superhero.

ProgHarm: The IEG structures a bailout loan for Mexico.

The USSR places its first space station in orbit.

September

The conflict between Israel and Lebanon escalates rapidly beyond conventional weapons. The conflict soon involves syntergenes, widespread mind control, clashes of metahumans and rumored use of biological agents. In five years, this conflict comes to be called "The Opening Act."

A healer in Utah named Jonas Denapier declares himself God's representative on Earth, but continues to insist on being paid for his dark energy cures. Most Mormons reject him as a false prophet, but a substantial proportion of his followers come from that tradition.

October

Atlantis, ProgHarm: People's Servant Brenda Mills is hamstrung at every turn by the People's Voice as she attempts to implement Progressive Harmony social reforms and structures.

Jason Weeks: A strange, rag-tag group of people break into Global Human University's biology lab and sabotage the work on Selarosis Maxilliae, only months before a possible cure. A simultaneous attack on a lab in Nebraska destroys one of the few other viable samples of the germ. The third simultaneous action takes place at the headquarters of the CDC, destroying their sample and assassinating the world's foremost expert on the disease.

November

New aerogel production techniques demonstrated at a symposium on material engineering at UCLA.

Sykes Family: Abe Sykes (p. 173) is seen more and more often in the company of Cynthia Carls (p. 214).

December

Metapocalypse: Metal Virus (p. 283) stocks his bunker.

The Metapocalypse

The Metapocalypse begins with one selfish sociopath named Rudy Phelps (p. 283). A Tier Nine, he has no direct power of his own. He can just make the seeds. The seeds grow into robots—more precisely, they grow into Killbots, and each Killbot has the potential to reproduce itself.

If Rudy had possessed a different set of priorities, he might have thrown in with Zipperneck (p. 210) or some other self-styled “supervillain” and held cities hostage. Or he might have hired himself out to a major world government as a “just in case” surprise superweapon. But Rudy is a simple man who really just wants to watch the world go poof.

Rudy salts ten cities with his seeds, five in the USA, three in the USSR and two in Europe because his flights pass through and, hey, when else is he going to have a chance to menace London and Paris? The seeds activate at midnight, Washington DC time, and start to rampage. It’s midmorning for the three Russian cities (Leningrad, Stalingrad and Moscow) that have robots sporting the stars and stripes and stomping the heads of every human they can find.

The American Killbots have the hammer and sickle on them. Between Cold War paranoia and well-meaning metahuman interference in attempts to negotiate an eleventh-hour cease-fire, the primary victims (the US and USSR) turn on one another. Whether this is despite or because of the interference of Connor Sprague (see page 263), it is impossible to tell.



New York Action 1 News

On-Air Transcript
May 9, 1983

JOHN FESTIN: We interrupt this program to bring a breaking news bulletin. We here at ABC Radio News have received several reliable reports of robots, or metallic entities, active in and around New York City. I'm John Festin, night news manager at WBNU in Manhattan and at 1:15 this morning, police responded to a noise complaint from Brooklyn. We don't know what happened to that original responding car, but they called for massive backup soon afterwards. I have a report that dozens of these humanoid, moving metal figures have been seen in Brooklyn and now I'm hearing calls from the Harlem fire departments. I have a call on the line, this is an eyewitness from Brooklyn with our own Sheldon Mundt. Sheldon, are you there?

SHELDON MUNDT: I'm here with Jackie Stetson, a longtime Brooklyn resident, Jackie, can you...? Speak into the microphone here...

(Sound of muffled sobs.)

SM: Miss Stetson is, understandably, very upset...

JACKIE STETSON: Mike Royce opened his place early to get the midnight

traffic, you know? He sold coffee, started at midnight and had it open to noon...

SM: Can you tell us where this...?

JS: It just clomped around the corner. I was gettin' out of a cab and this thing, all rusty and clumsy with this crane arm, and I was half-out when the no-good cabbie took off and I swear it looked at me. Didn't have eyes but it turned, like and I started running towards the door of my place, I had my key out and it must've had wheels or rollers under its feet 'cause it shot down the street towards me, and then Mike was trying to get the metal grate down over his place and it just grabbed him instead.

SM: You say the... device... it was fast?

JS: Not at first when I first saw it, it was just, like... wandering. Like a tourist almost. But as soon as it saw Mike it went for him and oh God it just poked these pointy little claws into his chest! It just, like he didn't have any bones, so easy, it... There was this sound, like when you... oh God...

SM: Take your time, Miss Stetson.

JS: It stomped on his head! He dropped there all chopped up and then it just

took one of those big metal pod feet and smashed it like a kid crushing a beer can! And it's the Goddamn Russians! I saw the thing had that, that symbol on it! You know the...?

SM: The hammer and sickle?

JS: That's it! It had that!

JF: I'm sorry to interrupt, but I've just received an update from our national bureau and the attacks have spread, or possibly the US is under simultaneous attack. Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington DC are all experiencing robot attacks. I don't know if ID/EA or any of the Sykes family have been alerted to, to this, but if you are within the range of this station, stay inside! Do not attempt to... we've got another caller on the line, I believe we have a policeman on the line, this is officer Daniel... Westchausey.

DANIEL WCZCHYMSKI: Dan Wzczhymski, Sergeant in the NYPD. If you see these things, do not attempt to engage them. Guns do not harm them, I repeat, guns show no effect on them. We have a few metahumans in the action, LeRoi Mathers got a sighting and he was able to put them at a cold stop in no time flat. We've got Crissy White, um, Zippergirl? She's in from

Jersey and they can't touch her, she's tearing them apart. Just remain calm, and stay inside. They only attack when they see you, understand?

JF: Do they seem to be... following any particular strategy, or pursuing some specific goal?

DW: Negative on that. They're pretty mindless from what we can tell, until they see a person, or... um, yeah. They just kind of move around at random until they see someone.

JF: Has anyone survived an attack from one of these? Anyone not a metahuman, I mean?

DW: I don't have that information.

JF: We heard from one witness that they're emblazoned with the hammer and sickle, is that accurate?

DW: I can't speak to that.

JF: Excuse me?

DW: I don't have an answer for you there.

JF: You have seen one, haven't you?

DW: I've seen more than I want to, buddy.

JF: Well did they or didn't they have Russian markings on them? Officer Wickchaumsy? Sergeant?

(Brief pause.)

JF: We seem to have lost our connection with Daniel Wi... with our, with the police spokesman. There are unconfirmed reports that the Statue of Liberty is under some kind of assault from these metal men, but no one seems to know where they came from. We're getting... do we have...? Yes, we have an astronomer from Amhearst on the phone, Doctor Spenser? Can you hear me?

MASON SPENSER: Yes...

JF: Has anyone reported any unusual activity in the skies before midnight this morning, professor?

MS: None whatever. I have to say, I'm upstate and nothing

here is... is any different, there have been no alarms, no sightings...

JF: If these things had come from the stars, would you have detected them?

MS: If they entered our atmosphere conventionally, I should think so. I mean, if they didn't teleport, if they just came in through reentry there would have been loud noises, streaks in the sky... the conventional technologies we have would not be able to deliver things of this size... you say they're about the size of a man?

JF: I'm hearing five feet from toe to head quoted frequently.

MS: If something like that entered the atmosphere, I...

JF: I'm afraid we have to cut you off, I've just gotten word that there's going to be an address live from the White House!

(Brief pause.)

JF: We're having some difficulty with the feed, it's possible that lines of communication have been deliberately cut...

RONALD REAGAN: ...under attack from a Godless and remorseless foe. These rampaging machines of destruction cannot be reasoned with and must be destroyed. My attempts to negotiate with the Soviets have failed, and all last-ditch attempts to make peace have met with only increased aggression. Russian ships in the Persian Gulf have fired on one of our carrier groups, intelligence indicates a massive, nationwide mobilization within the Soviet Union, and with only the greatest reluctance, I engaged the protocols for a full nuclear strike.

RR: We were not the aggressors, and we did not start this war, but with courage and determination, there is a very realistic chance that we can knock out their retaliatory capabilities before those capacities can be realized.

RR: America is the strongest nation on Earth. Ours is a unique destiny. We can

and will end this sudden and awful war, and we will rebuild after. Our military is more than a match for the forces we face, and our superhuman allies and assets are second to none in power or number. But beyond military power and metahumanity, our future is best secured by our optimism, confidence, and energy. Those qualities, which tamed the frontier, will restore our strength after this present and ongoing conflict.

RR: For the duration of hostilities, I am placing the nation under martial law. Listen to your radios for emergency evacuation instructions as needed. A mandatory curfew is in place for six PM nationwide. Anyone outside after that time for any reason other than official duty or life-threatening emergency can expect imprisonment or, if the situation warrants, summary execution.

RR: There are some... lawless elements in the land who do not respect the principles of civilization. These persons will attempt to profit from this crisis through the most dishonorable and selfish acts of profiteering, fear-mongering, and blatant robbery. If you are considering this criminal course, listen to me now: You will be dealt with. Harshly. Protections such as the Miranda law, trial by jury and habeas corpus cannot be guaranteed in the

current climate. I anticipate a speedy restoration of our treasured liberties once the emergency is resolved. America will not abandon its decent and law-abiding citizens to those who would intimidate, enslave, or destroy them. This is as true for domestic criminals as it is for foreign tyrants. Neither will be tolerated.

RR: Thank you. Stay strong. God bless America.

(Long pause.)

JF: The President of the United States, ladies and gentlemen. We... we are at war. This attack is... I'm getting reports of troop mobilizations, National Guard units throughout every state, um... hold on... oh God.

JF: The Statue of Liberty has collapsed. I'm hearing reports that... that it is being transformed into robots. Ellis Island is completely overrun with, with these things and a cordon is... Christ. I'm sorry. I'm...

JF: Liberty has fallen, ladies and gentlemen.

(Sound of muffled sobs.)



The First Salvo

World War III begins in the Persian Gulf as Soviet subs attempt to sink an aircraft carrier. But the ground-based ICBMs are launched even before that battle is complete.

Amanda Sykes (p. 159) neuters the world's nuclear weapons as soon as she's alerted to the attacks, which happens a full half-hour before the US and USSR unwittingly launch them.

No one really questions how Amanda hears about an imminent nuclear launch. At least, no one does in public. In confidence, Amanda says that at least five different metahumans contacted her that night—Jason Weeks (p. 195) and one other on the phone, two unidentified telepaths and The Dream by materializing in her bedroom. She'd known for years that she could do it if she had to: At Weeks' suggestion, she'd figured out just how as early as 1980. It wasn't without cost, but it wasn't all that complicated for her either. Getting the range out to orbital distance on the world's far side was the only part requiring extraordinary effort. It gave her a headache and wore her out, but when it was done she rolled over and went back to sleep. She figured she had a busy day ahead of her.

The Conventional War

Nuclear weapons were only the first and worst of the superpowers' weapons. Multiple nations had orbiting weapons platforms, some bearing beam weapons, some simply repurposing weather influence technologies, but most commonly loaded with aerodynamic tungsten rods designed to inflict maximum kinetic impact after dropping from orbit. "Rods from God" (p. 330) rained down on the American east coast, on Soviet military targets (including Moscow), on Air Force bases in Alaska and suspected missile silos of the American southwest, on conventional forces massed along the Iron Curtain borders, on Beijing and on Hanoi.

Commercial flights were quickly grounded at the nearest airports, and those that were slow in getting to safety were soon being shot down by the fighter jets of all nations. A long-range bombing campaign began within hours of the missile strikes, with fighters scrambled to protect the already-reeling cities.

Ships at sea were safer from assault. The war was not perceived as a resource conflict, so the navies of the world were far more preoccupied with hunting one another to prevent missile launches or coastal assaults.

Because it was not a genuine military surprise attack, there was no follow-up invasion force ready to spring at the US, Europe, China or the Soviet Union. That didn't stop the soldiers and police of every nation from going on high alert. The looting and riots in heavily bombed cities went unchecked until units like the National Guard or Civil Defense swept in and put down the disorder, often with excessive force.

The only actual ground invasions happened in the Middle East, where armies had been on high alert for years. Each simply followed long-standing counterstrike plans, kicking off brutal tank- and air-wars between Iran and Iraq, Syria and Israel, and Israel and Egypt.

The highest per-capita targets for nuclear weapons, conventional missiles, bombing runs and orbital assaults were the nations of the IEG. They suffered heavily, despite their advanced defenses and the flawless execution of superb civil defense plans.



Nontraditional Weapons

1983 saw the first widespread and undeniable deployment of tailored genetic and synergenic weapons. Most commonly, sleeper agents released these weapons after spending years or even decades undercover. Bio-warfare was surprisingly limited. Most of its casualties were in the middle east, where Israel deployed its entire stockpile within five hours of the first tank skirmish with Syria. The nations that had the capability (primarily Iran and Iraq) responded in kind.

While the Middle East was gripped by tularemia and anthrax, more precisely tailored weapons and mutagens came into use in the United States. Chicago's water supply was rapidly infiltrated by fast-spawning bacteria dubbed *Bacillus xombus*. While the bacteria itself was easily killed with boiling water or filtration, it excreted a terribly stable psychoactive chemical, tryptamine monofisadrine. A few micrograms of it were sufficient to drive most humans into a berserk frenzy. Flooded with adrenaline, they tore family members, neighbors and co-workers to pieces before succumbing to

1983

ignored injuries sustained during their rampages. The worst of these ‘rage zombies’ kept going until they dropped from exhaustion or died of thirst. Other xombus outbreaks occurred in Los Angeles, Salt Lake City and Anchorage, Alaska within the US. Xombus rampages also claimed thousands of lives in Munich, Germany; Tours, France; and Shenyang, Kaifeng, Jinan and Yangquan in China. (The sole B. xombus incident in the IEG occurred at Phongsali in Laos, and was contained after 29 fatalities.)

Some of the strangest and saddest episodes arose from the deployment of dangerous syntergenes. ‘Instant brainwashing’ caused over a hundred gun owners in Wisconsin and Iowa to open fire on anyone wearing a uniform with a US flag on it. The syntergene was later traced to one individual working for the NRA, who had encoded the syntergene in the layout of several of their mailings. It was triggered by a radio broadcast through a hijacked AM radio channel. Another syntergenic attack in Twin Falls Idaho, directly broadcast through a pirate TV station, caused close to 9,000 adult women to kill themselves, while a poster placed throughout Liuzhou China prompted children to leap from great heights. An insidious syntergene originating in the Vietnamese city of Vinh was contained in a single black-and-white image on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper. Targeting unmarried male office workers, it compelled them first to make ten copies of the image and send them to ten other unmarried male office workers; and then to hoard food. Because the actions were relatively innocuous and legal, the thought-form spread for months, even after it was identified, and contributed to suspicion, shortages and at least three IEG food riots. It was Russia, however, that suffered from the most devastating single syntergene attack. A pirate broadcast on military channels sent hundreds of pilots into combat against their own bases of origin. After emptying their weapons at support crews, barracks buildings, fuel depots and grounded planes, the syntergene-driven pilots ended their flights with kamikaze runs at control or radio towers.

But the real wild cards were, of course, the metahumans.

World War Super

The Metapocalypse is thick with stories of metaheroes and supervillains. Glóir’s attack on London is seen by many as the beginning of the end for the Irish super-terrorists. While they wreak tremendous havoc and kill their longtime nemesis Lin Wen (p. 216), the breathtaking viciousness of it convinces many in Ireland that the forces of radical independence have gone too far. The ‘stab in the back,’ as the London Times calls it, is viewed as obscenely unsporting.

The single deadliest clash is over Zaporizhzhya in the Ukraine. It’s a one-on-one duel between a Soviet superhuman colloquially known as “The Big Crazy” and an unidentified metahuman, later estimated (by Njabulo Malema, page 359) to be a Tier Four. Both die and so does everyone else in the city. Remarkably, property damage is limited. A body, pulverized and charred beyond recognition, is found in a wreckage crater that had once been the DnieproGES hydroelectric plant. (Luckily, the dam remains intact). The Big Crazy’s still-hot corpse is found in the burned wreckage of a family home nine miles from the river, but other than that, the city is undamaged. Apparently everyone there just drops dead wherever they were.

Metahumans tend to get the worse of it when they’re on the defensive against conventional forces. When attacking, they leverage mobility or stealth advantages. (Though there are many notable exceptions.) By and large, the Soviet and American metahumans put one another in check. Many of the long-term effects of metahuman actions come in the southern hemisphere.

Australia, Africa (excluding its most northeastern nations) and South America take far less damage than North America, Europe and Asia. Soon after “Three Day” (as the beginning of WWIII is later known), numerous mid- and low-Tier metahumans realize that Amanda Sykes and her ilk are preoccupied with reconstruction and damage control. They make their moves and, rather than try to poach northern goodies that are simultaneously (1) in flux, (2) watched by alarmed metahumans and governments and (3) ruined, they consider southern real estate instead.

Australia retains a national civil order, with one major exception. A trio of mid-Tiers calling themselves the Kangaroo Island Gang seize Adelaide and retain effective control of it for two months before negotiating a \$6 billion ransom. (They also want uranium, but the Australian government is adamant that they'd flatten the city themselves before giving nuclear material to a criminal cartel.)

It's a peculiar occupation. The KIG occasionally teleports into the middle of a military convoy to destroy vehicles and personnel before popping away again: In mere seconds, they can kill dozens or reduce several tanks to wreckage. But other units are permitted to enter unmolested. The authorities' inability to find the trio means the KIG can strike anywhere, at any time. By the time the government reaches terms, the Island Gang has driven two fifths of the city's population to evacuation and destroyed close to twelve million dollars' worth of property. After getting their ransom, they are never heard from again.

The same can't be said of the South American or African metahumans who go for wholesale destruction rather than limited harassment. The balance of power there is less stable, and often dictators find it easier to just cede a city (or an entire province) to a megalomaniac metahuman, rather than waste their army trying to bring him down.

I started the nuclear crisis in a small metal room. I was at Mountain Home AFB in Idaho, working on a profile of the 366th fighter wing, the "Gunfighters." It was 1983 and they were doing integrated training with a new metahuman, nineteen years old and a space-warping flier. Her name was Debby Monk. I'd been at her press conference and she made a particular point that her name was spelled with a 'y' and not an 'ie.' She died.

I thought I'd spare you the suspense. Debby Monk died on May 9th, 1983. The best estimate is that she had a billion others for company.

I'd gotten permission to watch her training with the Gunfighters, and they let me sleep on base because we were going to start early, four AM according to my notes. But they woke me up before midnight, two MPs. They didn't answer



my questions, just told me I had to go with them to "a safer zone." I wanted to know what was happening, and as we were going through the halls a horrible klaxon started, the lights dropped and then came back on blue, emergency lights I guess and people were running, grim looks on their faces. The airmen running past me in their t-shirts clearly knew what was going on, even if I didn't. Everyone was heading upwards, everyone but me,

they were taking me down stairs, two flights, and then a room very much like a prison cell. A metal bunk, a toilet, a chair and a desk with a phone. They put me in there, none too gently, and closed the steel door.

If they'd taken just a half-second more, the door probably would have latched, too.

I checked the room, picked up the phone (no tone, no

dial on it) and idly tried the knob. I didn't expect it to open, and when it did I wasn't sure I wanted to leave. But I left and ran back up all those steps.

Those blue lights were on outside too, and now the airmen were in flight suits, rubbing sleep from their eyes as they put on helmets and scrambled for their jets. I dropped to the ground as the first one shot over my head with a noise

Excerpted from "1983: The Metal Apocalypse" by Ivan Sehey

I could feel in my bones, a passage that sucked the air out of my lungs and then someone grabbed my shoulders, pulled me back. I could see his mouth moving but I was deaf, I just shook my head as he dragged me towards one of the hangars and shoved me around the corner of a cinder block wall.

Then came the fire, and Debby. It was a sudden, bright flare out on the plains, bright straight red flames. I don't know if it was some kind of Vietnamese orbital beam weapon or a Soviet metahuman—I've never gotten an answer, but for a moment there was just that glare, lighting dust and debris flung up by the flames, like an evil red tornado, and then it darted towards the base, faster than a race car.

Later, I measured the scorch marks. Fifty feet across, the topsoil was all burnt off twenty-seven inches deep where it first hit, and then two inches in the path it followed towards the base.

I thought I was going to die. But Debby was there.

She looked so scared and young in her t-shirt and sweatpants, she was barefoot and floating a couple feet above the ground, her hair blown back, lit blue from behind and red in front and she gestured. Some kind of space warp. A lens in front of the beam. I don't know, but the burning stopped and the night was lit like noon. Coherent photons being smashed apart, smeared across the visible spectrum? I can't say.

She watched the beam as it crossed the base, she kept her shield above it over the command center and the control tower, wincing at the glare and covering her eyes. I was probably twenty yards from her, and she had her back to the north, she didn't see the missile coming.

At reentry speeds, a nuclear missile doesn't look like much of anything other than streak, like a shooting star only thicker and closer and I don't know how I had time

to realize what it was. Before I'd feared death. Now I was simply certain. Debby hadn't spotted it, and I don't know if she could have stopped it anyhow.

I know now that when it hit, the blast was only the kinetic force of a 2,000 pound rocket falling from orbit. The nuclear warhead had been neutralized. Like every ounce of fissionable material in every A-bomb on earth, it had been transformed by a global act of metahuman will into an alloy of osmium and iridium.

The warhead was supposed to detonate in the atmosphere for maximum destructive impact. Had the warhead been active, it would have vaporized me, Debby, the base and everyone else nearby. But instead, it just cratered, creating a shock wave and air-blast. Seeing it, I'd instinctively ducked back and down and covered my ears. I'd also screamed, and my open mouth let the pressure in my skull equalize so that my eardrums didn't rupture. Many of the airmen

inside the base buildings weren't so lucky, but most survived. Debby, though, she was out in the open, in midair. Maybe her instinct was to fly, to use her power. Maybe she just didn't want to hurt her feet walking on gravel in the dark. Whatever the reason, there was nothing to block her from the blast, no drag to hold her down so that she might fall to the ground, get knocked back a few yards and come out of it with some broken bones. Some out in the open lived. Some, not most. But Debby was flung through the air straight into the brick wall of the Consolidated Services Building. Death was instantaneous.

Me, I lived. I stayed curled up by the doorway, I don't know how long, and then I scuttled off to look for a safer place. I eventually got to a communications room, nestled inside the building like a nut in its shell. The room was busy, frenetic, but someone spotted me and told an E-2 airman to do something, probably get me out of the way. He came over and led me to the hall outside, sat me down against a wall, made soothing gestures. When he gave me a hankie I realized I had a bloody nose. I kept asking what happened, but I couldn't hear his answer over the ringing in my ears. But eventually I got what he was saying.

"The big one," he kept repeating. "It's the big one. Nuclear war."



It was a day like any other, though not for long. But I got up, drank a cup of the company's execrable coffee, showered and shat and got ready for ten more hours of geological surveying. Then I heard upraised voices in the local dialect. Usually I could pick out a word here or there, but this was too fast, too excited.

"What is it?" I demanded, expecting a fight or another accusation of theft. But the workers were gathered around a radio with an astonishing variety of expressions on their faces. Antoine looked overjoyed, while Salim seemed bemused, confused, like he was waiting for someone to explain the joke. It was Marcel who really caught my eye. His skin looked like ash, his lips were waxy and his mouth was open in horror.

"C'est Paris!" Antoine called out. "Paris est chuté! Paris est détruit!"

"Speak English, you sorry bastard, it's too early for your *Françafrique* babble."

"Mr. LeClerc," Salim said, "The radio, he say robots got Paris."

"Robots? What?" I took it from them and twisted the tuning knob, to their groans. They listened to a station out of Kindu, all sensationalism and football scores. I waved the aerial and tried to get the BBC. It took a while, but I wasn't tense yet. I figured it was all an over reaction, some metahuman turned into metal and climbed the Eiffel Tower for attention or something. Though even then, something about Marcel's face made me think this could be something more.

"...recap what we know. At five this morning, London time..."

"Hush, you lot!" I said. The static was atrocious.

"...robots emblazoned with the hammer and sickle, apparently mindless but capable of rapid reproduction..."

"Robots are fucking in London!" Antoine crowed. He did a little dance.

"You are a fool," Salim said, his voice distracted. "If Paris and London are both under attack..."

"You think we're next?" Antoine asked. "Who cares about us? It's finally time for someone else to get the shit for a while!"

"No," Marcel said. "You don't understand, this will end with fire, with the nuclear winter..."

"Hush up all of you! He said the death toll and I missed it!"

Then I saw a flash in the east. I caught the first one from the corner of my eye and turned for the second. It looked like nothing so much as lightning, straight lightning. It was so bright that even a half-second of the glare made me turn aside, covering my eyes. But it was already too late at that point, I'd seen four of those lines, like slices in the sky showing hell behind, all coming down at a slightly different angle.

"Boss?" Antoine's glee was suddenly gone, he suddenly wore an expression much like Marcel. "Boss, what was...?"

"Nuclear missiles," Marcel whispered.

"No," Salim said, his eyes narrow and weary. "No mushroom cloud."

We were silent for a while.

"Some kind of orbital weapon, I reckon," I said, just to be saying something.

"Who would fire such a thing at us?" Antoine asked.

I shook my head. "Use what brains God gave you, Antoine. What's due east of us?"

"Lake Victoria?"

"Could be," said Salim. "If one wanted to change African weather patterns, for whatever reason... how much water would be vaporized? How much fog would it send up and how far would it extend?"

I shook my head. "My money's on Global Human U."

"Who would want to bomb good Mr. Weeks?" Marcel asked.

"Dunno."

"If anyone can stop a nuclear weapon, it's him!" Antoine said, but his voice trembled.

We saw the sound coming, shifting the plants and raising a curtain of dust. When it hit us it was like standing inches from the road when lone car shoots by.

"Wasn't the lake," I said.

"Too dry," Salim said.

"And I think the mountains would have blocked it. No, whatever those were, they hit on top of the ridge, or on our side of it. Come on, pack up."

"Where are we going?"

I stared at Antoine. "You have a wife, right? Do you expect me to keep you fools out here in the bush when it's the fucking apocalypse?"

Excerpted from "Metal Rain in Africa" by Kerwin LeClerc

SUSPICION	4	TECHNOLOGY	4	ECONOMY	1	WARFARE	2
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Jan 3 - Kilauea begins a slow eruption.	May 28 - Ninth G7 summit held in VA.	Oct 9 - Rangoon bombing kills South Korea's foreign minister and 21 others.
Jan 19 - Apple releases the Lisa computer.	Jun 9 - Thatcher re-elected by a landslide.	Oct 12 - A former Japanese PM is sent to prison for taking bribes.
Jan 19 - Nazi Klaus Barbie arrested in Bolivia.	Jun 18 - Sally Ride goes into space.	Oct 19 - 40 people are killed, along with the PM of Grenada.
Jan 26 - Computer spreadsheet Lotus 1-2-3 released.	Jul 15 - Nintendo Entertainment System released in Japan.	Oct 22 - Nuclear disarmament rally in Bonn.
Feb 3 - Australian PM Malcolm Fraiser is granted a double dissolution of the Houses of Parliament.	Jul 15 - Orly airport attack in Paris kills 8.	Oct 23 - Suicide truck bomb in Beirut kills 241 US Marines, 58 French paratroopers and 6 civilians.
Feb 16 - Ash Wednesday Fires in Victoria and Southern Australia kill 76.	Jul 20 - Poland ends martial law.	Oct 25 - The US invades Grenada.
Feb 18 - Thirteen people killed in an attempted robbery in Seattle.	Jul 23 - Black July riot in Sri Lanka kills over a thousand.	Oct 30 - First democratic elections in Argentina in seven years.
Feb 23 - EPA announced plans to buy heavily polluted Times Beach.	Jul 23 - Mudslide in Shimane Japan kills 117.	Nov 2 - Reagan signs MLK day into law.
Feb 28 - Last episode of M*A*S*H airs.	Aug 18 - Hurricane Alicia kills 22 on Texas coast, does \$3.8 billion in damage.	Nov 13 - US cruise missiles stationed in Britain.
Mar 8 - IBM PC XT released.	Aug 21 - Benigno Aquino killed in the Philippines.	Nov 26 - Massive gold robbery in London.
Mar 9 - Anne Burford retires from the EPA amid scandal.	Aug 26 - Floods in Bilbao Spain kill 45.	Nov 29 - Soviets invade Afghanistan.
Mar 23 - Reagan proposes the Strategic Defense Initiative.	Sep 1 - USSR shoots down Korean Air commercial flight 007.	Dec 2 - Michael Jackson's seminal Thriller video premieres.
Apr 18 - US embassy bombed in Beirut.	Sep 17 - Vanessa Williams becomes Miss America.	Dec 4 - USAF Lt. Goodman is shot down and captured in Syria.
May 6 - Stern magazine publishes Hitler's diaries. They are later proved fraudulent.	Sep 23 - Gulf Air flight 117 crashes after being bombed.	Dec 17 - The Troubles: IRA car bomb kills 6 , injures 90.
May 17 - Israel agrees to vacate Lebanon.	Sep 23 - Kanak violence in Canada.	Dec 31 - Two bombs in France kill 5, injure 53.
May 26 - Quake and tsunami at Honshu in Japan kills 104.	Sep 25 - The Troubles: 38 Irish Republican prisoners escape.	Dec 31 - Macintosh "1984" ad plays.
	Sep 25-26 - Stanislaw Petrov correctly identifies a false satellite alarm and possibly averts a Soviet nuclear launch.	

US Culture

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Terms of Endearment wins a lot of Oscars, but Return of the Jedi does better at the box office. Other films from this year include Risky Business, Flashdance and Blue Thunder.

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1983—Progenitor

SUSPICION	4	TECHNOLOGY	4	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	4
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January

Kilauea begins construction of a thermal energy plant similar to the one powering the first Global Human University campus.

February

Xerox releases the first commercial graphical user interface for the IBM HC (home computer).

The first GPS satellite goes into orbit.

A lab in Japan demonstrates stable superconductors at supercold temperatures.

March

ProgHarm: After an exposé in The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the US and IEG both admit to having orbital fighters and satellite-based kinetic energy weapons. The USSR refuses to confirm or deny the report, which claims the Soviets have similar armaments in place.

April

Metapocalpyse: Metal Virus (p. 283) enters his bunker.

The biological-based cell phone companies bring a lawsuit against the other two design protocols, accusing them of colluding to fix prices and close markets.

May

Metapocalpyse: The Metal Virus seeds go active in Moscow; New York City; Leningrad; Stalingrad; Washington DC; Los Angeles; Chicago; Paris; London; and San Francisco. The rampaging killer robots manage to directly kill 18,119 people worldwide, with another 22,492 perishing from related property damage, mass hysteria, panic and mob actions.

Both the US and the USSR believe the other is responsible for the attack and launch full salvos of missiles. Detecting the incoming missiles, China reciprocates.

Debilitated by drink when the missiles launch, Andrew Colt (p. 168) is unable to apply his powers and coordinate US actions. He kills himself in shame eighteen hours into the crisis.

The Colors of the Metapocalypse

From 1983 on, Progenitor is Red two. Even if every superhuman lost their powers in 1984, history would not recover. The changes have simply become too great. This doesn't mean that metahumans can easily swing the course of nations into a new orbit, but with the shocks of the primary government systems, and the role superpowers play in rebuilding them, the primacy of dark energy as a force for policy can't be denied.

The Gold two tone stays steady, as does the Blue three. But the post-apocalyptic conditions of the mid-80s leave a lot of people living Black Two lives.



1983

Metapocalypse, Sykes Family: Quite possibly, all human life on Earth is spared when Amanda Sykes creates a global effect preventing atomic detonations. The damage from dud missile strikes, along with functioning kinetic energy weapons in orbit, conventional cruise missiles and bomber deployment is estimated at 233,000,000.

The ensuing biological deployments, along with disease and starvation caused by infrastructure attacks; synergetic warfare; anarchy; conventional infantry and armor actions; personally-motivated murders; and metahuman assaults, eventually account for another 792,000,000 deaths by December 1983. Boris Mizurski (p. 217) is one of them, perishing while attempting to protect the eastern seaboard of the US from KE spears.

The survivors of Glóir launch an opportunistic attack on London days after the missiles impact. They destroy the Tower of London (again) and kill Lin Wen (p. 216).

Metapocalypse, ProgHarm: The US Navy isolates Halmahera island and seizes the ground side of the space elevator Thien The Thang Máy (p. 328).

Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem are all heavily targeted by assaults of every sort. Orbital attacks thick enough to pierce the Earth's crust and provoke a lava flow are used to demolish the Dome of the Rock. Watching its destruction on live TV, Ayatollah Khomeini dies of a heart attack.

Sykes Family, ProgHarm: The only city unprotected by Amanda Sykes' nuclear prevention power is Hanoi. (Afterwards, the Progressive Harmony nations claim she deliberately excluded them. She says they had some sort of anti-dark-energy shield that blocked her powers.) Out of the 77 nuclear weapons targeted at it, only one gets through its combination of technological missile defense and metahuman shielding. The infrastructure damage from that detonation is severe, though the loss of human life is reduced by the city's network of bunkers and the flawless execution of its nuclear evacuation plan.

June

ProgHarm, Metapocalypse: The US, USSR, China, France, both Germanies and the member nations of the IEG all declare martial law. Border control is a thing of the past.

Sykes Family, Metapocalypse: Abe Sykes (p. 173) drops out of the eye of what remains of government and media attention. Amanda Sykes visits almost every country in the world, attempting to reduce the damage of the Metapocalypse.

"Baby Doc" Duvalier flees Haiti.

ProgHarm: The US attempts to take the station at the end of the Thien The Thang Máy space elevator, but is repelled.

July

Jason Weeks: Weeks (p. 195) releases a "Calm Down, Get Back To Normal" synergene in conjunction with Deionne Bright (p. 192).

ProgHarm: IEG attempts to retake Halmahera island and, to prevent them from regaining control of Thien The Thang Máy, the US detonates a (restored) tactical nuclear weapon on the island, severing the tether and sending the top of the space elevator hurtling away from Earth.

Soldiers infected with Selarosis Maxillae (p. 250) turn the tables on Joao Perdomo (p. 248), tracking him down for an extrajudicial killing.

Throughout Lebanon, US interests suffer both from concentrated attacks by terrorist groups operating in the open, and from spontaneous mob actions.

August

Metapocalypse: Spurred by the advice and leadership of Bryson Maas-Thierry and Brenda Harkness (p. 206), Michigan declares its secession from the United States of America and declares itself a sovereign state. Reagan deploys troops to the Great Lakes.

ProgHarm: Bao Verong (p. 355) is assassinated during a tryst with one of his most trusted mistresses.

Atlantis: Civil order collapses. The few superheroes in Atlantis are simply swamped by the demands for their services.

Metapocalypse: Healer and self-declared emissary of God Jonas Denapier announces that he is healing anyone who asks. The influx of the ill is like a gold rush to his small home town in Utah.

September

Metapocalypse, Sykes Family: Amanda intercedes between the Michigan militias and the US troops deployed against them. She neutralizes the weapons of the federal soldiers, but warns the Michigan fighters that if they attempt to take advantage of the disarmament, she's not going to shield them again.

Northern Ireland declares its independence.

Metapocalypse: The Meta-Defense League, a splinter group of Metavictims Advocacy and Support, becomes radicalized and begins propagandizing about the metahuman abuses that climaxed in May. They insist that the Killbots weren't an anomaly, but merely an extreme example of the way metahumans treat the unempowered.

October

Metapocalypse: Known metahumans worldwide are lynched, sometimes by crazed mobs, sometimes in actions planned by the Meta-Defense League and its philosophical cousins. Those who can defend themselves often do so with devastating results. Those who can't either flee or defend, succumb—often protesting their harmlessness to their last breath. While many are uncomfortable calling for public destruction of all dark-energy endowed people, it's a notion that's increasingly accepted in private.

Margaret Thatcher orders exactly three BL755 conventional cluster-bombs bombs dropped on Northern Ireland.

Ferdinand Marcos is ousted in the Philippines.

Anarchy in Haiti.

Åism: Organized Åites led by Å and Sipho Masango (p. 359) seize land in the Kalahari and declare it a sovereign nation called "Åia."

November

Metapocalypse: The Soviets invade Afghanistan brutally, claiming the source of the Metal Virus is there.

Violence against metahumans increases world-wide, with open calls for their murder becoming less and less of a bizarre fringe viewpoint.

December

The US pulls out of the Middle East entirely, falling back to positions in the Mediterranean.

Jason Weeks: Jason Weeks assembles a team of metahumans to uncover the source of the Killbots, document it thoroughly, and kill the person or persons responsible.

Sykes Family: Amanda spends most of the month in Peru, laying low and recovering.

SUSPICION	5	TECHNOLOGY	5	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	2
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Jan 10 - US establishes full diplomatic relations with the Vatican.	hostage and two of the hijackers dead.	Sep 20 - Hezbollah car bomb kills 22 in US Embassy in Beirut.
Jan 18 - Coal mine explosion in Omuta, Japan, kills 83.	Apr 17 - Yvonne Fletcher killed outside the Libyan embassy in London.	Sep 26 - UK agrees to give Hong Kong back to China in 1997.
Jan 24 - Apple releases the Macintosh computer.	May 8 - USSR to boycott summer olympics.	Oct 12 - The Troubles: The IRA tries to kill the British Cabinet in the Brighton hotel bombing.
Feb 3 - First human embryo transfer.	May 8 - F5 tornado kills nine and injures hundreds in Barnveld WI.	Oct 19 - Polish secret police kidnap a Catholic priest who supports Solidarity. He's found murdered Oct 30.
Feb 8 - Winter olympics in Sarajevo.	May 12 - Louisiana World's Fair.	Oct 31 - Indira Ghandi murdered by her two Sikh bodyguards. Riots in New Delhi kill 2,700.
Feb 3-10 - Tenth shuttle mission, first to land at Kennedy space center.	Jun 6 - Operation Bluestar storms the Sikh Golden Temple in India.	Nov 6 - Ronald Reagan beats Walter Mondale in the general election.
Feb 13 - Chernenko becomes General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.	Jul 18 - Massacre in San Ysidro McDonald's kills 21.	Nov 19 - Fire at PEMEX Petroleum Storage in Mexico City kills 500.
Feb 26 - US Marines pulled out of Beirut.	Jul 23 - Miss America Vanessa Williams resigns her title over nude photos in Penthouse.	Nov 25 - "Band Aid" concert held to benefit Ethiopia.
Mar 5 - Iran accuses Iraq of using chemical weapons.	Jul 28 - Summer olympics in L.A.	Nov 30 - Tamil Tigers begin purging Sinhalese, killing 127.
Mar 15 - The Troubles: Gerry Adams and three other are ambushed and injured in Northern Ireland.	Aug 11 - Ronald Reagan accidentally broadcasts a joke about bombing the Soviet Union.	Dec 3 - Bhopal disaster. An accident at a Union Carbide chemical plant kills 2,000, injures 20,000.
Mar 16 - CIA chief in Beirut kidnapped, later killed.	Aug 16 - John DeLorean acquitted.	Dec 4 - Hezbollah hijacks a Kuwait Airlines plane and kills 4.
Mar 22 - Accusations of Satanism fly at California's McMartin Preschool.	Aug 21 - Massive demonstrations in Manila against Ferdinand Marcos.	Dec 22 - Bernard Goetz opens fire in a New York subway.
Apr 4 - Reagan calls for a ban on chemical weapons.	Aug 30 - Maiden voyage of the space shuttle Discovery.	
Apr 12 - Palestinian gunmen seize an Israeli bus. It's stormed, leaving one	Sep 2 - Seven killed in a motorcycle gang shootout in Sydney, Australia.	
	Sep 4 - Sandinista Front wins Nicaraguan election.	

US Culture

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Action-comedy movies Beverly Hills Cop and Ghostbusters gross the most, while Amadeus cleans up the awards. Other recognizable films include A Nightmare on Elm Street, Splash, and The Terminator. On the radio is Prince's "When Doves Cry," "Jump" by Van Halen, "The Glamorous Life" by Sheila E and Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun."

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1984—Progenitor

SUSPICION	4	TECHNOLOGY	4	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	4
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January

Metapocalypse: The US forms a "Department of Reconstruction," which is granted broad powers, but those powers are set to expire in December of 1985. Martial law is withdrawn in the United States.

The USSR successfully resists a coup attempt.

ProgHarm: Tuyet Thi Dang (p. 356) is taken by surprise and killed by a synergenically brainwashed patient while trying to treat biowarfare victims in Laos.

The USDA approves a test for the HIV virus.

February

Chernenko is in power in the USSR.

The olympic games are still held, but the expected power house teams—the USSR and the US—both put in a poor showing due to a number of athletes having perished during the bombing.

The Sykes Family: France and China propose a UN resolution to recognize Amanda Sykes as an “Extranational Civic Entity,” unbound by the particular laws governing individual citizens but rather, constrained by the international regulations on sovereign countries. With her agreement, the proposal passes. Her status is confirmed by 114 signing nations. Hopes that this will disentangle her from American politics and focus her efforts on global needs are, at least partly, fulfilled.

March

Glóir presses attacks against British troops and civilians. Despite the anger at Thatcher’s bombs, the gratuitous violence and sadism that Glóir increasingly displays causes Sinn Fein to disavow them.

Iraq uses chemical weapons on Iran, but Iran’s indignation goes unheard on the international stage. It’s just one more disaster among many.

April

Hospitals begin noticing a gradual increase in the frequency of births. This is the leading edge of what’s later called the second Baby Boom.

Reagan and Chernenko make progress on banning weapons of mass destruction.

When the Beirut CIA chief is kidnapped, aid comes from an unexpected direction. Mai Thi Chung (p. 356), a member of the Progress Cadre, tells the US army exactly where to find the missing intelligence officer, along with detailed descriptions of his captors. Her motives remain unguessable but, despite suspecting a trick, commandos in Lebanon successfully extract him.

May

Most nations of the world participate in a global “moment of silence” from noon to 12:01 local time.

The US has reliable electricity once again.

June

The Soviet Union becomes slightly liberalized by default, since the government has looting, starvation and reconstruction to occupy the time and attention that ideological monitoring would otherwise require.

A “Haitian Soviet Army” begins restoring order by violence and claiming a mandate to transform the island into a worker’s paradise.

July

As with the Winter Olympics, teams are badly depleted, but the USSR does attend in a gesture of international unity.

ProgHarm: The IEG demands reparations and apologies from the US, USSR and China. Claiming there was no shred of evidence nor reason to suspect violent action on their part, the bombs and missiles launched as part of the Chinese, American and Soviet comprehensive strategies constitute an unprovoked attack. IEG officials insist that the leaders of those nations should be tried for war crimes and genocide.

ProgHarm, Atlantis: Atlantean anarchy devolves into warlordism with metahumans putting regions under their personal protection. The tribes roughly map to the pre-war political factions of Atlantean Socialism, Faction Four (including most of the failed Progressives) and One World Energy (to which many in the Progressive Harmony party return after the elaborate structures ProgHarm demands fail).

Sykes Family: While Abe Sykes is en route to Jerusalem, he's attacked by an unknown psychic metahuman and forced to a German sanitarium until his catatonia breaks. When he arrives in the Middle East, he's devastated to find that the destruction is so complete that even his powers can't find enough pattern remaining to rebuild.

August

ProgHarm: In the Philippines, a right wing government struggles against a rising populist movement organized and supported by Progressive Harmony states.

Metapocalypse: The source of the killbots is found by a cabal of unidentified metahumans. They abduct him and insist that he demonstrate his powers, which he cheerfully does. The production of seeds and killbots is carefully recorded, and Metal Virus (as the media later dubs him) clearly and articulately describes his travels and proffers a list of locations where seeds were placed. After these demonstrations, and his full, insolent confession, a hooded figure blows his brains out on camera.

September

ProgHarm: The Sandinista Progressive Harmonic Front wins a majority of the votes in the Nicaraguan election.

Åism: In their Kalahari redoubt, the Åites defend themselves against military aggression from South Africa.

October

Attempting to kill the British Cabinet, Glóir instead winds up causing hundreds of civilian deaths. The IRA disavows them.

In Poland, the kidnapped priest, Jerzy Popiełuszko, is liberated and smuggled out of the country by Alyssa Veronne (p. 233) and The Dream (p. 229). While the priest is profusely thankful, the church hierarchy never mentions the incident and, in his private correspondence, Popiełuszko admits that he received a letter from the college of Cardinals instructing him to never speak of it publicly.

November

Metapocalypse: Citing continued instability and disorder, Reagan suspends the presidential and congressional elections. There are widespread demonstrations, but no significant violence.

The Physicist (p. 262) responds to a plea for aid from Sri Lanka and pits himself against the Tamil Tigers. While he alone is not able to prevent their violence or break the organization, he does disrupt its momentum and ruin a fair percentage of its weapons.

December

ProgHarm, Jason Weeks: A widespread syntergene in the US promotes homosexual behavior in men. Specifically, those who find it repugnant are pushed towards tolerance, while those who were indifferent or suppressed find their urges greatly amplified. Soon after the so-called "Fairy Glyph" is identified, a "safe sex" syntergene hits the country as well. Though Vietnam is suspected as the source of the first syntergene, and Jason Weeks as the author of the second, nothing is ever proven.

New ID/EA is able to get The Physicist to Bhopal within 90 minutes of the chemical release. Thanks to his intervention, the death toll is limited to 912 and roughly 10,000 injuries.

“The Energy” (page 244) responds to the Hezbollah hijacking. The plane is landed safely, but there are twelve fatalities on board.

Shavians: Bernard Goetz kills two Shaw Monsters on a New York City subway.

1985—History

SUSPICION 4 TECHNOLOGY 5 ECONOMY 0 WARFARE 1

Jan 15 - Brazil's first democratic election in 21 years.	km “Man in Motion” fundraiser.	Jun 14 - Hezbollah fringe group hijacks TWA flight 847.
Jan 20 - Ronald Reagan is sworn in privately.	Apr 11 - USS Coral Sea collides with Equadoran tanker ship Napo.	Jun 23 - Air India flight 182 blows up near Ireland, killing 329.
Jan 28 - USA for Africa records “We Are the World.”	Apr 12 - Madrid restaurant bomb kills 18. Possibly, Islamic Jihad is responsible.	Jun 25 - IRA ‘mainland bombing campaign’ foiled.
Feb 9 - US DEA agent Enrique Camarena is kidnapped in Mexico. He’s found dead Mar ch 5.	Apr 15 - South Africa ends its ban on interracial marriage.	Jul 10 - French commandoes sink the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior.
Feb 14 - CNN’s Jeremy Levin is released from captivity.	Apr 19 - USSR nuclear test in East Kazakhstan.	Jul 13 - Ronald Reagan undergoes surgery for colon cancer.
Feb 16 - Israel begins withdrawing from Lebanon.	Apr 23 - New Coke goes on the market.	Jul 19 - Dam collapse near Tesero, Italy, kills 268.
Feb 19 - China Airlines 006 from Taipei to LA loses power to an engine and almost crashes.	May 11 - FBI charges the suspected heads of 5 NYC Mafia families.	Aug 7 - Japan’s first astronauts announced.
Feb 28 - The Troubles: IRA mortar attack on the Royal Ulster Constabulary kills nine.	May 11 - Fire in the football stands kills 56 in Bradford, England.	Sep 19 - 8.1 Richter quake in Mexico City kills 10,000.
Mar 4 - USDA approves AIDS test.	May 13 - Philadelphia police bomb the fortified headquarters of MOVE.	Sep 28 - Race riots in Brixton, England.
Mar 8 - A car bomb in Beirut targets Sayeed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah and kills 80. CIA involvement is suspected.	May 15 - Unabomb injures John Hauser at Berkley.	Oct 1 - Israel bombs the PLO headquarters near Tunis.
Mar 11 - Gorbachev takes power in the USSR.	May 23 - Thomas Patrick Cavanaugh is convicted of trying to sell stealth bomber secrets to the USSR.	Oct 7 - Achille Lauro hijacking in Mediterranean Sea.
Mar 15 - Brazil’s vice president is sworn in, as the president is gravely ill.	May 25 - Bangladesh cyclone kills 10,000.	Nov 13 - Volcanoes in Amero, Columbia, kill 23,000.
Mar 16 - AP newsman Terry Anderson is kidnapped in Beirut, held until 1991.	May 29 - 38 killed in rioting during the Euro Cup final.	Nov 20 - Windows 1.0 released for PCs.
Mar 17 - Sep 16 - World’s Fair in Tsukuba, Japan.	May 31 - 41 tornadoes hit OH, PA, NY and Ontario, killing 76.	Nov 23 - Abu Nidal hijacks Egyptair 648 to Malta, where Egyptian commandoes storm the plane.
Mar 21 - Paraplegic athlete Rick Hansen begins a 40,000	Jun 13 - Police defuse Unabomb sent to Boeing.	Dec 16 - Two NYC mob bosses are shot dead, leaving John Gotti in charge.
		Dec 27 - Abu-Nidal terrorists open fire in Rome and Vienna airports, killing 18 and injuring 120.

1985

US Culture

Wham! and Madonna are huge on the music scene in 1985, and other oft-played songs are “Take On Me” by A-Ha, Glenn Frey’s “The Heat is On” and “Loverboy” by Billy Ocean. Out of Africa is the big Oscar winner, but Cocoon and Prizzi’s Honor both score as well. The Color Purple doesn’t win, but connects at the box office. So does Back to the Future, Rocky IV and Rambo: First Blood Part II.

1985—Progenitor

SUSPICION 3 TECHNOLOGY 4

ECONOMY 0

WARFARE 3

January

Sykes Family, *Metapocalypse*: President Reagan calls on all metahumans to volunteer their powers for three months. Abe (p. 173) calls it “a bullying stunt,” but many respond.

Right wing coup in Haiti.

February

Sykes Family: After being spat on at a public appearance as a crowd chants “Go back to Russia, commie!” Abe declares he’s doing just that. He flies to Moscow and puts his powers to work rebuilding, offering his work “as an apology on behalf of the USA.”

Joe Smith (p. 220) rescues Enrique Camarena but barely escapes alive. Declaring that cheap DETectors are making the work too hazardous and that he’s getting too old for “spy shit,” he retires. He’s 36.

March

A massive, targeted and conventional attack takes Glóir by surprise. British SAS troops succeed at killing their primary target, Terrence “Holocaust” O’Shay (p. 242). Recriminations fly within Glóir’s few remnants, with some claiming that too much faith was put in DETector defenses, and others insisting that the assault must have had inside information.

Sayeed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah comes down with a slight cold, but no one tries to kill him.

Gorbachev takes power despite rumors that he’s a closet metahuman.

Honda debuts modular cars (p. 332) at the World Fair.

April

The US and USSR agree to share their research on fusion power.

The USSR does not conduct a nuclear test.

May

Microbos computers releases “SAMANTHA,” an operating system based entirely on voice recognition.

Philadelphia uses a metahuman police officer who can phase through walls to attack MOVE.

***Metapocalypse*:** Dubbed “the Spring of the Patriots,” hundreds of metahumans throughout the US volunteer to help reconstruction throughout North America.

***ProgHarm*:** Guided by Mai Thi Chung (p. 356), Nguyet Cam uses US, Soviet and IEG space mirrors to disrupt a disturbance in the Bay of Bengal before it becomes a cyclone.

June

The IRA and Great Britain agree to a two month cease-fire.

Sascha Michnik (p. 260) is assassinated while doing reconstruction work in West Germany.

Campaign Framework: Dark Energy Archaeology

Where did it come from? The common wisdom is that it all started with Amanda Sykes, but is that really an acceptable answer? Did a measurable chunk of universal energy just happen to hit this planet, in all the vastness of the solar system, and providentially imbed itself in the all-American farmwife? Or is there more to it?

GMs who want to build an alternate reason for all these weird powers can easily decide that the explanation in the canon (what there is of it) is all a skein of lies, probably reinforced with synergetic science and instant brainwashing to keep anyone from finding the ghastly truth.

Unlike many of these scenarios, which work better earlier and let people unseat history with maximum leverage, this concept works better after the *Metapocalypse*, when many of the early-days principals are dead and upheaval has concealed primary sources. Because the only thing The Club Dumas lacked was heat vision, right?

Atlantis: Violence erupts between the New Progressive Army (the gang composed of the remains of Faction Four and the Progressive Party) and the Atlantean Socialist Front (formerly Atlantean Socialism).

July

Sykes Family: When Abe is “unavailable,” Ronald Reagan declares his trust in conventional medicine and goes under the knife. He dies during the operation.

Jason Weeks: Having detected the weaknesses in the Tesero dam, Jason Weeks warns Italy’s civil engineers and, when they disregard him, pays to have John Closterman (p. 235) flown there to save the dam when it collapses.

August

The Spring of the Patriots ends, but many metahumans who worked together on reconstruction continue to operate together, forming ‘teams’ similar to ID/EA. Many of these groups are ideologically motivated, but some attempt to be apolitical regional do-gooders.

There are renewed demonstrations over the cancelled election, with the slogan “Don’t Steal ’86!” gaining nationwide currency.

Jean Davis (p. 250) founds Freedom Ring magazine.

September

Atlantis, Jason Weeks: Jason Weeks warns Cynthia Carls (p. 214) about the eruption building under Mexico, but fails to realize that the Meta-Defense League has been stalking her, waiting for her to leave Atlantis. They wait to strike until she’s in the midst of quelling the quake and they succeed. She dies, the earthquake resumes, and 2,000 people die.

October

Atlantis: Ngoc Vo (p. 186) abandons Atlantis. The Shavians unite and begin to kill or disarm the other militias.

Tyler Ford (p. 228) collapses, then escapes from confinement in a hospital.

November

Jason Weeks, Sykes Family: Warned by Weeks, New ID/EA is present for the Amero volcano. Between Ngoc Vo’s ability to find and move people, John Closterman’s TK, Abe’s reinforcing of structures and landscapes and Weeks’ ability to foresee how geology will react to detonations, they’re able to mitigate the force of the volcano. But still, 3,200 people die.

December

Sykes Family: Abe offers to heal Rick Hansen (p. 111), who politely declines. But the two become friends.

The Abu Nidal airport attacks are conducted by metahumans (at least one of them a former Glóir terrorist working as a mercenary) but, warned by DETectors, other metahumans quickly arrive on the scene to engage them. (At least one of these other metahumans is later suspected to have been a Glóir member.)

The anesthesiologist from the fatal Reagan operation is arrested on suspicion of having killed the president intentionally through an overdose.

SUSPICION	4	TECHNOLOGY	5	ECONOMY	0	WARFARE	1
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Jan 1 - Spain and Portugal enter the European Economic Community.	Apr 14 - Hailstones up to two pounds in weight fall on Bangladesh, killing 92.	Aug 21 - A lake in Cameroon outgasses carbon dioxide and kills 2,000.
Jan 19 - "Brain," the first PC virus, starts to spread.	Apr 26 - Reactor explosion at Chernobyl devastates the surrounding region.	Sep 5 - Abu Nidal hijacks Pan Am flight 73.
Jan 20 - UK and France announce plans for the channel tunnel.	Apr 27 - "Captain Midnight" hacks the HBO satellite.	Sep 6 - Abu Nidal attacks an Istanbul synagogue, killing 22.
Jan 20 - First MLK day in the US.	May 2 - World Expo opens in Vancouver.	Sep 7 - Desmond Tutu is the first black Anglican bishop in South Africa.
Jan 24 - Voyager II probe encounters Uranus.	May 25 - Five million people participate in "Hands Across America."	Sep 7 - The FPMR kills five of Pinochet's bodyguards trying to get him, but he lives.
Jan 26 - Yoweri Museveni becomes the president of Uganda after a five-year liberation struggle.	May 25 - A Bangladeshi ferry capsizes, killing 600.	Sep 13 - Earthquake in Kalamata kills 20.
Jan 28 - The Space Shuttle Challenger explodes 73 seconds after launch.	May 26 - The EC adopts a flag.	Oct 3 - Supercolliding cyclotron switched on at Chalk River Labs.
Feb 7 - "Baby Doc" Duvalier flees Haiti.	Jun 4 - Jonathan Pollard pleads guilty to espionage for selling US secrets to Israel.	Oct 9 - US District Court judge Harry Claiborne impeached.
Feb 9 - Halley's comet's closest approach to the sun.	Jun 8 - Kurt Waldheim is elected president of Austria.	Oct 9 - Fox Broadcasting forms.
Feb 16 - Soviet liner Mikhail Lermontov sinks near New Zealand.	Jun 19 - Second NBA draft pick Len Bias dies of heart arrhythmia after using cocaine.	Oct 10 - Earthquake in San Salvador kills 1,500.
Feb 16 - France raids a Libyan air force base in Chad.	Jun 23 - LISTSERV, the first email list management software, debuts.	Oct 11 - Reagan and Gorbachev meet, but are unable to make significant diplomatic progress.
Feb 17 - Single European Act signed.	Jul 5 - The Statue of Liberty is reopened after refurbishment.	Nov 3 - A Lebanese magazine reports US arms sales to Iran in exchange for hostages.
Feb 19 - USSR launches Mir space station.	Aug 13 - Khian Sea sets off full of toxic waste and wanders for sixteen months before finding a port that lets it dock.	Nov 4 - Democrats regain the US senate.
Feb 25 - Marcos flees the Philippines, leaving Corazon Aquino in charge.	Aug 19 - A stolen Picasso painting is found in Melbourne Australia.	Nov 21 - Oliver North and Fawn Hall shred documents.
Feb 25 - Egyptian military police loot hotels in protest over wages.	Aug 20 - Postal worker Patrick Sherrill guns down 14 co-workers and kills himself.	Nov 25 - The Iran/Contra deal is described by US Attorney General Edward Meese.
Mar 26 - The New York Times accuses Kurt Waldheim of being a Nazi.		Nov 26 - The Tower Commission is formed to investigate Iran/Contra.
Apr 2 - A bomb on a TWA plane kills four.		Dec 20 - A racist attack in Howard Beach, New York, sparks national outrage.
Apr 5 - Bomb in Berlin disco kills three, injures 230.		

US Culture

1986 was the year of Top Gun, Crocodile Dundee, and Ferris Bueller's Day Off at theaters, along with Platoon, Blue Velvet and Children of a Lesser God. The airwaves are full of stalwarts like Bon Jovi, Madonna and Wham!, seeded with occasional one-hit wonders like Nu Shooz' "I Can't Wait" and the prophetic "Don't Forget Me" by Glass Tiger.

1986—Progenitor

SUSPICION 3

TECHNOLOGY 4

ECONOMY 0

WARFARE 3

January

Atlantis: UN Peacekeepers are dispatched to Atlantis. The Shavians prefer to avoid engagement, taking advantage of their small size, invulnerability and unique bodies to simply slip away.

Metahumans build the Channel Tunnel over a long weekend.

ProgHarm: Uganda installs a modified form of Progressive Harmony after overthrowing the old government.

February

ProgHarm: The Philippines forms a Progressive Harmony government and begins reordering its society.

President Bush commits to a “Faster, leaner, more responsive” military.

March

Georgia attempts to break away from the USSR and is pacified with a combination of military might and syntergenic influence.

Jason Weeks: Jason Weeks (p. 195) warns the staff at Chernobyl in time to avert the disaster, though the plant does have to do a slow shutdown and remain offline for several months.

April

The Physicist (p. 262) is lauded in Bangladesh for his tireless, inventive and largely effective attempts to protect the nation from killer hail.

ProgHarm, Atlantis: The Atlantean Socialist Front joins forces with the Shavians and convinces them to destroy the island’s Progressive Harmony faction once and for all. The UN forces attempt to intervene but are decisively defeated.

May

A metahuman assassinates Kurt Waldheim and escapes unhurt, without even being identified.

The World Expo features affordable jaunts into space, courtesy of several highly-paid metahumans.

June

ProgHarm: Haiti’s government is overthrown by an extraordinarily well-timed and executed Progressive Harmony coup.

Atlantis: Ngoc Vo (p. 186) returns to the island and banishes several radical Shavians to the depths of the solar system. Exerting herself to her fullest, she sends them into deep space beyond Pluto. It’s estimated that, at normal Shavian speeds, they’d need more time to fly home than has elapsed in all recorded human history dating back to the cave paintings at Lascaux.

July

Atlantis: In a disputed election, the Atlantean Socialist Front’s candidate, Lawrence Regis, is elected People’s Servant. The ASF wins six seats on the People’s Voice while the New Progressive Party

1986



(formerly the New Progressive Army, formerly Faction Four and the Progressive Party) holds three. One World Harmony (the fusion of Progressive Harmony and One World Energy) boycotts the elections and then complains about their lack of representation.

Waldheim's assassin is identified as one of the Israeli metahumans who fought Abu Nidal in December '85.

Jason Weeks: Foreseeing the Cameroon outgassing, Jason Weeks activates New ID/EA and gets The Physicist on the scene in time to contain it.

August

ProgHarm: Progressive Harmony is overthrown in the Philippines.

Atlantis: A group of five Shaw Monsters ambushes Ngoc Vo and kills her. People's Servant Regis flees the island.

A metahuman intervenes to stop Sherrill's rampage. There are no fatalities, though two buildings collapse.

September

Abu Nidal recruits several metahumans who clash with Israeli metahumans.

ProgHarm: In the face of military escalation, President Bush permits the development of an anti-Progressive Harmony synergene tailored for the Haitian population, but does not release it.

October

Waldheim's assassin is captured.

A hyperbrain in Portugal unveils elastic semiconductors.

Sykes Family: Amanda appears at the San Salvador quake just as it begins, in the form of a hundred-foot-high woman robed in green and gently glowing. She redirects the force of the quake to form a life-sized (i.e., hundred-foot-tall) statue of herself while those in danger of being crushed are pulled into the sky, encased in bubbles of green energy.

November

The US elections are held as normal, with Republican legislative gains leaving the parties deadlocked in congress.

ProgHarm: President Bush meets with Gorbachev—formally to ensure that there is never another disastrous exchange like

the war three years ago, but privately much of their talk revolves around how to deal with Progressive Harmony.

Sykes Family, ProgHarm, Jason Weeks: Nguyet Cam (p. 164) pays Global Human University a call and is able to speak privately with Jason Weeks for over an hour before Amanda Sykes materializes in a pillar of fire and demands that they explain what they're plotting. They manage to persuade her that their conversation is innocuous, but she insists that they separate and tells them she'll be watching to make sure they remain incommunicado.

1987—History

SUSPICION 5 TECHNOLOGY 5 ECONOMY 1 WARFARE 1

Jan 5 - President Reagan undergoes prostate surgery.	May 28 - Matthias Rust lands his plane on Red Square.	Oct 10 - Jesse Jackson announces his presidential campaign.
Jan 8 - Dow closes over 2,000 for the first time.	Jun 11 - Margaret Thatcher is elected to a third term.	Oct 14-16 - 18-month-old Jessica McClure falls in a well and is stuck for two days before rescue.
Jan 13 - Two NYC mafioso are sentenced to 100 years in prison.	Jun 12 - Reagan gives his famed "Tear down this wall!" speech.	Oct 15-16 - Hurricane force winds hit southern England, killing 23.
Jan 16 - The President of Ecuador is kidnapped and offered in exchange for imprisoned general Frank Vargas.	Jun 19 - The US Supreme Court strikes down a Louisiana law requiring 'creation science' be taught alongside evolution.	Oct 23 - Bork rejected.
Feb 11 - British Airways is privatized.	Jun 29 - South Korea's President promises reforms.	Oct 26 - The Dow drops 156.83 points.
Feb 11 - US nuclear test in Nevada.	Jul 1 - Robert Bork is nominated to the US Supreme Court.	Nov 8 - The Troubles: IRA bomb kills 11 at Ennis Killen.
Feb 23 - A supernova is visible with the naked eye.	Jul 4 - A court in Lyons sentences Klaus Barbie to life imprisonment for Nazi war crimes.	Nov 17 - Tsunami in the Gulf of Alaska.
Mar 4 - Reagan admits that negotiations with Iran 'deteriorated' into arms-for-hostages.	Jul 11 - The world population hits five billion.	Nov 18 - Fire in the London Underground kills 31.
Mar 18 - Presentations on high-temperature superconductors are dubbed "the Woodstock of Physics."	Jul 31 - Saudi security forces kill 400 Iranian pilgrims to Mecca in street clashes.	Nov 22 - Signal hijack by "Max Headroom."
Mar 19 - Jim Bakker, televangelist, resigns over his affair with Jessica Hahn.	Jul 31 - F4 tornado hits Alberta and kills 27.	Nov 25 - Hurricane Nina kills 1,036 in the Philippines.
Apr 19 - The first Simpsons cartons are broadcast on The Tracy Ullman Show.	Aug 4 - FCC rescinds "fairness doctrine."	Nov 29 - Korean Air flight 858 is blown up, killing 115.
Apr 27 - The US Department of Justice declares Kurt Waldheim an "undesirable alien."	Aug 7 - Warship crisis between Venezuela and Colombia.	Dec 1 - Construction of the Channel Tunnel begins.
May 5 - The Assemblies of God defrocks Jim Bakker.	Aug 16 - The harmonic convergence (an alignment of planets in the solar system) occurs.	Dec 2 - The US Supreme Court hears the case of Hustler Magazine vs. Jerry Falwell.
May 8 - Gary Hart drops out of the Democrat presidential race after incriminating photos are taken of him with Donna Rice.	Aug 19 - Michael Ryan kills 16 in Hungerford with an assault rifle before killing himself.	Dec 8 - The First Intifada begins.
	Sep 2 - The trial of Matthias Rust.	Dec 8 - Reagan and Gorbachev sign the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Treaty.
	Sep 17 - Pat Robertson throws his hat in the ring for Republican presidential nominee.	Dec 20 - A passenger ferry hits an oil tanker in the Philippines, killing thousands.
		Dec 29 - Prozac debuts.
		Undated - Aum Shinrikyo founded.

1987

US Culture

Big songs on the radio include George Michael's "Faith," "With or Without You" by US and "Here I Go Again" by Whitesnake. In movies, Wall Street and The Untouchables straddle popularity and critical acclaim, while Fatal Attraction and 3 Men and a Baby turn big profits.

1987—Progenitor

SUSPICION 3 TECHNOLOGY 3

ECONOMY 0

WARFARE 2

January

ProgHarm: China, the US, the USSR and 90% of Earth's other countries sign agreements to limit the development and deployment of nuclear, orbital, biological and chemical weapons. Although some Progressive Harmony nations sign, the IEG refuses and begins rebuilding its munitions stockpiles.

February

Great Britain and separatist groups in Northern Ireland agree to another truce.

Atlantis: An uneasy peace descends on Atlantis.

Starting with a surprise attack made possible by a "space annihilating" metahuman, Iran invades Israel.

March

Sykes Family: Amanda intervenes in Israel. Stalling the invaders' tanks and turning their gunpowder inert leaves them vulnerable to Israeli defense forces, who are merciless. After neutralizing the fuel in Iran's attack planes, Amanda grows a hundred feet tall and strides into the thick of the Iranian ground forces, demanding surrender.

In Europe there's a scandal over massive misuse of reconstruction funds.

The USSR has consistent electrical power again.

April

The Pope issues an encyclical against the use of dark energy when it's revealed that Jonas Denapier has been using subtle mind control abilities in addition to his healing powers.

May

Gary Hart's indiscretions are largely ignored as ongoing coverage of reconstruction and the Iran/Israel war provides lots of juicy footage.

Matthias Rust's plane is torn from the sky by a Soviet metahuman. Any German outrage is subdued when it becomes clear how deep into forbidden airspace Rust had gotten and how many warnings he ignored.

ProgHarm: Nicaragua and Haiti form the "Progressive Gestalt of the Americas."

June

George Herbert Walker Bush suggests in a speech that the time to ease the barriers between east and west might be upon the US and USSR and proposes that it's not unimaginable that the Berlin Wall could come down within five years.



Sykes Family: Palestine erupts in violence, while Lebanon and Iraq also attack Israel. All this happens the very day after Amanda leaves the country. She returns but is immediately swarmed by a pan-Arab group of metahumans. Israeli metahumans leap to her defense, and Amanda flees to the radioactive glass ruins of Jerusalem to prevent civilian casualties. Public media speculation about why Abe isn't there prompts him to take the reporters and commentators to task, saying "Amanda can certainly take care of herself and she knows I don't agree with her current politics."

July

Sykes Family: Showing no ill effects from the previous month's battle, a luminously beautiful Amanda Sykes gives a speech to the United Nations. She calls for universal women's suffrage and military integration, saying "No nation should call itself civilized if it denies women the right to participate in their nation's decision and defense."

Metapocalypse: The world's population, beginning to recover from the Metapocalypse, hits four billion.

August

On the harmonic convergence, a group of telepaths attempts to connect as many willing minds as they can into a single "shared mindspace." The results are unexpected, as many within suffer horrible mental assaults. The gestalt drags in nearly a thousand unwilling minds before its own contradictions split it apart. As late as 1997, "curds" of malevolent fused minds centered around and controlling an (often helpless and unwilling) telepathic metahuman are causing trouble throughout the world.

September

Roy Kilpatrick (p. 87) declares his candidacy for the Republican Presidential nomination in the US. Freedom Ring magazine endorses him, despite his disagreements with them over sexual philosophy.

October

Jessica McClure is rescued so easily that the story doesn't get beyond local news.

Åism: In Åia, Å (p. 238) maintains constant cloud cover to conceal a "wild" animal preserve of Thabo Moloi's (p. 369) modified creatures, making sure that the created ecosystem is stable.

November

A new group of metahumans called "The British Defenders" is announced with government sanction and fanfare. A resurgent Glóir clashes with them soon after, inconclusively. Many suspect the British Defenders were created specifically to draw Glóir into the open.

December

ProgHarm, Atlantis, Sykes Family: Violence increases in Israel, despite Amanda's efforts. Refugees from both sides of the conflict flee to Atlantis, Europe, the IEG and the US.

SUSPICION 6 TECHNOLOGY 5 ECONOMY 0 WARFARE 1

Jan 1 - Perestroika begins in the USSR.	Apr 14 - In the Geneva Accords, the USSR agrees to leave Afghanistan.	neighborhood residents protesting a curfew.
Jan 1 - The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is formed.	Apr 16 - PLO leader Abu Jihad killed. Many suspect Israeli commandoes.	Aug 8 - Uprising in Burma results in widespread slaughter.
Jan 8 - The Dow drops 140 points in a mini-crash.	Apr 30 - World Expo held in Brisbane, Australia.	Aug 19 - Iran-Iraq truce.
Jan 15 - Clash at the Dome of the Rock.	May 15 - USSR starts withdrawing from Afghanistan.	Sep 5 - The \$2 billion S&L bailout.
Jan 25 - George Herbert Walker Bush and Dan Rather have a heated exchange over the Iran-Contra scandal.	May 16 - Surgeon General Koop compares nicotine's addictive effects to cocaine and heroin.	Sep 11 - 300,000 demonstrate for independence in Estonia.
Feb 3 - Dominated by Democrats, the House of Representatives rejects Reagan's request for \$36 million in aid to the Contras.	May 16 - The US Supreme Court rules that police don't need a warrant to search trash.	Sep 17 - Summer Olympics in Seol.
Feb 12 - Anthony Kennedy is accepted to the US Supreme Court.	Jun 29 - The US Supreme Court permits special prosecutors to pursue the executive branch.	Sep 24 - Large militant protests against IMF and the World Bank in Berlin.
Feb 13 - The Winter Olympics start in Calgary, Canada.	Jul 1 - Heat wave begins in US, ultimately killing at least 4,800.	Sep 29 - NASA resumes shuttle flights.
Feb 17 - UN truce monitor Lt. Col. William R. Higgins is kidnapped in Lebanon and later killed.	Jul 6 - North Sea drilling platform explosion kills 167.	Oct 5 - Riots in Algiers. 500 die as police attempt to quell them.
Feb 24 - In the case of Hustler Magazine vs. Falwell, the US Supreme Court decides in favor of Hustler.	Jul 3 - US ship shoots down Iran Air flight 655.	Oct 5 - Pinochet defeated in Chilean plebiscite.
Mar 7 - The Troubles: Three unarmed IRA members are killed by the SAS in Gibraltar.	Apr 14 - A US warship, the USS Samuel B. Roberts hits a mine in the Persian Gulf.	Oct 13 - Dukakis' opposition to the death penalty loses him the debate.
Mar 8 - George HW Bush gets the Republican nomination for President.	Apr 18 - US forces strike Iranian vessels and oil platforms as part of Operation Praying Mantis. They sink the IS Sahand and the IS Joshan.	Oct 27 - Reagan decides to tear down the heavily bugged US embassy in Moscow.
Mar 16 - Halabja poison gas attack in Iraq.	Jul 6 - First beach syringes found in the New York area.	Oct 30 - Philip Morris buys Kraft.
Mar 16 - Oliver North and Admiral Poindexter are indicted.	Jul 31 - A bridge collapse at a Malay ferry terminal kills 32 and wounds an equal number.	Nov 8 - George Herbert Walker Bush elected president.
Mar 19 - The Troubles: IRA kills two British colonels.	Aug 5 - The leader of all Shia in Pakistan is killed.	Nov 15 - The Palestinian National Council meeting in Algiers declares an independent state of Palestine.
Mar 29 - An African National Congress representative is assassinated in Paris.	Aug 5 - Malaysian constitutional crisis.	Nov 16 - Estonia declares sovereignty, if not quite full independence.
Apr 4 - AZ governor Evan Mecham impeached.	Aug 6 - The Tompkins Square Park riot in NYC erupts when police use excessive force over homeless people and	Nov 30 - Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. buys RJR Nabisco in the biggest leveraged buyout ever.
		Dec 2 - Cyclone in Bangladesh kills thousands and ruins millions of homes.
		Dec 7 - Armenian quake kills close to 25,000.
		Dec 16 - Lyndon LaRouche convicted of mail fraud.
		Dec 21 - Pan Am flight 103 is blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland killing 270.

US Culture

In theaters, Rain Man won awards and earned millions. It was also the year of Dangerous Liaisons, Mississippi Burning, A Fish Called Wanda, Big and Die Hard. In music, '88 was the year of Rick Astley's "Never Gonna Give You Up," "Sweet Child o' Mine" by Guns 'n' Roses, "Could've Been" by Tiffany and Billy Ocean's "Get Outta My Dreams, Get Into My Car."

1988—Progenitor

SUSPICION 3

TECHNOLOGY 4

ECONOMY 0

WARFARE 3

January

Sykes Family: As the Arab-Israel war stalemates, Amanda (p. 159) begins restoring or recreating Jewish and Christian holy sites. Abe (p. 173) travels to the land to try to restore Muslim sites, with indifferent success.

February

The US hires Christophero Munóz (p. 253) to recover William Higgins, but dark energy proximity triggered explosives kill the hostage. At the behest of the Japanese government, John Closterman (p. 235) joins Christophero in the hunt and, together, they find and eliminate the kidnappers.

March

Glóir, betrayed from within, is caught by a surprise attack from the British Defenders (p. 119). Although a later terror cell claims its acts under the name, it has no metahumans or membership continuity with the original Glóir. Although some members of Glóir escape the Defenders and continue to break laws, they do so on their own. March 17, 1988, is the definitive end of Glóir.

ProgHarm: Ecuador joins the Progressive Gestalt of the Americas.

Following the assassination of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the Côte d'Ivoire plunges into civil unrest.

April

Atlantis, Sykes Family: Factions in Atlantis finally agree to submit to Amy Sykes' (p. 177) authority until the 1990 election.

Åism: South Africa explodes in Åite sponsored revolutionary violence.

The USSR entrenches in Afghanistan.

May

Sykes Family: Amanda creates her own private equatorial island, which the press quickly dubs "Amandlis."

June

Not long after the US Supreme Court permits special prosecutors, Congressional Democrats recruit just enough disgruntled Republicans to sic one on President Bush about the dismissed 1984 election.

July

The United States attacks Iran after its "provocative" actions against Navy ships in the Gulf.

August

ProgHarm: The IEG begins rebuilding its space elevator (p. 328).

1988

The first cloned sheep is unveiled in Scotland.

September

Sykes Family: The US attacks Iran from two Air Stations, and despite Amanda's vocal insistence that it's "ill considered," she refrains from interfering.

October

Arizona begins constructing the first ZRI Geodesic Steam plant (p. 373).

ProgHarm: Côte d'Ivoire stabilizes under a new Progressive Harmony government, forming the "African Harmonic Gestalt" with Uganda. Meanwhile, Chile installs a Progressive Harmony government and petitions for admission into the Progressive Gestalt of the Americas.

November

George Herbert Walker Bush is re-elected.

December

Jason Weeks: Global Human University opens satellite campuses in Chicago, Moscow and occupied Tehran.

ProgHarm: The top module of the space elevator returns to Earth orbit.

1989

1989—History

SUSPICION 5	TECHNOLOGY 4	ECONOMY 0	WARFARE 1
Jan 4 - US Navy shoots down two Libyan MiGs in the Gulf of Sidra.	Feb 14 - The first of 24 Global Positioning System satellites goes up.		Loan in the beginning of the scandal that eventually lands Charles Keating in prison. It's the beginning of the S&L Crisis.
Jan 7 - Akihito becomes emperor of Japan.	Feb 15 - All Soviet troops are out of Afghanistan.		Apr 21 - Students start protesting in Tianmen Square.
Jan 17 - Patrick Edward Purdy kills five children, wounds 30 and then commits suicide in Stockton, CA.	Feb 23 - John Tower is rejected as Secretary of Defense.		Apr 25 - Motorola releases a small cell phone.
Jan 20 - George Herbert Walker Bush becomes President of the USA.	Mar 1 - US ratifies Berne Convention on copyright.		May 1 - Disney MGM Studios opens at Walt Disney World.
Feb 2 - The last Soviet armor leaves Afghanistan.	Mar 1 - Curfew imposed in Kosovo.		May 2 - Hungary dismantles 150 miles of border barbed wire.
Feb 11 - First female bishop for the Episcopal Church in the US.	Mar 4 - Time-Warner merger.		May 14 - Gorbachev visits China.
Feb 14 - Union Carbide agrees to pay \$470 million to India over Bhopal.	Mar 9 - A strike bankrupts Eastern Air Lines.		May 19-20 - In response to Tianmen Square protests, martial law is declared in Beijing.
Feb 14 - Ayatollah Khomeini urges the death of Salman Rushdie over The Satanic Verses.	Mar 23 - University of Utah announces production of cold fusion, but can't repeat it.		May 30 - The Medellín Cartel attempts to assassinate Columbia's security director.
	Mar 24 - Exxon Valdez spills 11 million gallons of oil in Prince Edward Sound.		
	Apr 7 - A Soviet sub sinks in the Barents Sea, killing 41.		
	Apr 14 - The US government seizes Lincoln Savings and		

US Culture

Hit songs of 1989 include "Heaven" by Warrant, "Love Shack" by the B-52s and New Kids on the Block's "Hangin' Tough," along with a lot of singles by Paula Abdul and Milli Vanilli.

Meanwhile, at the movie theaters, viewers swarm to see Batman, The Little Mermaid and Look Who's Talking while the Oscars reward My Left Foot, Driving Miss Daisy and Born on the Fourth of July.

Jun 3 - Khomeini dies and is torn asunder during his public funeral.	Sep 21 - Hurricane Hugo hits South Carolina.	Nov 30 - A bomb kills a German banker. Red Army Faction claims responsibility.
Jun 4 - Tianmen Square massacre.	Sep 22 - The Troubles: IRA bomb in Kent kills 11.	
Jun 4 - Solidarity wins the Polish election.	Oct 5 - US televangelist John Nunes is found guilty of embezzling \$158 million.	Dec 1-9 - A coup attempts to oust Corazon Aquino.
Jun 12 - Corcoran Gallery removes Robert Mapplethorpe's gay erotica.	Oct 13 - Friday the 13th mini-crash drops Dow 190 points.	Dec 6 - Feminism opponent Marc Lépine kills 14 women in Quebec.
Jun 22 - The Troubles: Ireland opens its first two universities since independence.	Oct 17 - Quake in California kills 67.	Dec 15 - Colombian police kill drug lord José Gacha.
Jul 26 - First prosecution for releasing a computer virus.	Nov 7 - David Dinkins elected mayor of Washington, DC.	Dec 20 - Operation Just Cause is launched to remove Manuel Noriega from Panama.
Jul 31 - Gameboy in North America.	Nov 7-9 - Berlin begins to tear down the wall.	Dec 21-25 - Romanian dictator Ceausescu flees and is shot.
Aug 18 - A presidential hopeful in Colombia is assassinated.	Nov 16 - Six Jesuit priests murdered by Salvadoran soldiers.	Dec 25 - Bank of Japan raises the interest rate, eventually popping the bubble economy.
Aug 23 - Two million people in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania protest Soviet occupation.	Nov 16 - In South Africa, de Klerk announces the repeal of the Separate Amenities Act.	Dec 28 - Quake kills 13 in New South Wales.
Aug 23 - Hungary liberalizes its border with Austria.	Nov 17 - The Velvet Revolution begins in Prague.	Dec 29 - The Nikkei index hits a high of 38,957.
Sep 10 - Hungary opens to GDR refugees.	Nov 22 - A bomb kills the president of Lebanon.	

1989—Progenitor

SUSPICION	2	TECHNOLOGY	5	ECONOMY	1	WARFARE	3
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January

Jason Weeks: Weeks proposes a series of trans-African vacuum tunnels (p. 333) to enable high-speed travel and economic interdependence. He spends much of 1989 intermittently traveling the continent trying to drum up support for this plan.

President Bush pushes a drastically raised budget for fighting AIDS through the Congress.

February

ProgHarm: A covert, joint US/USSR attack on the orbital side of the IEG's space elevator (p. 328) fails and kills a lot of mid-tiers.

Riley Boetje (p. 243) dies of a heart attack.

March

An anti-syntergene designed to free Afghans from the grip of Soviet tranquility programming is released in Afghanistan early in March. A well-coordinated cabal of foreign agents is in place to arm and organize the angry revolutionaries liberated thereby, and at month's end the nation erupts in violence.

1989



April

Sykes Family: Uninvited visitors to Amandlis Island find nothing there unless Amanda Sykes (p. 159) is in residence.

The trials of the Michigan secessionists (p. 107), particularly Bryson Maas-Thierry and Brenda Harkness (p. 206) begin.

Åism: The Åites announce the Doctrine of Solar Destiny, stating that it is their intention to free themselves from Earth permanently and seed the entire solar system with life based on Earthly DNA.

May

ProgHarm: The world's Progressive Harmony nations begin a massive and concerted reconstruction effort in Vietnam.

June

The US launches two air-stations (p. 321) to replace those destroyed in the '83 discharge. The new ones are bigger and more open to civilians.

Solidarity in Poland uses syntergenic science to spread its ideas. So do the Tianmen Square demonstrators.

A cell phone that can be planted in a human jawbone, which recharges itself with flywheels at

the mandible joints and uses bone conduction to play received voices is offered for sale in the US and Europe. Its battery is guaranteed for the life of the user and can store a thousand phone contacts, accessed through voice recognition.

July

The demonstrations in China spread.

Jedgar: Unrest in Saudi Arabia and Iran begins to draw in foreign troublemakers. Soon both nations are plagued by Progressive Harmonists, Åites, Atlantean refugees and Shavians, on top of the usual Israeli agents, Sunni/Shia extremists and shady Russian businessmen. Also, Jedgar (p. 189) is reported in the area.

August

Skyware, Inc. produces the next generation of electronic computers. Based completely on wireless internet access and cloud storage, these eight-by-eleven touch-screen computers can be rolled up like a scroll around a battery pack the thickness of a pencil. When unrolled and used, they go rigid until wound around the spindle again.

September

A sustained study by a nonpartisan watchdog group accuses Mama Schone's Finest Foods CAFOs of incorporating bioengineered parasites into their meat that leave their consumers receptive to targeted synergetic effects. Mama Schone's immediately sues for defamation.

October

China announces major democratic reforms.

November

The USSR lets Poland and East Germany go, concentrating its focus on Afghanistan and its eastern European client states.

The Michigan rebels are convicted of treason but, to the shock and astonishment of nearly everyone, the judge suspends their sentences.

December

A revolution in Jordan installs a pro-US right-wing government.

1990—History

SUSPICION 4	TECHNOLOGY 5	ECONOMY 0	WARFARE 0
Jan 3 - Manuel Noriega surrenders to US forces and is eventually extradited to stand trial.	Feb 26 - The Sandinistas are defeated in Nicaragua's election.	Apr 7 - Admiral Pointdexter is found guilty in the Iran-Contra scandal, but the conviction is later overturned on appeal.	
Jan 4 - Pakistani train wreck kills 400.	Feb 26 - USSR agrees to withdraw 73,500 troops from Czechoslovakia by 1991.	Apr 20 - Hubble space telescope launched.	
Jan 10 - Time Warner merger complete.	Mar 1 - Steve Jackson Games raided by the US Secret Service, leading to the founding of the Electronic Freedom Foundation.	May 4 - Latvia declares independence.	
Jan 11 - Independence movement gets serious in Lithuania.		May 17 - The World Health Organization removes "homosexuality" from its list of diseases.	
Jan 18 - Marion Barry arrested in a drug sting.	Mar 10 - 18 months after the coup, Prosper Avril is ousted from Haiti.	May 22 - Windows 3.0 released.	
Jan 20 - Soviet troops occupy Baku in Azerbaijan and kill 130 independence protesters.	Mar 15 - USSR denies independence to Lithuania.	Jun 1 - Gorbachev and Bush sign a treaty limiting chemical weapons.	
Jan 25-26 - Burns' Day storm kills 97 in northwest Europe.	Mar 18 - First free East German elections.	Jun 1 - The Troubles: IRA kills two British officers in separate incidents.	
Jan 31 - First McDonald's opens in Moscow.	Mar 20 - Imelda Marcos on trial.	Jun 2 - 88 tornadoes in the American midwest kill 12.	
Feb 2 - In South Africa, de Klerk allows the ANC to operate and promises to free Nelson Mandela.	Mar 21 - After 75 years of South African rule, Namibia becomes independent.	Jun 21 - Thousand die in an earthquake in Manjil, Iran.	
Feb 13 - An agreement to reunify Germany is reached.	Mar 31 - A riot against the poll tax in Trafalgar Square leaves 471 injured.	Jun 26 - Bush breaks his campaign promise of "No new taxes" after serious pressure from both sides of the aisle.	
Feb 15 - UK and Argentina restore diplomatic relations.	Apr 1 - Strangeways prison riot in Great Britain begins, lasting three weeks and three days.		

1990

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US Culture

On 1990 radio, one can hear
Poison singing “Unskinny Bop,”
“Pray” by M.C. Hammer and
“Because I Love You” by Stevie
B. Movie screens hosted Ghost,
Dick Tracy and Pretty Woman.

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Jul 2 - Stampede in a Mecca pedestrian tunnel kills 1,461.	Jul 27 - Belarus declares sovereignty.	Oct 8 - Israeli police kill 17 Palestinians near the Dome of the Rock.
Jul 6 - Somali presidential bodyguards massacre demonstrators: 65 die and over 300 are wounded.	Jul 30 - The Troubles: IRA car bomb kills British Parliament member.	Nov 28 - Thatcher leaves office and John Major becomes British Prime Minister.
Jul 15 - Tamil Tigers kill 168 muslims in Sri Lanka.	Aug 2 - Iraq invades Kuwait.	Dec 1 - Workers on the Channel Tunnel meet.
Jul 16 - Philippine quake kills 1,600.	Aug 28 - Plainfield tornado kills 29.	Dec 9 - Slobodan Miosovic is elected in Serbia.
Jul 27 - Violent coup attempt in Trinidad/Tobago.	Sep 11 - George Herbert Walker Bush threatens Iraq.	Dec 9 - Lech Walesa elected in Poland.
	Sep 19 - The Troubles: IRA shoots Air Chief Marshall nine times, but he lives.	Dec 11 - John Gotti arrested.
	Oct 3 - The Germanies unite.	Dec 16 - Aristide elected in Haiti.

1990—Progenitor

SUSPICION	1	TECHNOLOGY	5	ECONOMY	1	WARFARE	4
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January

A collection of hyperbrains attempts to form an “Extrageographic National Identity.” They argue that in an age of teleporters, telecommunications and rapid trans-national transport, it’s ridiculous to allocate national identity based on accidents of geography. Instead, they wish to be recognized as citizens of “EgNI#1” no matter where they reside in the world. The UN refuses to recognize EgNI#1 as a sovereign nation.

February

Åism, Jason Weeks: De Klerk begins liberalizing South Africa after Jason Weeks (p. 195) flatly states that South Africa has no chance of hooking into his vacuum network as long as the blatant racism of apartheid continues. The increasing pressure of Åites in Namibia and native ANC activists also contribute to the decision.

March

Shavians, Jason Weeks: Global Human University makes three stunning announcements. The first is that they have successfully created a material that is superconductive at zero degrees Centigrade. The second is that they have created a device that allows Shavians to reproduce. The third is that both technologies are only to become available after six months without major political violence between Shavians and humans. The outcry is massive and global, but Weeks is already deep in hiding by the time the announcement is made.

Just about everyone is angry for one reason or another. Anti-Shavians are terrified by the specter of Shavian reproduction, while the Shavians themselves are offended that the reproduction device isn’t immediately released. A similar incredulousness grips those who appreciate the revolutionary potential of the superconductor: They consider it unconscionable to link its release to mere political considerations.

April

ProgHarm: A civil war in Haiti breaks out, ultimately overthrowing Progressive Harmony for a hybrid system called “Socialist Tranquility.”

May

George Herbert Walker Bush proposes putting “the first human on Mars by purely technological means.”

ProgHarm: Chile joins the Progressive Gestalt of the Americas.

June

Demonstrations flare up within and without Iran over the US occupation.

Trials of the US military officers who opened hostilities against the Michigan Revolution begin.

July

Atlantis: A shell-shocked Atlantis holds its fifth election. A moderate Atlantean Socialist coalition builder named Doyce Walton is elected People’s Servant, while everyone on the People’s Voice gets re-elected.

August

Northern Ireland becomes an independent country.

ProgHarm: The IEG is back up to its full pre-war GNP and begins to reconnect its tethered satellite Thien The Thang Máy.

September

The hyperbrains of EgNI#1 buy a single square kilometer of land from Morocco and declare it a sovereign nation. They carefully explain to their neighbors their willingness to offer millions of dollars in ongoing economic aid though, of course, they can only do so legally if they are recognized as a legitimate nation. Their neighbors all recognize them, despite the utter emptiness and worthlessness of EgNI#1’s land.

October

Sykes Family: Between rising muslim discontent over the occupation of Iran, Progressive Harmonic agitation in all developed nations, and ongoing violence in Afghanistan, the UN finds its forces stretched increasingly thin. Abe Sykes (p. 173) and New ID/EA begin stepping into the breach, simply teleporting themselves to areas of conflict and forcibly separating the battling sides.

November

Jason Weeks, Shavians: A hyperbrain outside Weeks’ Global Human University system cracks the Shavian reproduction problem and announces his intention to construct a “breed chamber.” His peer-reviewed paper in “Nature” clearly lays out how such a device can be constructed. Many opposed to Shavians insist that Weeks is the one really behind the article.

December

Jason Weeks, Shavians: With the promise and threat of unchecked Shavian reproduction looming, violence breaks out globally between both species. Admitting that his ultimatum has been made obsolete, Weeks agrees to begin production of his superconductors—but only for use on the African continent.

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Colors At the Cycle’s End

By 1990, the comfort with Blue three is setting the stage for Blue four shocks: Hyperbrains have pushed technology forward, but now normal people are working hard to apply those innovations. The massive migration of the Årk is the open side of space exploration, while Vietnam’s secret contact with the mysterious and terrible ‘Unsided’ is its hidden shadow. Both events set the stage for infusions of weirdness as disruptive as the appearance of the Progenitor in the 1960s.

On that Årk, or atop the space elevator, the Gold two baseline is slipping down to Gold One, but most people are, still, free of dark energy despite the Åites best efforts. Red two stays steady, while Black three rises from the grayer ashes of conflict.

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1990

US Culture

The songs of 1991 were unusually frank and straightforward, judging by titles like "Gonna Make You Sweat" by C+C Music Factory, Mariah Carey's "I Don't Wanna Cry" and "I Wanna Sex You Up" by Color Me Badd. Movies were more discreet, with popular films including Fried Green Tomatoes, Silence of the Lambs, and Sleeping With the Enemy, only one of which had much to do with the nouns used in its title.

Jan 4 - The UN condemns Israel for its actions in Palestine.

Jan 11 - The Soviets enter Vilnius to halt Lithuanian independence.

Jan 12 - The US congress authorizes the use of force to free Kuwait.

Jan 16 - Operation Desert Storm begins.

Jan 17-19 - Iraq fires SCUD missiles into Israel.

Jan 26 - Somalia's president flees his compound in Mogadishu.

Feb 5 - Kevorkian is barred from aiding suicide.

Feb 7 - Aristide sworn in Haiti.

Feb 7 - The Troubles: IRA mortar attack on #10 Downing Street.

Feb 7 - US ground troops enter Iraq.

Feb 15 - Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland agree to move towards a free market economic system.

Feb 23 - Bloodless coup in Thailand.

Feb 25 - Worst attack on US forces during the first Gulf War kills 29.

Feb 18 - IRA bombs two London Underground stations.

Feb 26 - Iraqis ignite oil wells.

Mar 3 - LAPD officers are taped beating Rodney King.

Mar 3 - Latvia and Estonia vote to leave the USSR.

Mar 9 - Massive demonstration against Milosovic in Belgrade.

Mar 15 - Four LAPD officers indicted for the King beating.

Mar 31 - First multi-party elections in Albania.

Mar 31 - Georgia votes to leave the USSR.

Apr 4 - US senator John Heinz killed in a chopper crash.

Apr 4 - William Kennedy Smith is a suspect in a sexual assault.

Apr 5 - Former senator John Tower killed in a plane crash.

Apr 10 - Italian ferry hits an oil tanker and 140 die.

Apr 14 - Twenty paintings worth \$500 million are stolen from the Van Gogh museum in Amsterdam, found within an hour in a parked car.

Apr 17 - Dow closes over 3,000 for the first time.

Apr 22 - Quake in Costa Rica and Panama kills 82.

Apr 26 - 70 cyclones in US kill 17.

Apr 29 - Bangladesh cyclone kills 138,000.

May 15 - Edith Cresson becomes the first female premier of France.

May 21 - Former Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi is assassinated.

May 21 - Ethiopian civil war ends when the president flees.

May 24 - Israel covertly evacuates Ethiopian jews.

Jun 3 - Mount Unzen erupts and kills 43.

Jun 9 - Mine collapse traps 26 in Swaziland, but they eventually are freed.

Jun 12 - Boris Yeltsin becomes president of Russia.

Jun 12 - The Chicago Bulls win their first NBA championship.

Jun 15 - Mount Pinatubo erupts, killing 800.

Jun 17 - South Africa repeals the Population Registration Act.

Jun 25 - Croatia and Slovenia declare independence from Yugoslavia.

Jul 1 - The Warsaw Pact dissolves.

Jul 22 - Mike Tyson arrested for rape.

Jul 22 - Jeffrey Dahmer arrested for cannibalism.

Aug 6 - Tim Berners-Lee announces "World Wide Web" project.

Aug 7 - Ex-PM of Iran assassinated in France by Iranian intelligence agents.

Aug 19 - A coup attempt in the USSR fails within 72 hours.

Aug 20-31 - Eight countries leave the Soviet Union.

Sep 5-7 - At the Tailhook naval symposium 83 women and seven men are assaulted.

Sep 20-21 - Hostage crisis in Sandy, UT.

Sep 24 - Nirvana releases Nevermind.

Sep 30 - Aristide's removed from power in Haiti.

Oct 11-13 - During Clarence Thomas' confirmation hearing for the US Supreme Court, Anita Hill testifies against him, accusing him of sexual harassment.

Oct 20 - Oakland Hills Firestorm kills 25.

Oct 27 - Parliamentary elections in Poland.

Nov 5 - David Duke loses the race to be Louisiana's governor.

Nov 7 - Magic Johnson announces he has HIV.

Nov 7 - Kuwait's last burning oil well is extinguished.

Nov 7 - First report on carbon nanotubes published.

Nov 23-24 - Freddie Mercury announces he has AIDS and dies soon after.

Dec 4 - Pan Am World Airways ends operations.

Dec 15 - An Egyptian ferry sinks in the Red Sea, killing 450.

Dec 25-26 - The USSR is formally dissolved.

1991—Progenitor

SUSPICION 2

TECHNOLOGY 6

ECONOMY 1

WARFARE 5

January

Saddam Hussein's army forms a coalition with the US against the Iranian resistance.

February

Tibet rebels against the People's Republic of China.

Atlantis, Sykes Family: Amy (p. 177) meets Derrick Atford, a grad student doing anthropological research on Atlantis.

March

Atlantis, Shavians: Shavians seek refuge in Atlantis, which admits them over the objections of One World Harmony and Ngoc Vo's (p. 186) old faction, the Atlantean Socialist Front.

A paid Los Angeles "metacop" is taped electrocuting motorist Rodney King.

April

In Hong Kong, masses pour into the street to protest the return to China.

EgNI#1 is overrun by a relatively small number of Bedouins, who claim the land was theirs in the first place. The Bedouins have no interest in becoming citizens of EgNI#1, and EgNI#1 protests to the UN are met with indifference.

May

ProgHarm: The USSR begins incorporating some of Progressive Harmony's "spontaneous tonal organizing" techniques in its cities.

The Shavian Birth Chamber (p. 375) is completed on Atlantis.

Jason Weeks: The first high-temp superconductors are employed in Egypt to carry power from a ZRI glass steam plant (p. 373) in the Empty Quarter.

June

ProgHarm: The IEG supplies massive quantities of arms and munitions to the Iranian insurgency.

Zipperneck (p. 210) begins doing mercenary missions in support of Iran. It is never clearly established afterwards who was paying him.

July

Sykes Family: On July 3, Amanda (p. 159) announces that she's going to neutralize all firearms in Iran for 48 hours, starting midnight July 4. She's as good as her word, and in the bloodshed and confusion that ensues over 500 Americans are killed. When President Bush protests, Amanda questions why the US is in Iran at all.

1991

the **MASK** makes the **HERO**



ONLY **YOU** CAN SAVE
US FROM **A-HIV**

August

Atlantis, Shavians: The first Shavian created since Tina Shaw's death emerges from the Birth Chamber on Atlantis.

In the US, reconstruction creates a building boom in California, drawing in masses of immigrants (some legal, many not) from Mexico and Central America.

Sykes Family: The US declares Amanda Sykes an "undesirable alien."

September

The first Iraqi troops arrive in Iran.

Jason Weeks, ProgHarm: The African Harmonic Gestalt successfully reverse-engineers Jason Weeks' superconductors.

October

As the USSR struggles to balance the demands of its member states with economic and military threats, it announces still more political reforms, this time calling them "Neo-Marxism." Its new buzzword is "representationalism."

ProgHarm: The space elevator (p. 328) is reconnected. Dinh Quang Phung (p. 356) and his crew return to earth for the first time since 1983.

November

ProgHarm: Although all the nations operating in space deny it, there are extensive clashes in orbit, many of them visible from earth as flashes and falling stars.

Janice King (p. 288) is confirmed to the US Supreme Court, becoming the first metahuman justice to sit on that body.

December

An airborne strain of HIV breaks out in the Dakotas. There's statewide panic, resulting in a federal quarantine of both states as well as individual quarantines around population centers.

Sykes Family: Amy (p. 177) persuades her father Abe (p. 173) to reinforce Derrick Atford's body so that she can explode on him and thereby bestow powers on him. Surprisingly, this works perfectly.

Derrick Atford's Superpowers

Derrick Atford is a Tier Three Zipperman, as described on p. 23.

1992—History

SUSPICION 5	TECHNOLOGY 5	ECONOMY 0	WARFARE 1
Jan 1 - Boutros Boutros-Gali of Egypt becomes the UN Secretary General.	Jan 16 - El Salvador's civil war ends with a peace treaty signed in Mexico City.	Feb 17 - Dahmer gets life in prison.	
Jan 6 - Bosnian Serbs declare their own country within Bosnia/Herzegovina.	Jan 22 - Suicide bombing in Israel.	Feb 21 - UN agrees to send peacekeepers to Yugoslavia.	
Jan 8 - President Bush vomits in Japan.	Jan 26 - Yeltsin says Russia will stop targeting the US with its nuclear missiles.	Feb 25-26 - 613 Azerbaijani civilians killed in Khojaly.	
Jan 15 - Yugoslavia begins to disintegrate.	Feb 7 - The EU is founded.	Mar 3 - Turkish coal mine disaster kills 263.	
	Feb 10 - Mike Tyson convicted of rape.		

1992

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US Culture

Noteworthy 1992 films included Basic Instinct, Wayne's World, Aladdin and A Few Good Men. The airwaves resounded with Sir Mix-a-Lot's "Baby Got Back," and Eric Clapton's "Tears in Heaven." "Masterpiece" by Atlantic Starr and Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" were also popular.

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Mar 9 - China signs the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.	May 13 - Falun Gong introduced in China.	Jul 22 - Pablo Escobar escapes from Colombian prison.
Mar 13 - Turkish quake kills 500.	May 19 - Amy Fisher shoots Mary Jo Buttafuoco.	Aug 10 - The Troubles: UK bans the Ulster Defense Association paramilitary.
Mar 17 - Suicide car bomb kills 29 near the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires.	May 22 - Johnny Carson retires.	Aug 21-22 - Ruby Ridge standoff.
Mar 18 - Windows 3.1 released.	May 23 - Mafia bomb kills Italian judge.	Aug 24-28 - Hurricane Andrew kills 23 from FL to TN.
Apr 2 - John Gotti convicted of murder.	May 26 - President of Adobe Systems, Inc. gets kidnapped. The kidnappers are later caught.	Sep 23 - The Troubles: IRA bomb in Belfast.
Apr 5 - Bosnian war begins with the Serbian siege of Sarajevo.	Jun 1 - Carlos the Jackal is tried in Paris and given a life sentence for the murder of two police officers and a police informant.	Oct 2 - São Paulo prison riot turns into a massacre.
Apr 9 - Manuel Noriega convicted.	Jun 15 - Dan Quayle mis-spells "potato."	Nov 3 - Bill Clinton elected.
Apr 9 - Conservative Party and John Major re-elected in England.	Jun 17 - Bush and Yeltsin move towards arms reduction.	Dec 3 - UN agrees to send troops to Somalia.
Apr 10 - The Troubles: IRA bomb kills three in London.	Jun 28 - Quake in Landers, CA.	Dec 3 - Huge oil spill off the coast of Spain.
Apr 13 - Great Chicago Flood.	Jun 29 - President of Algeria killed by his own bodyguard.	Dec 9 - Prince Charles and Lady Diana announce their pending divorce.
Apr 22 - Explosive fuel leak in Guadalajara kills 215.	Jul 13 - Yitzhak Rabin becomes PM of Israel.	Dec 12 - Indonesian quake kills 2,500.
Apr 29 - The LAPD Four are acquitted in the Rodney King beating. The ensuing riots kill 53.	Jul 20 - Vaclav Havel is ousted as the president of Czechoslovakia.	Dec 28 - Brazilian president Fernando Collor de Mello is found guilty of stealing \$23 million. His punishment is to be banned from office for eight years.
May 1 - High school hostages taken in Olivehurst, CA. Four die.		

1992—Progenitor

SUSPICION 3	TECHNOLOGY 6	ECONOMY 1	WARFARE 4
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January

The airborne human immunodeficiency virus, now known as A-HIV, pops up in isolated areas outside the Dakotas. The spread of the disease is drastically outstripped by the spread of A-HIV panic, which rapidly goes global. Face-mask sales skyrocket.

ProgHarm: Immigration from the US to the Progressive Gestalt of the Americas shows a marked rise. Though its numbers are still small in comparison to the total population, the ‘abandonment’ of the country for the promises of Harmony are seen as a stinging rebuke by many political conservatives.

February

English is legally enshrined as the official language of the United States of America.

Sykes Family: Amy (p. 177) gets engaged to Derrick Atford.

March

ProgHarm: Laotian scientists announce that they have produced a HIV inoculation that protects against most strains of the disease, including A-HIV. The next day, IEG spokespeople declare that the inoculation is a state secret. The US scoffs and insists that the IEG is lying.

April

The US reduces its troop numbers in Iran.

Howard March (p. 225) returns from exile in anticipation of the Rodney King metacop verdict. Despite a heartfelt warning from Jedgar (p. 189), March tracks down King's attacker and kills him. March dies in the process, though not before killing two other Federal metahuman agents.

First reported cases of A-HIV in Canada, Central America, and Brazil.

May

Under the growing influence of its military, China backpedals from its democratic reforms.

Åism: Åism begins to catch on in China while Åites worldwide mourn the death of "Saint Reddy."

First reported cases of A-HIV in Africa.

June

Jason Weeks: Scientists working for the US Department of Energy successfully duplicate Jason Weeks' African superconductors (p. 333).

Shavians, Atlantis: The People's Voice begins debating a proposal to deny the vote to Shavians.

July

Åism: Garfield Moloi (p. 369) produces a microbe that devours A-HIV viruses. The Åites claim the microbe is based on Howard March's DNA.

Chris Marshall (p. 171) dies in his sleep. All his Turf Warriors immediately disintegrate, but the metal officers he created continue to exist.

First reported cases of A-HIV in Europe and Asia.

August

Sykes Family: Iraqis initially dismiss Iranian claims of war crimes and atrocities as "Persian propaganda," but the notorious "Afareen footage" convinces many. Most importantly, it convinces Amanda Sykes (p. 159) who condemns Iraq's presence in Iran and threatens to take a personal interest if more such claims are made.

September

California, New Mexico, Texas and Arizona all pass state laws declaring Spanish and English to share the position of "official languages."

October

The United Nations condemns the US/Iraqi coalition and the US responds by disavowing Hussein and breaking its military alliance with Iraq. The USSR backs the US position against the UN and Iraq.

Åism: The Children of Å begin to protest the occupation of EgNI#1 territory.

November

George Herbert Walker Bush is re-elected, with Jack Kemp as his Vice President. He promises increased border security, an end to "that Iranian entanglement" and solutions to the A-HIV crisis.

1992

Åism: Four days after the US election, the USSR agrees to pay \$10 billion to the Children of Å in return for samples of “Reddy Salvation”—their name for their A-HIV consuming microbe. The US announces its unwillingness to purchase Reddy Salvation at almost the same time the Åites announce their unwillingness to sell it to “the unapologetic imperialists with Howard March’s blood still staining their mouths.”

Protests begin throughout the US, with many insisting that only massive vote-fraud returned Bush to office.

December

Åism, ProgHarm: Three days after the World Health Organization issues a report confirming the efficacy of both Reddy Salvation and the Laotian inoculation, a US executive order drastically restricts travel to Progressive Harmony nations.

The United States Congress passes a law requiring metahumans to register their powers in a federal database, and Bush signs it into law. It’s widely considered unenforceable.

Åism, Sykes Family, ProgHarm: A Pew research poll indicates that 63% of all Americans believe A-HIV was bioengineered by Progressive Harmony nations. Other conspiracy theories, less popular but still durable, lay the blame on the Republican party, Åites, or Amanda Sykes herself.

Sykes Family: Abe works with a national-range teleporter, healing as many cases of A-HIV as he can find in the US.

1993

1993—History

SUSPICION 6	TECHNOLOGY 6	ECONOMY 1	WARFARE 1
Jan 1 - Czechoslovakian “Velvet Divorce” into Czech Republic and Slovakia.	Feb 26 - World Trade Center bombing kills six.		second Rodney King trial.
Jan 1 - EC eliminates trade barriers.	Feb 28 - ATF raids the Branch Davidians. Nine people die and a 51 day standoff begins.	Apr 19 - Fire at the Branch Davidian compound kills 76.	
Jan 3 - Yeltsin and Bush sign SALT II treaty.	Mar 4 - Suspected WTC bombing mastermind Mohammad Salameh arrested.	Apr 23 - World Health Organization declares tuberculosis a Global Emergency.	
Jan 5 - The Troubles: \$7.4 million stolen from a Rochester NY Brinks depot. Five men with IRA ties accused.	Mar 9 - Rodney King testifies at his civil trial.	Apr 28 - Executive order lets women fly USAF warplanes.	
Jan 5 - Oil spill off Scottish coast.	Mar 12 - Bombs in Bombay kill 257.	Apr 30 - The World Wide Web is born at CERN.	
Jan 6-10 - Bombay riots pit muslims against hindus.	Mar 13-14 - Blizzards kill 184 in the eastern US.	May 1 - Tamil Tiger suicide bomb kills the Sri Lankan president.	
Jan 15 - Fugitive mob boss Salvatore Riina is caught in Sicily after 23 years on the run.	Mar 17 - PKK ceasefire in Iraq.	Jun 20 - Japanese quake kills 385.	
Jan 19 - US fires 40 cruise missiles at Baghdad factories.	Mar 20 - The Troubles: IRA bomb in Warrington kills two children.	Jun 23 - Lorena Bobbitt maims her abusive husband.	
Jan 20 - Bill Clinton becomes President of the USA.	Mar 22 - First Pentium computer chips.	Jun 24 - Unabomb at Yale.	
Jan 26 - Václav Havel in power in the Czech Republic.	Mar 27 - Jiang Zemin becomes President of the People’s Republic of China.	Jun 27 - US cruise missile attack on the Iraqi intelligence headquarters.	
Feb 10 - Lien Chan named as the next Premier of the Republic of China.	Apr 6 - Nuclear accident at Toms 7 in Russia.	July 7-9 - G7 summit in Tokyo.	
Feb 17 - Ferry sinks in Haiti, killing 1,215.	Apr 16 - Srebrenica falls in the Bosnian War.	July 7 - Hurricane Calvin kills 34 in Mexico.	
	Apr 17 - Two LAPD officers are found guilty in the	Jul 12 - Hokkaidō quake and tsunami kills 202.	

US Culture

Whitney Houston’s song “I Will Always Love You” is popular, as is “What’s Up” by 4 Non Blondes and the inescapable “Whoomp! (There It Is)” by Tag Team. Meanwhile, theaters do a brisk business showing Jurassic Park, The Pelican Brief and Mrs. Doubtfire.

Jul 19 - US military institutes “Don’t ask, don’t tell” policy.	Sep 13 - Rabin and Arafat shake hands in DC.	Oct 21 - Benazir Bhutto takes power in Pakistan.
Jul 27 - Windows NT 3.1 released.	Sep 30 - Indian quake kills 10,000.	Nov 1 - EU formally established.
Aug 6 - Mudslides and rain kill 72 in Kagoshima, Japan.	Oct 2-5 - Russian military clears its Parliament by force to protect Yeltsin.	Nov 17-22 - North American Free Trade Agreement passes.
Aug 13 - Hotel collapse in Thailand kills 130.	Oct 3 - The US confronts a militia in Mogadishu.	Nov 20 - S&L crisis in USA.
Aug 30 - Russian troops leave Lithuania.	Oct 5 - China tests nuclear weapons.	Dec 2 - Cocaine baron Pablo Escobar killed.
		Dec 20 - The first corrected Hubble images are viewed.

1993—Progenitor

SUSPICION	4	TECHNOLOGY	6	ECONOMY	1	WARFARE	3
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January

Saddam Hussein publicly decries the US withdrawal from Iran as a “stab in the back” to Iraq.

Åism: Chinese spies steal the Reddy Salvation microbe (p. 333) and within three months, the PRC begins producing a slightly altered strain for members of the Communist Party. They claim it’s their own creation, and within a year it’s available in most Chinese cities.

February

ProgHarm: A “friendship treaty” between the US and the USSR irks China, which begins a well-publicized series of summit meetings with the nations of the IEG.

The World Trade Center is subjected to a massive electrical attack, killing 52. No arrests are ever made.

March

With the aid of Jedgar and a few metahumans with hypercharm and hypercommand, the Branch Davidian standoff reaches a negotiated solution without bloodshed.

Åite: The US buys the Reddy Salvation germ from the USSR and then allows the Followers of Å an opportunity to publicly give the microbe as a gift, thereby defusing tensions. The Åites decline.

ProgHarm: A team of US metahumans steals crucial information about the Laotian inoculation, though two of the agents are killed and one captured during the mission. The IEG calls it an act of “naked aggression” and insists that the spies were US agents. The US denies everything and, when the captured agent confesses, insists that it means nothing because the IEG’s methods of brainwashing are “notorious.”

April

Shavians, Atlantis: A booming Shaving population is met by increased violence against the creatures world-wide. While they are mostly safe on Atlantis, where their numbers protect them, few Shavians are content to live out their whole lives on the island.

ProgHarm: Travel from the US to Progressive Harmony nations in South America continues, despite restrictions.

May

ProgHarm, Sykes Family: In an abrupt change from her previous reticence about Progressive Harmony, Amanda (p. 159) appears in public and denounces it as “morally bankrupt and spiritually

1993

diseased.” Her look is markedly different from her last public appearance: Although clearly the same woman, her body and features have shifted to an almost unbearable loveliness. One Polish hyperbrain hypothesizes that she must have created “some sort of meta-conscious psychic probe to amalgamate the world’s beauty standards and mimic them.” One of his colleagues in Ecuador suggests that it might have been simpler for her to just implant the idea in every human mind that “Amanda Sykes is the world’s most beautiful woman.”

June

Shavians, Sykes Family: Zipperneck (p. 210), El Cucuy (p. 253), Kevin Weist (p. 274), Dino Corliss (p. 279) and at least twenty other low-tier metahumans stage a trio of simultaneous attacks—one a meteor attack on the island of Amandlis, one a covert and conventional attempt to destroy the Shavian brood device, and the largest a strike against Amy Sykes’ (p. 177) wedding to Derrick Atford. Of the 72 non-metahumans in attendance, four survive. Derrick makes it his life’s business to hound Zipperneck to the grave. The brood chamber is lightly damaged, but soon repaired.

July

ProgHarm, Sykes Family: Amanda claims IEG involvement in the wedding attack—states it as fact on international TV. The IEG’s response is indignant, calling her “a hysteric, drunk on power and entitlement.” Saber rattling ensues, with the US reluctantly backing up Amanda and China reluctantly aiding the IEG.

August

ProgHarm, Sykes Family: Although she stops short of open violence, Amanda goes on a tour of the Americas, denouncing Progressive Harmony wherever she goes and drawing massive crowds.

September

Åism: The Followers of Å begin to organize themselves along the lines of EgNI#1, with foreign believers declaring themselves citizens of Åia. Egypt goes along with this to some extent, though it rejects Åite citizenship claims from anyone with a European or African felony conviction. Most other countries don’t even recognize Åia as a country.

The US announces its own HIV preventive regimen. Unlike Reddy Salvation (which is injected or applied to suspect tissue) and the Laotian inoculation (another shot) the US form is available as a pill.

October

Sykes Family: In the wake of Amanda’s speaking tour, the Church of the Emerald Virgin experiences a great resurgence.

Atlantis: Atlantis’ space program announces an project to place an “ark” of preserved Earthly biological material on the Hale-Bopp comet when it nears Earth.

November

The US continues to withdraw troops from Iran.

December

Sykes Family: Like Cynthia Carls (p. 214) before her, Amanda begins recruiting a select group of chosen followers to come dwell on her artificial island.

1994—History

SUSPICION 6

TECHNOLOGY 6

ECONOMY 2

WARFARE 0

Jan 1 - NAFTA goes into effect.
Jan 1 - Zapatistas are active in Chiapas, Mexico.
Jan 6 - Olympic hopeful Nancy Kerrigan is attacked with a blow to the knee.
Jan 14 - Clinton and Yeltsin sign the Kremlin Accords to stop automatic targeting of each other's nations with nuclear missiles.
Jan 17 - California quake kills 72, leaves 26,029 homeless.
Jan 21 - Lorena Bobbitt is found not guilty by reason of insanity.
Feb 1 - Jeff Gillooly, husband of one of Kerrigan's competitors, admits to planning the assault.
Feb 6 - Serb shell kills 68 civilians in a Sarajevo marketplace.
Feb 12 - Edvard Munch's painting "The Scream" is stolen. (It's recovered on May 7.)
Feb 22 - Aldrich Ames is charged with espionage.
Feb 25 - An Israeli gunman kills 29 muslims in the Cave of the Patriarch.
Feb 28 - The US shoots down four Serbian aircraft.
Mar 5 - Nine hostages are taken in Salt Lake City by Clifford Lynn Draper.
Mar 12 - The Church of England ordains its first female priests.
Mar 15 - US troops leave Somalia.

Mar 16 - Tonya Harding pleads guilty to conspiracy in the Kerrigan assault.
Mar 27 - A tornado outbreak kills 22 in Alabama.
Apr 5 - Kurt Cobain dies.
Apr 6 - The presidents of Rwanda and Burundi are killed when their jet is shot down.
Apr 7 - Rwandan genocide begins.
Apr 21 - Red Cross estimates that hundreds of thousands of Tutsis have been killed in Rwanda.
Apr 27 - South Africa holds its first fully multiracial elections.
May 6 - The Channel Tunnel opens.
May 10 - Nelson Mandela becomes president of South Africa.
Jun 12 - Nicole Simpson and Ron Goldman are murdered.
Jun 17 - OJ Simpson leads the police on a low-speed chase.
Jun 28 - Aum Shinryko sarin attack at Matsumoto kills seven.
Jul 18 - Anti-semitic terrorists in Buenos Aires kill 85.
Jul 25 - Jordan and Israel sign a peace treaty.
Aug 5 - Demonstrations against Castro in Cuba.
Aug 12 - Major League Baseball goes on strike.
Aug 31 - The Troubles: The IRA announces the cessation of all military activities.

Aug 31 - The Russian Army leaves Estonia.
Sep 3 - Russia and China stop targeting one another with nuclear weapons.
Sep 19 - US troops stage a bloodless invasion of Haiti to restore Aristide.
Sep-Oct - Iraq resists UN inspectors and positions troops near Kuwait, while the US builds up troop presence in response.
Oct 3 - 25 members of the Order of the Solar Temple are found dead in Quebec.
Oct 4 - 23 members of the Order of Solar Temple commit suicide in Switzerland.
Oct 29 - Francisco Duran fires at the White House.
Nov 6 - Flood in Italy kills dozens.
Nov 8 - Newt Gingrich leads Republicans in retaking the US House and Senate.
Dec 11 - Yeltsin sends troops to Chechnya.
Dec 11 - A small bomb on a Philippine plane kills one passenger.
Dec 15 - Netscape released.
Dec 19 - Massive financial meltdown begins in Mexico.
Dec 19 - The Whitewater investigation begins.
Dec 26 - French police storm a hijacked plane and kill four Islamists.

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US Culture

Music in 1994 included "The Sign" by Ace of Base and "The Power of Love" by Celine Dion. As an alternative to Europop and syrupy ballads, Beck released "Loser."

At theaters, Forrest Gump, Speed and The Santa Clause were big hits, as was Pulp Fiction.

1994—Progenitor

SUSPICION 5

TECHNOLOGY 5

ECONOMY 1

WARFARE 3

January

In an ill-considered gesture of national strength, Congress moves to deploy troops on the Mexican border "in response to continued threatening overtures by the Progressive Harmony nations of the Americas." The outcry in California, Texas and New Mexico and Arizona is immediate and durable.

February

Researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham announce clinical successes with a treatment regimen that can halt and in some cases reverse AIDS.

March

Sykes Family, Atlantis, Shavians: The People's Voice outlaws Shavian voting but puts a bill to enfranchise them on the ballot for public vote. Amy Atford (née Sykes) (p. 177) resigns in protest, predicting the bill's failure.

April

Åites, Sykes Family: Amandlis petitions for recognition as a sovereign nation with a population of 122. So do the inhabitants of "Åia."

The Extrageographic National Identity movement hires a metahuman to create "EgNI#2," an island at the juncture of the Indian Ocean's Ninetyeast Ridge and the Tropic of Capricorn. (That's just a shade under 2,000 miles east-southeast of Mauritius island, or 1,500 miles due west of the tiny Australian town of Exmouth. The closest other inhabited area is Cocos island, about 1,000 miles to the northeast.) They, too, petition for national recognition.

May

ProgHarm, Åism: The Hutus and Tutsis ally with Åia and the IEG respectively. There's no mass bloodshed, but conflict is sporadic, violent, and ends with syntergene-backed Tutsi repression of the Hutus.

June

The Lancet publishes a detailed critique of the Alabama AIDS protocol. It includes questions about the statistical methodology but, more importantly, it suggests several overlooked issues that might prevent the promised symptom reversals or even make the situation worse.

ProgHarm: The South American Progressive Gestalt liberalizes immigration from the US with a great deal of dismissive rhetoric about "failing empires" and "broken promises of democracy."

Jason Weeks: Ground is broken for Weeks' trans-Afric vacuum tunnel.

July

Sykes Family, Atlantis, Shavians: The Atlantean election disintegrates into violence and three of the remaining four Atlantean superheroes are killed by Shaw Monsters as they attempt to keep Shavians out of the polls. As word of their deaths gets out, Amanda Sykes (p. 159) heads to the scene and restores order by force—threatening the brood chamber and destroying dozens of Shavians in the process.

ProgHarm: Progressive Harmony rapidly pacifies Rwanda, joining the African Harmonic Gestalt.

August

Atlantis, Åism: The Children of Å recruit most of the Atlantean space exploring metahumans. It's understood that the Atlantean astronauts don't have to convert to Åism—they're just employees.

The US continues to back out of Iran, leaving the Iraqi forces there increasingly beleaguered.



September

A USAF “air city” is shot down leaving Iran. 210 die before a Navy teleporter can get to the scene and move the crashing city safely to the ground in Nevada.

October

ProgHarm: Progressive Harmony nations of South America, Africa and Asia form the “Global Philosophical Alliance” or “GPhA.”

Atlantis: Simmering unrest in Atlantis yields sporadic fights, harassment, looting and vandalism.

November

Åism, Sykes Family: The United Nations and most of the world’s countries reject Åia and EgNI#2 as nations. Amanda Sykes is informed that in order to legitimize Amandlis as a sovereign nation, she herself will have to give up her status as an extranational individual with global legal sovereignty. To the great surprise of all, Amanda agrees and becomes the first citizen of Amandlis.

In the United States, the Democrats recover a slim majority in both houses of Congress.

December

Åism, Atlantis: With the Åites in charge of the Hale-Bopp bio-Ark project, a great deal of material crafted by Thabo Moloi (p. 369) is included.

Atlantis, Shavians, ProgHarm: At the request of Atlantis’ One World Harmony party, the GPhA sends a group of warships to Atlantis, where they clash with Shavians who believe they’re secretly there to destroy the brood chamber. The UN dithers over whose side to legitimize while the US, Russia and China pointedly stay out of it.

SUSPICION	6	TECHNOLOGY	6	ECONOMY	3	WARFARE	1
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Jan 1 - WTO replaces GATT.	Apr 2 - Gaza explosion kills eight, including, a Hamas leader.	Jul 17 - NASDAQ closes over 1,000 for the first time.
Jan 16 - Iceland avalanche kills fourteen.	Apr 5 - US House votes for a tax cut.	Jul 21-26 - China fires missiles into the waters north of Taiwan.
Jan 17 - Kobe quake kills 6,434.	Apr 7 - Republicans celebrate passing the Contract With America.	Aug 5 - The Croats take Knin.
Jan 25 - Russians briefly think a space exploration rocket from Norway is an attack.	Apr 19 - Oklahoma City bombing kills 168.	Aug 24 - Windows '95 released.
Jan 31 - Under Clinton's guidance, the US lends \$20 billion to Mexico.	Apr 24 - Unabomb kills a lobbyist.	Sep - DVD format announced.
Feb 13 - UN tribunal charges thirteen Bosnian Serb commanders with genocide.	May 1 - Jacques Chirac becomes president of France.	Sep 4 - eBay founded.
Feb 15 - FBI arrests computer hacker Kevin Mitnick.	May 11 - 170 countries extend the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty indefinitely with no conditions.	Oct 1 - Ten convicted in '93 WTC bombing.
Feb 21 - Four guards and 96 prisoners die during the Serkadji prison mutiny in Algeria.	May 17 - Shawn Nelson goes on a rampage in San Diego. He has a tank.	Oct 3 - OJ Simpson is found not guilty.
Feb 23 - First Dow close over 4,000.	May 27 - Christopher Reeve is paralyzed in a riding accident.	Oct 4 - Hurricane Opal hits FL.
Feb 26 - Barings Bank collapses because broker Nick Leeson lost \$1.4 trillion on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.	May 28 - Russian quake kills over 2,000.	Oct 16 - Million Man March on Washington DC.
Feb 28 - Patriots Council members in Minnesota convicted of making ricin.	Jun 1 - Busiest hurricane season in 62 years begins.	Oct 26 - Iceland avalanche kills twenty.
Mar 1 - Anti-corruption reporter Vladislav Listyev killed.	Jun 2 - USAF F-16 shot down over Bosnia/Herzegovina. The pilot is rescued Jun 8.	Oct 30 - Quebec narrowly defeats a mandate to negotiate independence from Canada.
Mar 1 - Yahoo! founded.	Jun 22 - Police in Japan rescue hostages from a plane. The knife-wielding hijacker was demanding the freedom of Aum Shinryko's leader.	Nov 4 - Israeli prime minister Rabin assassinated at a peace rally.
Mar 3 - UN leaves Somalia.	Jul - Heat wave kills 739 in Chicago alone.	Nov 14 - US Congressional standoff temporarily shuts down some Federal services.
Mar 20 - Aum Shinryko kills twelve and injures over 5,000 with a sarin gas attack in the Tokyo underground.	Jul 11 - Serbs enter Srebrenica as UN leaves. Many Bosnians are murdered.	Nov 16 - Karadži and Mladic are charged with genocide at UN tribunal.
Mar 24 - For the first time in 26 years, no British soldiers are patrolling Belfast.		Nov 21 - The first Dow close over 5,000.
		Nov 22 - Quake in north Africa kills eight.
		Nov 22 - Toy Story released.
		Dec 15 - NYSE hits 638 million shares.
		Dec 31 - The last ever Calvin & Hobbes strip is released.

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US Culture

Hootie and the Blowfish have a solid hit with "Hold My Hand," as does Coolio with "Gangsta's Paradise" and Mariah Carey with "Fantasy." In the world of cinema, Disney releases Pocahontas, the 007 franchise weighs in with GoldenEye, and The Bridges of Madison Country soaks many a hankie.

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1995—Progenitor

SUSPICION	5	TECHNOLOGY	6	CONOMY	2	WARFARE	4
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January

All US troops are out of Iran.

February

Åism: Muslim metahumans take Å (p. 238) by surprise and kill him. His dying words, according to Siphos Masango, are “Finish the exodus.” The entire Åite church responds to the “Åssassination” by redoubling their efforts to construct a “world-ship” capable of leaving Earth and supporting itself on interstellar journeys indefinitely.

March

Åism: The Children of Å schism into two groups, those following the Giver of Other Selves (p. 370) and those following the Holder of History (p. 366) and the Liberator of Ė (p. 358). However, both factions continue to work on the world-ship, now dubbed the “Årk.”

China firmly requests an acceleration of the timetable for the return of Hong Kong. Britain agrees.

ProgHarm: The South American Progressive Gestalt bails out Mexico but, in return, requests the right to station troops along the US border to “stem the tide of illegal US immigrants.” Mexico agrees.

Sykes Family: Abe goes to Tokyo to deal with the Aum Shinryko aftermath.

April

Åism: FBI investigators claim that the Åssassination was carried out using Chinese dark-energy weapons. China denies everything.

ProgHarm, Atlantis: Thanks to Chinese pressure and an unexpected policy reversal by the USSR, the UN approves GPhA plans to deploy ground troops in Atlantis as a “peacekeeping force.”

Aum Shinryko scatters, with at least one metahuman psi-shielder protecting its leader.

May

Åism, Atlantis: Followers of Å on Atlantis begin to evacuate.

Jedgar: In Japan, John Closterman (p. 235) and Jedgar (p. 189) pursue Aum Shinryko fugitives.

June

Åism: The Historian is killed, either by Muslim infiltrators or followers of the Giver’s faction, depending on who you ask. The Giver claims he can re-create Å’s knowledge and personality. The Liberator attacks the Giver, reformatting his powers, and then quits Åism altogether. But the remaining power-descendants of Å continue preparing for the exodus.

July

A thin majority of economists agree that the global economy has finally recovered from 1983.

Iraq finds Iran to be a total quagmire.

August

The US Congress is frozen immobile by bitter partisan struggles.

September

Microbos and Apollo computers team up to work on an Artificial Intelligence project.



October

Atlantis, Sykes Family: Amanda (p. 159) commands all believers in the Church of the Emerald Virgin to leave Atlantis as soon as possible.

November

ProgHarm, Atlantis, Shavians: A Shavian confrontation with GPhA soldiers escalates to violence and, over the course of the month, Shavian attacks occur in every single Progressive Harmony nation. These attacks range from bloodless infrastructure attacks, to stealth assaults destroying military targets, to blatant public civilian massacres.

December

ProgHarm, Atlantis, Shavians: Against frenzied resistance, GPhA troops backed by various metahumans and Chinese special operatives seize the Shavian brood center.

1996

1996—History

SUSPICION 6	TECHNOLOGY 6	ECONOMY 3	WARFARE 1
Jan 4 - Hosni Mubarak, the president of Egypt, appoints a new government due to corruption accusations.			Mar 25 - 81-day standoff begins between Federal agents and Montana Freeman.
Jan 7 - A blizzard in the US kills over 100 and buries the eastern states.	Feb 10 - Computer Deep Blue beats Gary Kasparov at chess.		Mar 26 - IMF loans Russia \$10.2 billion.
Jan 9-20 - Russian soldiers clash continually with Chechan rebels.	Feb 15 - 73,000 tons of crude oil are spelled near Wales.		Apr 3 - Ted Kaczynski arrested.
Jan 19 - 820,000 gallons of heating oil get spilled on the coast of Rhode Island.	Feb 15 - The US embassy in Athens comes under mortar fire.		Apr 3 - Tutsis massacre 450 Hutus in Burundi.
Jan 20 - The Palestinian Authority re-elects Yassir Arafat as president.	Feb 17 - Irian Jaya quake and tidal waves kill 102.		Apr 11 - Israel attacks Lebanon.
Jan 26 - Hillary Rodham Clinton testifies about Whitewater.	Feb 18 - The Troubles: IRA bomb in London's West End kills the bomber and injures nine.		Apr 24 - The Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel agree to stop insisting on the destruction of each other.
Jan 31 - A truck bomb in Colombo, Sri Lanka, kills 86 and injures many more.	Feb 25 - Two Hamas suicide bombs kill 27 in Israel.		Apr 28 - Bomb in Pakistan kills 60.
Feb 4 - Quake in Lijiang, China, kills 240.	Mar 3-4 - Two suicide bombs in Israel kill 32. Arafat condemns the violence.		May 8 - Keck II telescope operational in Hawaii.
Feb 7 - A peaceful transfer of power in Haiti installs René Préval.	Mar 6 - Russians clash with Chechans and 200 die.		May 13 - Storms in Bangladesh kill 600.
Feb 8 - The Troubles: The IRA's cease-fire ends with a	Mar 8 - Chinese missile tests near Taiwan prompt saber-rattling.		May 19 - Karadžić resigns.
	Mar 14 - Peace summit in Egypt.		May 27 - Yeltsin and the Chechans agree to a cease-fire.
	Mar 16 - Mugabe becomes president of Zimbabwe.		Jun 10 - The Troubles: Peace talks in Northern Ireland without Sinn Féin.
	Mar 20 - Mad Cow Disease uncovered in England.		Jun 15 - The Troubles: IRA bomb in Manchester.
			Jun 23 - Archbishop Desmond Tutu retires.

Jun 25 - Bomb in Saudi Arabia kills nineteen US troops.	Aug 28 - Prince Charles divorces Diana.	Dec 13 - Kofi Anan becomes Secretary General of the United Nations.
Jul 3 - Yeltsin re-elected.	Sep 4 - Revolutionary violence in Colombia.	Dec 17 - Túpac Amaru revolutionary movement takes 72 hostages at the Japanese embassy in Peru.
Jul 5 - Dolly the sheep is successfully cloned.	Sep 13 - Rapper Tupac Shakur gets shot.	Dec 26 - Huge labor strikes in South Korea.
Jul 13 - The Troubles: Bomb in Northern Ireland injures seventeen.	Sep 27 - The Taliban capture Kabul.	Dec 26 - 250,000 workers strike in Israel, protesting Netanyahu's proposed budget cuts.
Jul 16 - 6,000 e. coli fatalities in Japan.	Oct 14 - Dow's first close over 6,000.	Dec 26 - Jon Benét Ramsey is killed.
Jul 19 - Tornado in Maryland kills three.	Oct 23 - OJ civil trial begins.	Dec 27 - Taliban take Bagram Air Base.
Jul 24 - Sri Lanka train bombing kills 56.	Nov 5 - Clinton re-elected.	Dec 29 - Peace accord in Guatemala.
Jul 27 - Olympic park bombing kills one, injures eleven.	Nov 7 - Cyclone kills 2,000 in India.	Dec 30 - Indian passenger train bombed by Bodo separatists, killing 26.
Aug 6 - NASA finds proto-life on Martian meteorite.	Nov 17 - Bomb in Russia kills seventeen.	
Aug 15 - Bob Dole gets the Republican nomination for US President.	Nov 25 - Dow surge.	
Aug 26 - Clinton signs welfare reform.	Dec 5 - Alan Greenspan warns against "irrational exuberance."	
	Dec 12 - Assassination attempt on Uday Hussein injures him.	

US Culture

The unavoidable song of 1996 is one-hit-wonder "Macarena" by Los del Río, but radios also blare out Alanis Morissette's iconic "Ironic" and "1979" by the Smashing Pumpkins. Independence Day is a popular movie, as are Jerry Maguire and The Birdcage.

1996—Progenitor

SUSPICION 5 TECHNOLOGY 6 ECONOMY 3 WARFARE 5

January

Shavians, Jason Weeks: Jason Weeks offers to personally construct a second Shavian breeding chamber if the Shavians can behave peacefully for one year.

Hong Kong returns to Chinese control.

February

Åism: On the anniversary of the Åssassination, the world-ship launches. At the last moment, the Giver of Other Selves (p. 370) is teleported from the Årk to a park near the Eiffel Tower.

March

A satellite crash in Indonesia proves to be filled with tungsten KE weapons (p. 330). No nation admits ownership of the satellite.

The Montana Freemen escape via teleport and thousands of American dissidents eventually claim to have been there when the Feds closed in. In 1998, John Closterman (p. 235) calls it "the survivalists' Woodstock."

April

ProgHarm: China invades Taiwan and, despite cries of outrage, no one's willing to get in their way. The GPhA nations don't even condemn them. In mainland China, nationalism grows in surges, while the sporadic protests and calls for reform die down.

1996



May

Jedgar: A “Peace and Reconciliation” effort begins in the former Yugoslavia, led by Jedgar (p. 189), Bryson Maas-Thierry and Brenda Harkness (p. 206).

June

Åism: The Årk “life-bombs” Mars, sending thousands of samples of Earth DNA (both modified and original) crashing into the planet’s surface in areas calculated to be least inhospitable. They crash several huge asteroids into the north and south polar ice caps as well, hoping to prompt enough of a greenhouse effect to raise the planet’s temperature and get the ice-dust from the impacts to come down liquid.

Jason Weeks: The first run of the Trans-Afric Vacuum System (or “TAVAS”) is a success.

ProgHarm, Atlantis, Sykes Family: Violence flares up in Atlantis again with natives rebelling against the GPhA occupation. Amanda Sykes (p. 159) publicly announces her intention to evacuate Atlantis and then sink it if peace can’t be reached.

July

The first human clone is announced in Japan, though her name is withheld from in the interests of privacy.

Scientists in Brussels unveil Syzekipam, a medication that can temporarily ‘supercharge’ the human immune system. It’s marketed in the US as “Immboost™” and in Great Britain as “Turbo T™.”

August

President Bush guts welfare in America.

Jack Kemp, struck by a sudden illness, withdraws from the presidential race. Bob Dole fights off a convention challenge from Dan Quayle and gets the nomination to compete against Al Gore for the US Presidency.

ProgHarm: The South American Progressive Gestalt comes into conflict with the other components of the Global Philosophical Alliance over the proper attitude to take towards the US and towards Atlantean refugees.

September

With the promise of additional reconstruction, the US economy begins to surge.

Sykes Family, Atlantis, ProgHarm, Shavians: Amanda schedules Atlantis for destruction on November 20, 1996. Amy (p. 177) argues vehemently that it's none of Amanda's concern what happens on Atlantis, that it's people should choose their own path, no matter how stupidly. Amanda remains unconvinced. Meanwhile, the Shavians demand the return of their brood chamber and insist that it be brought to a safe locale before November.

October

A manned craft from the US reaches Mars without the use of dark energy or metahuman power.

Sykes Family: Abe (p. 173) goes to speak privately with Amanda, trying to persuade her to take a less active role in global politics. She teleports him to Tokyo after an hour of chat.

ProgHarm, Jason Weeks, Shavians: The brood chamber on Atlantis is destroyed. The GPhA forces claim it was a surprise mortar attack from "Remember November" commandoes. A prominent Shavian leader named Bruce Emphysema baldly calls this a lie and insists that the GPhA's deeds show the ongoing prejudice against Shavians. He nonetheless calls on his people to forbear retaliation in the hopes that Jason Weeks will keep his promise.

Atlantis: The US reluctantly accepts Atlantean refugees who were previously US citizens—as long as they test negative for dark energy. The refugees who arrive are regarded with great suspicion and have a hard time adapting back to their native culture.

November

Jason Weeks: Abe Sykes narrowly saves Weeks from an assassination attempt.

Bob Dole narrowly wins the election after the final debate focuses on Amanda's Atlantean ultimatum. He takes the position that nobody should be permitted to cavalierly destroy any nation, "even failed states, even degenerate nations little better than anarchy" and vows to take a strong stance against any further "Progenitor threats."

Atlantis, Sykes Family: After ensuring to her satisfaction that the island is fully evacuated, Amanda destroys Atlantis utterly.

December

Sykes Family: Amanda announces to the Church of the Emerald Virgin that she truly is the matronly aspect of the Divine. Roy Kilpatrick (p. 119) immediately converts and brings many of his followers along.

SUSPICION	5	TECHNOLOGY	5	ECONOMY	3	WARFARE	1
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Jan-Dec - Ongoing massacres in Algeria.	Mar 6 - Tamil Tigers overrun a military base and kill over 200 soldiers.	Jun 2 - Timothy McVeigh convicted of the Oklahoma City bombing.
Jan 19 - Arafat returns to Hebron as Israel cedes control of the last West Bank city.	Mar 9 - Rapper Biggie Smalls is killed in a drive-by shooting.	Jun 10 - Pol Pot faces internal struggles in Cambodia.
Jan 20 - Clinton begins his second term.	Mar 11 - An explosion at a Japanese nuclear plant exposes thirty-five people to mild radiation.	Jul 1 - Hong Kong returns to China.
Jan 21 - Speaker Gingrich disciplined for ethics violations.	Mar 22 - Hale-Bopp comet's closest Earth approach.	Jul 16 - Dow crosses 8,000 for the first time.
Feb 4 - OJ Simpson is ordered to pay \$35 million to the estates of Ron Goldman and Nicole Simpson.	Mar 26 - 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult commit suicide.	Aug 31 - Diana Spencer dies in a car crash.
Feb 5 - Morgan Stanley merges with Dean Whitter in a \$90 billion deal.	Apr 14 - Fire at a camp seven miles from Mecca kills 343 pilgrims.	Sep 5 - Mother Theresa passes away.
Feb 13 - Dow closes over 7,000 for the first time.	Apr 18 - Dikes break and flood Grand Forks, North Dakota and East Grand Forks, Minnesota.	Oct 4 - One million Promise Keepers go to Washington DC.
Feb 22 - Dolly the sheep announced to the world.	Apr 22 - Hostage crisis in Peru resolved when commandos storm the Japanese embassy.	Oct 27 - Stock prices plunge worldwide.
Feb 23 - Small fire on the Mir space station.	May 2 - Tony Blair becomes Prime Minister of Great Britain.	Nov 10 - WorldCom and MCI announce a \$37 billion merger.
Feb 28 - North Hollywood shootout convinces police throughout the US to increase their firepower.	May 10 - Quake in Iran kills 2,400.	Nov 17 - Islamic militants kill 62 tourists in Egypt.
Mar 4 - Clinton bans federal funding for human cloning.	May 12 - Russian-Chechan peace treaty signed.	Dec 11 - UN adopts the Kyoto Protocol.
	May 27 - Texas twister kills 27.	Dec 19 - The movie Titanic premieres.
		Dec 27 - The Troubles: Ulster Loyalist Billy Wright killed in Long Kesh prison.

US Culture

Mourning songs top the charts with Elton John's "Candle in the Wind 1997" and "I'll Be Missing You" by Puff Daddy and Faith Evans reprising "Candle in the Wind" and "Every Breath you Take" (respectively) in tribute to Diana Spencer and Biggie Smalls (respectively). You might also hear "Barely Breathing" by Duncan Sheik.

Notable films include Good Will Hunting, Men in Black and LA Confidential.

1997—Progenitor

SUSPICION	6	TECHNOLOGY	6	ECONOMY	4	WARFARE	5
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January

Åism, Sykes Family: Amanda Sykes (p. 159) travels to Åia and declares herself to be the new carrier of the Å identity. The Giver of Other Selves (p. 370) disappears and the Åites schism further between the worshippers of "Åmanda" and those who decry her as a false prophet (often claiming she murdered the Giver for good measure).

February

The New York Times reports that the US Mars mission was not completely free of dark energy assistance.

Demonstrations are held in Austin, San Francisco and Flagstaff to protest the presence and behavior of US troops along the Mexican border.

March

ProgHarm: Mai Thi Chung (p. 356) scans deep space out at the limits of her perceptual range and perceives something that terrifies her. She uses Duc Van Ho (p. 357) as a conduit to convey what she beheld to Nguyet Cam (p. 164). Despite Nguyet's best efforts, she is unable to dissuade Mai and Duc from killing themselves over their despair and fear of "the Unsided." Nguyet does not share her knowledge with the leaders of the world's Progressive Harmony nations. Instead, she only tells the remaining members of the Progress Cadre (p. 353), and even they get only a verbal description, not the visceral experience that passed between Duc, Mai and Nguyet.

Sykes Family, Åism: With the aid of Åmanda, the Åites place their genetic payload on Hale-Bopp.

April

Sykes Family: A non-metahuman named Horace Mullins, once one of Åmanda's staunch supporters, publicly questions her religious claims and starts organizing a faction on Amandlis to offset her control and provide legal balances. When the UN recognizes him as an envoy from the island, Åmanda teleports him off the island and back to his former home in Boston.

May

The US Republican party experiences severe internal stresses. Social conservatives agitate for stronger executive power; fiscal conservatives seek to limit both executive and legislative authority.

June

At a PushCore Technologies lab, Seonaid Gladwell invents the Space Injector (p. 335).

Alyssa Veronne (p. 233) dies in a fight against one of the last Harmonic Convergence mind-control gangs.

July

The Dow continues to surge on the expectation of a new space race and new orbital industries.

August

ProgHarm: PushCore demonstrates the Space Injector to the IEG, who express interest in developing it for offensive, defensive and transport purposes.

September

ProgHarm: The South American Progressive Gestalt begins to fracture as member nations disagree over the use of oil reserves.

October

Sykes Family: Amy (p. 177) gets pregnant.

November

Shavians, Jason Weeks: From an undisclosed orbital location, Weeks announces that the Shavians have satisfied him with their good-faith efforts to reduce violence. He invests the billions the reproduction device costs and the Shavians begin construction.

1997

Tensions rise between China and the USSR.

Åism: The Årk begins seeding Jupiter's moon Europa with Earth-based DNA packets.

1998

1998—History

SUSPICION 5 TECHNOLOGY 5 ECONOMY 3 WARFARE 2

US Culture

At theaters, both Armageddon and Deep Impact alert the public to the dangers posed by asteroids. Filmgoers also frequent Saving Private Ryan, There's Something About Mary and The Truman Show. On the radio, it's Celine Dion singing "My Heart Will Go On," Will Smith "Gettin' Jiggy Wit It" and "You're Still the One" by Shania Twain.

Jan-Dec - Massacres continue in Algeria.	Mar 29 - Tornadoes kill three in Minnesota.	Jul 24 - Russell Weston Jr. shoots up the US Capitol, killing two police officers.
Jan 10 - Massive snowstorm strikes New England.	Apr 6 - Pakistan tests missiles that could hit India.	Jul 25 - Four die from arsenic poisoning at a festival in Japan.
Jan 12 - Nineteen European nations agree to ban human cloning.	Apr 7 - Citibank and Traveler's Group announce a merger.	Aug 7 - Yangtze floods kill 12,000.
Jan 17 - Paula Jones accuses Bill Clinton of sexual harassment.	Apr 8 - Birmingham tornado kills 32.	Aug 7 - Embassy bombs in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi kill 224.
Jan 22 - Ted Kaczynski pleads guilty.	Apr 10 - The Troubles: Belfast Agreement signed.	Aug 15 - The Troubles: Real IRA car bomb kills 29.
Jan 25 - Suicide attack in Sri Lanka kills eight.	May 11 - India conducts three underground nuclear tests.	Aug 19 - On his 52nd birthday, Bill Clinton admits to his affair with Monica Lewinski.
Jan 26 - Clinton denies sex with Monica Lewinski.	May 13 - Two more tests get India sanctioned by China and the US.	Aug 19 - Russian bank crisis begins.
Jan 26 - Compaq buys Digital Equipment Corporation.	May 13-14 - Riots in Indonesia against Chinese Indonesians.	Aug 24 - First RFID implant in a human.
Jan 27 - Hillary Clinton decries a "vast right wing conspiracy."	May 18 - Microsoft antitrust suit.	Sep 7 - Google founded.
Jan 28 - Philippine gunman holds 400 hostage at a school for several hours	May 21 - School shooting in Oregon.	Oct 6 - Matthew Shepard found tied to a fence, murdered.
Jan 29 - Bomb at Alabama abortion clinic kills one.	May 21 - Suharto resigns after 32 years as president of Indonesia.	Oct 7-8 - US tightens copyright protection.
Feb 2 - S&P 500 closes above 1,000 for the first time.	May 28 - Pakistan conducts five nuclear tests, earning sanctions from Japan, China and the US.	Oct 16 - The British arrest Pinochet.
Feb 4 - Afghan quake kills 5,000.	May 30 - One more Pakistani nuclear test.	Oct 17 - Pipeline explosion kills 1,082 in Nigeria.
Feb 9 - Assassination attempt on Eduard Shevardnadze fails.	May 30 - Quake in Afghanistan kills 5,000.	Oct 29 - Hurricane Mitch kills 18,000 in Central America.
Feb 19 - 66 day blackout begins in Auckland, New Zealand.	Jun 5 - General Motors goes on strike.	Oct 29 - 63 killed by arson in Sweden.
Feb 23 - Tornadoes in FL kill 42.	Jun 25 - Microsoft releases Windows 98.	Oct 31 - Iraq refuses to cooperate with UN inspectors.
Mar 4 - US Supreme Court declares that sexual harassment laws still apply when both claimants share a gender.	Jul 5 - Japan sends a probe to Mars.	Nov 3 - Jesse Ventura becomes governor in Minnesota.
Mar 10 - US troops in the Persian Gulf get vaccinated for anthrax.	Jul 10 - The Roman Catholic Church pays \$23 million to nine former altar boys.	Nov 9 - UK abolishes the death penalty.
Mar 24 - Boys aged 11 and 13 kill five in Jonesboro.	Jul 17 - International Criminal Court founded.	Nov 19 - Clinton impeachment begins.
Mar 27 - FDA approves Viagra.	Jul 17- Tsunami kills 1,500 in New Guinea.	Dec 16-19 - Airstrikes on Iraq.
		Dec 19 - Clinton impeachment complete.

1998—Progenitor

SUSPICION 7

TECHNOLOGY 6

ECONOMY 2

WARFARE 6

January

Jason Weeks: Microbos and Apollo present their AI, named “Echo,” to an international council of psychologists, philosophers and hyperbrains led by Jason Weeks (p. 195). After two weeks of study, the council votes 7-3 that the entity possesses consciousness.

Shavians: Shavians create the island of “Shavia” as a homeland, fortress, and central location for their breeding device.

February

Atlantis: Throughout February, displaced Atlanteans in San Francisco suffer from prejudice and abuse. When an Atlantean metahuman named Hercule Desmarais uses his powers of matter compression on several teens who vandalized his store, the police are called. Attacked in the city jail, Desmarais kills a fellow prisoner before being beaten into a coma. When he dies after three days unconscious, the Atlanteans riot. Backlash against the rioting Atlanteans spreads throughout the city and takes on a virulent, anti-Hispanic dimension as well. Seventeen people are killed and hundreds injured before police can restore order, and property damages are estimated at \$21 million.

Jason Weeks: Weeks begins calling in old favors with every metahuman he can find. He insists that San Francisco is becoming a focal point of several interlaced and concurrent social conflicts. As with the war in September ‘82, he suggests that the San Francisco riots might just be a prelude.

March

Åism, Sykes Family, Jason Weeks, Atlantis: Åmanda Sykes (p. 159) announces her intention to come to San Francisco, and, despite firm language from the State Department requesting that she present her passport and enter through official channels, she simply teleports in. Standing a hundred feet high on the Golden Gate bridge, she gives a rambling, apocalyptic, messianic speech that’s clearly audible to everyone in the city—San Franciscans and displaced Atlanteans along with thousands of Åites and Emerald Virgin believers, many of whom traveled from all over North America to hear her.

Of course, putting a lot of religious fanatics in a tense and damaged city provokes trouble. Of course the police get involved. Of course local metahumans like The Lawn (p. 278) and Angelica Ming (p. 265) wind up stirred into the mix. But it’s not until Åmanda starts dictating actions to the city and the people that things really go to hell.

Abe Sykes (p. 173) and Amy (p. 177) try to stage an intervention, but Åmanda refuses to hear it.

That’s when Jason Weeks and a crew of thirty-five metahumans, many high tier, attempt to restrain the Progenitor by force.

Most of the ensuing carnage takes place in San Francisco Bay. Åmanda and her dozen metahuman disciples make their stand on the bridge. The main battle takes only twenty minutes, during which Jason Weeks is killed, along with LeRoi Mathers (p. 207), General Andrew Colt (p. 168), and possibly The Dream (p. 229). Eventually, however, Paige Rampling (p. 236) is able to get close enough to strike at Åmanda, simultaneous with the collapse of the bridge, a psychic attack, and the detonation of several conventional RPGs. For the first time in thirty years, Åmanda Sykes is injured by something other than cosmic forces or her own overreaching.

1998



When Åmanda collapses, she is joined by every metahuman flying at that moment, anywhere. Dozens of dark energy wielders on both sides of the Battle of San Francisco are instantly killed when their invulnerability fails. Dozens of others are spared when force bolts, telekinetic strangulation, or laser blasts instantly cease.

When Åmanda Sykes falls, every human being who controls dark energy loses their powers.

It's another hour before a rescue worker digs her out of the rubble. Until her fingerprints are checked, no one identifies her.

April

Sykes Family: With Åmanda comatose in a high security hospital, Abe reluctantly goes to her followers, seeking funding to sue for her release. Unable to locate her, the worshippers reluctantly agree.

ProgHarm: Within weeks of the 'power outage,' the GPhA begins to decay. Progressive Harmony nations throughout the world lose momentum, face protests and see a drastic increase in corruption and graft.

The global economy shrinks by 2% in one week.

Chatelaine Debussy (p. 272) empties a 9mm pistol at Jean Davis (p. 250) but only two bullets hit and Davis survives.

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Campaign Framework: Coma Ward

Brubacher Hospital was founded in 1979 as a high-security hospital for the treatment of dark energized individuals. Run by the US Army Medical Corps, in the 1980s it became a dumping ground for metahumans who were too dangerous, crazy or difficult for the regular courts. This led to the "Eustace Nine" scandal of 1992, in which an independent psychiatric review led by Dr. Eustace Debbins found that nine patients were, in his professional judgment, entirely sane and had been kept committed "solely as a matter of convenience." A lawsuit freed eight of the nine to face the trials they'd never received, and forced the hospital's Chief of Staff to resign in disgrace in 1994. To Debbins' surprise, he was offered the job. To the Army's astonishment, he accepted.

When Åmanda is brought there in 1998, there are some in the US government who want to simply assassinate her and be done with it. Others who felt that the "meta-gap" was in America's favor simply want her kept in an artificial coma until just the right moment: Once Progressive Harmony decays sufficiently, a perfectly timed meta-strike by US supers who know when their powers are returning could wipe clean the GPhA once and for all. Some think she must be awakened as soon as possible. Others dream of finding a way to keep her sedated and inactive, even as her body or mind recovers just enough to permit others' powers to recur.

The machinations around Brubacher Hospital are intense, and the stakes are as high as any in human history. PCs could be agents pursuing one (or more) of the agendas, attempting to penetrate Brubacher's security. Or they could be the security staff, suddenly finding themselves without powers and trying to keep the concentrated attention of the world away from their patients, Åmanda in particular.

An entire campaign could be set at Brubacher, starting at any point in its history. If the PCs work there, how do they feel about the extrajudicial imprisonments? How do they handle the issues of holding back metahumans during (and after) World War III? What's their reaction to Debbins when he's a snotty do-gooder poking around? How about when he becomes director? Finally, what do they do when their energies fail and the Progenitor lies helpless in their power?

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May

Åism: Those Åites loyal to Åmanda despair, riot, and in some cases commit mass suicides. So do followers of the Emerald Virgin.

Stock prices begin an almost universal, grinding decline that doesn't stop until September.

Sykes Family: An attempt on Amy's life wounds her husband.

June

Afghanistan rapidly goes from simmering resentment to full-on revolutionary insurgency against the USSR.

Many governments, including the USSR, China and the United States, crack down on Åmanda worshippers of any stripe.

Shavians: An unidentified nation detonates an atom bomb on the island of Shavia. Whoever plants it faces no resistance, since every Shavian disappeared when Åmanda went into her coma.

Åism: Attempts to contact the Årk with conventional technology fail, primarily because the earthly Åites don't know its exact location.

July

The New Guinea tsunami prompts mass prayers for Åmanda's recovery.

ProgHarm: China invades the IEG.

Deionne Bright (p. 192) dies of an overdose.

Sykes Family: Amy delivers her baby. It's a girl. Derrick and Amy name her Andrea.

August

Zipperneck Russo (p. 210) is identified, arrested and immediately imprisoned in Shanghai.

The Catholic Church blames Harmonic Convergence mind control gangs for the pastoral abuse allegations.

Sykes Family: Abe successfully sues for the right to visit his wife's bedside and, afraid of not being readmitted if he leaves, begins a two-week vigil.

September

Sykes Family: Åmanda recovers from her coma. As soon as he realizes his powers have returned, Abe asks Åmanda to let him "help her." When she groggily agrees, he begins to regress her, body and mind, wiping her memories and changing her back into the woman he loved back in 1970.

Shavians: All the Shavians re-appear in the locations they were in when Åmanda collapsed.

Zipperneck escapes in the most violent way he can imagine. 717 people die before he gets bored.

Åism: With telepathy and clairvoyance restored, the Åites recontact the Årk and learn, to their great relief, that it survived even without dark energy.

1998

ProgHarm: The GPhA begins to re-solidify, and resistance to China gives it a great deal of focus.

Sykes Family: The United States admits that Abe and Amanda Sykes escaped from custody.

The Catholic Church endorses the theory that Selar M. is an artificial disease intended to put people in contact with a telepathic metahuman.

November

Sykes Family: In her first public appearance since her regression, Amanda announces her intention to leave Earth. (See page 164.)

PushCore Technologies demonstrates a superconductor that can operate at up to 72 degrees Fahrenheit.

December

Shavians: The Shavians propose to accompany Amanda if she builds them a brood chamber.

1999—History

SUSPICION 4	TECHNOLOGY 5	ECONOMY 4	WARFARE 1
Jan 1 - Euro currency established.	Mar 26 - Minnesota jury finds Kevorkian guilty of second degree murder.	Jul 20 - Falun Gong banned in the People's Republic of China.	
Jan 2 - Snowstorm kills 68 in US midwest.	Mar 29 - Dow closes over 10,000.	Jul 23 - Airline hijack in Japan.	
Jan 4 - Sixteen Shia gunned down in Pakistan.	Apr 9 - The president of Niger is assassinated.	Aug 7 - Chcechens invade Russian republic of Dagestan.	
Jan 21 - US Coast Guard intercepts 9,500 pounds of cocaine.	Apr 20 - Columbine high school massacre kills twelve.	Aug 17 - Quake in Turkey kills 17,000.	
Jan 25 - Columbian quake kills 1,000.	May 3 - Strongest tornado in recorded history (an F5) kills 38 in Oklahoma.	Sep 7 - Athens quake kills 143.	
Feb 2 - Hugo Chavez becomes president of Venezuela.	May 3 - Dow crosses 11,000.	Sep 7 - CBS merges with Viacom.	
Feb 4 - The NYPD shoots and kills an unarmed Amadou Diallo.	May 17 - Ehud Barak becomes Prime Minister of Israel.	Sep 21 - Taiwan quake kills 2,400.	
Feb 10 - Avalanches in the Alps kill ten.	May 19 - The Phantom Menace is released.	Oct 12 - Musharraf takes control of Pakistan through a coup.	
Feb 16 - Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan arrested, prompting violence throughout Europe.	May 26 - India and Pakistan clash over Kashmir.	Oct 12 - Global population hits six billion.	
Feb 23 - Austrian avalanche kills 31.	May 27 - Milošević indicted for war crimes.	Oct 31 - Catholic and Lutheran churches end doctrinal dispute over faith and salvation.	
Mar 1 - Anti-landmine treaty takes effect.	Jun 1 - Napster debuts.	Nov 12 - Quake in Turkey kills 845.	
Mar 12 - Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic join NATO.	Jun 6 - 345 prisoners escape Brazil's Putim prison.	Nov 26 - Quake and tsunami in Vanatau.	
Mar 24 - NATO launches airstrikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.	Jun 12 - George W. Bush announces his candidacy.	Nov 30 - Exxon and Mobil merge, creating the biggest company in the world.	
Mar 26 - The Melissa worm strikes the internet.	Jun 21 - iBook released.	Dec 31 - US turns the Panama Canal over to Panama.	
	Jul 11 - India recaptures Kargil from Pakistan and declares victory.	Dec 31 - Yeltsin resigns as President of Russia, with Vladimir Putin taking over.	

1999

US Culture

In films, 1999 is the year of Blair Witch Project, Runaway Bride, The Matrix and the long awaited Star Wars prequel Phantom Menace. In music, top sellers included "Livin' La Vida Loca" by Ricky Martin, "No Scrubs" by TLC and Pearl Jam's cover of "Last Kiss."

1999—Progenitor

SUSPICION 5

TECHNOLOGY 6

ECONOMY 2

WARFARE 5

January

Shavians, Sykes Family: Åmanda (page 159), finally coming to grips with the almost thirty years she's forgotten, concludes that leaving really is the best thing. She asks Abe (page 173) to come with her, but he says no. She, six loyal metahumans, and close to a thousand Shavians leave Earth on January 15. By January 25, Abe's in Colombia, rebuilding after an earthquake.

February

A woman named Janice Stark makes national headlines when she voluntarily infects herself with Selar M. and publicly declares her reasons for doing so. She presents the disease as a gateway to a larger experience and a deeper engagement in American civil discourse. The Catholic Church escalates its condemnation of "disease culture."

March

Sykes Family: Matilda Schwarzenhelm (page 289) kills Zipperneck (page 210) during his last battle with Amy Atford (née Sykes; page 177).

April

Belarus declares its sovereignty.

May

Echo the AI files a formal request for a voter ID card.

June

Shavians: Over half of the world's remaining Shavians depart, seeking a hospitable star system where they can set up their brood chamber in peace.

Bill Clinton announces his candidacy for president.

July

ProgHarm: The African Harmonic Gestalt announces major "equality reforms," that call into question the fundamental Progressive Harmony caste system.

August

A car bomb, detonated by remote, kills Jean Davis (page 250). She resurrects in Delhi. Two members of the Meta-Defense League are eventually arrested, but neither is brought to trial.

Sykes Family: Abe and the remainder of New ID/EA go to Turkey.

1999



September

Sykes Family: New ID/EA goes straight to Athens after Turkey. Abe suggests sticking together on a permanent basis, but no one else is really interested.

A powerful Taiwanese earth controller threatens to sink the entire island unless China withdraws. A massive manhunt ensues, turning into a military engagement and then a clash of metahumans.

October

ProgHarm: Cambodia withdraws from the IEG and GPhA.

November

Pushcore Technologies acquires Very Us, Incorporated and becomes the world's third biggest company.

December

A bright light, visible with the naked eye, is seen from the orbit of Neptune.

What's that bright light by Neptune? Is it the Progenitor creating a wormhole for her and the Shavians to escape through, or is it the Årk exploding? Just what did that Vietnamese psychic see that made her kill herself? What are 'the Unsided' (page 147), and is Cam right that there's no chance of peaceful coexistence? Can Amanda fix it so that people keep their powers if she gets knocked out again? Is there any chance she'll get back together with Abe? And just why isn't a superpowered Robert F. Kennedy (p. 189) influencing things in the Progenitor timeline?

Or, as suggested by Joseph Meyer of the podcast "Meanwhile..." what if someone else gets struck and becomes a second Progenitor?

All these questions are up to you to answer, ignore or alter beyond recognition. They're the game's gift to you, tied up in a neat bow labeled "2000." We could have pushed the timeline farther, but anything we'd write in the new millennium would get dated pretty quick and besides, isn't the book big enough?

The 21st century dawns without the Progenitor, but with her progeny more numerous and active than ever. What they craft depends on what happens when your dice hit your table. But a few possibilities are...

They're Coming

What are the Unsided? That's up to you, but I recommend ripping a page out of your favorite horror novel, movie or game. Or maybe two. Whatever they are, they don't like being watched and now they're watching us. Maybe 'unsided' means they're not even physical, they're ideas that copy and corrupt information systems to which they're exposed (like, say, genius syntergenicist Nguyet Cam). Maybe they're poly-real and naturally able to slip between dimensions, flitting to Earth to materialize and engage metahumans, then teleporting effortlessly to one of the Magellanic Clouds to recover.

If your PCs have been ratcheting down the STEW gauges so far that they're keeping humanity from vomiting up interesting story tragedies, you may have to go outside for your plots.

Mark Madness

On the other hand, if the PCs' actions have raised the gauges until all hell breaks loose, you might want to ignore the aliens in favor of a far more mundane backlash. Specifically, the marks (those people with trace dark energy but no superpowers) band together and come down on the side of the numerous. With Willpower to resist mind control, they're a bit harder to deal with, but it's only when a fed-up Hyperbrain builds a dark-energy interference device—think "Matilda Schwarzenhelm In a Can"—that they're able to really push the metahumans against the wall. Sure, maybe null-grenades only work once and only suppress superhuman abilities for ten minutes, but when there are twenty guys with them, the power differential changes. If you loved "Days of Future Past," here's your chance to round up 'metants.' Hell, that hyperbrain could probably throw together some kind of giant sentinel robots. But what's his angle? Why is locking up all the superheroes the smart move? Maybe because he wants to... rule the world?!?

Unreliability

Amanda and her followers have taken off, but it's well-established that if she's hurt badly enough, everybody's powers conk out until she recovers. With her off in space and traveling unpredictably, what happens when another little 'power vacation' sweeps the fliers from the skies and derails Progressive Harmony once more? The powers return after a few weeks, but a few months later they fail again—this time for two full months. What do the PCs do as once and future supers? When they get approached by a metahuman ally who wants to search for Amanda and find out what's going on (either to help her or to return her to Earth and ensure steady power), do they have the nerve to say no?

CHAPTER THREE: THE METAHUMANS

Progenitor has a vast and complicated cast of characters, only a fraction of whom are likely to fit in any given campaign. Nonetheless, generosity won out and there are a lot of characters here for you to change, apply or turn into PCs.

Careers

Every character in the larger writeups has a ‘Career’ entry. Compared to their powers, their Stats and Skills are usually not that important, so they’ve all been assigned one of seven broad categories. If the fit isn’t perfect—a character needs some Perform or Leadership to really match the profile—then just add a couple Skill points here or there. Free free to remove points as well. Amanda Sykes, for example, might have more Command and less Body than a typical Laborer.

The intention is to avoid a lot of repetition with only minor differences in Progenitor’s many character writeups. So all children are ‘Layabouts’ and captains of industry are more likely to be classified as ‘Politicians.’ If you think something’s missing for a particular character, just add the Skill or a Stat point or two.



Crook

BODY 3	COORDINATION 3	SENSE 2	MIND 2	COMMAND 2	CHARM 2
Brawl 1, Dodge 1, Drive 2, Empathy 1, Intimidate 2, Knowledge _____ 1, Language 1, Lie 2, Lockpick 2, Persuade 1, Stability 1, Stealth 2, Streetwise 2, Weapon _____ 1					

Laborer

BODY 3	COORDINATION 2	SENSE 2	MIND 2	COMMAND 1	CHARM 2
Athletics 2, Drive 2, Endurance 2, First Aid 2, Knowledge _____ 2, Language 2, Navigation 2, Perceive 2, Stability 2, Survival 2					

Layabout

BODY 2	COORDINATION 2	SENSE 2	MIND 2	COMMAND 1	CHARM 3
Dodge 2, Language 2, Lie 3, Persuade 3, Stealth 3, Streetwise 2					

Politician

BODY 2	COORDINATION 1	SENSE 1	MIND 2	COMMAND 3	CHARM 3
Empathy 2, Endurance 2, Intimidation 3, Knowledge _____ 2, Language 2, Leadership 3, Lie 3, Other Language 1, Perform 1, Persuade 3, Stability 3					

Professional

BODY 2	COORDINATION 1	SENSE 2	MIND 3	COMMAND 2	CHARM 2
Drive 1, Empathy 3, Knowledge 3, Language _____ 2, Leadership 2, Lie 2, Persuade 3, Research 1, Stability 3					

Soldier

BODY 2	COORDINATION 3	SENSE 3	MIND 2	COMMAND 3	CHARM 1
Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Endurance 2, Knowledge _____ 1, Language 1, Leadership 2, Navigation 1, Perceive 2, Weapon _____ 2,					

Student

BODY 2	COORDINATION 2	SENSE 2	MIND 2	COMMAND 2	CHARM 2
Driving 1, Empathy 2, Knowledge _____ 3, Language 2, Lie 2, Perform 2, Research 1, Stability 2					

Tier One: Amanda Sykes, the Progenitor

Career: Laborer

History: Up until 1967, Amanda Sykes was a normal woman. Born Amanda Carson in 1934, she went to high school in Longton, Kansas, attended the University of Kansas but left before completing a degree. She'd met Abraham Sykes and fallen in love. They got married, moved to his farm and had a baby, and then she got .5% of the total energies of the universe lodged in her.

It was fall of 1967, she and her daughter Amy were bringing Abe a picnic lunch on a sunny Saturday and something happened. None of the Sykes' were able to explain or describe it clearly, later, but it was random, and violent, and loud, and it hurt. Amanda felt like she was coming apart, but at the same time like she was forcing herself together. She screamed, and shattered every window within twenty miles.

Then it ended. But it had really only begun.

Over the next few months, Amanda gradually realized that she had powers. That she could lift tremendous weights. That she could withstand things that should have hurt or bruised her, that she no longer got tired or had aches. She learned to fly and then she learned how to take the energies she had and do... well, anything really.

She didn't know what she wanted to do. But early in 1968 she saw footage of the Tet offensive in Vietnam and she knew what she had to do.

Lineage: Not applicable.

Personality: Initially Amanda is a typical woman of her time and culture. She's polite, quiet, slightly deferential to men. A bit of an idealist, Amanda believes as she has been taught—in God, country, law and her elected officials. More than anything, she wants to help.

Loyalties: The USA (4), Liberally Interpreted Judeo-Christian Morality (4)

Passions: Family (7)



Power Suite

Dark Energy Projection 6HD (252 Points):

Amanda can create superpowers as needed. She can have several different ones going at once, or one big one, but anything she wants she can, with a little time, do... as long as it can be accomplished through the manipulation or creation of observable matter and/or energy. Amanda's power cannot directly create beliefs or influence social factors, for example.

This is the power she uses to duplicate powers with all three Qualities, or to mimic Hyperstats or Hyperskills. Note that until the computing revolution of the 1990s, she cannot use this for Hyperbrains, Hypercommand or Hypercharm because, until then, she doesn't know how to use energy to create patterns of logic. But once those concepts are available to humankind (and can therefore be read with telepathy) she's able to extend her power into those Hyperstats.

This is similar to "Cosmic Power" from Wild Talents, except for the aforementioned limit.

Attacks (+2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must be used for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Only what can be accomplished with observable matter or energy) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Defends (+2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must be used for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Only what can be accomplished with observable matter or energy) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must be used for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Only what can be accomplished with observable matter or energy) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Immune (Dark Energy Effects) 9HD (36 Points): This is an extremely subtle and potent defense. While it can be overwhelmed by raw power—basically anything someone rolls as an attack pool—someone who attempts to read her mind gets nothing. Someone who attempts to model her personality using an analytical engine built from dark energy structures is forced instead to rely solely on human observation. Someone who tries to find her with clairvoyance can't unless she's willing. (She can, of course, switch it off to allow positive effects to work on her, such as being found by an ally or healed by Abe.) Note that this works against Hypercommand and Hypercharm as well.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3)

Versattack 6d+1WD (70 Points): When she wants to hurt someone or something, she has many options. She can simply configure an attack power on the fly and it stays that way until she needs a change.

Attacks (+2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must be used for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Only what can be accomplished with observable matter or energy) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

D.E.Fense 9HD (36 Points): The power coursing through her can be used to block just about any physical attack.

Defends (+2)

Versatility 6d+1WD (70 Points): As with her attack, she can easily gain useful abilities as needed, so long as they're possible with matter and energy.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must be used for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Only what can be accomplished with observable matter or energy) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Base Will +12 (36 Points): The energy supports her personality integrity as well as her physical integrity. As the years go on, her confidence increases. Assume she gains a point of Base Will every year, starting with 1969.

Destiny: Amanda's involvement in Vietnam begins in 1968, but instead of ending the war quickly, she sends it in a chaotic new direction. What no one initially realizes is that Amanda's strange power is contagious. By demonstrating it to the army, she creates a small group of superhumans. By using it in Vietnam, she creates an equal and opposite second group. Metahuman geniuses, global-range telepathic teleporters, and men who can raze cities singlehandedly give the war an entirely new dimension, as well as a second front when Vietnamese metahumans are able to whisk themselves to mainland America and away after launching dark energy attacks.

The fact of an American superhuman starts seeping out within months, whether released for maximum psychological advantage in the war, or simply because a secret so big couldn't be kept long. With the geometrically increasing numbers of empowered people, the situation is soon beyond even Amanda's control. A farm wife from middle America with no real idea what the war entailed, her innocence leaves her too ambitious, thinking she can win the war single-handedly. It also leaves her entirely unprepared for My Lai village.

In June of 1970, she is identified in the media, during her relief work after the Ancash earthquake in Peru. The whole Sykes family comes under intense scrutiny, not long after the military starts investigating the destruction of My Lai. As if that wasn't pressure enough, she soon has to deal with her daughter running away (briefly) and Abe getting kidnapped by Nguyet Cam (page 164), the only other My Lai survivor. Unable to rescue her brainwashed husband, she completely ignores the first religion to regard her as a divine being—the Church of the Emerald Virgin in Peru.

1971 brings Abe's rescue but not before two massive battles. The first is the "Laotian Götterdammerung," a massive clash of superhumans, Amanda included, that leaves

Amanda's Power Wardrobe

Amanda Sykes' powers are potent, but more than anything they're versatile. This can be a problem for GMs who don't want to bog down their games as Amanda reconfigures her abilities on the fly to deal with a particular problem (probably a PC). But like all humans, she's a creature of habit and has a few favorite themes she uses in different situations. Four of these are listed here for quick use, along with their Willpower costs.

Single Armored Target (42 Willpower)

What it says: This is her configuration for coming up on a single hard-to-injure target. Her strategy is to get invisibility up before engaging, pick her shot and try to trash the guy with a single Smash Attack before he's even aware of her. If that doesn't work, she can use multiple actions to dodge and reassign Versatack. This is something she can only do with a good load of Willpower, of course.

General Versatility 6HD = Invisibility: This is standard to Wild Talents except for the Slow (-2) Flaw. No Willpower cost.

Versatack 6d+1WD = Smash Attack: In addition to its normal Flaws of Obvious (-1) and Willpower Bid (-1), this gains the Extras Penetration 10 (+10), and Engulfs (+2). It gains the additional flaws Horrific (-1) and Full Power Only (-1). Costs 42 Willpower.

Versutil 6d+1WD = Multiple Actions: Standard to Wild Talents. No Willpower cost.

So Many Buttholes (0 Willpower)

When she's alone against a lot of 'little' opponents like armed normal folks or metahumans with poor attack powers, she uses this configuration. Note that the real 'Fires of Retribution' are for when she's ready and willing to kill a lot of folks, so this tends to enter play only when diplomacy fails. Or later in her career. More commonly, it's 'Fires of Madness.'

General Versatility 6HD = Heavy Armor: This is standard to Wild Talents but has the Flaws Obvious (-1), Willpower Bid (-1) and Horrific (-1). Just how she horrifies her enemies is up to the GM—it could be anything from a squamous monster form to a grandeur and beauty that is maddening in its perfection. She usually goes for 'giant fiery demon' because she's not all that imaginative. No Willpower cost.

Versatack 6d+1WD = Fires of Madness: This is a flame-based attack with the normal Flaws Obvious (-1) and Willpower Bid (-1), along with Full Power Only (-1), Horrific (-1) and No Physical Change (-1). It has the Extras Spray 1 (+1) and Burn (+2). Essentially she hoses down the crowd with hideous, clinging, agonizing fire. But it's all an illusion. No Willpower cost . . . or . . .

Versatack 6d+1WD = Fires of Retribution: This flame-based attack has her normal Flaws Obvious (-1) and Willpower Bid (-1), along with Full Power Only (-1), Horrific (-1) and Depleted (-1), giving her 49 shots from a single recharge. (After that, she has to reconfigure the power, if anyone is still alive.) This gains the Extras Spray 1 (+1) and Burn (+2), but now the damage is all real. Still no Willpower cost.

Versutil 6d+1WD = Minions: Standard to Wild Talents, except for the Flaws Full Power Only (-1) and Horrific (-1). Keeping with the theme, they usually look like flame-wreathed devils. No Willpower cost.

Friends and Foes (0 Willpower)

If she's facing a mixed crowd of enemies and allies, or a situation with lots of innocent bystanders, she uses this setup. She typically starts with a nonlethal Neuroelectric Surge, then applies Insubstantial attacks to any targets that remain troublesome. If the companions with her get hurt, she can rapidly fix them up.

General Versatility 6HD = Insubstantial: Stock standard. No Willpower cost.

Versatack 6d+1WD = Neuroelectric Surge: This pulse of electricity radiates out from her and assaults anyone who's aggressing against her or her friends. In addition to being Obvious (-1) and requiring a Willpower Bid (-1), it has the Flaws Touch Only (-2), One Use (-4) and Full Power Only (-1). It gains the extras Radius (+2), Daze (+2), Non-Physical (+2) and Controlled Effect (+1). Because it's non-physical, it can be resisted with an Endurance roll. No Willpower cost.

Versutil 6d+1WD = Shared Regeneration: She can touch people and heal Width damage on all their hit locations. It's very much like standard Regeneration. As with her other adopted powers, this has the flaws Obvious (-1) and Willpower Bid (-1).

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Touch Only (-2)

Everyday (0 Willpower)

When she's not expecting trouble and is just going about her business, this is her fallback power suite.

General Versatility 6HD = Sense: Hyperstat. No Willpower cost.

Versutil 6d+1WD = Flight: Standard to Wild Talents. No Willpower cost.

As for Versatack, it's left on its previous setting.

high-tier dark energy users dead on both sides, along with thousands of normal people. The second is Amanda's solo attack on Hanoi. Only later does Amanda learn that she was provoked into the assault so that a group of Abe's power-descendants could rescue him.

One of Abe's rescuers, a man named Jason Weeks (p. 195), deprograms him of Cam's conditioning and reunites the Sykes family, beginning a long and complicated association with the Progenitor herself. (Weeks is, in fact, the first person to call her that.) At first, Amanda is simply grateful to this stranger who saved her husband and restored his mind. But as she learns how cleverly he manipulated her to keep Nguyet Cam distracted, she becomes uneasy. That concern pervades all her future dealings with Jason Weeks.

Amanda needs Abe's support as she gives her first news conference, denying any connection to the complete destruction of My Lai village. But that support becomes double edged as Amanda tries to control her husband's travels, terrified of losing him again. Years later, Abe points to this as the beginning of their marriage woes.

Questions about the village refuse to die, but Amanda's relief work keeps most Americans satisfied, and coming together to aid the victims of natural disasters pushes Abe and Amanda back together. She relaxes enough to accept Abe's need to travel the world, doing what he can to right what's wrong, and in return he gives her much needed support through the Senate's My Lai hearings. Her testimony that she recalls nothing seems to conflict with military reports placing her in the area, and the American public becomes uneasy at the thought of "their superheroine" lying to them. But they become even more uneasy when a hyperbrain named Bryson Maas-Thierry (p. 206) suggests that Amanda might have come upon a massacre (as a foreigner called "Nguyet Cam" persuasively insists), killed the American soldiers perpetrating it, burned everything, and then altered her own consciousness to edit out the memories.

If a meta-liar was scary, a meta-madwoman is far more so.

Amanda lays low for a while after that, but is unable to keep herself from meddling in Abe's

rescue of kidnapped heiress Patty Hearst. When Abe confronts the Symbionese Liberation Army, Amanda unexpectedly shows up, frightening the SLA into an ill-considered attack that leaves two SLA members dead. Abe castigates her for upsetting his negotiations, and a very public argument ensues.

If that wasn't family trouble enough, Amy runs away again after being found by the media and attacked by a vengeful metahuman called "Zipperneck" (p. 210). Despite her daughter's assurances (and invulnerability), Amanda publicly begs her daughter to return. Instead, Amy flings herself into a battle against human supremacists, earning her an arrest warrant in Massachusetts. With President Nixon's assurances of a pardon, Amanda convinces Amy to turn herself in. But when the President reconsiders and Amy gets incarcerated, Amanda goes into seclusion. She emerges eleven months later to file for divorce.

Although she continues to associate with Abe through his work with International Disaster/Emergency Assistance, he signs the divorce papers and they separate.

As a divorcée, Amanda tries to avoid the spotlight as much as she can, while still engaging in low-profile counter-terrorism campaigns, aiding high-energy research and providing disaster relief. After becoming estranged from Amy in October of 1977, Amanda announces a 'break from superheroism' and goes incognito to the country where she is best loved in the world—Peru. She maintains her distance from world events even in the face of a plea from oppressed Muslims in Burma. But the growing influence of Progressive Harmony (p. 343) draws her from self-imposed exile to aid a Cambodian insurgency. Unfortunately, her involvement ends with the death of her friend Henry Dowd (p. 206) and an ugly diplomatic incident.

Laying low again, Amanda leaves her retirement only to purify Three Mile Island's radiation leak and go on the occasional date with Joe Namath. She stays out of the international spotlight right up to the Iranian hostage crisis, but the same patriotism that impelled her in 1968 drives her to Iran in 1979. It's a bloodbath.

Swearing off interventionism, Amanda stays out of trouble until 1980, when trouble comes to her. Jason Weeks warns her about an impending assassination attempt and, together with her old Army comrade General Colt (p. 168) they're able to halt and detain a total of twenty-one metahumans, all of whom report similar "dark thoughts" about Amanda and all of whom test positive for a disease Jason Weeks names Sclarosis Maxilliae (p. 250).

That's the state in which Amanda finds herself in 1983. Regarded as an incarnation of the Virgin Mary in South America, lambasted as the ignorant weapon of American Capitalism in the Middle East and Asia. Alienated from both her husband and daughter, Amanda's attempts to defend her country and stomp out an ideology she despised had both ended with well-publicized disasters. Moreover, she's being targeted for destruction by forces she can't even find. In 1983 Amanda Sykes is lonesome, depressed, and increasingly unable to find people who don't either worship or loathe her.

When the Metapocalypse strikes, it would be easy for her to let the world burn down around her, but throughout it all, Amanda still believes she can make a difference. When a panicky Jason Weeks calls her, terrified, with war unfolding around him, her response is a bitter "So what?" But despite her words, Amanda stops it. She reaches out all around the globe and turns thousands of nuclear warheads into duds, quite possibly sparing human life on Earth.

In the wake of total war, even without nukes, Amanda discovers purpose again. With a billion people dead, cities in ruins and chaos overwhelming the planet, Amanda finds that she can go anywhere and find an obvious way to make things much, much better. Despite all the horror and tragedy she sees, her ability to help finds its fullest expression in the war's wake, and while she wouldn't call herself happy, it is at this time that Amanda finds her life most meaningful.

A grateful world names her an "Extranational Civic Entity"—a unique legal position that lets her treat with nations as an equal. She continues to aid in global reconstruction, in addition to making a number of public speeches about

the future of humanity united. Her newfound confidence is a drastic change from her stumbling, blushing first press conference in 1971 (though she hasn't visibly aged a day), and her assertiveness finds its way into her heroics as well. When she redirects the power of an earthquake in San Salvador, for example, she uses it to create a hundred-foot tall statue of herself.

Indeed, everything Amanda does in the late 1980s becomes more dramatic and forceful. When she finds out that Nguyet Cam is closeted with Jason Weeks having a private discussion, she interrupts it with a column of flame and a demand that the two geniuses remain incommunicado. She also overcomes her reluctance to get involved in political conflict, taking Israel's side when Iran attacks it in 1987. Drawing followers worldwide, she explains that her previous attempts were failures, not because intervention was a bad idea, but because she intervened incompletely. She promises not to make that mistake again. Making good on her new philosophy of intervention, she creates her own island. Although she never names it, the press dubs it "Amandlis" and the name sticks.

The United States, still wounded by the war of '83, finds itself opposing Amanda's policies for the first time. Indeed, the tensions rise to the point that they declare her an "undesirable alien." This dissuades her not at all, and her self-assurance is only increased when her family starts to reconcile with her after Amy gets engaged. Unfortunately, the wedding day is interrupted by a massive assault that leaves several metahumans dead, along with most of the groom's family. Amanda blames the nations following Nguyet Cam's Progressive Harmony philosophy, who insist they're completely innocent. Though she threatens reprisals, Amanda instead goes on a speaking tour of the US that swells the ranks of the Church of the Emerald Virgin.

Many, but not all, of the people she selects to populate Amandlis Island are followers of that faith. She confers her diplomatic identity on the country, becoming its first citizen.

As Amandlis rises, its precursor, Cynthia Carl's (p. 214) island of Atlantis, sinks deeper into

violence and anarchy. Ultimately, Amanda commands all Emerald Virgin followers to leave Atlantis and threatens to sink the island if peace isn't restored. When the conflicts continue, she evacuates Atlantis and makes good on her threat. Not long after, she confirms her divinity to the Church of the Emerald Virgin and also claims the mantle of Åism's (p. 358) leadership as well.

Now firmly convinced of her supremacy over all humanity, Amanda travels to the troubled city of San Francisco and declaims a rambling messianic speech from the Golden Gate Bridge. When her daughter and ex-husband try to talk her down, she sends them away. It therefore falls to Jason Weeks to try and restrain her by force. Being the genius he is, he'd foreseen her impending madness and assembled a group of metahumans to take her down.

Amanda Sykes falls on March 9, 1998, during the Battle of San Francisco. With her collapse, every metahuman alive loses their connection to the dark energy that fuels their powers.

When emergency workers find her comatose body and identify her through fingerprints, they immediately send her to a high-security hospital. That's where she wakes up six months later, to find Abe by her bedside. Feeling his powers return, he begs her to let him help and, when she agrees, he regresses her back to her condition in 1971. He goes deep, regressing not only her body (which was, if anything, more youthful and beautiful in 1998) but her mind as well. The megalomania, the memories of triumphs and catastrophe, 27 years as the world's foremost metahuman—Abe wipes it all away. Then he asks her to teleport them into hiding.

The new Amanda—or more accurately, the old Amanda, who is also the younger Amanda—finds herself in a world she made but doesn't remember. Initially outraged at the regression, she gradually transitions to horror as she learns of her recent actions. It seems impossible to think she might have killed so many, saved so many, sculpted the world so powerfully to her imperfect ideas. But she can't deny 27 years of papers and video and history.

After thinking about it, hard, Amanda decides the only course that makes sense is to leave

Earth altogether. No longer trusting herself with humanity, she decides to find another solar system where she can start over. Or perhaps, somewhere she can find a way to decouple every one else's power from her own before returning to be a normal woman again.

She asks Abe to come with her and he says no. In 1999, the Progenitor leaves Earth.

Tier Two

Nguyet Cam (“Nwyit Kham”), the Great Conductor

Career: Laborer

History: Cam was not the smartest woman in her village. At least, she wasn't before April 18, 1968. She, like everyone else she knew in her tiny world, supported the NVA as they moved weapons and personnel south to fight the imperialists. Hers was just one more settlement on a branch of the meandering Ho Chi Minh trail. Hers was just another cluster of homes that finally got a visit from US choppers, and something worse. Something that moved faster than the eye could see, something that left men dead before they could hit the ground—some of them burned, some simply still, eyes open, their bodies unmarked.

Cam had a revolver and a head full of stories about American soldiers raping and killing. When the GIs approached on foot, she planned to keep one bullet for herself. As the first soldier, the first black man she'd ever seen, poked open the door of the house, she shrieked and charged and pulled the trigger.

She missed. She heard him swear and saw the rifle butt coming at her, and then she woke to a searing pain in her chest. Somehow, she knew not to scream. She was in a pile of bodies, the bodies of everyone she'd known. The Americans were bayonetting them and then heaping them up. She waited until she thought their backs were turned and she started scrambling out, making her way to the tree line. She collapsed halfway

A Word on Vietnamese Names

Within Vietnam, the family name is often listed first, with a personal name at the end—exactly opposite of how we do it in the US. There, I'd be Stolze Greg. Given the preponderance of Vietnamese characters in Progenitor, there are a lot of these names. They are listed with personal name first, as they would when dealing with westerners. Sorry if this causes any confusion.

I've also tried to provide pronunciation keys for some non-Western names. I take full responsibility for any errors.

there and an officer was pointing a pistol at her face when everything stopped.

The thing, the blur, the killing mystery had returned and it was a woman. Floating above them, it was screaming something at them in English and Cam couldn't move, the the man with the gun couldn't move, none of them could. And then the men, the American GIs, their heads exploded one after another, like dropped eggs and still their bodies stood upright for a moment. Then they fell and Nguyet lay still.

As the green monster wept, Cam crept away and stared, mind blank, as Amanda Sykes gestured and the dead soldiers, the dead villagers, they all massed together and then the pile burned as bright as the sun. Still shaking with sobs, the American woman floated into the sky, escaping the scene.

Cam was alone and hurt, but she was calm. Her thoughts were clear, clearer than they'd ever been. Before Amanda was even out of sight, Cam had developed enough self-consciousness and willpower to slow the bleeding of her wound. Her consciousness was expanding, swelling with thoughts, and if her mind before had been a leaf, her mind now was a tree, spreading and sucking in the light of observation, information, knowledge. As she trudged towards the next settlement for help, she learned more than she had in her entire life previous. She spun off a tiny piece of her capacity—one leaf on the tree—and used it as a repository for the physical pain. Another leaf was given the burden of processing the emotions, and then more leaves to support it, an entire branch. The rest was analyzing, timing the fall of the blood drops as they hit the ground, as they hit her knee in mid-step, calculating the difference, watching the play of light and shadow, reading the terrain, seeing where plants grew and where they didn't, where the soil built up and where it wore away and by the time she'd gotten help, her observations had equipped her with roughly the equivalent of Masters' Degrees in botany, geology and classical Newtonian mechanics.

She had also realized that this new mental might was surely the result of that American creature, and that if it had been contagious to her, she might be contagious to others. So she spoke to no one, interacted with them as little as possible,



but instead spent her time listening, learning, observing. She watched men take apart an engine, looked in the back of a transistor radio, stole and disassembled a pocket watch. She watched flames flicker and timed the breeze and understood fluid dynamics, she listened to husbands and wives and children and understood psychology more thoroughly than Sigmund Freud dreamed possible. She listened to that radio and learned English, learned French, and when she was ready she set out to the north.

By that time, her mind was more than one tree. It was a forest. She had heard more about the flying American, heard rumors of a boy who could make things explode and it was all making sense. She set out to find him and when she did she understood how people's minds made their powers. She broke her self-imposed silence at last, picking carefully among the Vietcong and NVA personnel. She spoke to those she could enthrall, those she knew would, if they received the strange contagion, develop powers to serve her purposes. By the time she came into the presence of General Giap, she had no more power to release into others, and she could apply her perfect theory of mind with impunity.

Nguyet Cam would become essential to the North Vietnamese war effort, but always in the shadows, on the sidelines, operating through her perfect and magnificent proxies. For them was the glory, the honor and respect and her? Just a figure in the background, writing catchy patriotic ditties. In time she would play a unified Vietnam like the strings of a moon lute, her influence would draw in Cambodia and Laos as well, more instruments for her orchestra, though few of her subjects would know her name, guess her influence, or catch a sense of the symphony in which they were but single notes. Nguyet Cam would implement the policies known as “Progressive Harmony” in her countries and make things strange and fearsome and beautiful.

For Nguyet felt that the odds of mankind being alone in the cosmos were negligible. She was also certain that when humanity encountered its cosmic neighbors, the differences in synaptic structure and epistemological perspective would allow for no common ground. There would be no negotiation, not even understanding. There could only be the lowest common denominator: Total war.

Nguyet, for all her suffering and anger, still loved humankind. She was not willing to let humanity fall, and if the process of making it strong enough to triumph was a painful one, she could shunt that pain aside. It would be only a leaf.

Millions would have to die, as notes fade to silence, but it would forge a new humanity—a race unhindered by sentiment or cruelty or mercy or regret. A humanity curious and brave and utterly, utterly practical. A humankind like herself.

Yet, deep inside the forest of her mind, one leaf is still that frightened 15-year-old girl from the village of My Lai.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes

Personality: Analytical, curious, calm, measured and usually quite relaxed. People who are uncomfortable in her presence are so because she has something to gain by disquieting them. More often one leaves her presence with a mildly favorable opinion, quickly forgotten unless she wants to leave a lasting impression.

She’s a passionate and enthusiastic lover. She tends to change partners every few years, usually

after subtly convincing them they’re tired of her. She considers her sensual self an important part of her identity, but she’s not going to let it eclipse her plans or ambitions. If she decides it’s unwise to be attracted to someone, she stops being attracted—poof.

Loyalties: Vietnam (4), Progressive Harmony (8), The Survival Of Humanity (15)

Passions: Absolute Control (11), A Long, Serious Screw (2)

Power Suite

Hypermind 10HD (80 Points): Hers is an icy, analytical and utterly controlling intellect.

Hypercharm 10d (40 Points): This is less a factor of innate charm than an application of her “perfect theory of mind.”

Hypercommand 10d (40 Points): As with the personable persuasiveness, her ability to be terrifying or inspiring or utterly self-controlled is a result of total self-knowledge and a broad-scope understanding of the human psyche.

Gadgeteering 10d (100 Points): Her idiosyncratic and autodidactic approach to mechanical and electrical (and, eventually, nuclear) engineering is decades ahead of the rest of the world. While her machines push the envelope, they are not inherently “impossible.” If duplicated closely enough, they can be manufactured.

Attacks (+2), Delayed Effect (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Created foci must be Manufacturable) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect requires a workshop) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for technology) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), Willpower Investment (-1)

Defends (+2), Delayed Effect (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Created foci must be Manufacturable) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect requires a workshop) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for technology) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), Willpower Investment (-1)

Useful (Gadget Creation) (+2), Delayed Effect (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Created foci must be Manufacturable) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect requires a workshop) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for technology) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), Willpower Investment (-1)

Useful (Gadget Disassembly) (+2), Delayed Effect (-1), Endless (+3), If/Then (Requires a workshop) (-1), Touch Only (-2)

The Strike Was Foreseen 10HD (20 Points):

This is essentially the Dodge Skill when it's been armed with Perfect Theory of the Mind and a grasp of physics, biology and probability several orders of magnitude greater than the human norm.

Hyperskill (+1)

You Hold No Secrets 10HD (20 Points): It's a fancy name for what the Empathy Skill evolves into when it's pushed through Perfect Theory of the Mind and stripped of any inclination to suffer in sympathy with those nearby.

Hyperskill (+1)

Profession: Songwriter 9d (9 Points): Her splendidly multifaceted intellect is able (by her calculation) to enjoy music 8.42 times as much as a dedicated music critic with a gifted ear, but despite her gargantuan mind, her beautiful and irresistibly catchy melodies are just a little less marvelous than those with that elusive element called 'soul.'

Hyperskill (+1)

+47 Base Will (141 Points): Did I mention that she's determined? So very determined.

Destiny: As the unacknowledged leader of the Progress Cadre (p. 353), Cam influences strategy and political action in North Vietnam throughout the war, then in the unified Vietnam, and soon in neighboring countries as well.

Cam's political success hinges on her organizational genius, her inexorable persuasive abilities (with those of her primary figurehead, Bao Verong, as described on p. 355), and her command of synergetic science. Her doctrine, Progressive Harmony (p. 343) offers itself as an alternative to Communism and democratic capitalism alike, a practical system for integrating people into cooperative collectives instead of defining identity through exclusion.

But though she shapes policy for successively larger entities—Vietnam, then the Indochinese Economic Gestalt of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and ultimately the Global Philosophical Alliance of Progressive Harmony

nations in Africa, Asia and South America—she is not unopposed in her waltz over human destiny. Amanda Sykes is a perpetual irritant whose inability to grasp Cam's goals is offset by sheer power. More directly, she's opposed by Jason Weeks (p. 195) and Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207), two more towering intellects whose own philosophies lie directly athwart the unstated ultimate goals of Progressive Harmony.

Weeks, an optimist whose belief in chaotic unpredictability might as well be fatalism, resists directing humanity in favor of encouraging what he deems its better impulses. Cam's greatest weapon against him is his own humility.

Bich Thi Ngyuen, her countrywoman, is no laid-back optimist. No, she's a Catholic who sets out to reshape Communism into an organ of religious politics. Unlike Weeks, she's willing and able to shove people and philosophies into unconsidered new directions. But like Weeks and unlike Cam, Bich Thi has moral limits. Bich Thi follows the ten commandments. Cam follows no commandment beyond "Humanity must prevail."

Surprisingly, to those of normal intellect, Cam is able to reach agreements with both her major opponents, despite their political and synergetic sniping at one another. After all, each of them agrees on the value of humanity, even if they all have different ideas of the greatest good for it and, indeed, what 'humanity' even is. But they agree on the value of intellect and the one project that unites them is New Rational Language or "Nuryarya." Equipped with a language that can make any mind more efficient, Cam's Progressive Harmony nations are able to withstand numerous challenges, uprisings and disasters, even as the Progress Cadre defect, die or get flung into the depths of space.

Cam remains, through it all, aging naturally into a raisin-faced woman of 46 by 1999. (That's about the point that she directs her mind towards geriatric medicine.) Cam conducts her planetary orchestra, with its death-scream chorales counterpointing cries of triumph and relief. But at the millennium's turn, she finds herself confronting her greatest challenges. One is a vision from a distant galaxy, a glimpse at something so horrible that two of her closest aides kill themselves over it. The other is the risk of a world without Amanda Sykes, or without dark energy.

General Andrew Colt, the Perfect Strategist

Career: Soldier

History: Andrew Colt went straight up the ladder. From a military family, he attended West Point, got his first commission midway through World War II, served with distinction in Korea, and was coordinating recruiting efforts stateside as a two-star General when Sergeant Marshall came forward with “something he really needed to see.”

General Colt saw Amanda Sykes tear apart a Jeep with her bare hands, fly unaided and, when he asked if she could restrain people at a distance, she responded by paralyzing him.

The visions started soon after that, but at first he refused to accept them. The voices were next and they alarmed him, but when he heard about Sét and learned that Amanda’s energies might be contagious, he figured it out.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes

Personality: General Colt is a third generation Army brat. Formality is normality to him. In his personal life he is a soft-spoken, gentle and invariably polite man. His innate caution and patience put him at odds with some of the more excitable officers and soldiers, but nobody calls him a fool.

Outside of work, General Colt enjoys the simple pleasures—fishing, hiking, canoeing and nature photography, often with his wife and son. At work, he’s a somber and patient patriarch.

Loyalties: The USA (4)

Passions: His Family (4)

Power Suite

Perceive (Other Places) 10d (90 Points):

General Colt has always preferred to act moderately with excellent information than to fling overwhelming force at an incompletely-understood tactical problem. Broad range clairvoyance was his tactical dream.

With its range boost, General Colt can place a psychic perceptual probe anywhere on Earth or out to the radius of the moon’s orbit. He can

clearly see and hear everything in a 40 yard radius of the probe.

Useful (+2), Booster (Range) (+7)

Telepathy 8d+2HD (348 Points): The only thing better than knowing where the enemy is, is knowing where the enemy plans to go. Or, perhaps, being able to cripple them with agonizing psychic static before they get there. As with his clairvoyance, General Colt can contact any mind on Earth or between Earth and the moon’s orbit. He can also broadcast (or receive from) everyone in a 40 yard radius of his attention’s focus.

When he attacks psychically, he strikes directly at the autonomic nervous system. Depending on circumstances, this can take the form of phantom pains in a limb, muscle spasms, vomiting, cardiac arrest, sudden vascular constriction, histamine overload or simple lung paralysis. It can, however, be shaken off with a Stability roll.

Attacks (+2), Booster (Range) (+7), Non-Physical (+2)

Defends (+2), Booster (Range) (+7)

Useful (+2), Booster (Range) (+7)

+4 Base Will (12 Points): He started out as a strong-willed man. Then he went to war. Then he became a superhero.

Destiny: If anyone’s equipped to fight a war using telepathy and clairvoyance without going mad or becoming utterly isolated from humanity, it’s Andrew Colt. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suggest that no one can fight a war with telepathy unless he’s a monster, a madman or completely disconnected from empathy.

Colt knew the horrors of war, but it’s one thing to see a man die—see horrors, up close, see the fire on a man’s legs flicker when he pisses himself burning to death—but it’s another to read that man’s dying thoughts, feel the ghosts of his fading sensations. It’s different, killing a man with your mind, feeling what he feels as you do.

For years, Colt holds it together. He finds missing people, guides troops, gathers invaluable intel and, when needed, performs psychic assassinations. But it costs him. It starts with drinking, and he always enjoyed a beer and a shot now and again,

Non-Physical: A Quick Reminder

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“[Y]ou must define some reasonably common factor that can protect against your attack but would not protect against a physical choice.” That’s from Wild Talents. Therefore, if you see an attack that has an unusual way to resist it, check its Flaws and Extras. If you don’t see If/Then, it probably has Non-Physical and needed a limit.
.....

but it grows to many beers, many shots, and no enjoyment. More, he starts withdrawing from his family and even his own body. By 1977, Colt spends most of some days inert, his mind wandering the world and searching others' minds. Whatever he's seeking, he never finds it.

Aid comes from an unexpected source. Ngoc Vo (p. 186), his Tier-mate, power sister and onetime enemy, contacts him during this depression. Of all the billions on Earth, she's the one who understands the burdens of telepathy, and she shares her sympathy.

His growing isolation doesn't interfere with his work—or at least, not to the point that the high commanders are willing to throw aside a Tier Two—but his marriage sickens and, in 1980, his wife divorces him.

After that, even his commanders can't deny his problems. What had been a decline becomes a plummet, with his powers failing him as his brain succumbs to greater depths of alcoholism. The Army tries to save him, his subordinates and commanders alike do what they can, but they can never make him want to be saved. Besides, alcoholism is a hard habit to break when, at any moment of weakness, a telepath can simply hitch a ride on the nearest drunkard's buzz.

In 1983, Colt is utterly debilitated when his nation needs him most. When he realizes the consequences of his failure, he kills himself.

Lyndon Baines Johnson, President

Career: Politician

History: LBJ was born in Texas in 1908 and worked as a school teacher before entering politics. In 1937 he got elected to Congress as a New Deal Democrat. Notorious for a dirty (and failed) Senate run in 1941, he joined the military during World War II.

Though he requested combat duty, he was valued more as a political observer in the Pacific Theater. He has the distinction of receiving, quite possibly, the least-merited Silver Star in the history of US combat. Despite that, his reports on conditions at the front and his ruthless taste for streamlining bureaucracy had a powerful positive effect on the war on Japan.

After the war he cheated his way to a Democratic nomination for Senate, which he won in 1948, quickly becoming a party leader. He was whip from 1951 to 1953 and Senate Majority Leader during the passage of the 1957 Civil Rights Act.

During his Senate tenure he became notorious for "The Treatment"—a sort of high-pressure persuasion tactic that involved speed, intensity and a stunningly broad gamut of emotional expression crammed into a short span of time. Already his powers of persuasion were remarkable at a personal level, something that would be multiplied many times after exposure to Amanda Sykes.

He became John F. Kennedy's Vice President in 1960, despite the disdain of many of Kennedy's Ivy League advisors. (Reputedly, Robert Kennedy called him "Uncle Cornpone" behind his back.) When JFK was assassinated in 1963, LBJ served out the rest of Kennedy's term before crushing Barry Goldwater in the '64 election and pushing an ambitious civil rights agenda. He was also a firm believer in the Domino Theory and, consequently, drastically deepened the US involvement in Vietnam. In 1967 he put Thurgood Marshall on the Supreme Court and in 1968 he met Amanda Sykes.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes

Personality: Forceful but friendly, Johnson firmly believes that he's on the side of the angels, which makes it OK for him to work all the angles.

Loyalties: The United States (18), The Democratic Party (18)

Passions: His Personal Authority (20), Fairness and Justice (7)

Power Suite

Hypercharm 10HD (80 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Hypercommand 10HD (80 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Hyperempathy 1d+9HD (19 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

Andrew Colt's Degradation

By 1975 or thereabouts, his Loyalty to the USA has dropped to 4, his Passion for his family is down to 4, and a Passion for Alcohol has emerged at 2. By 1983, that's shifted to USA (3), Family (3), Alcohol (4).

.....

Hyperstats and Television

Fortunately for all free thinkers, Hypercharm and Hypercommand don't work over TV. Part of it may be that the influence vectors—tiny gestures and changes of vocal pitch—are too subtle for broadcast or recording. There's also an element of audience response: When LBJ enralls a crowd, he's reading the reactions of everyone in it and calculating how every person there is affecting every other person there (though, of course, all this calculation is entirely subconscious). The speech uses everyone present as a tool to help mold everyone else present, and that immediacy doesn't work on people watching on a tiny screen behind closed doors.

.....

Untouchable 10HD (100 Points): This works just like regular Heavy Armor, except for its If/Then Flaw. Essentially, whenever anyone tries to directly and intentionally harm LBJ, they can't do it or pull their punch or subconsciously aim wrong. It won't protect him from unaimed carnage or fire or, say, a time bomb.

It can also be overcome by Willpower, but it takes a lot. Spending 9 Willpower permits a single attack, as does spending a point of Base Will. The president can also be injured if an attack's damage exceeds his armor: In that case, it's simply a glancing blow (doing damage minus 10) instead of a crushing one.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), If/Then (Only for intentional attacks) (-1)

+57 Base Will (171 Points)

Destiny: With perception of the war changing from “doomed morass” to “setting for a superhuman American warrior,” Johnson gets nominated for a second term, and his developing powers of inhuman charisma ensure his victory.

Before his re-election he tries to use his abilities to get the Soviets out of Czechoslovakia and to resolve the Vietnam conflict, but in each case the foreign leaders' reluctance to meet him face-to-face impedes his efforts. As Vietnamese metahumans attack the American mainland, opposition to the war changes tone and Johnson calls a halt to bombing right before the election.

After starting his third term (legal because he served less than half of JFK's term) Johnson begins a speaking tour to shore up his flagging support and handily survives an encounter with an assassin. Sirhan Sirhan's attempt on the President's life is covered up so that Johnson doesn't have to explain how he persuaded his attacker to commit suicide instead of homicide.

But even before the public starts to suspect Johnson's mind control abilities, other metahumans develop concerns, and in November of 1969 five of them come together to disrupt a meeting of the world's leaders. While nominally a general peace summit, its real purposes was to draft a comprehensive plan for dealing with dark energy and metahumanity. Rather than let that happen, Jason Weeks (p. 195) persuades The

Dream (p. 229), James Closterman (p. 235), Jack Grimes (p. 214) and Deionne Bright (p. 192) to disrupt the proceedings.

LBJ's growing control over the US government begins to crack when Howard March (p. 225) tries to kill him in 1970. By that point, Johnson has heavily conditioned Boris Mizurski (p. 217) and Henry Dowd (p. 206) to protect him and obey without question. While March fails to kill the President, he does put a few cracks in Mizurski's mental cage.

Meanwhile, Vietnam continues to escalate. Both countries develop metahumans so rapidly that even hyperbrains like Nguyet Cam (p. 164) and Brenda Harkness (p. 206) can't predict the course of battles. Meanwhile, Vietnamese attacks on American soil drive some people out of the peace movement while driving others into it. As the anti-war movement gains steam and hysteria, Johnson increasingly taps individual metahumans to deal with it. One of his aides, his own power progeny Midge O'Hara, faces off with a metahuman protester at Kent State, with bloody results. Both dark energy users perish, taking three other protesters with them. The National Guard wounds six more restoring order.

Later that year, Johnson personally disperses a huge anti-war crowd in Washington. Those watching on TV find it difficult to believe he wasn't using mind control, despite his denials. Only two months later, the US Congress (after having their minds freed by Abbie Hoffman, p. 58) passes the Federal Cognitive Sovereignty Act, which forbids the use of dark energy to “alter beliefs, consciousness or intent.” Seeing how badly a veto would reflect on him (and regarding the law as unenforceable), Johnson signs it.

Another clash between Mizurski and Howard March completely snaps Mizurski out of Johnson's spell. When Mizurski tells the papers that the President had him brainwashed, the accusations that Johnson's a ‘puppeteer’ start to move from the lunatic fringe towards the mainstream. In the face of their suspicions, Johnson stops pushing for a constitutional amendment permitting him another term.

While giving up another term in the White House is a bitter pill for Johnson to swallow, it isn't his

worst shock of 1972. That happens a few months later when a Vietnamese metahuman kills his wife.

In response, Johnson requests Congressional approval for the use of nuclear force against Vietnam if their attacks on the US continue. This “Territorial Integrity Act” alarms and angers the Soviets, earns stern language from the United Nations, and is defeated in the Senate after Bao Verong (p. 355) arrests the killer An Toán Do (p. 353) and puts him on trial. Do is executed the day after Richard Nixon wins the November 1972 presidential election.

After his retirement from the White House, Johnson gets investigated for his use of mind control, a Justice Department probe labeled “Mindcrime” in the press. Ultimately, no charges are filed.

In 1973, acting as an “interested private citizen,” Johnson attempts to convince Jack Grimes to side with the US against OPEC, but since OPEC has a hyper-persuader of its own, all he does is give Grimes a minor nervous breakdown. After that, Johnson helps negotiate a peaceful solution to the Mayaguez crisis in 1975 and does a lot of behind-the-scenes work for the Democrat party before being killed at a fund raiser in 1976. A bomb wired to go off in the proximity of dark energy blows up under his chair and no piece of him is ever recovered.

Sergeant Christopher Marshall, the Infinite Recruiter

Career: Soldier

History: Christopher Marshall was kind of a lazy kid. He graduated high school with decent grades but no real plans and not much ambition, so he joined the army. Honestly? He’d always got by on his charm and looks, but he recognized at some level that his life needed more direction and structure.

The army gave him that in spades. He joined in 1961 and was never stationed farther from the U.S. than Germany. When it was suggested that he might serve Uncle Sam best as a recruiter, he agreed and went back to his Midwest home.

Sergeant Marshall had never fired a weapon in anger and was comfortable with his Army life until a woman came in one day and said, “I want to help win the war, and I can do this.” Then she levitated him out of his chair. Nothing was the same after that.

It wasn’t until three months later that Sergeant Marshall had a dream about calling soldiers and having them rise out of the ground, answering his commands. He awoke to a polite tapping at his window, and screamed.

The first unit of Turf Warriors had arrived.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes

Personality: The sort of cheerful, can-do personality that someone handsome and fairly lucky develops. He’s a little attachment-averse, but you have to pick through a thick veneer of hearty good nature to find that distance.

Loyalties: The USA (1)

Passions: Personal Success (2), His Good Name (1)

Power Suite

Turf Warriors 8d+2HD (144 Points): At his command, the stones themselves will fight. More specifically, man-sized and -shaped entities tear forth from the soil, ready to take up weapons and march. They’re featureless (unless they happen to have grass down their fronts or backs, or large rocks sticking out of them), robotically obedient and interchangeable. They have roughly the training of a soldier fresh out of boot camp, and a grasp of the Uniform Code of Conduct about equal to Sergeant Marshall himself.

Turf Warriors are Wild Talents-style minions. He creates them in batches of ten, and they are rated at “expert.” If pulled up on a beach, they look sandy. If pulled up in a forest, they have roots and twigs in them. But wherever they’re created, they have the same stats—expert minion.

Useful (Create Minions) (+2), Permanent (+4)

Useful (Minions are Obedient) (+2), Permanent (+4)

Immune (Human Weakness) 2HD (12 Points): The Turf Warriors cannot be smothered,

The Hole in the Second Tier

Amanda has the capacity to create ten progeny, but only nine are listed. The gap is left for individual GMs and play groups to use as needed. If you want a group where all the PCs are (say) Tier Three descendants of the same Tier Two Kansas patriarch who somehow got exposed in Amanda’s early days, the gap lets you do that. If you want a high power adversary, you can simply stat up a Tier Two soldier between Marshall and Colt who had to be persuaded and who then went mad with power. Or if you want to keep things as they are but plug the gap, it’s not hard to imagine a fifth Vietnamese exposure who either rocketed into space to explore new worlds (and who is, therefore, always available to return), or who got shot down by the Air Force. Or you could just leave the hole as a gaping mystery.



strangled, poisoned, psychologically manipulated or given a dose of the clap.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Variable Effect (+4), Attached to Turf Warriors (-2), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for Immunities) (-1), Self Only (-3)

Metal Officers 2HD (96 Points): Fungible, interchangeable Turf Warriors are good, but it's better to have an officer to give them orders—something a little more intelligent and goal-oriented. Whether the Metal Officers have free will is entirely debatable, but each has its own volition. He creates these one at a time and they all look different. (This is a variant on the “Sidekick” power from Wild Talents.) Some are iron, steel, copper—whatever metal is most common where he summons them.

Attacks (+2), Mass Capacity (+2), Permanent (+4)

Defends (+2), Mass Capacity (+2), Permanent (+4)

Useful (+2), Mass Capacity (+2), Permanent (+4)

Light Armor 5HD (10 Points): Being made of metal, the officers are tough.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Attached to Metal Officers (-2), Endless (+3)

Heavy Armor 5HD (40 Points): Quite tough.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Attached to Metal Officers (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3)

Extra Tough 5HD (30 Points): The Turf Warriors are just dirt and fall apart pretty easily. The officers take more punishment—5 Wound Boxes per location.

Useful (+2), Attached to Metal Officers (-2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3)

Immune (Human Weakness) 2HD (12 Points): Same deal as the Warriors.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Variable Effect (+4), Attached to Metal Officers (-2), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for Immunities) (-1), Self Only (-3)

Hyperskills 20d (20 Points): The officers have Skills. Specifically, they have 2d in Athletics, Brawling, Endurance, Dodge and Perception. They have 3d in Drive (Jeep) and Stealth, and 4d Firearms.

Hyperskills (+1) Attached to Metal Officers (-2)

Hyperbody 8d+1WD (24 Points): They're strong, but more importantly, controlled.

Hyperstat (+4) Attached to Metal Officers (-2)

Hypercoordination 6d+1WD (20 Points): Did I mention controlled? They're very precise.

Hyperstat (+4) Attached to Metal Offices (-2)

Control (Earth and Stone) 7d (42 Points):

Eventually, the Sergeant discovers that by touching stone or soil he could control it, causing up to 6.4 tons of matter to surge up as a barrier, form temporary structures, and whomp people.

Attacks (+2)

Defends (+2)

Useful (+2)

Destiny: Marshall goes to 'Nam soon after showing Colt (see p. 168) what he can do. Amanda herself transports him there, where he spends most of early June in 1968 building forces as rapidly as he can. Hampered by secrecy, he nevertheless creates 300,000 troops in ten days, along with 3,000 metal officers.

The Turf Army, guided by Colt's clairvoyance and supported by telepathic linkage with a second pincer-arm of human forces, is meant to push into North Vietnam and overwhelm their defenses before they know what's happening. Marching tirelessly under the surface of the Gulf of Tonkin while the humans push past Khe Sanh, the plan derails when Monument (p. 183) and Sét (p. 182) attack the human arm. The Americans, despite Colt's far superior information, are out-thought and out-planned by Nguyet Cam (p. 164), backed by her fearsome Progress Cadre. Bringing the turf army out of the water earlier than planned pushes them hard against the NVA, and forces Sét to redirect his blasts against them. The western forces retreat, badly bloodied, while the Turf Warriors scatter, sowing confusion and wreaking havoc. After three days of battle, destruction and confusion, both forces are largely in the same positions. The only difference is, each has a better idea of what the other could do.

Marshall stays on the move for the next three years, rushed around the country to bolster forces as needed. Identified as a high-value target by the NVA, he narrowly escapes no fewer than five assassination attempts in that time. The last attempt, in 1970, wounds him so badly that he's sent back to the US, where his abilities can be used uninterrupted, with his troops being sent overseas in cargo holds (since they didn't require any human amenities). As he recuperates, he meets a girl and the age-old love story plays itself out bittersweetly, in between his mining for fighters.

Marshall maintains the relationship even when he's redeployed in March, 1971, to take part in "Operation Bulldozer"—a major push, harnessing the best dark-energy troops the US can get, against an increasing Vietnamese presence in Laos. Marshall's there for the "Laotian Götterdammerung" (p. 58), when his career effectively ends. An Toán Do (p. 353) contacts Marshall and makes it perfectly clear that he knows all about the girl and will not hesitate to kill her from afar unless Marshall withdraws. Unwilling to risk her life, Marshall obeys.

His absolute refusal to use his powers at Colt's command leads to his arrest and, eventually, court martial. Only testimony on his behalf from Amanda Sykes (p. 159) and General Colt keep

him out of a military prison. He gets an other-than-honorable discharge and is sent back to the US.

Several of his metal officers follow him. Insisting that their loyalty is to him personally and not the army (while others he created insisted that his politics were irrelevant to their own), they are charged, convicted and locked up for dereliction of duty by a court system with no precedent for dealing with non-human intelligences.

Though courted by the peace movement, Marshall wants nothing more than to be left alone. Ironically, the girl he loves rejects him after his 'cowardice in the face of the enemy.' It isn't until Amanda asks for his help with disaster relief in 1974 that he comes out of his self-imposed exile in Montana. For the rest of his life until his death in 1989 (at the hands of an unknown assailant) he's extremely cautious about creating Turf Warriors but, since they stick around until destroyed, he dies with a disaster-relief workforce of close to 3,000. He's also accompanied by three metal officers, who return to his service after the Supreme Court rules in 1977 that they cannot be held in a military jail. After his death, the Turf Warriors turn to the officers for leadership, and they continue to help with disaster relief. It's what their maker would have wanted.

Abraham Sykes, Husband and Healer

Career: Laborer

History: Born on a family farm, Abe had to grow up fast when both his parents were killed in a car wreck two months before he graduated with an Agriculture degree. His three younger brothers and two sisters ran the farm until he could graduate, and then he took over. It was basically the family's plan all along, just on an accelerated schedule.

There were some uneasy years as his younger brothers, still living on the farm in his custody, tried to work out whether he was supposed to be a peer or a parent, but eventually they left (Marines, college and a job in Alaska, respectively) and he got by, selling part of his land and hiring hands to work the remainder. He was content, if lonely, until he met Amanda Sykes

at a bowling alley when she dropped a ball on his foot and fractured three of his tarsal bones. She felt awful, visited him in the hospital and, in time, married him. They were happy, though their politics were a little different, until a day in 1967 when she was bringing him a picnic lunch.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes

Personality: Abe is a gentle, patient and considerate soul. He bears no ill will towards any creed, race or color, and shares with his wife a real desire to do what he can to ease the pains of the world. Many who see only the patient surface (and the spectacular healing powers) regard him as a living saint. They've never seen the ease with which he can draw a knife across a pig's throat or wring a chicken's neck. But Abe is a farmer, and his ties to both life and death are simple and direct. He does what he needs to without dithering or regret.

Loyalties: The USA (1)

Passions: Mercy and Kindness (6), His Family (6)

Power Suite

Molecular Restoration 5d+5HD (255

Points): Abe can hold things together. He can keep molecules from moving out of their current configuration, often in the face of tremendous forces. He can, for example, apply his power to a plasterboard wall and enable it to resist machine gun fire. Or he can apply it to paper cup in a bonfire and keep the cup from burning. That's the defensive application.

He can also 'rewind' objects to undo the effects of time and force upon them. This is often used to heal people—he turns back the clock to before that shrapnel took your arm off and ta da—it's restored. He can do the same for a wrecked building, or a rusted-out car. He cannot bring the dead back to life, though some suspect this is less a limit on his power than a limit imposed by his subconscious, the outcome of his religious upbringing.

It takes a long time for it to occur to anyone (other than Abe himself) that his power can not only make the aged young, it can take anyone and regress them back through childhood and infancy, back into fetuses or blastocysts, unable

to survive outside the womb. The first time he "young someone away," it's a shock.

It should be noted that while Abe's power restores bodies and buildings to the same patterns on a molecular level, the degree of detail is not perfect. This doesn't matter for fixing a car or reattaching a limb, but if he turns your brain backwards you lose memories, so when he makes people younger he often leaves the brain aged.

This talent can affect up to 1,600 pounds at a range of 320 yards.

Attacks (+2), Disintegrates (+2), Non-Physical (+2), Base Will Cost (-4), If/Then (No effect if it does not instantly kill the target) (-1)

Defends (+2), Interference (+3), Range Capacity (+2)

Useful (Repairs) (+2), Interference (+3), Mass Capacity (+2)

Useful (Heal Illness) (+2)

Corporeal Refinement 6d+5HD+1WD (120

Points): Abe does not publicize this power. He doesn't publicize any of his powers, but this one he plays particularly close to the vest. He knows he'd never get a moment's peace if people knew he could improve on nature. Not that he gets much peace once they realize he can "cure" old age.

With Molecular Restoration he can take someone back to their peak, but with Corporeal Refinement, he can make them better than they ever were. He can realize their physical potential.

Here's how it works. He spends Willpower for the dice he's going to throw and if he succeeds, the target permanently gains a point in one Stat. If the 'patient' was someone who was always exploiting their own strengths or concentrating on what came easily, the point goes to their lowest Stat. If it's used on someone who was always compensating for weakness, it goes to their highest Stat. However it works, it can never be used on someone more than once.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4)

Rectoperception 5d+5HD (30 Points):

Because he can feel how molecules were previously arranged, he can 'look' (though it's not exactly sight) into the past and know what happened to objects in the area where he is. It's

Did You Raise the Dead?

In the writeup for Abe Sykes, it suggests that he could return the dead to life, he just doesn't. But many of the world's bereaved aren't nearly so fastidious.

The question of returning from the grave is left for individual GMs to manage, but with a caveat that you should make up your mind before a PC wants to come back. You can play it with easy restoration and the ghastly overpopulation that's sure to ensue, or you can have it be difficult (perhaps requiring a Base Will expenditure) and watch people squirm when they don't really feel like zilching out their Base Will to bring back all those collateral damage fatalities. Or you can go the route I did in my playtest, deciding that the trauma of interrupting the process and for-real dying is not an experience the brain was built to withstand. (I think of it as a computer that's only built to be switched on one time.) People came back in my game, but they came back alienated, uneasy, feeling like strangers within their own skin.

like seeing the past, just... not exactly. But it's close enough to psychometry for his purposes, which are often finding people who ran away. He starts at their last location and just chases their past.

The range on this is about 5,000 yards.

Useful (+2)

+15 Base Will (45 Points): Stubbornness is a valuable quality for a farmer.

Destiny: In 1968 the key difference between Abe and his wife is that she trusts the government implicitly and he doesn't. She tells them about her powers and he keeps his mum. (At his request, she mentions nothing about his abilities, though they have a long discussion. He prevails after pointing out that if they know the two parents have powers, the government is certain to investigate the daughter. So perhaps her trust isn't that implicit.)

Because of his reserve and her wholehearted patriotism, she gets rushed off to DC and then Vietnam while he's left behind, out of the loop, denied admittance. This is not a comfortable position for a conservative man in 1968, but Abe takes out his frustrations productively—by saving lives and, in the process, creating some of the most noteworthy Tier Three metahumans in history.

Soon, just as Amanda feels an obligation to use her powers in war, Abe feels a similar obligation to ease the suffering of natural disasters. In consultation with his power-progeny Jason Weeks (p. 195), Abe starts acting on a global stage, reconstructing fallen buildings, healing wounds, and delaying epidemics. He stays out of wars, though. He wants to be helpful, not ideological.

After a kidnap attempt on his daughter, he begins to take an interest in unraveling that particular crime as well, especially when political figures are taken. Abe has a deep-seated dislike for people who try to wield disproportionate influence through showy bad behavior. It's this same impulse that leads him to use his powers on American victims of ideological attack as diverse as George Wallace and Larry Flynt.

The activities of husband and wife collide in 1970, when Abe insists on going to Vietnam to

rebuild after the October 30 monsoon. Hoping to move around subtly and act under the radar, he is rapidly identified, kidnapped and brainwashed by Nguyet Cam (p. 164). Under her influence, Abe fervently preaches the virtues of Progressive Harmony and heals a lot of Vietcong, right up to the point that a number of his power-children are able to snatch him, get him to Hawaii, and turn him over to Jason Weeks for mental restructuring.

Despite his renunciation of Cam and Progressive Harmony, Abe after the kidnap is not exactly the same man he was before. He's more taciturn and withdrawn, and when Amanda tries to keep him out of foreign nations for his own protection, he starts shutting her out too. It comes to a head on Christmas in 1971, after which he's obligated to reconstruct their ruined house. (His daughter exploded.) After that, things are fine for a while, but never as good as they were before he got taken.

Abe and Amanda work together in some relief efforts, but they find their beliefs drifting apart. Abe wants to repair when things go wrong. More and more, Amanda wants to force things to go right. This schism is magnified by problems with an invulnerable daughter who keeps running away and persistent questions about Amanda's role in the mysterious destruction of My Lai village. They deal with the Amy problem by sending her to live with cousins under an assumed name, taking her out of Amanda's limelight. That turns out to be another mistake, leading to Amy running away again, ultimately ending up in Atlantis just in time to see her close friend Tina Shaw (one of Abe's power children, p. 205) get murdered.

Amy's pursuit of vengeance leads her all around the western hemisphere, but despite Abe's best efforts, he's unable to find her or convince her to come home. With his marriage under strain, Abe falls back on the one thing he's good at: Fixing things after disasters. His shifting group of metahuman volunteers eventually starts calling itself "International Disaster/Emergency Assistance" or "ID/EA." His tireless work with ID/EA helps offset it when his daughter is arrested on suspicion of murder and gets broken out of jail by Shavians—inhuman entities created by the late Tina Shaw.

In 1976, for reasons never publicized, Amanda files for divorce.

Throwing himself into his work, Abe finds that ID/EA complicates his desire to remain aloof from politics. Some members, such as Cynthia Carls (p. 214) are regarded with mistrust by the world's nations, while others like Henry Dowd (p. 206) are seen as tools of America's imperialist dreams. The suspicion of some members spreads to the entire group, precipitating demonstrations and even violence in some countries. When Dowd dies in Cambodia in 1979, propping up an anti-Progressive Harmony rebellion, the political backlash is too much. ID/EA dissolves.

Abe's not content to let a good thing go, though. In 1980, he quietly begins recruiting for "New ID/EA," a reorganized metahuman relief group. Instead of a static membership traveling all over the world, he organizes volunteers into a communication tree. When emergencies occur, local volunteers report it to a central organizing group, overseen by Abe and by Jason Weeks. Communication and transport are handled by Ngoc Vo (p. 186), who tries to bring one or two metahumans whose powers are perfect fits instead of a big showy gang.

But before New ID/EA can really get organized, Abe goes off on his own to Algeria, where he's accused of being an American spy, escapes, gets captured by muslim metahumans and, eventually, saved through the mediation of Å (p. 238). Though Å demurs joining New ID/EA as a traveler, he does promise to call for help if needed and (more importantly) to use his followers as an organ for gathering news of mass disasters that the western media (or Africa's corrupt governments) suppress or ignore.

New ID/EA functions adequately, right up until 1983. Then the global need is too much for New ID/EA to manage. Every plea for aid goes unanswered, as every member is too busy dealing with the tragedies local to them.

The US response to 1983's "Metapocalypse" (see p. 95) finally drives Abe out of his carefully crafted position of neutrality. Disgusted by what his country is doing and desperate to keep the global rage and hatred from deepening, Abe makes public visits to Jerusalem and Moscow

to repair the wreckage of America's one-time enemies. This is not popular with the American public, nor with some metahumans, including the unidentified psychic who blasts Abe into catatonia for a week before Abe can reach the Holy City.

Eventually, however, things calm down. Abe bases himself in Toronto and New ID/EA continues its work. The barriers between him and his ex-wife deepen as she becomes more and more politically direct, attempting to dictate peace in the Middle East. When she begins fixing Jewish and Christian sites, but not Muslim mosques, Abe fills in, apologizing all the while.

In the end, New ID/EA's members persuade Abe to revise his policy against interfering in wars. He still tries to be neutral, simply sending New ID/EA personnel to conflicts to force combatants apart peacefully and treat both sides, but this idealism is hard to implement in the ugly practicalities of a 20th century war.

But what politics divides, family unites. Abe and Amanda get together to help plan their daughter's 1993 Atlantean wedding, and though it ends in violence (as a gang of meta-criminals with scores to settle with all the Sykes crash the ceremony) it eases Abe's bitterness towards Amanda and shifts it into concern at her increasing alienation from normalcy.

He tries to talk her out of it, but by 1996 her attitude is increasingly messianic and she simply teleports him away (to Tokyo) when he gets on her nerves. Soon after she declares herself a goddess incarnate, fights a huge battle in San Francisco Bay, and gets knocked comatose.

While she's in a coma, Abe reluctantly makes common cause with the Church of the Emerald Virgin, his ex-wife's cult followers. With their money, he launches lawsuits to get her removed from protective custody. Those suits are, ultimately, fruitless, but he does succeed in gaining access to her. When she awakens, Abe uses his powers to regress her, physically and mentally, back to her 1971 self.

To the new Amanda, it's as if decades have passed in the blink of an eye. Shocked at what has happened to herself, her planet and her

ID/EA's Roster

In the mid 1970s, the original ID/EA is built around the core of Cynthia Carls, Ngoc Vo, Boris Mizurski and Steelsuit Dowd. Jason Weeks often provides warnings, organization and advice, while Lin Wen and The Dream also contribute on an ad-hoc basis.

When Abe forms New ID/EA, the membership is much looser and broader, but members who do get tapped for missions include Ngoc Vo again, James Closterman, and Saichin "The Physicist" Rahim. Jason Weeks begins contributing again in 1985. After the death of Ngoc Vo, Kevin Weist (p. 274) gets hired to provide teleportation services, but he quits in the summer of 1988.

marriage, Amanda reverses her interventionist philosophy dramatically. Declaring her intention to leave the planet, she asks Abe to come with her. He says no.

After she leaves, Abe throws himself back into relief efforts, even asking some members of New ID/EA to go full time, but no one else is really interested. Just as he's starting to wonder what it's all about, he gets an invitation from Amy to come spend some time with her, her husband, and their new daughter Andrea.

Amy Sykes, Daughter and Detonator

Career: Layabout

History: Amy was a normal young Kansas girl until the day her mommy blew up.

She remembers it more clearly than her parents. Mama was up ahead carrying a picnic basket and a pie hot from the oven. Dad saw them coming and stopped the tractor. Moving between the stems and roots at her feet, Amy spied the biggest, shiniest black beetle she'd ever seen. She knelt down to take a close look and the world shook and changed.

The sound was sudden and painful and it went on and on, a shriek that turned into a roar that, only later, she recognized as the ocean-surf noise of deafness. She looked up and felt her own scream, the scream she couldn't hear. Her mother was coming apart.

Green fire and something black that sucked in the noontime Kansas light, and her mother was in the middle of it, torn apart, dissolving... and then her dad got close and somehow mom was back together.

A second later she heard birds and realized she was fine, she could hear and everything was back to normal. Except that her mother was sitting down in the field and every blade and stem and stalk was blown to the ground, all radiating out from the central point where her mother was stunned. Except that the headlights and windshield on the tractor were shattered, until Abe looked at them and said, "No, no!" in a tone of despair... and the shards flew back into place and became seamless.

She didn't want to believe it, but nothing was back to normal. Her father could repair windows with a glance, her mother could fly, the impossible was becoming commonplace and none of them knew what to do about it.

Then came the Tet Offensive, about four months after The Event (as the Sykes family came to call it) and her mother said she had to go. Her mother went away with soldiers and politicians, and Amy followed Abe to D.C. where they were an afterthought, when anyone thought about them at all. It was confusing and upsetting and she cried a lot, wanting her mom back, but that was the worst of it that first year.

The second year, 1969, was when Jack Grimes (p. 213) and Alphonse "Zipperneck" Russo (p. 210) and some other men hit her dad with a car and tried to drag her off into a van and she said "No!" And then three of them were dead. She'd blown them to pieces, like a mortar round, but she was fine.

She knew she hadn't gotten hurt since The Event, but she hadn't really let herself think about it. After the kidnap attempt, after her father healed himself and got them out of there, she thought about it a lot. He said it looked like she'd exploded, and she figured she had.

She could explode, and nothing could hurt her, and she didn't know what she was supposed to do with herself.

Grimes' kidnapping attempt happened four days after her 13th birthday.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes

Personality: At first, Amy Sykes is a scared and confused American teen, covering up her uncertainty with sarcasm and a snotty, put-upon attitude. But as she gets deeper into her teen years, Amy becomes more confident and less abrasive. She's never the most empathetic person. With little pain in her life after 1968, it's hard for her to identify with the fears of the fragile everyday person. But she's not selfish, she's not cruel and she's not greedy. She wants to be good, just like her parents.

Loyalties: Sykes Family (2)

Passions: Stopping Bullies (2)



Power Suite

Regeneration 9HD (90 Points): This is standard to Wild Talents. When she gets injured, Amy heals. Fast. As long as she has a single Wound Box free of Killing Damage in both her torso and her head, she can recover from any injury in one round.

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3)

Heavy Armor 2HD (24 Points): Her body, independent of other factors, has been made remarkably hard to injure. Her skin feels normal, but knives won't cut it. You know: Ordinary Wild Talents Heavy Armor.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3)

Invulnerability 6HD (240 Points): Aside from her body's physical resistance to damage, she's protected by a potent infusion of dark energy. It keeps her the same. To a limited extent, it provides her needs—she can't be smothered or starved and she can't die of thirst. While she matures, past a certain point she does not age. This is as described in Wild Talents.

Defends (HAR) (+2), Interference (+3), Permanent (+4)

Defends (LAR) (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Hardened Defense (+2), Permanent (+4)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

The Big Boom 9d (90 points): Initially, this went off only when she was panicky and threatened, but she quickly learned to control it. With no Range, it's always focused on her, but it has the Mass quality, so it produces knockback. It does Width in Shock and Killing to every location on everything within 40 yards, ignoring two points of armor.

Attacks (+2), Engulfs (+2), Penetration 2 (+2), Mass Quality (+0), Radius (+6), Full Power Only (-1), Obvious (-1)

Miniboom 6d (6 Points): As she refined her control, she was able to subdue and focus her explosions, limiting them to something like a shaped charge originating from her hand (or whatever body part she's touching with). As with the Big Boom, it has no Range but, with Mass, can throw people about.

Attacks (+2), Mass Quality (+0), Touch Only (-2), Penetration 1 (+1)

Destiny: Much as her parents try to keep her out of the family business, they can't stop her from getting sucked in. Against their better judgment, they allow her to accompany her father on a 1969 emergency call to save Jason Weeks (p. 195) from a team of assassins. After that, teenage restlessness and invulnerability combine to drive her away from her parents, running away abortively in 1970 and more successfully in 1974.

In between those flights, she argues with her parents and watches them fight one another. Eventually they send her to live with her cousins

under an assumed name, repeating a year in high school to catch up. Unfortunately, the media finds her, followed shortly by Zipperneck. He's only driven off by Ian Kraus (p. 222), a hidden defender that Amy was completely unaware she had. It's anger that her parents are spying on her, along with a feeling of responsibility for drawing Zipperneck to the area, that leads her to run away again.

It's also around that time that Amy forges a close friendship with Tina Shaw. It's not entirely easy for Amy—as the two grow up, it becomes more and more clear that Tina is going to be skinny and gorgeous while Amy... isn't. But their shared worries and hopes from their superhuman powers mostly trump teen angst and jealousy. Right up to the night in 1974 when anti-Shavian extremists calling themselves "Remember November" attack the Shaw household on Atlantis, killing Tina, her non-powered brother, and wounding both her parents.

Amy then teams up with her former protector, Kraus, to track down and dismember Remember November. They do this with the tacit approval of Andrew Colt (p. 168) who officially denies all knowledge of their operation, while shielding them from psychic discovery and providing Amy with a discarded prototype jetpack that's worthless for anyone who isn't invulnerable.

In time, Amy attacks the Martha's Vineyard home of the mastermind behind Remember November. It turns out the group is funded by Tracy Mayhew, an industrialist in the laser industry and the grandparent of a child slain by the Shavian 'Juniper' in 1971. Mayhew escapes to South America, while the State of Massachusetts issues an arrest warrant for Amy.

Despite Richard Nixon's promise to pardon her if she turns herself in, Amy stays on Mayhew's trail, cornering and killing him in French Guyana in April of 1975. After her mother finds her there and talks to her, Amy agrees to return to the US and stand trial.

Nixon, citing Amy's escalation from property damage to possible murder, decides not to pardon her after all, and she's sentenced to 15 years in an Arizona 'superjail.' She serves three months

The Jetpack

It's loud, it fries your spine and it's blindingly bright. Top speed 160 mph. Good for about an hour of continuous use before it runs out of gas. Any questions?

Useful (+2), Focus (-1), Adaptation (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Durable (+1), Backfires (-2), Obvious (-1), Native Power (+1), Depleted (-1)

before 52 Shavians attack the penitentiary and free her (with seventeen of them dying in the process). She goes underground for two years before emerging in 1977 to fight alongside her mom against Moluccan terrorists in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, their reconciliation is short-lived. After Remember November claims responsibility for a poison gas attack on Atlantis, Amy sets off to punish them again. Amanda wants to work through legal avenues, but decides to let her daughter go rather than try and restrain her. Not long after that, Amy becomes an official Atlantean professional superheroine, to the incredulity of many in the US.

Amy's Growth

As she grows and matures, Amy's confidence improves. By the time she's an Atlantean superheroine, her Command has risen to 4 and her Base Will is up to 10. Her Loyalties are Her Family (3), and Atlantis (5) while her Passion remains unchanged. She also puts some points in the Firearms Skill, obviously.

It's in Atlantis that Amy finally finds her niche. Invulnerable, feisty and capable of blowing up a building if she sets off her big boom enough times, she does a lot of good serving as a combination police officer, fire-fighter and soldier of Atlantis.

After accidentally passing powers to Zipperneck and Grimes, Amy starts carrying a gun and only using her attacking powers on those who display metahuman abilities of their own. In this fashion she controls her lineage to some extent.

She has almost no effect on the world outside the island for years, but the outside world fails to return the favor. With 1983's *Metapocalypse* (p. 95), Atlantis is struck with neutered nuclear missiles and orbital weapons from all sides. While the death toll is surprisingly small, the impact on civil order is tremendous. The fragile social structures of Atlantis simply collapse, and all Amy can do is try to mitigate the damage. She refuses to fall in with any of the warlord factions that eventually arise, staying unaligned and threatening all equally in a frustrating but partially-successful attempt at reducing the violence. She fights anyone who gets out of the control, but she can't stop the escalation of trouble as Atlantis' first citizens like Cynthia Carls (p. 214) and Ngoc Vo (p. 186) die or flee. When the UN arrives in 1986, they are initially suspicious of her, then try to co-opt her and place her under their orders, and finally accept her as an individual power-broker. They work together in a limited fashion, but are unable to turn the tide of violence between the warring factions and the Shavians (p. 374).

The return of Ngoc Vo holds out the promise of a return to political governance, but the 1986 election is disputed and Vo is assassinated soon afterwards. But Vo's death seems to serve as a symbolic wake-up call. The Atlantean factions, weary of fighting, make truces and settle into uneasy stability, trying to rebuild their destroyed homes and businesses.

Amy does what she does best: She endures. In 1988, having spent a decade as Atlantis' most stalwart defender, she's selected by the warring factions as the compromise choice for island leadership until the 1990 election. Her term of leadership is marked by strict law enforcement and a sort of proactive stasis of government agencies. During those years, Atlantis' central authority doesn't do much, but at least there aren't many complaints of sectarian corruption.

A year after gratefully handing over Atlantean power, Amy meets Derrick Atford, an anthropologist doing research on Atlantis' long, strange trip. They hit it off right away during their interviews and Amy makes it her business to get around Derrick's professional ethics. As the island's politics gradually stabilize, the two of them shyly fall in love. At the year's end, Amy hesitantly suggests that if her father were to stabilize his body, she might be able to pass powers on to Derrick. Feeling that there's no way he can continue to have a relationship with Amy if he's just a fragile human, Derrick agrees.

Abe reinforces his body as Amy strikes him with an explosion. He easily survives it and, as predicted, becomes a Tier Three metahuman himself.

Not long after, politics on Atlantis heat up again as Shavians worldwide flock there in hopes of finding a way to reproduce. This spurs international fears of Atlantis and local backlash against the Shavians, leading up to a bill to deny them voting rights on the island. But despite this, Amy and Derrick get engaged and hold a marriage ceremony on Atlantis that turns into a metahuman battle rivaling the Laotian *Götterdämmerung*. Just as Amy is reconciling with her increasingly distant mother, long-time enemies of both strike the wedding and two other locations, trying to lure Amy and Amanda



into vulnerable positions. The attacks are masterminded by Zipperneck and wipe out most of Derrick's immediate family.

In the aftermath, Amy finally seems to run out of resistance. When Atlantis takes away Shavians' votes, she resigns in protest. She and Derrick are on an extended honeymoon in Europe when the next Atlantean election turns into an orgy of Shavian-on-human violence. The UN decides not to get involved, and the world's Progressive Harmony nations (p. 343) move in. The conflict rises and falls throughout the mid-nineties until Amanda Sykes threatens to sink the island.

This is the final straw. The Amy/Amanda relationship was always rocky, and Amy insists that it's not Amanda's place to bring peace through destruction. Amanda, however, seems eerily certain. Amy begins to suspect her mother has lost her mind. When Amanda destroys the island and declares herself a living goddess, Amy considers her suspicions confirmed.

But any plans to act against her Progenitor parent are hamstrung by her own uncertainty, her grief over Atlantis, and—in October of 1997—by her pregnancy.

By March 1998, she's visibly expecting when she travels to San Francisco. There, she pleads with Amanda to give up her delusions of grandeur and get help. Amanda won't hear it. Amy flees before Jason Weeks' attempt to restrain Amanda by force, but regretfully endorses it.

In the aftermath of the battle, Amy gives birth to a girl and names her Andrea. Motherhood can't stand between her and her position in the metahuman community, however. Her past is too powerful, and ultimately the man she created, Zipperneck Russo, makes yet another attempt on her life, in 1999. It's his last as he falls, not to Amy or Derrick, but to the powers of a then-unknown Tier Ten (p. 289).

But Amy's not one to brood on ironies. With her husband and daughter, 1999 finds her still looking for a place in the world where she can shape it for good. That ambition, coupled with the nature of her powers, seem to place her destiny athwart peril for the foreseeable future.

Ky Thientong, “Sét” (“Kee TeeYENtong,” “Sheht”)

Career: Soldier

History: Ky Thientong was 16 years old when he took part in the Tet offensive. He was fed up with the mismanagement and pushiness of the foreign occupiers, and more fed up with the corruption and incompetence of their Christian Vietnamese stooges. His Buddhist family had been humiliated and despoiled because of their beliefs, leaving Ky angry, with the self-righteousness that’s only possible for a teenager who has seen only one side of the fight, but has seen that side painted with blood.

Tet was bad. Sure, they seized a lot of territory. They showed their strength, they showed that nowhere was safe. But it cost them heavily, many Vietcong lives, and Ky Thientong had already been driven back to the Vinh Long countryside when his cadre were tracked and attacked by an American woman who swooped down out of the sky, silent, glowing, masked. Green fire streamed from her hands and rifles exploded in Vietnamese hands. Ky had been sleeping, he was thrown from his bed when their store of grenades went up. He was stunned in the jungle for close to fifteen minutes, and when he came to, it was fearsomely silent. He crept forward and saw her, still glowing, and without a thought in his head he picked up a bayonet from a comrade’s melted body and slowly crept closer to her.

Amanda—he learned her name only much later—she never saw him coming. He raised the knife and struck between her shoulder blades as hard as he could.

She stumbled forward and he struck again and again as she turned, but there was no blood, nothing, and then she raised her hand and he was suspended in midair, spreadeagled, the knife wrenched from his grip and she looked at him.

Her helmet had a mask, it was featureless. Slowly, she rose in the air until she was even with him. Then, without a word, he dropped to the ground and she rocketed off into the sky. Ky could only think that she’d found him unworthy of killing.

The fall, landing on twisted metal, hurt him worse than the initial blast had, and when infection set in he was in bad shape. But the officers got him the best treatment they could, because they were desperate to know what had happened, how the Americans had found them and had wiped out his unit so quickly, so completely, without a single loss.

While he thrashed in the hospital, a horrible white light flung itself out of his chest. It punched a hole in the ceiling, flew away over the horizon and devastated the village from which he’d been driven. That blast killed his first 42 people. They would not be the last.

As the North Vietnamese Army came to understand their terrible new tactical asset, they code-named him “Sét” or “Thunder.” In time, it was a name as fearsome to the Americans as “Amanda” to the Vietnamese.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes

Personality: Ky Thientong is a dour and serious man, aged beyond his years, brittle and truculent in his beliefs. Rarely seeing the havoc his power causes when in use, he is nonetheless fully aware of how devastating it is. He forces himself to believe it is all worth it, that the many deaths are the cost of freedom from the Christians. But despise them though he may, he understands perfectly that American major who said, “We had to destroy the village to save it.”

Loyalties: Vietnam (2)

Passions: Revenge (2)

Power Suite

Destruction 9HD (450 Points): When Sét fires off his power, it takes the form of one or more balls of light emerging from his chest. When they strike their target, they spread out in a wave, encompassing everything in an eighty-yard sphere. At first, large things in the area of effect begin to vibrate, rumbling and swaying and often beginning to splinter. The vibration oscillates faster and faster as it dials inward in scale, shattering glass, and twisting metal. Soon, any living creatures in the radius get about twenty percent larger as the cells in their bodies are

driven apart by the vibrations, an instant before the friction causes them to burst into flame. The air burns last. When it's done, there is fine ash, and perhaps the vague shapes of exceptionally thick walls or old trees. But usually just ash.

Attacks (+2), Engulf (+2), Horrific (-1), Obvious (-1), On Sight (+1), Penetration 6 (+6), Radius 6 (+12), Range Boost (+5), Slow (-2), Spray 1 (+1)

Destiny: After a small number of American troops survive exposure to his power and develop abilities of their own (see p. 48), Sét makes sure to never spread his power too thin again. When the Marshall Army (see p. 171) attempts to invade North Vietnam in June of 1968, Sét is key to destroying them and breaking the invasion's momentum. He pays for his heroism, however: A psychic American named Colt (p. 168) identifies him as the source of the explosions and nearly succeeds in killing Thientong from across the ocean. After a month of recovery, however, Sét accompanies Ngoc Vo (p. 186) on deep strikes into the United States. Though his inclination is to target civilian population centers, Vo won't countenance it. ("If we do so, are we not just as bad as they?" she asks.) Moreover, Nguyet (p. 164) insists that they shed as little blood as possible in the nuclear-armed US homeland.

In 1969, Ky Thientong is exposed to an eerily beautiful set of poems by Jason Weeks (p. 195) entitled *Fog in the Swamps of Free Will*. The carrier of a powerful syntergene, it shows him that Nguyet has been manipulating him emotionally and psychologically since their first meeting. Unlike Vo, Ky accepts that Nguyet's actions are for the best and continues to fight for his homeland.

Ky Thientong is a loyal soldier, dooming Americans, ARVN soldiers and eventually Cambodian troops as well with his powers, until September of 1970. While resting at a supposedly-secure building in Haiphong, Ky and Bao Verong (p. 355) are attacked by an elite squad of American troops. Afraid to use his powers at close range, Ky dies trying to escape, shot from behind. It's later believed that his assassin was Achille Riitzi (p. 207) who dies in the raid along with Lieutenant Mike Kurlansky (p. 189).

Dac Kien Truc, "Tuong" ("Dahk KEEyen Trooch," "Twong"), "Monument"

Career: Professional

History: When Vietnam was first partitioned, some communists from the south were exiled to the north. Dac Kien Truc was one of them. He'd been a history teacher, and communism's appeal to historical forces convinced him. A decent speaker and a good thinker, he was modestly placed in the party—just high enough to warrant banishment with Ho Chi Minh.

In 1965, he came back, trained as a soldier, to free his homeland from the foreigners, plunderers and sycophants. By 1968 he was a low-ranking officer, battle tested and respected by his men. None of that mattered when Amanda Sykes attacked.

Ky Thientong (see p. 182) was the only survivor of Amanda Sykes' first sortie. It was such a success that the planners decided to have her support a major troop maneuver, a big push against a heavily defended position in the north. Dac Kien was entrenched underground and heard the reports about a "flying woman" before she arrived. He'd heard just enough—that she could breathe fire, that she'd torn apart a tank with her bare hands—that when the screams echoed through the tunnels, he picked up his sidearm, crawled into one of the larger chambers, and waited. He wanted enough room that he could raise his hands appropriately when he said "I surrender."

The woman seemed confused, even though her face was hidden. Her posture indicated surprise, though perhaps just unease that a 'gook' could speak English. With a sudden, tense movement she pointed at him and he passed out.

He came to with his hands cuffed behind him and a G.I. slapping him. It was the beginning of an interrogation, and they planned to soften him up with blows before the questions. But with the third or fourth strike, he struck back, in a way he couldn't understand. The man striking him disappeared, and when another soldier grabbed him, that one vanished as well and Dac Kien was suddenly big enough to break his bonds.

Sét's Loyalties

After about eight months of exposure to Nguyet Cam (see p. 164), the concepts of "Vietnam," "Progressive Harmony" and "Nguyet Cam" are pretty much conflated into one concept in Ky's mind. All have claim on his Loyalty.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes

Personality: Dac Kien Truc is a well-educated and articulate man, whether he's speaking his native language, or French, or English. He was an idealist at one time, but war has hardened him and he has come to accept that some people cannot be persuaded and must be removed.

Loyalties: Communism (2)

Passions: Vietnam (4)

Power Suite

Disassemble Person 1d+7HD (90 Points):

Dac Kien can touch a person and instantly vaporize him. The person's mass is then incorporated into Dac Kien's body. Initially it takes the form of flesh and sinew, but as the square-cube law begins testing the limits of the loads human tissue can bear, he begins incorporating them as metal. Ultimately Dac Kien (called "Tuong," meaning "Monument" or "The Statue") grows to fifty feet tall and weighs fifty tons. Most of it's steel, with seamless connections of nerve, muscle and sinew articulating it. Its surface is covered with elaborate bas-relief scenes from Vietnamese history, incredibly detailed and picked out with chrome and copper highlights.

Attacks+2 (+4), Disintegrates (+2), Engulfs (+2), Touch Only (-2)

Growth (Stage 1) 2HD (16 Points): When he has destroyed two people, or three smaller ones, he grows to about eight feet tall.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must have absorbed about 250-300 pounds of humans) (-1)

Growth (Stages 2-5) 2HD (8 Points each):

Each stage of growth corresponds to two steps on the "Increased Size" chart under the "Size Shift" power in Wild Talents. The "If/Then" restriction on each iteration requires absorbing enough human mass to make the difference. Each stage is Attached to the stage preceding it. Thus he tops out with ten Hard Dice in various Growth Stages.

Useful (+2), Attached (Previous Growth Stage) (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must have destroyed enough human mass) (-1)

Hyperbody (Stage 1) 1d (3 Points): His increased mass comes with greater strength.

Hyperstat (+4), If/Then (Must have destroyed someone with Disassemble Person) (-1)

Hyperbody (Stage 2) 1d (1 Point): As before, he has to destroy sufficient people. He gets to Stage 2 of strength when he's at Stage 1 of growth.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Growth Stage 1) (-2), If/Then (Must have destroyed someone with Disassemble Person) (-1)

Hyperbody (Stages 3-10) 1HD (2 Points each): Similar to the first two stages, but now they're Hard Dice.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Previous Hyperbody Stage) (-2), If/Then (Must have destroyed sufficient numbers of people with Disassemble Person) (-1)

Extra Tough (Stage 1) 2HD (12 Points):

Note well that the Wound Boxes he has from this are not permanent. He can't heal them. He can only reactivate them by absorbing more people to fill in the gaps. When he loses them, he shrinks. Usually, he has chunks blown off him and then he shrivels up a little until the gaps close.

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must have absorbed about 400 pounds of human tissue) (-1), Self Only (-3)

Extra Tough (Stages 2-9) 1HD (2 Points each):

You know how this works by now, right?

Useful (+2), Attached (Previous stage) (-2), Engulf (+2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must have absorbed an adequate mass of human tissue) (-1), Self Only (-3)

Heavy Armor (Stage 1) 2HD (20 Points):

Before he learns to make people into metal, he doesn't get Heavy Armor until he's at least at Stage 5 of growth. Once he learns the trick, he can armor himself at any time.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must have destroyed sufficient people) (-1), Interference (+3)

Heavy Armor (Stages 2-9) 1HD (6 Points each):

Attached to previous stages, duh.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Attached (Previous stage of Heavy Armor) (-2) Endless (+3), If/Then (Must have destroyed sufficient people) (-1), Interference (+3)

Light Armor (Stage 1) 4HD (16 Points): He gets this with the very first absorption, but after that it's roughly tied to each stage of Growth.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must have used Disassemble Person) (-1)

Light Armor (Stages 2-7) 1HD (4 Points each): Same as it ever was, only different. Now the armor has the Hardened Extra though. The first four layers can be penetrated, but later stages cannot.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Attached (Previous stage) (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must have disassembled enough people) (-1), Hardened Defense (+2)

Superb Sight and Hearing (Stage 1) 1d (3 Points): Surprisingly, when your ears and eyes get that much bigger, your vision and hearing improve.

Hyperstat (+4), If/Then (Must have reached at least Stage 3 Growth) (-1).

Superb Sight and Hearing (Stage 2) 1d (1 Point): It only gets so good, however.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Stage 1) (-2), If/Then (Must have reached at least Stage 4 Growth) (-1)

Shout 10d (60 Points): Sometimes he can't reach an enemy, or is surrounded, or wants to disable a large crowd of attackers. If he's big enough, simply screaming at the top of his gigantic lungs can be disabling. Note that this has no Range quality, but does have the Mass quality—so it only works in a twenty yard radius around him, but can knock people over in that radius.

Attacks (+2), Attached (Growth Stage 3) (-2), Radius (+4), Limited Damage (Shock) (-1), Daze (+1), Engulf (+2)

Immune: Human Physical Frailties 4HD (8 Points): Once he's sufficiently large and metallic, he's effectively immune to petty distractions like drowning, smothering, poison gas and the like.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Variable Effect (+4), Attached (Heavy Armor Stage 5) (-2), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable effect is only for immunities) (-1), Full Power Only (-1), Self Only (-3)

Rending 5d+4HD (78 Points): When you get to be the size of Monument, you are sometimes called on to destroy things that aren't fragile, easily-vaporized humans. Things like buildings, battleships, dams, Amanda Sykes... when fighting something like that, Dac Kien has to grit his enormous metal teeth and put his back into it. Note that this has no range but, with the Mass quality, is capable of some big knockback.

Attacks (+2), Penetration 8 (+8), Limited Damage (Shock Only) (-1), Willpower Bid (-1), Attached (Hyperbody Stage 5) (-2)

Base Will +2 (6 Points)

Destiny: In the war for his country, Tuong can't escape the horror of what he does, and it inevitably gives him a horror of what he is. Destroying men and cannibalizing them with a touch is disturbing on a number of levels, and when he realizes that somehow he wanted this power, wanted to be what he became...

Well, in addition to trampling enemy positions, crushing tanks and vaporizing enemy troops, Tuong spends a lot of time smoking pot.

This is what keeps him from going into his giant form indefinitely: When he's a metal giant, it's hard for him to get stoned, and being stoned is about the only thing that keeps his head together. Nguyet Cam (p. 164) inspires him as needed but even with her powers of persuasion, there are diminishing returns. So Dac Kien spends 1968-69 at the bloody spear-tip of the war for Vietnam, occasionally getting teleported to America to threaten the enemy (see p. 183). But in September of 1969, Dac Kien gets a copy of Fog in the Swamps of Free Will and all of Nguyet's encouragement and helpfulness is revealed to him as naked game playing.

With Ngoc Vo (p. 186), Tuong flees to Australia. Discarding his metal form, he lives as an illegal refugee, supported by Vo's largesse. That life continues until October, 1970, and the great Vietnam monsoon. Knowing the risks, he still returns to his homeland, building a new body for himself out of the storm-killed, a body to help him rebuild his nation.

Something like the return of Tuong can't be hidden, and it isn't long before Nguyet finds

him and speaks with him, and this time turns him into her malleable slave. He obediently marches into Laos in March of 1971, just in time for the “Laotian Götterdämmerung,” where he encounters the mind-touch of General Colt (p. 168). Sensing the scars of Cam’s manipulation, Colt attempts to destroy, liberate or unhinge Monument’s mind—he isn’t picky, he just wants the giant off the battlefield.

That’s how the mountainous wilderness of Laos comes to be plagued by a rampaging giant for five long years. Dac Kien simply stumbles around aimlessly, killing anybody who gets close enough for him to reach.

In 1976, his body is found slumped against a cliff—one he’d apparently hammered with his fists for some time before his death. No one can be sure what killed him, but the most popular guesses are starvation and despair.

Ngoc Vo (“Nahk Vah”), “The Go-Home Girl”

Career: Soldier

History: Vietnam has a rich history of “long-haired warriors,” women who fight alongside the men. Given the resentment engendered by colonial injustices, the desire to drive out the Westerners was hardly restricted to a single gender.

Ngoc Vo grew up in toiling on the family farm. She was five years old when the Geneva Conference on Asia accepted Ho Chi Minh as leader of the north. Raised on stories of “Uncle Ho,” she volunteered for the NVA and was operating an air-defense battery during Amanda Sykes’ first surprise raid on Hanoi in May of 1968. Vo heard explosions and sounds of distress, but there was no sign of enemy aircraft, the reports coming on the radio were garbled and confusing. Fearing that US troops (or, unlikelier still, ARVN) had somehow reached the city without warning, she checked her rifle just moments before a green blur tore through her anti-aircraft gun, shredding the housing and barrel, hurtling the the ammo into the sky and igniting it with a searing blast of light.

Vo didn’t really think about aiming and shooting, and all it seemed to do was put a few new holes in the invader’s army fatigues. That, and get the mysterious American’s attention.

The woman in green turned her mask towards Vo, paralyzed her with a gesture, then paused. The American’s language was strange to Vo, but the tone of surprise was clear. The attacker’s shoulders dropped a little and she shook her head before leaping into the sky.

It was three months before Vo could get the American’s words—“Good God, you’re pregnant!”—translated into Vietnamese. By that time, she’d lost the baby.

Realizing that the American Amanda had seen this in her, Ngoc Vo became deeply depressed. It came on her quickly, as a sudden desire to just go home... and when she raised her head, she was in the wreckage of her parents’ farm. She wasn’t alone. A squad of GIs spun to face her, eyes wide and rifles raised. But even though she was afraid, Vo realized she knew these boys. Yes, boys, afraid and confused and in each of them was the same longing she’d felt. At some level, even the most loyal of these soldiers wanted to be home.

So Ngoc Vo sent them there.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes

Personality: Quiet, melancholy and, in the postwar years, a bit dreamy and distracted, Ngoc Vo is a gentle soul at heart. After developing her powers, she never again harmed a single human being, with the exception of an ARVN metahuman who tried to assassinate her. Badly wounded and unable to read her attacker’s mind, she simply teleported him into space.

Loyalties: Her Country (2). Initially this is Vietnam; Later, Atlantis..

Passions: Peace (1), The Value of Human Life (1)

Power Suite

Telepathy 10d (160 Points): Ngoc Vo does not have General Colt’s attacking abilities (see p. 168), nor can she alter memories as he does, but she is a strong receiver and adequate broadcaster. With her range boost, she can contact anyone in the world (or indeed, as far away as the Moon), as long as she’s sufficiently familiar with him. She also instinctively scans for malevolent intent and intuitively attacks even as they’re decided upon.

Defends (+2), Booster (Range) (+6)

Useful (+2), Booster (Range) (+6)

Teleportation 10d (200 Points): Ngoc Vo can move a little more than three tons of mass to anywhere on Earth, or to the surface of the Moon. Or much, much farther. Her utmost range is around 133 astronomical units, more than three times the average distance from Pluto to the sun.

She can also use it to easily ‘blink’ away from attacks. While she cannot technically attack with her power—she can’t phase people into objects or teleport away sections of their bodies—setting someone adrift in space or at the bottom of the ocean is close enough, so watch out. But rather than kill, as she so easily could, Vo usually uses telepathy to identify a place that an enemy would consider “home” and then sends him there. (All this takes is one round and two sets from a 9d pool.) Over the course of the Vietnam War, she individually relocates a total of 972 soldiers back to the United States.

Defends (+2), Booster (Range) (+2)

Useful (+2), Mass Capacity (+2), Booster (Range) (+12)

Base Will +30 (90 Points)

Destiny: The war changes drastically when the full parameters of Vo’s abilities become apparent. Though Nguyet Cam clearly understands the possibilities of dropping a three-ton mass from orbit onto New York City, she forebears—possibly to spare Vo’s sanity and possibly because her ultimate plans did not yet call for wide-scale devastation.

Instead, Vo and Sét (p. 182) teleport into the US and make attacks on symbolic targets, or on empty munitions factories, or drop that mass on an abandoned stretch of Arizona desert and then, two days later, drop the same mass in the same place to demonstrate that it wasn’t a natural meteorite strike.. At all times, they attempt to keep civilian casualties minimized—Vo out of pity, Sét out of duty and Cam for inscrutable reasons of her own. When Dac Kien Truc (p. 183) comes into his power, Vo takes him to the US to vandalize the St. Louis Arch. She also takes Cam herself for risky (but high yield) opportunities to brainwash ordinary Americans, turning them into synergenically-entranced sleeper agents.

Vo’s transport function comes to an abrupt halt when Jason Weeks (p. 195) releases an anti-synergene that shows her exactly how Cam has been manipulating her and the rest of the Progress

Cadre. While the Cadre remains loyal, Vo and Truc flee to Australia.

With her telepathic skills, it isn’t difficult for Ngoc to make money and avoid deportation. Truc, being a giant, has no such recourse, even after he realizes that he can change back to normal if he hurts himself enough. But their existence is precarious, and Vo is unhappy having to hide. She starts drinking and, at one point, attempts to green Australia’s outback by teleporting in tons and tons of Antarctic ice. It doesn’t work.

In 1970, she gets sober and decides that the new frontier of Atlantis is just the place. She goes, begins moving people on and off the island at their request, and is quickly granted citizenship. She just as quickly makes an enemy of Jack Grimes (p. 213), then going by the name “Carlos Moses.” Grimes isn’t at all ready to clash with a fellow superhuman—especially one who could sense him coming and teleport him into space—so he falls back on insinuation and political slander.

Vo never planned to become an important politician in Atlantis. She just wanted to help people, particularly Vietnamese people suffering from the war. But rescuing a lot of people who share no language with the first Atlanteans creates tensions, and their gratitude towards her thrusts her into social prominence. Grimes/Moses blames her for the outside world’s suspicion, and within the expatriate community, she’s about the only thing they all support.

Factional infighting splits along three lines. Moses’ followers are increasingly drawn into a cult of personality. Cynthia Carls (p. 214) retains respect as the founder of Atlantis, but her desire to please everyone keeps her from taking a firm stand against anyone. As for Vo, she eventually outs Grimes as a criminal, ending any chance that they might work together.

1972 begins a phase when Vo’s influence is characterized by what she doesn’t do. She stops importing people at Cynthia’s request. She also refuses to smuggle Atlantis’ marijuana crop off the island. Not long after, she telepathically interrogates a group of assassins who tried to kill Cynthia Carls, and determines that they’re Grimes’ followers (though not acting on his orders). When Cynthia sends Grimes’ territory away, separating it from mainland Atlantis by a causeway, tensions

increase, along with demands for a formal governing structure from all factions. Baffled by Grimes' continued success despite his past, Vo hesitantly contacts General Andrew Colt (p. 168).

The relationship between an American general and a Vietnamese soldier who fought against him is surprisingly nuanced. As two of the only global telepaths, they find themselves unable to easily lie to one another in mind-space, and learn in turn that while they have many disagreements, they have some common enemies. As a first, tentative attempt to work together, Vo asks Colt prepare the US to have Jack Grimes sent home. Colt suggests Leavenworth prison and makes arrangements.

Vo's faction and Cynthia's followers immediately agree to a constitutional convention once Grimes is gone. Grimes' followers, formerly the most impatient for it, begin delaying the convention as much as they can, hoping to string it along until their leader returns. Their efforts are ultimately in vain, as Cynthia Carls is appointed pro-tem executive of Atlantis until elections in 1974.

(See p. 336. for an explanation of Atlantean politics.)

Formally organized as "Atlantean Socialists," Vo's followers (mostly Vietnamese but with a scattering of American dissidents and refugees from other conflicts) gain a third of the legislative seats and place the first elected Atlantean executive, the "People's Servant" Dith Ngyuen, a bilingual Vietnamese intellectual.

Vo drops out of public sight for a few years after that, happy to leave leadership to someone who wanted it. She helps Atlantis function (importing people and goods, exporting the nation's few legal products) and is surprised, in 1976, when a man named Jason Weeks (p. 195) contacts her asking for help. A clairvoyant, he'd perceived fault lines in the tectonic plates beneath Guatemala and was hoping Vo would join Cynthia Carls in preventing a disaster. With Vo's telepathy helping organize the efforts and Abe Sykes (p. 173) lending it respectability, Weeks is able to get a lot of high-tier metahumans on the scene. Later that year, Vo helps some of the same people get to Italy for another earthquake, and the group eventually christens itself "International Disaster/Emergency Assistance" or "ID/EA."

Between her work with ID/EA, her efforts on behalf of Atlantis and her attempts to help General Colt

(p. 168) come to grips with a steadily worsening emotional crisis, Vo stays busy right up until the start of the 1978 Atlantean election, when she finds herself drafted by the Atlantean Socialists after Dith Ngyuen refuses to stand for a second term. Despite her reluctance and shyness, she becomes People's Servant. She immediately has to deal with an accusation that Atlantis used a syntergene called "Burning Spear" to 'brainwash' America into legalizing marijuana. Though she indignantly denies government involvement, the US isn't going to take the word of a former Vietcong metahuman.

(In fact, Vo insists that "anyone who bothered to watch Atlantean government in action would know we could never pull off such a ruse or keep it secret if we did"—a quote that alienates many who work for Atlantis, despite her attempts to explain that she meant it as a testament to Atlantean open government.)

America only maintains diplomatic contact after another metahuman (Deionne Bright, p. 192) meddles in public opinion. Meanwhile, Vo finds the source of the syntergene on Atlantis and hands her over to US officials. While this eases tensions between the US and Atlantis, it only further degrades her popularity. An island-wide economic slump doesn't help, either, and while Servant Vo is instrumental in making Atlantis one of the world's premiere nations for near-space exploration, teleporting camera platforms around the solar system does not bring the island much cash.

1979 is a miserable year for Vo. First, ID/EA collapses following revelations of one member's military adventures. Even worse, after pushing an unpopular taxation platform, Ngoc Vo is removed from office by a recall election. Vo immediately leaves the island, giving no forwarding address, and makes a decent living boosting European satellites and exploration craft out of the gravity well. She enjoys a solitary life in Paris for several months before General Colt's ex-wife—very recently divorced—tracks her down and screams at her for a good twenty minutes about being a "home-wrecking psychic whore."

After that, when Abe Sykes starts discussing a "New ID/EA," Vo is eager to join and Abe is eager to have her. Ultimately, communication and transportation are more necessary to New ID/EA than even Abe's powers.

Vo stays out of Atlantean politics (with the exception of removing one of her appointees when he's arrested in a corruption sting—she actually teleports him straight back to Vietnam) until the attacks of 1983. She returns to a grateful population (who conveniently forget her political unpopularity when she's there to bring them needed supplies) and tries her best to keep the situation from devolving into anarchy. But by 1984, there are many more metahumans around, and some of them are on Atlantis trying to make it their private fiefdom. Vo struggles against the warlords, but reluctantly fights to keep the Atlantean Socialist Front from being utterly destroyed.

She stays on Atlantis right up to the death of Cynthia Carls and then loses hope. Abandoning the island, she watches from afar as it falls into total chaos. New ID/EA still finds her useful, and in 1986 her disgust with Atlantis escalates to the point that she returns, simply to remove several of the most egregiously violent Shavians. Her presence reduces the fighting to the point that actual elections can be held, with the Atlantean Socialist Front dominating in a disputed outcome.

One month later, a group of Shavians ambushes and kills her.

Tier Three

J. Edgar Hoover, the Man of Secrets

Career: Politician

History: J. Edgar Hoover backed America and was willing to do whatever it took to make sure he (and the USA) came out on top. He started out as a young lawyer with an interest in the famed postal inspector Anthony Comstock, a crusader against pornography and birth control information. It was an early sign of the tendencies that would mark his professional life before the radical change brought on by dark energy.

Long before Amanda Sykes was even born, however, Hoover was a man of power and influence. He served with the Justice Department in the Great War, quickly becoming head of the Enemy Aliens Registration Section. From there he went on to helm the General Intelligence Division of the Justice Department in 1919. This was a time of anarchist bombings in the US, along with the Communist revolution in Russia, and the notion of the nation being sundered from within by subversives was all too plausible to Hoover and many of his fellows in the Justice Department. This

The Forgotten Tier Threes

Providing stats for all the Tier Three characters would bulk out an already-heavy chapter and provide little value in exchange. Some holes are left for GMs to fill as needed, either with PCs or GMCs. A discussion of the unstatted canonical GMCs and the power-descent structure follows.

Amy Sykes (p. 177) creates two early offspring, but then goes for years without needing her explosive power again. When she does unleash it on the unempowered, they rarely survive the process. Therefore, there are seven wide open gaps in her chain of descent for some time.

General Colt (p. 168) empowers Bich Thi Ngyuen (p. 207), who becomes a decisive mover and shaker in history. He also inadvertently bestows powers on an ARVN commander and a Vietcong officer when he reads their minds and broadcasts thoughts to them during his strategic operations. More comfortable in the minds of English-speakers, most of the people he empowers are American. They include his wife Tracy (who becomes a Tier Three healer, as described on page 24) and his ten-year-old son Andrew Junior (whose Tier Three powers are left to individual GMs to develop). Lieutenant Art Harmon, Major Jason Blume, Sergeant Mark May and Private First Class Joe Ruiz also benefit from contact with the general's mind before his ability to share power is gone. These characters can be replaced by PCs, played as PCs, statted as GMCs or discarded and replaced as GMs require.

In addition to empowering J. Edgar Hoover, Lyndon Johnson (p. 169) also infuses George McGovern and Robert F. Kennedy with dark energy. RFK gets Hypercommand and a form of free-roaming clairvoyant "answers" power similar to that of Jason Weeks. George McGovern becomes mildly bulletproof, but his primary power suite is to look at someone, know their deepest desires, and (if he so chooses) grant their wish with his extremely variable abilities. His power is, in this respect, very similar to the powers of Boris Mizurski (p. 217) and Deionne Bright's 'devil.' Bryson Maas-Thierry and Brenda Harkness (p. 206) get activated as well. The other offspring of LBJ are aides, White House workers and the people present at a speech he gave the evening after meeting Amanda.

Ngoc Vo (p. 186), to the great eventual dismay of Nguyet Cam (p. 164), places power within more American soldiers than Vietnamese citizens. Her unstatted American descendants-in-power are Sergeant Charles Dooley (a spread of physical Hyperstats and Heavy Armor), Sergeant Rick McEllen (a former geometry teacher who can warp space and interact with the world as if he were two-dimensional), Private Bill Stross (can draw in power to heal himself or enhance his physical strength by sucking the life out of nearby plants), Lieutenant Mike Kurlansky (reshapes reality through uncanny luck and determination), Private Amando Bell (a self-only teleporter with tremendous range) and Corporal Robert Vaux (can create and destroy self-willed permanent duplicates of other people, which obey only him).

led to the notorious Palmer Raids, in which at least 10,000 people were rounded up (often violently). The methods used to gather information before and during the raids were condemned as illegal and unethical, including unauthorized wiretaps, entrapment and possibly torture.

While blowback from the raids destroyed Palmer's career, continued anarchist bombings (including the September 16 Wall Street bombing that killed 38) kept the tide of public opinion from sweeping Hoover out as well. He became deputy head of the Bureau of Investigation (the FBI's precursor) in 1921 and director in 1924.

In the 1930s, the thorn in Hoover's side was John Dillinger and, with him, the folk-hero status of snazzy robbers that people actually preferred to the banks. Hoover was incensed at their evasion and took their sneers as a personal affront. Yet when Melvin Purvis' Chicago team killed Dillinger outside the Biograph Theater, Hoover took the credit and had Purvis transferred to a hardship post where he wouldn't compete with Hoover's publicity.

1935 saw his organization renamed the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Hoover's drive for information control led him to found the FBI Crime Lab and compile a central fingerprint file. (His obsession for control also led him to fire agents he felt "looked stupid.")

From the very beginning, the FBI placed itself in opposition to those Hoover deemed 'un-American.' He had a list of 12,000 American citizens that he proposed to lock up in suspension of Habeas Corpus at the start of the Korean War, but Truman refused to go along with it. By 1956, this paranoia had given birth to COINTELPRO, a secret program intended to structurally disembowel organizations that Hoover thought were enemies of the state. These included: The Ku Klux Klan, the American Communist Party, the Black Panthers, the American Nazi Party and Martin Luther King Junior's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. (See p. 229 for more on MLK.)

He was also, by that time, amassing blackmail material on many political figures as a form of career insurance. It worked. Truman, Kennedy and Johnson (p. 169) all considered dismissing Hoover from the FBI but were ultimately scared of the damage he could do.

In 1968 Johnson didn't tell him a damn thing about Amanda Sykes (p. 159) but that didn't stop Hoover from trying to worm answers out of the President. He was so pushy that Johnson had to draw on parahuman means to dissuade him. Unwittingly, President Johnson thereby set Hoover on a radically different path.

In March of 1968, frustrated by February's ongoing civil rights demonstrations in the Carolinas, Hoover found himself desperately wishing he knew what was in the Reverend King's mind. Then suddenly, he did.

But it was more than that. Hoover didn't just understand King, he became King. For about twenty minutes, Hoover physically and mentally transformed into a replica of Martin Luther King Jr. He thought King's thoughts and felt King's feelings.

When he returned to himself, Hoover was shocked and overwhelmed, but he certainly had a great deal of new insight into the civil rights movement. Eager to test out his power, he sought the minds and persons of people on his Ten Most Wanted list—Howard March (p. 225), Judith Weissman (p. 232) and James Closterman (p. 235). But when he reached the cesspit mind of Tyler Ford (p. 228), he learned there were some things he was unready to know, no matter how desperately he wanted to.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson

Personality: Self-righteous, paranoid and obsessed with control. Particularly with information as a means to control. Hoover's a genuine patriot, but one whose ideal of America is dangerously narrow. He has no tolerance for dissent but does possess the means and vindictiveness to make his intolerance incredibly dangerous. Curious and fascinated by his enemies, Hoover is driven by a need to know.

Loyalties: The Stability and Security of the USA (7)

Passions: Control (7), Protect Clyde Tolson (2)

Power Suite

Scan Other 10d (100 Points): Hoover can psychically study a person and create a template of that individual—body, mind and

dark energy profile. He's got a range of around 2,909,090 miles.

Useful (+2), Speeding Bullet (+2), Range Boost (+6)

Adjust Towards Other's Appearance 4HD

(32 Points): This works much like Dead Ringer from Wild Talents, but limited to duplicating the look of those he has scanned. The degree of physical resemblance has to reflect the degree of psychological parity, as well. (Note that with the Spray quality, he can use this at the same time as Be Other without losing a die from his pool.)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for other appearances) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), If/Then (Physical resemblance has to reflect psychological parity) (-1), Attached (Be Others) (-2), Automatic (-1), Spray 1 (+1)

Be Other 4HD (32 Points): This duplicates the opinions and memories of those he has scanned. Since the two aspects are attached and automatic, they both happen at the same time, but the Spray extra ensures that each aspect gets 2HD to ensure its use.

Useful (Access memories) (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Must successfully use Scan Other first) (-1), Spray 1 (+1), Willpower Bid (-1)

Useful (Duplicate opinions and personality) (+2), Duration (+2), Spray 1 (+1), Willpower Bid (-1), Attached (Access memories) (-2), Automatic (-1)

Skill Use 8d (96 Points): When J. Edgar copies someone, he can use their Skills. The way this works is, the dice from this power add to his normal pool up to the point that it matches the duplicated person's pool. If the person copied has HD or WD in the pool, Hoover can't copy those.

Attacks (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only up to the level of the copied individual) (-1), If/Then (Only the current persona) (-1)

Defends (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only up to the level of the copied individual) (-1), If/Then (Only the current persona) (-1)

Useful (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only up to the level of the copied individual) (-1), If/Then (Only the current persona) (-1)

Power Clone 4d+1WD (120 Points): Hoover can copy dark energy powers if they're present. He can't exceed the host's power, nor can he use his Wiggle Die if the host doesn't have one.

However, he could use this to copy Stats. It's similar to Power Mimic except that it works at a distance and has to conform to the person being copied. This he could use to duplicate a Wiggle Die in a Hyperskill.

Attacks (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Must successfully use Scan Other first) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect must match subject's powers) (-1), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Defends (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Must successfully use Scan Other first) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect must match subject's powers) (-1), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Must successfully use Scan Other first) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect must match subject's powers) (-1), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

+7 Base Will (21 Points): If Jedgar isn't currently confident about what he's doing, he can usually find someone who would be.

Destiny: Hoover's early career—when he largely retains his original identity—is frustrating. Many of the first people he scans, those he most wants to overcome, develop powers of their own while, ironically, providing viewpoints so different from his own that they shake Hoover's beliefs to the core. He becomes shy of his powers after Tyler Ford, but when the depredations of Jarvis West become too much for him to ignore, he reluctantly scans him. His insights let him put traps right in West's path, but West's untouchability and willingness to harm anyone in his way keeps him one step ahead of a mounting pile of dead special agents.

Just when he thinks it can't get any worse, Hoover attempts to scan his first hyperbrain in August of 1969. It's a credit to Hoover's cunning that he even identifies Nguyet Cam (p. 164) as a person of consequence after Johnson requests Hoover's aid (unofficially) in Vietnam. But when Cam becomes Hoover she subsumes him and remains in control for over a week. (See p. 22 for the effects of using telepathy on Hyperbrains.) During that time she goes through his files for damning material on US politicians and copies the reports on the My Lai massacre. Fortunately for the US, her access is limited by her inability to keep Hoover's looks while

using her mind-structure, but she still does a great deal of damage and gets some startling evidence smuggled to the ‘original’ Nguyet Cam in Vietnam (who is mildly surprised until she decodes the cover letter from her duplicate).

But Hoover’s no quitter and, though Cam gets the better of him, he learns an awful lot about Vietnam and her ideas for Progressive Harmony. Having pillaged her memories for associates who are unpowered, he is able to duplicate them one by one in rapid succession, even as Cam races to dismiss the people she suspects he’s become. In the end, she can’t get rid of everyone she knows without doing more damage than Hoover would, but knowing that he’s looking over her shoulder (or could be) almost all the time definitely makes her moves less efficient.

1971 puts Hoover in the field for the first time in decades as he personally spearheads the search for Howard March. Hoover feels responsible, having created March’s powers, and is determined to undo the damage. Again, it’s close. But Hoover can’t quite get the ball over the line. March is forced into a fugitive’s life, but remains free.

Things really change in 1972. That’s the year Hoover’s body dies.

Hoover’s powers allow him to scale between being himself and being someone else, someone he’s scanned. After May 1972, Hoover can never go to being completely himself, because his body is dead. After that point, to survive he has to be at least 30% someone else. He has to have someone else’s opinions and values and beliefs interlaced with his own. Remarkably, he doesn’t go visibly crazy. He just starts calling himself ‘Jedgar’ and drops off the grid after posting a letter to his closest comrade, Clyde Tolson (p. 63).

He spends some time traveling around the US, “trying to find someone I can stand to be,” as he puts it in a letter to Tolson. He goes to Minneapolis and harasses left-wing students and street criminals. In 1977, arch-psychic Andrew Colt (p. 168) manages to find Jedgar and convince him to help Amy (p. 177) and Amanda Sykes overcome a group of Moluccan terrorists. Hoover doesn’t forget about March, either, and watches the Aite (p. 358) offshoot of March’s powers with great interest, going so far as to

interfere with their attempts to enter the US in 1980.

But as the years go on, Jedgar’s travels become increasingly difficult to track. His ever-changing mind is difficult even for powerful telepaths to find, and his changing appearance carries with it changes in goals and beliefs and hatreds. But a gradually emerging trend, something that must be changing in the core Hoover identity, is a streak of kindness. It’s most vivid in his rescue of Tilda Gräss (p. 292) in 1988. Quite possibly the only person on the planet who could understand her, Jedgar plucks her from a life of sociopathy and shows her better people to be.

The old Hoover “end justifies the means” attitude crops up periodically, especially when he melds with someone who has a bad case of Realpolitik. He stirs up shit in the Middle East in 1989, but so does everyone else. By 1992 he (or “it”) has drifted so far from the original Hoover persona that it attempts to help Howard March. Granted, it tries to help by talking March out of attacking a group of US government metahumans, but witnesses seem to feel that his concern for March is as great as his concern for the supercop who killed Rodney King. He negotiates with the Branch Davidians in 1993. In 1995 he pursues Aum Shinryko fugitives—again teaming up with someone he once hated and, consequently, empowered. He’s at the forefront of a reconciliation movement in Yugoslavia in 1996, and a monument to him is erected there in 2001.

Jedgar dies in 1999, though no one’s sure exactly how. Tilda Gräss gets a letter from his lawyer stating that “If you receive this, it means I’ve died.” She inherits his surprisingly sparse possessions and speculates that he either died in the Battle of San Francisco (p. 149) or that he perished when his powers failed. But as with so much of Jedgar’s life, it’s impossible to know.

Deionne Bright, Rock Star

Career: Layabout

History: Deionne always introduced himself as a musician, but despite some small skill with the harmonica, he made most of his steady money unloading grocery trucks. His insurance wasn’t that great, so when one of those trucks backed into him and crushed his pelvic bones, it looked

like he was going to have to sue somebody to pay for the reconstructive surgery, while at the same time enduring months of agonizing physical therapy. But he hadn't even had a chance to contemplate those issues when Abe found him. No, he was still being fed loads of morphine to deal with the horrible, horrible, horrible pain.

Abe, being a rather self-conscious superhero, healed Deionne and then crept out of the room without disturbing him, not realizing he'd infected the poor broken stocker with unbelievable degrees of power. That power was shaped by Deionne's subconscious mind into a form that helped him understand what had happened, explained the hellish agony and, more, helped his dreams come true.

Within two months of walking out of the hospital, Deionne had his hospital bills dealt with. The people in the billing department were very understanding, and he was soon packing crowds at the local D.C. blues clubs. When he moved to New York, he became a sensation.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes

Personality: Deionne was, initially, a pleasant, laid-back and self-effacing guy. As he reaps the rewards of his skills, he gets disconnected from his common roots, develops an ego problem, starts taking drugs, surrounds himself with gold-diggers and yes-men, and turns into the most stereotypical arrogant rock musician you can imagine. But behind it all, he's always got the devil to keep him scared and just a bit humble.

Loyalties: Artistic Integrity (1)

Passions: Luxury (3)

Power Suite

Hyperperform (Guitar), 10WD (40 Points): Deionne Bright is the greatest guitar player of all time. Period.

Hyperskill (+1)

Unaging 2HD (20 Points): Deionne does not physically get older. While he may gain weight, be injured and become addicted to this or that, he is never going to fall prey to fading eyesight, wrinkles, gray hair or his family history of male-pattern baldness.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3)

Hypercharm 10d (40 Points): Is he the most charming person in the world? No, that's Bao Verong. But Deionne certainly has all the magnetism he needs to pack stadiums, enthrall groupies, and convince groupies' furious boyfriends that they should actually feel honored to have shared a woman with him.

Hyperstat (+4)

Summon the Devil 8d (32 Points): Here we get to Deionne's dark secret.

Part of Deionne doesn't really believe that the handsome black man in immaculate clothing is the genuine, no-foolin' Prince of Lies, but he's not taking any chances. In fact, what Deionne is summoning is an independent figment composed entirely of dark energy. "The Devil" is autonomous, though he does have a soft spot for Deionne his creator. If "The Devil" were actualized when Deionne died, "The Devil" would continue to act autonomously (at least, it would until destroyed). It exists to purchase souls and grant wishes.

Note that this is not a supernatural entity! It's a disembodied thought-form that behaves like a supernatural entity. Could it really claim the 'soul' of someone with whom it has a pact? No.



But it's fully capable of creating a duplicate of the faustian bargainer's consciousness and subjecting it to what feels like a thousand years of torment.

This is essentially the "Sidekick" power from Wild Talents. Remember that Deionne can banish "The Devil" whenever he wishes and there's nothing "The Devil" can do about it. At least, not directly. Manipulating people into manipulating Deionne? It's all about that.

Note well that "The Devil" has no wound boxes or armor. One hit dispels it, and it stays gone until Deionne decides to bring it back. But while it's gone, Deionne still gets to stay young, play guitar, and charm the pants off everyone he meets.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Uncontrollable (-2)

Defends (+2), Duration (+2), Uncontrollable (-2)

Grant Wishes 10d+2HD (210 Points): This is more or less "Cosmic Power" from Wild Talents. "The Devil" can reconfigure its considerable store of dark energy into useful patterns for those with whom it bargains. The powers it gives aren't permanent—they last until the next time he's banished or until he withdraws them to make another pact. But between suckers, it can use the power to its own ends, such as they are.

Attacks (+2), Attached to Sidekick (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must be used for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Recipient must agree to "sell his soul to the devil"), (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Defends (+2), Attached to Sidekick (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must be used for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Recipient must agree to "sell his soul to the devil"), (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Useful (+2), Attached to Sidekick (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Must be used for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Recipient must agree to "sell his soul to the devil"), (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Hyperbrains 6 (12 Points): This is attached to "The Devil" as a -2 Flaw. Deionne is not as smart as "The Devil."

Hyperstat (+4), Attached to "The Devil" (-2)

Base Will +46 (46 Points): This is attached to "The Devil" as a -2 Flaw. Deionne can't use this Base Will.

Destiny: From 1969 to 1972, Deionne merely lives the life of a rock 'n' roll overnight sensation—booze, pot, pills and heavily rhinestoned bell-bottoms. But in the autumn of '72, his power-brother Jason Weeks (p. 195) visits him and gives him a rundown on the connection between synergenics, free thought, and musical rhythm. When Weeks asks him to incorporate a mind-liberating synergene in his next single, Deionne agrees, and anyone who hears "Little Green Man" is synergenically armed to resist other synergenes. (See p. 64.)

Deionne's dabbling in synergenics, and his fame's potential to propagate musical synergenes, alarms Nguyet Cam (p. 164), who travels to France, acquaints herself with a gorgeous Parisian of Algerian descent, and spends a few months brainwashing her to meet Deionne, get close to him, obtain his trust and, when activated by a trigger phrase, go into a killing frenzy to destroy him. In June of 1973, the assassin strikes, successfully perforating Deionne's intestines with a butcher knife before he can call "The Devil" to protect him. Lucky for Deionne, his would-be killer is too deeply hypnotized to offer her soul to "The Devil" in order to have him kill Deionne. Instead, "The Devil" kills her, and then persuades Deionne's bass player to 'sell his soul' for "The Devil's" help disposing of the body and healing Deionne.

This might seem a bit clumsy for a hyper-genius international political manipulator, but as Cam saw it, the blatant, sudden, murder-from-nowhere was win/win. It might succeed, in which case the problem was gone. But even if it failed, what would an unexpected attack do to the psychology of a person whose strongest urge was approval from strangers?

In Deionne's case, it yields paranoia, raised security and increased chemical intake to assuage his fear that this groupie (or that one, or that one) might again flip out and take a poke at his ever-growing belly. Pretty much what Cam expected, and as she'd hoped Deionne stays well away from politics, keeping his songs about heartbreak, cars, depression, kind bud and women with butter-smooth thighs. It's five years before he releases another song with even a slight political undertone, and in that case it's

just to keep America from going nuts on Atlantis (p. 336) because one Atlantean released a pro-marijuana synergene in the States.

Deionne is a superstar throughout the 1970s and, increasingly, a jackass. He uses casual mind control (in the form of Hypercharm) without a second thought, and most of the people around him either don't realize they're being manipulated, or they don't care. At least three people have their first experience with hard drugs because Deionne suggests it to them when he doesn't want to shoot up alone. He leaves a swath of disorder through his record label, despite an unending parade of hits, because every stupid suggestion he makes—singles with hologram covers, a concert held on a sky city, parachuting a hundred Deionne Bright impersonators onto Mount Rushmore—gets treated as the Word From On High. Which, considering his copious drug intake, it usually is.

“The Devil” gets out more than once during the seventies as well, though Deionne does make a good-faith effort to avoid invoking him. But it only takes one stoned and arrogant demand and then “The Devil” can slip him some ‘ludes or knock Deionne out and then head down to Georgia (or the ‘Frisco Tenderloin, or Brownsville in New York, or East St. Louis) lookin’ for a soul to steal. While conceived as amoral and gleefully sadistic, “The Devil” prizes irony and style above genuine destruction. He’s got no interest in murdering innocents because (1) no challenge and (2) as far as he’s concerned, when you kill an innocent you’re just sending a soul to heaven that might otherwise get dirtied and corrupted. No, when he looks for a wish to grant, he’s looking for a sucker who’s miserable, and whose wishes will make him more miserable. He always has plenty of takers, and until Deionne can banish him, “The Devil” leaves behind a string of strange murders, suicides, overdoses and self-destructive acting out with temporary superpowers.

But mostly Deionne and his sidekick are a problem local to L.A. or New York or wherever he happens to be touring. They impact the world on the level of drug busts, drug buys, drug abuse, ruined marriages, betrayed loves, petty jealousies, empowered psychoses and financial ripoffs, but they’re not clear-cutting cities or

inciting revolution. Besides, the guy never once fails to put on a kick-ass show.

No, Deionne pretty much sticks to what he knows, and if Jason Weeks convinces him to release a “everybody get back to normal” synergene in July of 1983, even Nguyet Cam won’t bust him for it.

In 1991, agents of a well-funded political think-tank approach Deionne with a proposition. They want him to help compose and perform music intended to socially disrupt Progressive Harmony. He doesn’t even have to think about it before saying no. Had he agreed, he’d have been the single greatest threat Progressive Harmony ever faced, but in a thousand subtle ways, Nguyet Cam dissuades him before he’s even asked. Harkness and Maas-Thierry (p. 206) find the right weapon, but Cam had unloaded it decades earlier, and Deionne isn’t willing to give them a chance to debug the ideas Cam so subtly installed. No, fighting Progressive Harmony sounds hard, and it sounds boring.

Deionne fatally overdoses in 1998. His posthumous final single, “The Millennium Shuffle” spends two months at #1 on the charts.

Jason Weeks, “The Answer Man”

Career: Student

History: Jason never met a drug he didn’t like, right up to the point that he met Abe Sykes. Ironically, Jason wasn’t an addict. He’d smoked pot when it was available, but never missed it when it was gone. He’d had good experiences with both benzedrine and mescaline, and he believed that The Man was trying to keep folks off drugs with scare tactics because enlightenment would threaten the status quo.

So he decided he was going to blend science (in the form of LSD), tribal religion (represented by peyote) with some smooth hash and have himself an epiphany. It was working fine until he got hungry. He got in his car to go to the store, put it in drive instead of reverse, slammed into the front wall of his family garage, hit his head on the steering wheel and became too disoriented to realize he was in an enclosed space with a running car engine.

DOES GOD EXIST?

The question is inherently unanswerable, given all available data that can be gathered within the range of one light year. On one hand, the structures of all perceptible physical, cultural, linguistic, psychological and spiritual phenomena can be explained through observable scientific laws that do not require the presence of an omnipotent creator. However, it is not possible to rule out the establishment of those laws by an external intelligence. There are no signs of specific miracles, nothing outside the realm of scientific law. But there is also no sign that all natural law is not, itself, the product of miracle.

Abe was at the hospital when Jason was wheeled in. (Neighbors heard the car hit the wall, even though it wasn't going fast.) The healing touch cleansed Jason of the drugs (and, more importantly, the carbon monoxide) but more, when the energy flooded into him, Jason was still seeking cosmic enlightenment and the answers to life's biggest questions.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes

Personality: Jason is the most mild, selfless, mellow and pleasant person you're likely to encounter. There's an old saying that to understand all is to forgive everything. That's Jason in a nutshell. He wants to encourage

benevolence, generosity and empathy throughout the world, but he's not going to try and force anything. His theory of social and psychological engineering suggests that the more you force people and cultures to do anything, the stiffer the resistance and, in time, the harder the pendulum swings back. Because people (and, in the aggregate, societies) are bundles of contradictory impulses, he finds it easier to find the noblest and kindest currents (whether in an individual or an event) and try to make those the path of least resistance.

Loyalties: The Good of Humanity (2)

Passions: Knowledge (2)

Power Suite

Limited Omniscience, 9d+1WD (26 Points):

Jason can answer any question. When he activates Limited Omniscience, his massive intelligence (see below) examines the question and engages his clairvoyance (see below) to gather the information it needs to answer the question authoritatively. Because the process is entirely outside his consciousness, Jason's oblivious to it. (By the same token, if there's any human or personal bias involved, it's completely hidden.) Limited Omniscience robs him of most of his powers, so he's stingy with its use. But when you need an answer, he can provide it.

Limited Omniscience is not a quick process, taking anywhere from a few minutes to several weeks to yield a solution. The duration of the calculation seems unrelated to the apparent difficulty of the question, but as Jason himself is quick to point out, determining the true parameters of a question is often a great part of the challenge.

Width determines the time frame for the answer, as shown below. The answer is always exactly 100 words in length. Height determines the units of time. Specifically, it takes a number of units equal to eleven minus Height.

WIDTH	TIME FRAME
-------	------------

2x	Weeks
----	-------

3x	Days
----	------

4x	Hours
----	-------

5+x	Minutes
-----	---------

Example: Jason asks if there really is a God. He rolls nine dice and gets 2x1, 2x7 and 2x9. Setting his Wiggle Die to 9, he has a 3x9 result. Eleven minus the height of nine indicates that it'll take two of whatever, and the 3x Width shows that 'whatever' means days. After two days stripped of his most extraordinary abilities, he gets the following answer.

"The question is inherently unanswerable, given all observable data that can be gathered within the range of one light year. On one hand, the structures of all observable physical, cultural, linguistic, psychological and spiritual phenomena can be explained through observable scientific laws that do not require the presence of an omnipotent creator. However, it is not possible to rule out the establishment of those laws by an external intelligence. There are no signs of specific miracles, nothing outside the realm of scientific law. But there is also no sign that all natural law is not, itself, the product of miracle."

Useful (+2)

Conditional Hyperbrains, 10HD (60

Points): The difference between Jason Weeks' 10HD and Nguyet Cam's 10HD make a pretty convincing argument that there are many qualities that can be called 'intelligence.' Cam's intellect is inherently divisive, analytical and controlling. It is singularly focussed on creating and imposing predictable results, and Cam's hunger for information is insatiable because it holds out the promise of ever stronger predictions, ever finer degrees of manipulation.

Jason, on the other hand, has an open, receptive and curious intelligence. He regards the world, indeed the entire cosmos, as a toybox of wonders that he can dig in without reservation. He wants to understand because the more he understands the world, the more he can enjoy it. He no more wants to control the fate of humanity than he wants to control a sunset over the ocean with a rainbow framing it and some dolphins frolicking in the surf.

The tyrant of the east has bent her intelligence towards making the world ever smaller in her eyes, pruning away anything chaotic and stochastic. The mystic of the west turns his

WHAT WOULD BE THE MOST FRUITFUL QUESTION OR QUESTIONS I COULD ASK?

"What action can I take to prevent the greatest number of human deaths in the next decade?" Ask this periodically, particularly after forestalling a predicted disaster. However, the benefits of limited omniscience will often be of lesser value to the world than the products of your genius consciously directed.

"How may I best encourage equitable economic development in Africa?" is a good question for some time in the next two years.

"How can I produce a rugged and inexpensive water purification device with the optimum balance of cost and reliability?" will be wise after you've earned your second million dollars.

weighty mind to perceiving the world on an ever larger and deeper scale.

Hyperstat (+4), If/Then (Not using Limited Omniscience) (-1)

Conditional Clairvoyance, 10d (190

Points): When Nguyet Cam finds out that Jason Weeks can perceive everything within the range of one light year, the envy she feels resounds through 96% of her artificial meta-consciousnesses. For Cam, the prime limit to her power is her inability to gather sufficient data. Jason, on the other hand? If he wants to observe something, he pauses for a moment and then observes it. Coupled with his ability to analyze and hypothesize (abilities that, from a typical human perspective, might as well be bottomless) there is little he can't learn just by applying himself consciously to a problem. If his naïve human perspective can't get him the right approach, he can always fall back on Limited Omniscience.

This is also good for predicting and avoiding assassination attempts, sucker punches and other bummers. With the "Speeding Bullet" extra, he

WHO IS THE SMARTEST OF US ALL?

"Smart" is a vague quality. While Bich Thi Nguyen is guarded against direct evaluation, her gambits in Russia indicate an exocortex of unsurpassed complexity and power. However, some limiting factor appears to inhibit its full use, or exhausts it.

Nguyet Cam's grasp of psychology, sociology and music lets her match Bich's ability to manipulate populations through indirect deep brain structure influence. Cam's understanding of technology and mathematics is superior. Our own technical insight is more reliable and steadier than Cam's, if less brilliant. Our moral intelligence surpasses both, and our self-doubt serves to correct bias in our theories. Sometimes.

can even avoid gunshots, though in this case it's not because he's moving so quickly but because he's been paying attention to where every gun within few miles of his body is pointed ever since it got that close.

Defends (+2), If/Then (Not using Limited Omniscience) (-1), Speeding Bullet (+2)

Useful (+2), Booster (Range) (+15), If/Then (Not using Limited Omniscience) (-1)

Conditional Gadgeteering, 10d (70 Points):

Jason can build machines that push the frontiers of science until they fall over. His machines must all include the Manufacturable flaw, however. He cannot truly build "impossible" machines, no matter how advanced.

Attacks (+2), Delayed Effect (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Created foci must be Manufacturable) (-1), If/Then (Useless when Limited Omniscience is in use) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect requires a workshop) (-1), If/Then

(Variable Effect is only for technology) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), Willpower Investment (-1)

Defends (+2), Delayed Effect (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Created foci must be Manufacturable) (-1), If/Then (Useless when Limited Omniscience is in use) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect requires a workshop) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for technology) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), Willpower Investment (-1)

Useful (Gadget Creation) (+2), Delayed Effect (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Created foci must be Manufacturable) (-1), If/Then (Useless when Limited Omniscience is in use) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect requires a workshop) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for technology) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), Willpower Investment (-1)

Useful (Gadget Disassembly) (+2), Delayed Effect (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Useless when Limited Omniscience is in use) (-1), If/Then (Requires a workshop) (-1), Touch Only (-2)

Hyperdodge, 10HD (20 Points): Even if his Clairvoyance doesn't warn him of impending doom with enough time to take a leisurely step out of the way, his ability to calculate trajectories and predict behavior make him a hard guy to hit. This is the one of the two abilities he retains when his brain is off on a jaunt seeking an answer. (Compared to the sorts of challenges that engage Limited Omniscience, avoiding a runaway milk truck requires only minor intellectual capital.)

Hyperskill (+1)

Hyperempathy 10d (10 Points): Jason understands people, deeply, truly and with painful sincerity. Because of his humanist focus and the primacy of his desire to give people the attention they deserve (and to Jason, everyone is deserving of some attention) this Skill works even when the bulk of his massive intellect has been set free to grind on Limited Omniscience. And really, compared to questions like, "What is a comprehensive theory of matter that can be expressed in an equation that would be legible on a single blackboard?" figuring out what's bothering his secretary Nancy is not that demanding.

Hyperskill (+1)

+8 Base Will (24 Points): It arises from sense of wonder at the world around him.

Destiny: An early conflict with Jarvis West (p. 203) convinces Weeks that his powers aren't well adapted to front-line superheroism. He starts out by saving countless lives in the developing world by making water purification simple and affordable (p. 320). Then he moves from defending bodies to minds, first by releasing Inoculus (p. 320) to disrupt the influence of the hyper-charismatic, and by sending an improved version, Fog in the Swamps of Free Will to Vietnam.

In a conflict between normal minds, an attempt to monkeywrench control methods is like a declaration of war, but Nguyet Cam (p. 164) and Weeks are anything but normal. Each understands the other as a resource and each understands that mutual manipulation has the potential to yield higher rewards than mutual antagonism. Fog in the Swamps of Free Will becomes the first move of a chess match that lasts thirty years.

For many of those years, Weeks' behavior is reactive. He blocks the ambitions of Cam and Johnson (p. 169) to the extent he's able, while founding Very Us Enterprises and making a fortune off the Stupid T-Shirt Marketing

HOW CAN INFORMATION BE COMMUNICATED EFFICIENTLY WITHOUT BIAS?

Because 'Bias' is a form of information, The problem is how to separate The subjective from the objective. This discernment has always fallen under The rubric of consciousness, which is by its nature vulnerable to bias. To communicate facts with no possibility of bias requires a recreation of events with perfect grasp and fidelity. While a multi-sensor, multi-perspective recorder is technologically feasible, transmitting its accuracy to people past The defenses of their own prejudices is far more challenging and could easily be adapted for brainwashing. Moreover, The exchange would be time-consuming. Easier to teach people critical thinking.

CAN MANKIND EVER CONQUER DEATH?

Dark energy's attachment to consciousness indicates that consciousness may be objectively real (though it may simply arise from objective conditions). Indefinitely delayed corporeal decay exists already, but to ensure a consciousness' continuity beyond disruption by any energy is impossible if it is not already inherently continuous. My consciousness is contiguous despite the replacement of every molecule in my body. Identity is a wave-form, but if a wave is artificially reproduced it is non-continuous and therefore distinct. A duplicate of my identity activated after death would be indistinguishable from 'me' to everyone but that duplicate itself, and me

syntergene (p. 316). Once his startup cash is ensured, he turns to the stock market. He flees the US in 1970, for no reason that anyone (even other hyperbrains) can detect. Nguyet Cam decides he's either faking her out, or that he possesses perception abilities that exceed 'mere' supergenius logic. She had the same dilemma when he releases the SuperHealthScreen!™.

His rescue of Abe Sykes (p. 173) from Nguyet Cam is another push towards open hostilities with the Vietnamese mastermind, but it cements the friendship between Abe and Jason (even as his necessary trickery alienates Amanda, p. 159). But despite Weeks' interference, Cam's influence grows by leaps and bounds. Weeks'

1972 syntergenic program in Deionne Bright's #1 single "Little Green Man" (p. 64 and p. 194) shields the US from syntergenic attack for close to a decade, though few people ever realize it's more than a catchy tune with funny lyrics and a killer guitar solo.

Never a publicity hound, Weeks minimizes his contributions to negotiating a peaceful resolution at Pine Ridge in 1975, and his part in predicting various dam failures, earthquakes and natural disasters throughout the 70s, 80s and 90s. He is a guiding force behind ID/EA (p. 176), and even though Abe Sykes is ID/EA's undisputed leader, Weeks often suggests situations for intervention and Abe always takes Jason's advice.

In 1977, Jason moves from Stuttgart to Zaire, purchasing an active volcano and sparing no expense to build a revolutionary geothermal power plant on it. The “Weeks compound” becomes an object of fascinated but frustrated media scrutiny. (Weeks likes his privacy.) Nobody on the outside knows that he has both Nguyet Cam and Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207) as his guests, nor would anyone appreciate the import of that meeting. But the three smartest people in the world meet, discuss, and spend a week lalyng the foundations for a project they all agree is in humanity’s best interest: The creation of Nuryarya (p. 325), the New Rational Language.

In 1978, Weeks finally takes proactive action to shape the world: He opens Global Human University, housed in his growing Zaire compound. By 1980 it’s teaching Nuryarya to anyone who wants to learn it.

Perhaps Jason Weeks’ greatest impact on history comes from his interactions with the creatures called ‘Shaw Monsters’ (p. 205) or ‘Shavians.’ Sterile on their own, in 1981 Weeks begins secretly working on a device that would allow two of them to invest their energy into the creation of a third. Ironically, it’s not Weeks who creates the first ‘Brood Chamber.’ In 1990, Weeks announces the possibility of such a device, along with Global Human U’s discovery of materials that are superconductive at the temperature of ice. But though one of these devices is regarded by many as apocalyptic, and the other as miraculous, Weeks insists that he’ll only make them both available together, and then only after six months without serious human/Shavian violence. When a hyperbrain outside of Weeks’ influence publishes the how-to of his own Shavian reproduction device soon after, Weeks is forced to admit his ultimatum has been made obsolete. He begins producing the superconductors, but insists on implementing them first in Africa. By 1991, his superconductor secrets are reverse-engineered by scientists working for the African Harmonic Gestalt (p. 122). Soon after, they’re in use by Progressive Harmony nations throughout the world, and it doesn’t take long for him to share them with the

How SHOULD I INTERACT WITH NGUYET CAM?

Cam is a ruthless interventionist who believes her actions are necessary to defend the world from ineluctable alien conflict. She expects you to interfere with her assaults on individual liberty and free will. Do so, whether she’s right or wrong about the inevitability of war with extraterrestrials, the resulting conflict between you and Cam should yield a human race of greater aggregate moral strength. Suggest a plan to her and Bich Thi Nguyen to create a new human language based on rationality. Use it to improve global reasoning and as an isolated arena in which to struggle with their ambitions.



WHAT ACTION CAN I TAKE TO PREVENT THE GREATEST NUMBER OF HUMAN DEATHS IN THE NEXT DECADE?

Progenitor is likely to undergo some form of severe mental breakdown. It could come as early as 1982 and barring unforeseen intervention is almost certain to occur before 1991. Delusions of grandeur are highly probable, as is paranoia, either isolated or in conjunction with a messiah complex. In 1983 a global nuclear launch is likely. Permit this and the ensuing disaster is likely to ground Progenitor in reality for another five years, during which you can subtly isolate her from the powerful followers she might otherwise recruit. Suggest to her the possibility of neutralizing launched fissile warheads prior to 1982.

whole world. After the destruction of the first Brood Chamber, he successfully leverages the know-how needed to recreate it to ease Shavian violence against humans... temporarily.

If his attitude towards Shavians earns him many small enemies, he gets one powerful one when he identifies Selarosis Maxillae, Jean Davis' (p. 250) tool of mental influence and espionage. Working with Garfield Moloi (p. 369), he creates an inoculation for it, but Davis' minions destroy the Global Human University bio lab before it can develop a cure. Davis works against Weeks

for the rest of Jason's life, making the occasional failed assassination attempt while painting him as a dangerous, anti-American manipulator in Freedom Ring magazine.

Weeks' actions during the Metapocalypse (p. 95) are predictably subtle. He joins with his power-brother Deionne Bright to release a "Get Back to Normal" syntergene in one of Deionne's songs, and he covertly assembles a group of metahumans to track the killbots to their source, conclusively document that the source was a single person, (Rudolph "Metal Virus" Phelps, p. 283) and then kill him. Though this well-researched murder forestalls most nationalistic attempts to blame the Metapocalypse on Russia, capitalism, Islam, Progressive Harmony, Å, or the Jews, it leaves a number of metahumans with questions. If Weeks could find Metal Virus after the fact, and could predict various disasters, why didn't he stop the Metapocalypse before it started? Some think that the essentially random acts of someone who was (after all) only a Tier Nine failed to make enough of a disturbance until it was too late. Others (notably Nguyet Cam) believe Weeks thought the long term good of the Metapocalypse would justify the billion lives it costs. At least, Cam hopes so, to the extent that she permits herself luxuries like hope.

In 1989, Jason Weeks proposes a trans-African network of high speed vacuum transport tunnels. Using this technological and economic bonanza as a lever, he helps push South Africa away from Apartheid. The total network is 35% complete when Jason dies in 1998.

In the end, neither Nguyet Cam nor Jean Davis are responsible for Weeks' demise. No one's ever sure who 'did it,' but any blame surely lies on Amanda Sykes. When she declares herself divine in the late 90s, Weeks is more alarmed than anyone and assembles a group of metahumans to 'deal with' the Progenitor if she becomes dangerous. Reluctantly, he deploys his 35-metahuman team for the Battle of San Francisco in 1998. He's not the only fatality, but he does succeed in restraining the would-be 'goddess.'

Jarvis West, a Complete Asshole

Career: Layabout

History: Broken home. Absent father. No money. Poor education. Abusive mom. Drug addict. Petty crook. Jarvis West's personal history is pretty clear from these two-word phrases. There are no surprises here, he was just a person who got treated like garbage until he became garbage. He was getting ready to wind up his sad and worthless life with one word—"overdose"—when Abe Sykes happened along.

Jarvis could have taken his second chance as a wake-up call to turn his life around and not squander it. If he'd just been instantly healed of his addiction and saved from his OD, he might have. But Jarvis got empowered too. And when you give a whole lot of power to someone who's never had any, it doesn't always end well.

Jarvis West is a prick, he thinks he's entitled to anything he can take because the world treated him so shabbily for so long, and now he's ready for revenge. Also, he's perpetually high.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes

Personality: Utterly selfish, utterly arrogant, utterly cruel. Not too smart, either.

Loyalties: The Boston Red Sox (1)

Passions: Selfish Excess (3)

Power Suite

Hurt People 8d+2HD+1WD (160 Points):

Victims so often victimize, when given the chance. Jarvis can now look at someone—or a group of someones—and wrack their bodies with the most hideous pain imaginable. He can even choose what kind of pain they experience—burning, freezing, cutting, crushing. He likes to change it up.

It's never real injury, so as soon as he switches it off, you're fine. Unless the pain was so horrible that you died which, y'know, happens when it happens. Because it's an illusion, it ignores armor (that's the Non-Physical) and it's hard to dodge (Speeding Bullet). He can spread it to everyone in a twenty yard radius (that means a

sphere 120 feet across, remember) and can make multiple spheres of pain if he likes (with Spray).

It is not hard for Jarvis to get up and, on a whim, decide he's going to head downtown and just excruciate the business district for ten minutes, then hop on the subway, call City Hall and demand some money or else he'll do it again. That's one way he gets some walking-around change.

People can fight off this harm with an Endurance roll. If it succeeds, the victim still feels it, but isn't debilitated.

Attacks (+2), Limited Damage (Shock Only) (-1), Non-Physical (+2), No Physical Change (-1), Radius (+4), Speeding Bullet (+2), Spray 1 (+1), Traumatic (+1)

High All the Time 4HD (24 Points):

One time, in his old life, Jarvis got to do an exceptionally pure speedball. He had the physical rush of the cocaine along with the megalomaniac certainty that he was the apex of God's creation, mixed with the sweet heroin mellow that let him not give a damn about anything at all. It was the high point of his life, until he used a small portion of Abe Sykes lost power to recreate that feeling. All. The. Time. Jarvis West is totally fucking blasted. All. The. Time.

As a side effect, this means he never sleeps, never passes out from having a head full of Shock, and never takes penalties for having a fully Shocked torso.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3)

Hyperstability 5HD (10 Points): It's not fair to say that Jarvis West really is sane, but mechanically his perpetual high lets the unpleasantness of life (like the consequences of his actions) slide harmlessly off his psyche.

Hyperskill (+1)

Mind Control 10d (100 Points): Just as it's described in Wild Talents, except for the extras. He can't make people want to do things, but he can control their bodies. So when he uses this on you, you're a helpless passenger as your body acts out Jarvis' sick fantasy of the moment. He enjoys choreographing elaborate dance-numbers that end with people knifed, shot or sexually



molested. Makes the Hurt People power sound almost acceptable, doesn't it?

Note that to control masses of people he has to give verbal orders. Even if he mumbles or is vague, people still carry out the acts as he imagined them: The words are there to focus his raddled mind, not to help them. He can take silent control, but only of one person at a time, and it's somewhat easier to resist. Jarvis always was a blabbermouth.

Useful (Control actions) (+2), Radius (+4), Speeding Bullet (+2)

Useful (Send commands silently) (+2)

Untouchable 10HD (100 Points): This is just like President Johnson's psychic armor. It works like Heavy Armor, but it only blocks deliberate attacks by people. If you try to hurt Jarvis, you just won't be able to bring yourself to do it... unless you spend a point of Base Will or 9 Willpower to permit a single attack.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), If/Then (Only for intentional attacks) (-1)

+2 Base Will (6 Points): There's a pun in there somewhere, built around "base" meaning "ignoble" or "without moral principles."

Destiny: Jarvis' destiny is one of pleasure, punctuated by terror and conflict and frustration. All he wants is to steal, live large, enjoy his permanent high and commit the occasional (okay, extremely frequent) mind-control sex assault. But that sort of thing makes enemies, starting with his power siblings and Jedgar (p. 189) but, in time, growing to encompass his power offspring as well.

The typical Jarvis routine is to move to a city and keep things on the down-low for a while (by getting what he wants through cash, or by limiting his depredations to underclasses that get no attention). Eventually though, whether it's Boston or New York, Mexico City or Rio de Janeiro, he runs out of dough and gets himself some more. As he gets more experienced, he's able to do this by taking over local criminal enterprises with a minimum of fuss, but sometimes he's bored. Even when he does go all mob boss, sooner or later the ennui sets in and nothing's going to cure it except something big. Something with some spectacle. What other metahumans call "an atrocity."

So then the heat comes down. Jedgar (p. 189) or Lin Wen (p. 216) or Jason Weeks (p. 195) or Barbara French (p. 218) or James Closterman (p. 237). Jarvis fights for a while, usually throwing lots of innocents under buses to slow down his pursuers, and he runs. He runs to a new city and the whole cycle starts again.

This continues until Alyssa Veronne (p. 233) and Paige Rampling (p. 236) corner him in Brisbane, Australia. As usual, he threatens the innocent, but unlike his other big fights, this time he's facing his previous victims. They've been the innocent and they're willing to take the risk to kill him. While Alyssa distracts him, Paige bulls her way through his psychic armor.

Jarvis West dies in 1972. In four short years, he becomes a historical touchstone for metahuman evil.

Tina Shaw, Healer and Fount of Monsters

Career: Layabout

History: She was twelve. Her cold turned into pneumonia which turned into pleurisy and her family had no money for medicine so by the time she got to the hospital it was touch and go. Except that this stranger in blue jeans and flannel heard her coughing and came into her room. "Poor girl," he said. "You're really suffering, huh?" But she couldn't answer until he glanced at the door, then quietly stepped over to her and stroked her hair. "Feel better," he said, and she did.

When her little brother got sick that winter, Tina patted his head and said, "Feel better," and he did, but what came out of him was horrible, and that was the real beginning of the story. Its title could be "Tina and the Shaw Monsters."

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes

Personality: Before getting sick, Tina was a cheerful, extremely energetic young tomboy. But when she found out she could cure any disease—any disease—and what it would cost, she became very serious very quickly.

Loyalties: Her Family (1), Shavians (1)

Passions: Helping the Ill (2)

Power Suite

Expel Foulness 10WD (40 Points): If something is sick in your body, Tina can cast it out. Her power doesn't work on injuries (or even foreign objects like shrapnel) but if you have a disease, or are poisoned, or were forced to swallow caustic chemicals, Tina can bring them out just by touching you.

Useful+1 (+3), Touch Only (-2)

Create Horrible Homunculus 5HD (10 Points): Here's the complicated part. When Tina expels cancer or leukemia, it doesn't just evaporate. That made no sense to her 12-year-old mind. Being raised on stories of preachers back in the Ozarks who could cast out the unclean, Tina's power inexorably does that. The illnesses take form. About 1-10 pounds of the patient's flesh pulls free (without leaving

Concise Tier Threes

Some canonical Tier Threes deserve discussion without a full, lavish writeup. Here they are.

Henry “Steelsuit” Dowd

A Sét survivor, Steelsuit Dowd gets his nickname after he starts wrapping himself in inch-thick metal plate to give himself some protection during his many, many brawls. Patriotic right up to the edge of obnoxiousness, Dowd is a darling of the right wing and is equally likely to be found doing disaster relief with ID/EA (p. 176) or helping underground rebellions against Progressive Harmony.

Hyperbody 10WD (400 Points): Note that his powers defy physics, so he can wrap massive amounts of metal around himself and have them conform to his body like fabric. He can lift a tank over his head without it breaking and without being driven into the ground like a tent-stake. He gives the finger to Newtonian physics and with his Booster levels he can lift 1.28 million tons, throw a one ton weight over 135 yards, sprint at almost 2,000 mph (that’s Mach 2, if you’re interested), clear 640 yards with a running start or easily jump over the Statue of Liberty with no run-up at all.

Hyperstat (+4), No Physics (+1), Booster (+5)

Brenda Harkness

Brenda was a hard-workin’ Texas gal who was part of LBJ’s staff (p. 169) for years. She was a good do-be, modest, quiet, anticipated needs well and made barely a ripple on the President’s consciousness until he accidentally infused her with dark energy. Then she, along with Bryson (see below) became one of the US’s unofficial government hyperbrains, though she eventually became so disillusioned that, during the 1983 Metapocalypse, she tries to help Michigan secede from the union.

Mind 10d (40 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Charm 10d (40 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Coordination 5WD (80 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Empathy 2HD+4WD (20 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

Invulnerability 4HD (160 Points): Just as described in Wild Talents.

Defends (HAR) (+2), Interference (+3), Permanent (+4)

Defends (LAR) (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Hardened Defense (+2), Permanent (+4)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

+20 Base Will (60 Points): You’d want it too if you had to deal with Johnson.

Bryson Maas-Thierry

Bryson gets his powers at the same time as Brenda Harkness, and they’re extremely similar to what she gets (which may just be a function of being spellbound by the same Johnson national security speech), and while he winds up as her partner for decades—advising Presidents and congressmen, detangling synergenes for the government, having diplomatic missions blow up in their faces—their backgrounds couldn’t be more different. Bryson’s a child of privilege, ran track at Harvard, was in the Skull and Bones there while he studied Poli Sci, later picked up a law degree from Yale and served in the National Guard before coming to the Kennedy White House as what would later be called a “policy wonk.”

Mind 10d (40 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Command 10d (40 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Body 10d (40 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Sense 10d (40 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Invulnerability 4HD (160 Points): Just as described in Wild Talents.

Defends (HAR) (+2), Interference (+3), Permanent (+4)

Defends (LAR) (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Hardened Defense (+2), Permanent (+4)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Stability 3HD (6 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

Athletics 3d+1WD (14 Points): This is a Hyperskill with a layer of speed booster. Combined with his Body, he can run at 120 miles per hour.

Hyperskill (+1), Booster (Speed) (+1)

+20 Base Will (60 Points): He uses this primarily for arguments with Brenda.

LeRoi Mathers

Healed of a broken arm by Abe Sykes' hospital sweep, LeRoi was one of the few to have a conversation with Sykes that fateful night. A truck driver by trade, Mathers developed several strength-related powers and put them to use when he could during his trips across the country.

Hyperbody 7d+3HD+1WD (68 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Drain Strength 10HD (160 Points): If the Width of his roll exceeds the Body Stat of a target, that target loses a point of Body and LeRoi gains a Body token (which he can spend using his Bestow Strength power, described below). Draining a Wiggle Die also requires Height 10, while draining a Hard Die requires Height 8+. If he reduces someone to Body 0, they're paralyzed and, if he reduces their Body below 0, their heart and lungs stop. Note that he doesn't pull out more than one point of Body per turn.

The power can be dodged, but only by those with Coordination 6+.

Useful (+2), Speeding Bullet (+2), Area (+2), Duration (+2)

Bestow Strength 10HD (80 Points): He can spend Width (or fewer) Body tokens to temporarily give someone a boost to the Body Stat equal to the number of tokens spent. This lasts out a scene.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2)

Invulnerability 2HD (80 Points): It's the usual from Wild Talents.

Defends (HAR) (+2), Interference (+3), Permanent (+4)

Defends (LAR) (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Hardened Defense (+2), Permanent (+4)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

+4 Base Will (12 Points)

Bich Thi Ngyuen ("Beet Tee Nwen")

An ARVN defector who repudiated the south after her husband and daughter died from friendly fire, Bich gets scanned and empowered by Andrew Colt (p. 168). Developing hyperintelligence, she sets out for the Soviet Union. A member of Vietnam's privileged Christian minority, Bich is a true believer who intends to transform the USSR into an engine of Christian socialism. Her machinations create a secret subculture of the faithful among the highest ranks of the Communist party, and also repair the structure of Soviet governance (using generous doses of syntergenes) so that it survives into the 21st century. Unfortunately for her, her plans to create a deliberate clique of power followers (like Cam's Progress Cadre) are thwarted by Cam's own psychic assassin. One of Bich's power offspring breaks free of her conditioning and sets up a rival faction within the Kremlin. But Bich keeps Cam, Weeks and her own traitor in check while steadily preparing the USSR for a Christian future, right up to the point that she drops dead of asymptomatic hypertrophic cardiomyopathy in 1978.

Hypermind 10WD (120 Points): She is the smartest and most versatile mind on the planet... when the sun's out. For her massive intellect only works in sunlight.

Hyperstat (+4), If/Then (Only in sunlight (-1))

Immune (Psychic Meddling) 10HD (40 Points): Bich Thi Ngyuen cannot be mind read, brain raped, persuaded with Hypercharm, bullied with Hypercommand, scanned for memories, attacked, coerced or even found with psychic powers. Anyone who tries to use psychic powers on her gets a headache, while Bich herself briefly fluoresces. (Which is handy, because it tells her when someone's trying something, but it does out her as a metahuman.) This power, incidentally, keeps any clairvoyant doctor from realizing her heart condition before it kills her.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Variable Effect (+4), If/Then (Variable Effect only) (-1), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), Willpower Bid (-1), Self Only (-3), Always On (-1), Obvious (-1)

Syntergenic Engineering 12HD (144 Points): Just like on page 309.

Control (Her DE Contagion) 2HD (4 Points): She decides whether she's giving power to someone or not.

Useful (+2), Self Only (-3)

Hyperdodge 10HD (20 Points): Like Jason Weeks, she applies physics, psychology and advanced oddsmaking to get out of the way of danger.

Hyperskill (+1)

Hyperempathy 2d+5HD (12 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

+20 Base Will (60 Points): It's that whole 'secret mastermind' business.

Achille Riitzi

One of the soldiers who survives a Sét attack, there's nothing complicated about Riitzi's powers. He becomes a potent US intelligence asset and, as the years go by, he gets more and more cocky, pushy and condescending.

Invisibility 10HD (100 Points): Standard to Wild Talents.

Defends (+2), Duration (+2)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

Invulnerability 7HD (280 Points): Also standard to Wild Talents.

Defends (HAR) (+2), Interference (+3), Permanent (+4)

Defends (LAR) (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Hardened Defense (+2), Permanent (+4)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

+2 Endurance (2 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

+6 Base Will (18 Points): You'd be confident too, if you couldn't be seen or injured.

an injury) and forms itself into a hideous little independent creature. They're all self-aware, individual, and intelligent. They're also unique, and each a reflection of the patient's feelings towards his illness. This means they're universally grotesque. Misaligned body parts, suppurating wounds and pustules are common, as are elements from the animal kingdom that touch on people's phobias—elements of the spider, bat, insect or cephalopod inform a large minority of the entities. Still others are humanoid but disturbingly distorted.

Often times these "Shaw Monsters" feel a sense of debt towards Tina and/or the sick person from whom they came. But some of them seem to be born nasty, evil and vindictive, especially to the formerly-sick 'parent.'

Useful (+2), Attached to Expel Foulness (-2), Permanent (+4), Touch Only (-2), Always On (-1)

Extra Tough 10d (30 Points): The homunculi have wound boxes and wound locations. Note that this version of Extra Tough has no Hard Dice. You roll the 10d pool and they have Wound Boxes at each location equal to the Width of the set.

Useful (+2), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3)

Hyperbody 4d (8 Points): The Shaw Monsters are surprisingly strong.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2)

Hypercoordination 4d (8 Points): They are quick and lithe.



Hyperstat (+4), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2)

Hypersense 4d (8 Points): It's hard to take them by surprise, sometimes.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2)

Hypermind 4d (4 Points): They are quick studies. They have free will.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2), Uncontrollable (-2)

Random Stat Boost (6 Points): They're all different, so when a Shaw homunculus gets made, roll 1d10 to see how this one happens to be gifted. 1-3 = +3d Body, 4-6 = +3d Coordination, 7-9 = +3d Sense, 10 = +1d each to Body, Coordination and Sense.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2)

30 Points of Random Hyperskills (30

Points): Give the Shaw Monster thirty points in Skills. They must be Skills possessed by either the ailing 'parent' or by Tina Shaw. The homunculus can't have a higher Skill than the

person from whom it copied the Skill. These Skills are set at birth and can't change.

Hyperskill (+1), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2)

Flight 1d+1WD (10 Points): This is normal, non-attacking flight. It's how Shavians get around if they don't have the appropriate limbs, or even sometimes when they do.

Defends +1 (+3), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2)

Useful (+2), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2), Booster (Speed) (+1)

Random Power, 10d (30 Points): I mentioned that there's a lot of variance in these, right? Roll a d10 and determine what an individual homunculus receives. It then has 10d in that power.

All the powers a homunculus might get are straight out of Wild Talents, except they're attached. Roll 1d10 to see what the monster gets. 1 = Control (Flesh), 2 = Create (Wind), 3 = Flight (this is ADU flight), 4 = Ghost, 5 = Illusions, 6 = Insubstantial, 7 = Teleport, 8 = Vicious, 9 = Control (Wild Animals), 10 = Create (Icy Darkness)

Attacks +1 (+3), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2)

Defends +1 (+3), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2)

Useful +1 (+3), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2)

Heavy Armor 10HD (80 Points): I mentioned they're really hard to kill, right? Unless you have a non-physical attack.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Attached to Create Horrible Homunculus (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3)

Destroy Homunculus 10HD (80 Points): Tina doesn't like having to do this, but sometimes they get out of hand. When she uses this, they pop. There's goo. It's gross.

What neither they nor she realize at first is that while this power is immaterial, it can be blocked by one thing only: Humans infused with dark energy.

Attacks (+2), If/Then (Only against Shaw Monsters) (-1), Non Physical (+2), On Sight (+1)

Untouchable by Homunculi 7HD (56 Points): This is like President Johnson's Untouchable power, only instead of humans it works on Shaw Monsters.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), If/Then (Only for intentional attacks) (-1), If/Then (Only works on Shaw Monsters) (-1)

Destiny: If the Shaw Monsters (or, as they're eventually called, "Shavians,") were always evil, or always good, Tina's life would be a lot easier. But they're always weird. Alien. Some seem friendly and try to be helpful, in a gormless sort of way, but others are actively sadistic or resentful. Some go from being helpful and honest to being murderously violent according to some inscrutable logic of their own.

On the other hand, letting someone die when she knows she can save them is a lot to ask of a twelve-year-old with a kind heart and a Christian upbringing. After a bit of seesawing, she decides she has to save the lives and let the chips land where they land. She tells herself that she can kill the bad monsters, if she needs to, but it's not easy. They're quick, and often clever, and they beg for their lives, and they scream when she does it. But for all that, no Shavian ever attempts to manipulate a human into killing or even harming her. It may, literally, not be a thought they can have.

By 1970, there are over a thousand Shaw Monsters worldwide.

Their numbers stop growing for a while when Ngyuet Cam (p. 164) decides they're an unacceptably random element in her schemes and asks her psychic assassin An Toán Do (p. 353) to eliminate them. He does with gusto, and also threatens to kill Tina's parents if she creates any new ones.

Tina caves immediately. At that point she's fourteen and is just starting to get used to all the money she's made from over a thousand miracle cures. Living on an estate in Vermont, Tina and her family have also become close to Amy Sykes (p. 177) and America's first family of metahumans. Tina recognizes Abe (p. 173) as the man who 'fixed her' and together they talk

out the responsibility of being a healer. Amy and Tina bond because they're two girls in their early teens with superpowers. (Later, their friendship is strained by teen-girl tension when it becomes abundantly clear that Tina is turning into a beauty and Amy really isn't, but at first it's not an issue.)

Tina's decision to stop creating Shavians is reinforced when a Shaw Monster calling itself "Juniper" massacres a sixth-grade class in November 1971. Juniper's callousness spurs the passage of a bill forbidding the unauthorized creation of "dark energy entities." It also swells the membership ranks of Metavictims' Advocacy and Support (p. 375) and sparks a terrorist backlash, through an anti-Shavian, anti-metahuman network called "Remember November."

The Shavians (and by extension, Tina) become pieces in Jack Grimes' (aka "Carlos Moses") political ambitions (p. 213) when he proposes that Atlantis (p. 336) serve as a Shavian homeland.

After the execution of An Toán Do, Tina is once again torn between her desire to heal and her fear of her creations. In a moment of weakness, while being lobbied by one of the most sympathetic and humane Shavians, she agrees to expel a malignant glioma from a four-year-old boy. This leads to her arrest in 1973. She's tried as an adult, despite being 16 years old.

It's a testament to the backlash against Shaw Monsters that just one month after her arrest, a pretty sixteen-year-old white girl gets sentenced to 10 years in a Federal prison, even after weepy testimony from the parents of the child she saved. Even her judge tears up while announcing her sentence, but when she's offered a suspended sentence if she 'expresses regret' for her crime, Tina lowers her head and whispers, "I'm not sorry I saved him."

That August, the US Supreme Court hears her appeal and overturns the Dark Entity Act. Only the presence of Ian Kraus (p. 222) prevents a riot outside the courthouse between Metavictims' Advocacy and Support demonstrators and thousands of counter-demonstrators, many drawn from the ranks of those she's healed and their families.

In 1974, the Shaws move to Atlantis, where the large Shavian population reveres her and she's able to resume her healing practices. Not long after the move, Amy Sykes runs away and comes to stay with the Shaws, which is why Amy is on hand that November when a dozen mercenaries and trained terrorists ambush Tina at her home. The first public strike by Remember November succeeds at its goal of assassinating Tina Shaw. She dies at the age of 18, having saved 4,112 lives and spawned 4,112 monsters.

Alphonse Russo, "Zipperneck"

Career: Crook

History: Zipperneck got his nickname because of a ragged transverse scar that stretches across the front of his throat. It's a memento of an attempted jail house snitch-shanking gone embarrassingly awry, but it's a testament to Zipperneck's lawyers that he ever left prison after that. (The official narrative is that the snitch attacked him and Alphonse only defended himself after disarming the man who'd gouged open his neck.)

Alphonse is second generation Mafia, arrogant, loud, crude, tasteless and direct. On the plus side, he prides himself on never breaking a promise, but given that his most common promises are things like "I swear I'm gonna kill you!" it's hard to consider that an unalloyed virtue.

So this goombah got into a string with Jack Grimes (p. 213) to kidnap the daughter of this American woman with crazy powers who was fighting overseas. Grimes had good information, an inside source, they knew that the scary mom was on the other side of the globe and that the dad was just some kind of sad-sack peacenik. So they hit the dad with a car, snatched the girl, made ready to shove her in a van, and then the bitch exploded.

The kidnap gang was five men. Only Jack and Zipperneck survived, having been flung into Boston Harbor instead of brick walls and telephone poles like the other three. Sloshing around in agony, Zipperneck (who couldn't swim) went down for the second time, pounded the water as hard as he could, and shot up into the air. And then he flew.

Infected with dark energy, Zipperneck could not only fly, he'd developed massive strength and near-invulnerability. This constellation of powers would eventually become the most common, but Alphonse was the first, and the strongest.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Amy Sykes

Personality: As I mentioned, arrogant, crude, pushy and boorish. But while he lies as much as the next crook, he never breaks a solemn vow. Like, for example, his rashly sworn vow to destroy Amy Sykes.

Loyalties: Code of Omertà (1)

Passions: His Own Comfort and Pleasure (3)

Power Suite

Hyperbody 4d+3HD+3WD (132 Points): Is he the strongest man on earth? Is Henry Dowd (p. 206) stronger? Hard to say, they never arm wrestle. But Zipperneck's strong enough for all moral purposes and most crooked ones. It's an ordinary Hyperstat with the No Upward Limit Extra.

Hyperstat (+4), No Upward Limit (+2)

Extra Tough 2HD (20 Points): Standard to Wild Talents, he gets two extra Wound Boxes per location.

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3)

Heavy Armor 10HD (120 Points): This is stock standard from Wild Talents.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3)

Light Armor 3HD (18 Points): Again, straight from Wild Talents.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3)

Flight 10d (50 Points): Sometimes, instead of just hitting people, he hits them while flying at them. When he does this, he can add his Flight pool to a blow as Augment dice. Of course, to get any additional 'oomph' out of it he has to break the sound barrier.

Attacks (+2), Augment (+4), Obvious (-1), If/Then (Only attacks with Augment) (-1), Touch Only (-2), Full Power Only (-1)

Defends (+2)

Useful (+2)

Immune (Whatever) 3HD (30 Points): He's easier to hurt with Non-Physical attacks but needn't concern himself with dying of suffocation, starvation, freezing or most radiation.



Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effects) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), Variable Effects (+4)

+10 Base Will (30 Points): Fuggeddabouddit.

Destiny: Alphonse's limits lie not with his powers, but his imagination. With his abilities, he could change history, but instead all he can think to do is commit an escalating series of robberies, climaxing with Fort Knox in 1969. Attempting to flee to Atlantis with the gold, he finally runs into metahumans who can stymie him (though not kill him) and he's forced to flee after hurtling the gold into space.

After that, Earth's mightiest villain is pretty lazy. He's a guy who likes a blowjob, a steak dinner and a movie with lots of pratfalls. He's not hard to satisfy, and his powers mostly languish under his lack of ambition. The one thing that really motivates him is spite, and when he finds out where Amy Sykes (p. 177) is hidden, he tries to kill her. That time it's Ian Kraus (p. 222), a metahuman whose powers seem tailor-made to counter Zipperneck, who sends him away grumpy. Similarly, he sets a trap for Amanda (p. 159) in 1974, only to be forced off by what he calls "the super-bitch trio" of Amanda, Lin Wen (p. 216) and Barbara French (p. 218).

In terms of historical impact, Zipperneck's most significant act might be one to which he dedicated all of two seconds' worth of consideration. He kills his power-brother and old comrade Jack Grimes (p. 213) when Jack talks down to him one time too many in 1977.

Perhaps suffering from a mid-life crisis, he attempts to take over the New York Mafia in 1979, only to be teleported so deep into the solar system that he doesn't find his way back to earth until 1981.

Two years alone in deep space aren't good for Alphonse's sanity, and he returns more sadistic, paranoid and megalomaniacal than ever. He torments the teleporter who exiled him to suicide, then proceeds to ally with El Cucuy (p. 253) and the Fantasmobile (p. 294) to hold the World's Fair hostage. They demand \$30 million and a ban on gays holding public office, but are eventually driven off by Ian Kraus and LeRoi

Mathers (p. 207). He works as one-man-army for Iran for a while, but it's only for the money. His real passion is for elaborate acts of revenge, and his next attempt is at his power-parent's wedding. Organizing a wide array of Sykes family enemies, Zipperneck launches simultaneous attacks on the Shavian Brood Chamber (p. 375), Amanda's private island, and Amy Sykes' wedding. Though they fail to kill any of the Sykes or destroy the Chamber, they do butcher the groom's entire family.

After that, Russo seems to run out of gas for some time. He goes back to crimes that are (by his standards) petty—robbing armored cars when his wallet's empty, killing anyone who annoys him, and traveling between nations without legal passports. But mostly it's movies, sex and nice meals. This goes on right up to 1998 when, as a consequence of the Battle of San Francisco (p. 149) his powers fail, along with every other metahuman. He's promptly arrested in Shanghai. While many in China's legal system are privately in favor of just murdering the guy, he has too much money and too many friends among the criminal and the crooked. He has a few close calls with other prisoners who want to be 'the one who kills Zipperneck,' but other cons want him on their side if his powers come back. As for the guards, the ones who'd be willing to beat him to death are slightly outnumbered by the guards he buys off. They think he'll be grateful if his powers come back, but they think wrongly, as do the convicts who protect him. When Zipperneck's abilities return, he just starts killing and destroying everything he can get his hands on, until he gets bored. That takes 92 minutes, during which 717 people die and 12,730 are injured.

He lays low in Switzerland for a bit before Amy Sykes and her husband find and attack him. He runs, then gets disgusted with himself for rabbiting, and openly defies them to come get him in Pittsburgh. When they do, it's a massive fight for all of ten minutes before a hitherto-unknown metahuman named Matilda Schwartzenhelm (p. 289) nullifies his powers while he's flying around and holding up an SUV. He falls and gets crushed. His death is as unconsidered as most of his life.

Jack Grimes, a Man Who Matters

Career: Crook

History: Smart, poor and not challenged at school, Jack Grimes grew up to be a cocky, cunning, self-interested hoodlum. He never took any particular pleasure in violence: He was willing to do it, but there were always others who really relished it.

A friend to mobsters, Jack never got made because he wasn't Italian enough. He was, however, a friend to the local goons. As long as he gave them a cut and kept them in the loop, they were happy to extend their protection, with the understanding that they'd sacrifice him in a heartbeat to protect a real goodfella.

He found out about Amanda Sykes through a cousin on General Colt's staff, a guy with some debts. Once convinced that Amanda, at least, was the real item, he decided to kidnap the daughter and test his hypothesis that a superhero could come up with a king's ransom.

He did not realize, however, that Amy herself was empowered. He learned when she exploded, blasting him straight out of the getaway van and into Boston Harbor. Of the five men involved, he was one of two survivors. (The other was Alphonse "Zipperneck" Russo, p. 210.) He swam to shore and laid low. He didn't know it at the time, but the harbor saved him from discovery at the hands of Abe Sykes' molecular perceptions (see p. 173). No, he was picked up on an entirely unrelated outstanding robbery warrant, and then he turned his arresting officer (State Trooper Clarence Fredericks) into shit. Literally. The guy's partner (Thomas Moley) drew a gun, which Grimes turned into cheese and then, with a grin, Jack turned the skin of the man's face into water.

A little experimentation showed Grimes he could turn anything into anything—the shapes didn't change, but (depending on density) the size might. With a lot of experimentation, he eventually found the upward limits on what he could reshape with a thought.

Jack Grimes' upward limit is twelve million tons of matter.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Amy Sykes

Personality: A self-interested, cynical jerkwad. Preferring to do things as easily as possible, he soon discovers a craving for power. Not just power over matter, but power over people. Jack Grimes wants to be obeyed, respected, and feared—in that order.

Jack's not an unalloyed bastard. If he sees someone who's in a terrible situation through no fault of their own, he might intervene to help, as long as it didn't require any sacrifice or great effort, and as long as the person he's helping isn't an enemy.

Destiny: No dummy, Grimes starts thinking big while most of his Tier-mates are still trying to convince themselves they aren't crazy. He helps The Dream (p. 229), James Closterman (p. 235), Deionne Bright (p. 192) and Jason Weeks (p. 195) disrupt a global attempt to control dark energy and decides he wants to act, not react. Then he hears about Atlantis.

Claiming to be an ambassador from the island and adopting the alias "Carlos Moses," he's instrumental in making Atlantis a stable, inhabitable and recognized nation. He does not do any of this out of the goodness of his heart, of course: He wants to run a country full of metahumans. He wants in on the Great Game of international politics and figures he can use Cynthia Carls' (p. 214) island as his stakes.

But while he makes a lasting mark on Atlantean society, he doesn't count on Ngoc Vo (p. 186) having both the telepathy to find out who he is, the teleportation to send him away, and a connection to Andrew Colt (p. 168) that keeps him from escaping Leavenworth prison. The elections he so carefully planned to win are conducted while he was jailed.

Even while incarcerated, he tried to use his powers to become a major player in petro-politics, with the result that two hypersuaves try to talk him around at the same time. Smart as he is, he's not built to handle that kind of pressure. It's a week before he's deemed capable of standing trial, and in March of 1974 Jack Grimes is convicted of murder. He escapes while being transported to a different facility. He spends the next three years on the run before dying during an unclear argument with Zipperneck Russo.

Loyalties: His Followers (1)

Passions: Power (3)

Power Suite

Transform Dis to Dat 10d (400 Points): Jack can transform matter. Anything can be made into anything else. He can't create mass, but he can re-arrange it at will. He's not a strong defender, but his power can instinctively protect him by vaporizing bullets, transforming nitrogen in his bloodstream into oxygen, deflecting lightning by turning air molecules into metal and grounding it or quenching flames by turning oxygen into something non-combustible.

Note that for very large quantities, he has to be touching what he's changing.

Attacks (+2), Permanent (+4), Variable Effect (+4), Range Quality (+2)

Defends (+2), Permanent (+4), Variable Effect (+4), Speeding Bullet (+2)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Variable Effect (+4), Mass Boost (+6)

Cynthia Carls, the First Atlantean

Career: Student

History: An early hippie, Cynthia left her upper-middle-class parents for college and then for music, free love and, most importantly, enlightenment. Unfortunately, Cynthia pursued her spiritual ends with chemical means, much like her tier-mate Jason Weeks (p. 195). Like him and Jarvis West (p. 203) she was in a Washington DC hospital when Abe Sykes (p. 173) came to visit. Unlike Jarvis and Jason, she'd been there for three years, comatose.

She awoke to find Johnson (p. 169) twisting the US deeper into the war, a war being fought by inhuman armies and a flying woman of terrible might. She protested, but when the President spoke to the crowd she could feel him breaking their will, trying to break hers as well.

When MLK (p. 229) got shot, she despaired. She meant to walk out into the sea and drown herself, but when she went down for the second time, her body's natural panic kicked in. So did

her unnatural power to shape earth and stone. An island rose up in the bay, lifting her back up to life. Amazed, Cynthia turned to the east and started walking, the ground rising up to meet her every step and then surging beneath her, carrying her to the middle of the Atlantic where she began to call up a new continent, a land free of the old ways, a nation built on the will of its founder.

She called her island "Atlantis." But until MLK's ghost appeared to her, she was unsure just what to do with it.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes

Personality: Very much a dreamy, glass-half-full idealist. Like many idealists, she can become shrill—even vicious—when contradicted. But she does not see herself as a violent person, which makes it necessary to push her very hard before she rips open the ground and drowns you in magma.

Loyalties: Atlantis (3)

Passions: Escaping the Past's Mistakes (2)

Power Suite

Earthquakes and Lava 3d+6HD (90 Points): When pressed, she reluctantly has the earth pulverize, burn, engulf or fling stone against people.

Attacks (+2), Mass Capacity (+2), Radius (+2), Spray 1 (+1), Willpower Bid (-1)

Lunging Shields of Stone 10HD (120 Points): Before she really rumbles someone, she's more likely to protect herself by having shards of rock or metal shoot up to interpose themselves between her and any attack. Or between the attack and someone else.

Defends (+2), Mass Capacity (+2), Range Capacity (+2)

Sculpting the Earth 6d+2HD+2WD (180): She can shape 800,000 tons of stone and metal at will. She has a range of 80 yards. With this, she creates Atlantis, and its magnificent buildings.

Useful (+2), Range Capacity (+2), Booster (Mass) (+6), Permanent (+4), Go Last (-1), Slow (-2), Willpower Bid (-1)

Knowledge (Geology) +1d: It's an instinct, now.

Hyperskill (+1)

+3 Base Will (9 Points): Cynthia is not quite the same wilting flower child she once was.

Destiny: Atlantis is intended as a peaceful utopia where lush soil yields bounties of vegetables and legal marijuana, where the crass consumerism of US culture is negated by the ready access to plenty. It takes Cynthia about four hours to make a large home out of granite, longer if you want something like an elaborate spiral staircase with busts of famous poets worked into the stone of the balusters. Of course, you still need to buy and install windows and you need an outhouse. But the outhouse could be made of perfectly smooth black obsidian, if you like.

Lots of practical back-to-the-land rebels come out with Cynthia in the first wave of settlement, but the plan goes awry fast. Oh sure, the distilling works are fine and people get their first seeds in, but the governments of the world aren't willing to just mellow out and let Atlantis be. No, there's a blockade, and while Cynthia manages to get them to back off without having to hurt anyone, they refuse to leave, or to let ships travel to or from the island.

Then Zipperneck (p. 210) shows with the contents of Fort Knox. Cynthia and Barbara French (p. 218) have no recourse but to fight him, and though they drive him off, the blockading nations pay more attention to the fact that he went to Atlantis than they do to the Atlantean rejection.

The fear and disdain of the First World don't ease until the murdering gangster starts negotiating with them. Jack Grimes (p. 213), under the assumed name "Carlos Moses," replaces the Fort Knox gold, bribes the hell out of countless politicians and initiates diplomatic relations with the US while claiming to be an "Atlantean Ambassador." His metahuman powers buy him a lot of fans on Atlantis, too, when he finally gets there.

Then along comes Ngoc Vo (p. 186), fleeing from Vietnam and bringing loads of Vietnamese refugees with her. Between Vo, Grimes and Carls, Atlantis can get all the land needed, turn it into whatever material is required, and deliver it anywhere in the world, instantly. But the personality clashes are, to say the least, severe.

Grimes starts his bid for power in 1970, getting his followers to demand a formal government—something Cynthia never wanted. It's soon clear that the Atlantean community is fracturing into camps, each rallying behind a high Tier metahuman. Grimes widens the gap by making his followers take a loyalty oath and insisting that he's only using his powers to help those who are pledged to him. Vo refuses to use her powers for his loyalists and, moreover, reveals Grimes' past (not that many believe it). Cynthia tries to mend fences, but the divide is just too wide.

New fissures appear when Cynthia asks Vo to stop bringing people in. While this makes things calmer for the people already there, many of them feel this is a betrayal of Atlantean principles. Some abandon the metahumans altogether, after asking Cynthia to move their houses together in a valley to the south of the island. Meanwhile, Grimes is importing guns.

But while his followers are arming themselves, Grimes himself gets Atlantis recognized by the UN and (on no authority beyond his own) declares it a homeland for Shaw Monsters or "Shavians" (p. 205). The creatures begin flocking to Atlantis and a number of them join Grimes' community, which grows on the island's east side. More of them, however, settle in the south with the individualists and misanthropes.

Despite international recognition, there's still no way to move their first marijuana crop in 1972. But the first tourists begin arriving, and Cynthia starts trying to build a working plumbing infrastructure.

1973 starts with a bang and a whimper. Specifically, several bangs as members of Grimes' "inner circle" try to kill Cynthia, and whimpers from her after she's forced to kill two of them. Vo is unwilling to say one way or the other whether Grimes knew about it, though he denies everything. Cynthia separates his followers from the main island, putting their homes across a hundred-foot causeway. After he tries to claim that his island is the only real Atlantis, Vo teleports him to Fort Leavenworth and Cynthia reluctantly accedes to her followers' requests for a constitutional convention.

The first Atlantean election is in July of 1974, and the four rival cliques form four political

parties. Jack Grimes' followers call themselves "the Progressive Party"; Cynthia's group is dubbed "One World Energy"; Vo's primarily Vietnamese group goes by the name "Atlantean Socialists." And on the outside, the fractious "Faction Four."

One World Energy gets three seats in the nine-person legislature (called "The People's Voice"), tying with Atlantean Socialists. The first executive (or "People's Servant") is an Atlantean Socialist named Dith Nguyen.

Cynthia helps Nguyen keep his promise of building the island's first hospital, a high point of the year. A low point comes when a well-trained and financed group called Remember November attacks and kills Tina Shaw (p. 205), recently moved to Atlantis and at that time the only source of Shaw Monsters.

Seeing 'her' country spiraling out of her control, Cynthia turns to something she can do, and better than anyone else: Control the ground. Joining Abe Sykes (p. 173) in his group "ID/EA," she travels the globe for years, quelling earthquakes or rebuilding in their wake. Even after the group breaks up, she stays close with Abe Sykes. If the tabloids are to be believed, they have an on-again, off-again relationship for the first three years of the '80s.

But that relationship goes nowhere after the Metapocalypse (p. 95) of 1983. While Atlantis is disproportionately targeted by missiles and orbital weapons, it's also disproportionately well-protected. But despite its physical defenses, its social order proves fragile. With Cynthia rebuilding the structures she'd put up in the first place, the property damage is completely undone by the beginning of 1984, but Atlantis' nascent civil structures are harder to repair, and by July of that year, One World Energy is depending on Cynthia personally to protect them, despite her insistence that she cannot be expected to be both cop and army when she never wanted to be either.

Over the protests of her people, Cynthia goes to Mexico in September of 1985 to quell a building earthquake. What she fails to realize is that the Meta-Defense League, a conspiracy of hate against metahumans, has been watching her and waiting

for her to leave Atlantis. They attack her while she's in the middle of quelling the quake and, unable or unwilling to split her attention between the tectonic plates and her own frail self, she falls. They burn her to death with a flamethrower and then 2,000 more die in the quake.

Lin Wen, the Fastest Woman Alive

Career: Student

History: The stereotype that "Asians are all smart" was not so well established in 1968, but even without that, Lin Wen always felt a little slow. She worked hard, she studied, but it always seemed like she was the last one to reach the answer. When there was time pressure, it got worse—instead of taking twice as long, it might take her four times longer than it would a normal high-school student her age. So when the car ran the red light and honked at her, she didn't jump out of the way. She froze. She was panicky, hyperventilating and wishing things would just slow down when they brought her into the E.R.

She didn't even notice the man in the flannel shirt standing unobtrusively in the corner, tipping his ball cap at her.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes

Personality: Initially, Lin is a confused, hesitant and uncertain. As she grows to realize the extent of her power, she goes through a stage of being rebellious, contemptuous of normal folks and even a touch cruel. At that stage, other powered people could redeem her—or push her into true, selfish evil.

Loyalties: Her Nation (2). This is initially the US, later the UK.

Passions: Success (2), Respect (3)

Power Suite

Multiple Actions 10HD (40 Points): This is just as it's described in Wild Talents. When she activates it, she gets ten bonus dice (ordinary ones, not Hard Dice) that she can then add to rolled actions. Once she's spent all those dice, she has to re-activated this power to get more.

Useful (More actions) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

Useful (noncombat) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

Me First 10d (340 Points): Lin not only does more, she gets what she does done faster. Mechanically, this pool doesn't get rolled on its own—it can only alter other pools. But if she rolls a pool that's smaller than 10d, instead of adding this power to the pool, she can use its Extras. This means that results get timed as if they were eight steps Wider. (If she has a pool in excess of 10d, she can just roll the ten dice and get the same timing bonus.)

Attacks (+2), Augments (+4), Go First x8 (+8), If/Then (Augment only) (-1), Touch Only (-2)

Defends (+2), Augments (+4), Go First x8 (+8), If/Then (Augment only) (-1)

Useful (+2), Augments (+4), Go First x8 (+8), If/Then (Augment only) (-1), Self Only (-3)

Hyperrunning 1d+1WD (20 Points): Her Body score would put her at a fairly sedate 10 yards/round or 10 mph sprinting. With this Skill, that increases to 80 yards/round or 80 mph. Though of course, with Body 2 she's not going to sprint any farther than a half mile, even if she's completely terrified.

Hyperskill (+1) Booster (Speed) (+3)

Destiny: Jarvis West (p. 203), Lin's power-brother, drives her into the superhero business. She's not sure if she wants to be a do-gooder, but seeing West's excesses makes her damn sure she doesn't want to be evil. She falls in with a crime-hunting crowd and before she even realizes what's going on, she's got a reputation.

At her best, Lin Wen is simply someone who takes advantage of the fact that heroic feats that are damn near impossible for most people take negligible effort for her. Emptying a burning building of its inhabitants is an effort like giving a neighbor a jump start on a cold morning. Sure, it's kind of a hassle, but to save a dozen lives? Who wouldn't?

At her worst, Lin Wen is a hero and don't you dare forget it. She expects respect. She expects awe. She expects exceptions to be made for her, for the best table to be ready for her and to never need reservations. She can

be uppity, impatient, demanding and cruelly dismissive of everyone whose powers aren't as amazing as her own. She may be a hero, but she can also be a stone-cold bitch.

This duality flourishes most fully after she and Paige Rampling (p. 236) get hired as metahuman defenders for Great Britain. The Irish revolutionary metahuman gang Glóir gives her plenty to do, and when she's done with them London is full of shops, clubs and restaurants.

She's well-paid, superhuman and glamorous. She pushes her way through life, never completes high school, and gets killed in 1983. When she dies, she's 31 years old.

Boris Mizurski, Moral Paragon

Career: Professional

History: Middle class and middle aged, Boris taught middle school history in DC for years before multiple sclerosis caught up with him. A realist with hope, Boris had a lot of students come visit him in his decline. One of them even cried, she told him he didn't understand how he'd helped her just by being around when her parents were getting divorced. Talking to her later, Boris learned that she continued to cry out in the hall. When a man in jeans and work boots asked her what was wrong, she said, "The best teacher I ever had is dying!"

Abe Sykes (p. 173) told her, "Hang in there, kid. There's always hope, right?"

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes

Personality: Pleasant, deferential and hesitant to offend with adults. Firm, composed and expectant with students. As his powers become more and more widely known, he comes to treat more and more people as if they're students under his authority.

Loyalties: Humanity (8)

Passions: Basic Decency (8)

Power Suite

Know Their Hopes 10d (20 Points): Boris has a very limited form of telepathy. Specifically, he gets a sense of the collective hopes and

aspirations of the people within range. It's useful primarily for fueling his Paragonism (see below).

Useful (+2)

Paragonism 8d+5HD (324 Points): When people are around to fuel him with their optimism, he can become the hero they believe in. He gives shape and power to what they need. At a shipwreck, he develops the power to save the drowning. At a fire, he can ease the flames. But his power can never be activated by revenge, hatred, resentment or envy. He can call upon only the highest aspirations of those around him. It should be noted that Boris cannot, himself, inform the powers of Paragonism.

Attacks (+2) Duration (+2), If/Then (Variable Effect only) (-1), If/Then (Only in accordance with the hopes of those around him) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Defends (+2) Duration (+2), If/Then (Variable Effect only) (-1), If/Then (Only in accordance with the hopes of those around him) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Useful (+2) Duration (+2), If/Then (Variable Effect only) (-1), If/Then (Only in accordance with the hopes of those around him) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

+20 Contingent Base Will (20 Points): This is a separate pool, distinct from his regular Will, because this can only be used for Paragonism, giving it a -2 Attached Flaw.

+12 Base Will (36 Points)

Destiny: Boris tries to do the right thing. He defends Boston and does what good is in his considerable and versatile power. It's not long before he earns himself an invitation to the White House, and after a lengthy lunch with President Johnson (p. 169) he agrees to join Johnson's security detail.

In this capacity, he clashes with Howard March (p. 225) in 1970 and 1971. After the second encounter, however, he refuses to return to Johnson's presence and testifies that the president had applied mind control to him. Initially, he's decried as a back-stabber by the press (many of whom were just as enthralled by Johnson's charisma). With Richard Nixon's rise to power, the American public gradually comes to agree with Mizurski, a process no doubt encouraged by his work with Abe Sykes' team ID/EA (p.

41). While often regarded as a tool of western imperialism abroad, Mizurski never lets that stop him from trying to do what's right.

He dies during the 1983 Metapocalypse (p. 95), attempting to shield the US eastern seaboard from attack satellites. He's buried with honors at Arlington National Cemetery, posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, and is the subject of a 50-foot laudatory statue in Boston.

Barbara French, Illuminated

Career: Professional

History: Barb French was a crook, but not in the skeezy Jarvis West (p. 203) style or after the fashion of brute Alphonse Russo (p. 210). No, Barb was a quiet, minor embezzler, and she even felt guilty about it. At first she dipped into her boss' till (she was in the Accounts Receivable department) to get revenge when he belittled and teased her. But getting away with it was pretty intoxicating.

There was a lot of feminist (and revolutionary) rhetoric floating around in 1968 and Barb constructed some half-baked rationales for her thefts, but really? She was stealing 'cause she was greedy, not as an act of rebellion against an oppressive gender hierarchy.

This explains, perhaps, why she was a little distracted one afternoon driving home.

Distracted enough to run a stale yellow and only see at the last minute a surprised teenager standing in the crosswalk. She honked, she tried to swerve out of the way, but that just meant she hit Lin Wen (p. 216) with the corner of her car instead of the front. Barbara bounced over the curb and piled into a lamp post. Her head rebounded off the dashboard and though she wasn't really hurt that bad, she was dazed and bleeding and they took her to the hospital along with Lin. There, Barb got healed by Abe Sykes not long after Lin was.

When the police came to talk to her, all she could think was how much she wished they couldn't see her. Quickly coming to realize she was invisible, she explored the hospital just in time to catch her doctor making a joke about woman drivers. But it didn't bother her much. She was just beginning

to feel how light was bending to her will and responding to her desires.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes

Personality: Quiet, brooding, tends to hold a grudge against those she feels disrespect her. But thoughtful, generous and sympathetic to those who treat her well.

Loyalties: Those She Wrongs Accidentally (1)

Passions: Her Own Dignity (3)

Power Suite

Control Light 10d (100 Points): Barb can play with light the way a teenager plays with gum. She can bend it, color it, diffuse it, intensify it or curve it. That last one's particularly interesting. It means that with a bit of time and attention she can create a stable light-warp around a location. It takes multiple rolls to get 360-degree coverage, but if she's willing to put in the time, anything in that bubble of space has light flow around it, making it essentially invisible. At least, from most perspectives. Within the bubble, light is dim and seems to come in brief shafts from outside. (The intangible 'walls' keeping the light out look like perfect mirrors, though usually curved ones.) Keep in mind that she can affect a 30 yard radius sphere.

It's less amazing but more practical sometimes for her just to defend herself with her power by blurring her image, momentarily blinding an attacker, making it look like she's somewhere she's not or making it look like she's someone she's not.

Defends (+2), Spray 1 (+1)

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Radius (+2)

Laser Zap 10d (140 Points): While she usually prefers subtlety, Barb is not restricted to it. A pulse of phased light can come from nowhere and strike so swiftly that even superhumans don't anticipate it.

Attacks (+2), Penetration 4 (+4), Spray 1 (+1), Speeding Bullet (+2) Go First x5 (+5)

Create Light 10d (60 Points): While she often uses the ambient light, you can't rely on it, and Barb doesn't. From distracting flashes to

silent holograms with photorealistic fidelity and movement, she can project what she needs (though not with the duration of a Control Light effect).

Defends (+2)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2)

Invisibility 10HD (100 Points): When necessary, she can just fall back on her earliest trick. This is the same as stock Invisibility in Wild Talents.

Defends (+2), Duration (+2)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

Destiny: Barb goes back to her old job and uses her powers as little as possible until the reality of metahumans becomes too much to ignore. (Also, her boss starts asking questions about irregularities in the books.) Barb openly demonstrates her abilities in a fight with Jarvis West (p. 203) and, afterwards, goes to Atlantis with no particular plans.

There, Barb is present in the background for much of the island's early history, notably the battle against Zipperneck (p. 210) after he robs Fort Knox. But she can't find a real niche for herself on the island, so when Jason Weeks (p. 195) asks her to help rescue Abe Sykes (p. 173) from Vietnam, she doesn't dismiss it out of hand. That's all The Dream (p. 229) needs to 'encourage' her until she agrees. Though the mission is scary, it's also exhilarating, and she comes very close to agreeing when a group of Atlanteans asks her to turn a cargo ship invisible and smuggle their first marijuana crop past a naval blockade. But she doesn't do it. Something about it feels... wrong. Eventually, the snubbing and whining from the frustrated pot farmers pushes her right off the island.

She's in London, seeing the sights, when a group of IRA metahumans attack. To her shock, she sees Lin Wen, the girl she'd hit with her car, fighting them—in a superhero costume! While she'd apologized for hitting her not many months earlier (at a sort of 'family reunion' for the people who got powers from Abe Sykes), Barb still feels bad about it and, before she knows what she's doing, she goes invisible and starts to blind and disorient the Irish attackers. Then she sees one

of them (Terrence O'Shay, page 242) casually blanket a crowd with flame.

She's so shocked she does nothing. She has a clear shot, he has no idea she's there, she could laser his brain to the boiling point, but she does... nothing.

She never tells anyone about it afterwards, but she asks Lin if the Brits are still hiring superheroes. She finds out that the terrorists are called Glóir, and she makes herself such a pain in their asses that they assassinate her in 1982.

Pfc. Joe Smith, Just Some Guy

Career: Soldier

History: When people joke about his name, Joe Smith just shrugs and suggests that his parents weren't very creative. But it's a common first name, a common last name, and you'd expect, hearing it, someone who isn't special.

Joe heard that a lot growing up, and other than being an above-average bass player and having premature gray hair starting at age 16, there wasn't a lot about Joe Smith that stood out.

In Vietnam, however, Smith became a member of a select group. He, along with three other members of his fire team and a medic, were the only Americans to survive an attack from Ky "Sét" Thientong (p. 182).

They got lucky. Ky was still learning the parameters of his power. He knew single blasts were devastating and that when he split his power, the individual detonations left larger fragments in their wake. But when he experimented with dividing his power into five spheres while devastating a heavily fortified US base (from a position ten miles away), he weakened his power to the point that not only did most of the people in the initial blast survive, one of the five blasts was a complete dud. The white sphere struck and radiated, things trembled a little... but that was it.

There was a lot of confusion and fear, of course. The people in those other four blast sites were mostly unconscious. Sergeant Henry Dowd (p. 206) told his troops to run for the jungle, and Ian Kraus (p. 222) followed. It was just luck that

they got there before the second barrage, one effective enough to leave everyone else knocked out, and 90% of them dead. A third blast sealed the deal, and reports from the Vietcong spotters in the jungle ensured that Sét Thientong never strained his powers like that again.

It got interesting for the fire team when the enemy closed in looking for survivors. Dowd and Kraus started defending themselves. Privates Riitzi (p. 207) and Faran (p. 223) vanished from sight, but made their presences felt. And Joe?

The Vietcong ignored him. They acted like he was one of them. To his great unease, he realized he could understand everything they were saying, that he knew just what to do to fit in, that his appearance could shift at need to make him blend.

It took him two days to get close to Ky Thientong. He had a stolen .45 pointed at the back of Sét's head when a sharp voice cried, "Look out!" Thientong flinched, the bullet hit Ky's shoulder, and without that warning Joe Smith would have destroyed Vietnam's deadliest weapon (at that time). But that misfortune was evened out by his luck at escaping and getting back to the Army. Very few people could have eluded Nguyet Cam's pursuit (p. 164), for it was she who arrived in time to save Sét. Had he known, he could have killed her instead, an opportunity he regretted until his dying day.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Ky Thientong

Personality: Joe's a comedian, happy to make himself the butt of a joke if it's a good one, willing to mock others if he likes them enough. A performer by nature, his power seems to have fulfilled his fears about himself, rather than his hopes. But with those powers he makes himself one of the most feared espionage and covert operations assets of the late 20th centuries.

Loyalties: The USA (2), His Unit (2)

Passions: Music (1)

Power Suite

Dead Ringer 10HD (120 Points): Joe can change his appearance, but only to become unremarkable by the standards of the people around him. He can't mimic particular people,

but he is unparalleled at looking like the idea of a certain type of person. He can look just like you'd expect a car mechanic in Bangkok to look, or a mid-level Chinese bureaucrat, or the member of a crowd in an African mosque.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for appearances) (-1), If/Then (Must look like someone who would be expected to be there) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Fit In 10HD (120 Points): Private Smith possesses a very limited form of telepathy, and it operates entirely underneath his (or anyone else's) level of perception. He can understand whatever he needs to in order to carry on the role he has adopted. All languages are open to him, as long as he's in the presence of someone who knows it. He knows the passwords to restricted areas and knows enough to ask about the Vice President's wife. But this power does not give him actual skills. If he masquerades as a doctor, he can answer questions in a way that the listener would expect, but he can't perform surgery. (If disguised as an O.R. nurse, however, he'd be able to hand over the tools requested because the doctor would know exactly what was wanted. Therefore, so would Joe.)

Useful (Understand languages) (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Only when around those who also understand) (-1)

Useful (Know how to act to escape notice) (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Only when around those who can provide the knowledge) (-1)

Illusions 9d+1WD (156 Points): Joe's illusions occupy a curious position between "there" and "not there." Creating an illusory crowbar won't help him dig out a nail, nor can an illusory boat let him float on water. But if he shoots you with an illusory gun, your body not only feels like it got shot, there's an excellent chance you display spontaneous wounds and, no matter what anyone says, you won't believe it's all in your head because you can see it and feel the blood dripping. His false images do not displace objects (even air) but they can be heard and they show up on photos. And yes, if he cuts someone's head off with an illusory machete, that person is quite likely to die. Except as listed below, this is pretty much the Illusions power from Wild Talents. Pay good attention to that "If/Then"

limit, of course. If he's looking like a doctor, people won't expect him to have a machete.

Attacks (+2), If/Then (Illusion must fit expectations) (-1), Radius (+2), Spray 1 (+1)

Defends (+2), If/Then (Illusion must fit expectations) (-1), Radius (+2), Spray 1 (+1)

Useful (+2), If/Then (Illusion must fit expectations) (-1), Radius (+2), Spray 1 (+1)

+1 Lie (1 Point): It's a hyperskill. Comes easy to him.

Hyperskill (+1)

+1 Base Will (3 Points): Being a superhero is even more of a confidence builder than being in a rock band.

Destiny: Joe sees a lot of action in Vietnam. He penetrates the base of the Progress Cadre (p. 353) to make sure they get copies of *Fog in the Swamps of Free Will*. If it was up to him, he'd have just killed them, but the officers assured him he was a lot likelier to get out alive if he went in, dropped the books, and left. He fights in the Laotian *Götterdämmerung* and, after the war ends, goes undercover in Cambodia to assist an insurgency against its Progressive Harmony government.

In between, he jet sets around the world infiltrating militaries, terror cells and hostile governments. Joe rarely bothers himself with subtleties: His commanders tell him what to go get, and he gets it. After a close call in Russia, they take him out of Soviet missions for most of the 70s. (It turns out Bich Thi Nguyen, described on p. 207, was able to deduce his presence.) They make an exception in 1980, though, when it's imperative to scuttle a Soviet particle beam satellite.

It's the Metapocalypse that changes him. Joe's used to being the weird and unexpected factor in a situation that seems utterly normal. When normalcy fails in 1983, his controllers can't get hold of him and he's thrown into survival mode during a week of anarchy on the eastern seaboard. His powers let him blend, but he doesn't like what he has to blend with.

During the reconstruction effort, Joe's frustrated by his powers' lack of applicability. He

experiences a deep depression and it affects his work. DETectors (p. 321) are increasingly common and after a hostage extraction nearly goes south hard, Joe declares himself “too old for this spy shit” and retires at the age of 36.

His controllers aren’t too happy, but when they discuss using a telepath to erase Joe’s more ‘sensitive’ memories, one of the generals in the room draws a sidearm, pistol-whips the security director, says, “I shoulda known, you bastards. See you in hell.” Joe Smith drops his disguise long enough to make them strip and tie one another up, then strolls out of the Pentagon, never to be seen or heard from again.

Ian Kraus, Radiant Justice

Career: Professional

History: Ian’s parents were a nurse and a doctor, and he grew up with the expectation that he’d become a surgeon like his dad. That collective ambition took a detour in the jungles of Vietnam.

Ian volunteered to be a medic, leaving med school after his second year. Motivated primarily by patriotism, he wasn’t sure if he had what it took to kill, but he was quite confident he’d be more use to his country keeping its soldiers alive.

Ironically, it was one of those soldiers who kept him alive. When Ky Thientong (p. 182) attacked, Ian had no idea what to do. The shuddering buildings, the screams falling silent—it was too much. He’d been on duty for two days and hadn’t been able to sleep.

Lucky for Ian, and eventually many others, Sergeant Henry Dowd (p. 206) was on hand to grab him by the arm and shout, “Hump it for the bushes, go!” They were out of the range of the second blast and Ian joined the tiny number who could claim to have survived Sét.

He didn’t appreciate his luck at the time, though he understood he’d narrowly missed a deadly fate. Death continued to miss him when Vietcong scout units showed up to check over Thientong’s efforts. Three of the soldiers with him were able to elude the enemy and strike from hiding with deadly effect. Sergeant Dowd didn’t hide. He

just ripped trees out of the ground and flung them at the enemy.

Ian? Ian didn’t even know what he was doing or that he was doing it. But troops who aimed at Ian found themselves terrified, curling up and whimpering, as Ian had done. When a sniper’s bullet tore through Dowd’s leg, that sniper’s own leg erupted with equal injury.

Ian had become the balancer of scales. Any injury done in his presence was turned back on the attacker. Any fear felt was copied and directed at the one who caused it.

Ian got out as quickly as he honorably could, he went back to med school and became a doctor, but by then he knew his power. He started out volunteering at a battered women’s shelter, but in time moved on to bigger and better things.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Ky Thientong

Personality: To a shocking degree, Ian is not that interested in himself. He has the basic self-regard that’s hard-wired into the human experience, and his teenage angst was exceptionally intense, but after that he seemed to get over himself. He could easily have turned into a snob, he could have developed a messiah complex, but he likes helping people and finds that doing something about other people’s suffering keeps any troubles from his own life in perspective.

Loyalties: Justice (10)

Passions: Helping the Blameless Needy (7)

Power Suite

Reflect Injury 10HD (240 Points): Whenever Ian or someone within about twenty feet of him is the victim of a deliberate physical injury, that selfsame injury appears on the attacker’s body. Given his range boost, even long range attacks, possibly up to the level of cruise missiles, can be retributively reflected. Note that if one person harms many, he gets all that injury back. If many people harm one, each of them gets the injury he inflicts. Naturally, this power can’t harm anyone who isn’t aggressive. Additionally, it’s selective: Those Ian favors can attack with impunity.

Attacks (+2), Variable Effects (+4), Range Boost (+4), If/Then (Only to mimic injuries inflicted) (-1), Non-Physical (+2), Controlled Effect (+1)

Reflect Terror 10HD (120 Points): If a person does something that scares Ian, that person faces the same fear, usually in the form of a forced Stability check.

Useful (+2), Range Boost (+4), If/Then (Only to reflect fear on those who frighten Ian) (-1), Controlled Effect (+1)

+1 Empathy (1 Point): He's a sensitive guy.

Hyperskill (+1)

+13 Base Will (39 Points): Ian knows himself. That's one good thing that happened to him in Vietnam.

Destiny: Ian does most of his do-gooding on the individual scale, but in 1974 Abe Sykes (p. 173) asks him to keep an eye on his daughter Amy (p. 177). Ian agrees: If you're a healer (even just a mundane M.D.) and Abe Sykes asks you to do something, you do it. Opening a practice in the small town where Amy's hidden, Kraus becomes a friend to the family. When Zipperneck (p. 210) attacks Amy's high school, it takes Ian seven minutes to get there. In that time, Zipperneck kills 22 bystanders.

Initially enraged that Kraus was 'spying' on her, Amy forgives him later that year. In December of 1974, Kraus persuades Andrew Colt (p. 168) to help him conceal Amy's mission to find and disable the terrorist group Remember November—a mission he takes as his own. Though he's unable to accompany her to South America after a Remember November gunfight leaves a bullet in his leg, Kraus remains close to the Sykes family. In 1980 he becomes one of the rare people who can say he helped rescue the Progenitor. Recruited by General Colt, he helps round up the mid-tier assault team that The Disease (p. 250) sends against Amanda Sykes. Thanks to Colt's preparations and Kraus' powers, the attackers are subdued without fatalities.

But Kraus rarely acts as a superhero on the national scale. He returns to his small-town practice, only emerging into the spotlight when his powers uniquely suit him to counter a threat, or when something particularly upsets his ideas

of right and wrong. One such upset is in 1982, when Zipperneck leads a trio of supervillains who try to hold the World's Fair hostage, demanding money and a ban on gays holding public office in the US. Kraus' decision to combat this particular threat provokes speculation about his private life, though many homophobes insist that it's the presence of Zipperneck that draws him out.

Pfc. Hector Faran

Career: Soldier

History: Hector grew up in Los Angeles, played football and wrestled, and joined the Army because he felt a strong, sure urge to kick ass. He was just a big, hairy, testosterone-laden guy looking for some excitement. Vietnam gave him all he could handle and then some.

By the time Ky Thientong (p. 182) bombed his base, Hector wasn't just aggressive—he was angry all the time. He'd lost friends, and he couldn't write off the imbalance between his grief and fear at their deaths, and the fatalities he was dealing out himself. Despite any sorrow or unease, however, he still never felt as alive as in the heart of conflict. Something in him loved a firefight, loved the deadly hide-and-seek of jungle patrol, just as he'd loved contact sports.

When Hector and the rest of his fire team (including Joe Smith, p. 220, and Ian Kraus, p. 222) soaked up Ky Thientong's excess dark energy, Hector found himself able to absorb the very terrain around him. Or perhaps it was the terrain that absorbed Hector. Whichever, he could become one with the geography, perceiving everyone and everything within a ten-yard radius as if it was his own body. Outside that radius he could see and hear normally. Moreover, the terrain defended him, and he could strike with it.

Hector soon racked up an impressive body count in Vietnam, but it was oddly unsatisfying. Unlike his equally-deadly colleague Achille Riitzi (p. 207), Hector wasn't much of a sadist. He wanted competition.

When he learned about The Monument (p. 183) he knew where he'd find the challenge he craved.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Ky Thientong

Personality: Hearty, intense, macho and tough. He's got a perverse kind of optimism—it arises from seeing any bad turn as another challenge to overcome. And there's nothing he likes more than overcoming a challenge.

(This tendency explains the weird and complex on-again/off-again sexual relationship that, over the decades, forms between him and Nguyet Cam during his Vietnam years. Nguyet is described on p. 164.)

Loyalties: The USA (2)

Passions: Excitement, Adventure and Danger (2)

Power Suite

Melt Into the Environment 9HD (144 Points): Hector liquefies or turns into gas and infects the matter in a 10 yard radius around him. He can move the epicenter of this “self-infection” at a normal human's running speed. He is difficult to hurt when melded—more so in a metal or stone environment than in a watery or plant-rich area. In addition to moving unseen through an area, he can cause changes in the terrain as well.

When he occupies part of a house, he can cause shorts in electrical circuits, make fixtures come loose and fall, or move furniture like a poltergeist to hurt anyone who ticks him off. If he occupies a forest, tree branches swing and strike, while roots reach up to grab and stones jut up from the ground just where the tripped foe falls. In a city, parked cars swerve, objects fall off windowsills, boards come loose from the fronts of buildings and sail at his enemies with bruising force.

To attack him when he's absorbed, it's necessary to attack the environment—chopping at trees, blowing up walls or boiling water into steam. Sometimes, of course, this works better than other times.

Note that because his Defends quality has Range, he can use this power to protect other people within its range, even if they're outside the radius he occupies. Similarly, his attacks can reach out to the full extent of the range—they're not limited to where (or what) he is. This means it's

often possible for him to strike people who have no idea where to strike back.

Defends (+2), Range (+2), Radius (+2)

Useful (Perceptions) (+2), Endless (+2), Willpower Bid (-1), Full Power Only (-1)

Heavy Armor 3HD (24 Points): No matter the terrain, the very fact of being in a form without vulnerable organ groupings gives Hector some protection while melded.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Attached (Melt Into the Environment) (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3)

Stone Defense 4HD (24 Points): When he is in an area that's primarily rock, stone, metal, concrete or the like, he gets additional protection. Except for the conditions, this is just Heavy Armor.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Attached (Melt Into the Environment) (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Only when in a hard environment) (-1), Interference (+3)

Pliant Defense 9HD (36 Points): When he's in an area that's mostly flexible stuff—grass, turf, water, lumber—he has a different type of defense. Other than the conditions, it's hardened Light Armor.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Attached (Melt Into the Environment) (-2), Endless (+3), If/Then (Only in a soft environment) (-1), Hardened Defense (+2)

Immune (Organic Attacks) 3HD (30 Points): When he's melded, the normal human risks of poison, smothering, and thirst are no longer issues.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), Attached (Melt Into the Environment) (-2), Variable Effects (+4)

Hard Attack 7d (35 Points): When in a hard environment he can bring various crushing and smashing forces to bear. It does Width 3 Shock and Killing with Penetration 5.

Attacks 3 (+5), Penetration 5 (+5), Attached (Melt Into the Environment) (-2), If/Then (Only in a hard environment) (-1), Slow (-2)

Soft Attack 4HD+4WD (24 Points): In soft environments he can strangle, strike and otherwise clobber. It does Width+1 Shock and can only be dodged and parried by those with Coordination of 6 or more.

Attacks 1 (+3), Limited Damage (Shock Only) (-1),
Speeding Bullet (+2), Attached (Melt Into the Environment)
(-2), If/Then (Only in a soft environment) (-1)

Burning Attack 4HD+4WD (24 Points):

Sometimes he's in a burning environment. Then he can burn people. It does Width Shock and Killing and burns.

Attacks (+2), Burn (+2), Attached (Melt Into the Environment) (-2), If/Then (Only in a fiery environment) (-1)

Electrical Attack 7d (35 Points): If he's in a place wired for electricity, or he's being a clear or hilly area during a thunderstorm, he can electrocute. It does Width in Shock and Killing with Penetration 5, and it grounds itself.

Attacks (+2), Electrocutes (+1), Penetration 5 (+5),
Attached (Melt Into the Environment) (-2), If/Then (Only in an electrically charged environment) (-1)

Smother Attack 8d (24 Points): If he's in an aqueous environment, or something else very liquid or pliant, or something poisonous, he can envelop enemies and kill them that way. It does Width in Shock and Killing damage, it ignores armor and can only be dodged or parried by people with 6+ Coordination. On the other hand, people prepared with SCUBA gear, gas masks (in certain situations) or dark energy abilities that preclude such attacks are immune. It's also possible to delay the attack by holding one's breath.

Attacks (+2), Non-Physical (+2), Attached (Melt Into the Environment) (-2), If/Then (Only in a watery or poisonous gas environment) (-1), Speeding Bullet (+2)

Destiny: Hector is in the thickest, hairiest, weirdest metahuman battles of the Vietnam war. He gets to test himself against Dac Kien Truc several times, most spectacularly during the Laotian Götterdämmerung. Each mangles the other pretty fiercely, but neither wins a decisive victory.

After 'Nam, Hector joins the Secret Service and interposes himself between Squeaky Fromme and Richard Nixon in 1975. Cocky and brash, he easily agrees to go up against a group of radical Hanafi Muslims in 1977. They've seized three DC buildings, but Faran figures it'll be easy to get inside and pick them off one by one. He's

wrong. The terrorists have metahumans of their own, and the situation escalates to the point where the government sends in Henry Dowd (page 206) to back up Faran, which is a bit like sending in a chain saw to back up a scalpel. By the end of the fight, all the Muslims and Hector Faran are dead, along with two cops, three soldiers and 110 civilians.

Faran's posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

Tier Four

Howard "Reddy" March

Career: Soldier

History: A fiery speaker for Black Power, Howard "Reddy" March left a position at the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in 1968 to join the Black Panthers. There his passion and rhetorical skill pushed him to enough prominence that, when J. Edgar Hoover (see p. 189) was first learning of his own powers, he scanned March and, in the process, passed dark energy on to the Black Power advocate.

Initially, Hoover's understanding of March let the FBI director deal more constructively with the Panthers. But when March's own powers manifested, he struck cold, absolute terror into the hearts of America's law enforcement communities. He spent much of 1968 traveling the American south, forcibly imposing 'racial enlightenment' on various sheriffs and elected officials. But Hoover always seemed to guess March's next move, and in August of 1968, Reddy was run to ground in Perryville, Arkansas. Police surrounded the house where Howard was hiding, demanded that everyone inside emerge with their hands up and, when no one had within sixty seconds, they set the house on ablaze and opened fire with submachineguns. The four men and two women who were in the house with Howard were all killed, but Howard escaped, killing two police officers. (Two more were killed when a hand grenade intended for Howard went wide.) March was wounded, but escaped the police cordon and disappeared somewhere in Texas.

Howard laid low for most of 1969, constantly on the move and never daring to draw attention

to himself. But in early 1970, he attempted to assassinate President Johnson, inveighing against “presidential mind control” before being subdued by Boris Mizurski (p. 217) and Henry Dowd (p. 206)—both of whom had been extensively conditioned by the president for total loyalty.

Held in extreme confinement, Howard March escaped in May 1971. His lawyers had been kept from consulting with their client, because the guards cited security concerns about approaching him. When permitted to speak to March from a distance, the attorneys again lodged a complaint, decrying the lack of privacy and insisting that they needed to be alone, face to face, with March. Finally obtaining a court order, the lawyers went into March’s cell without a guard escort and promptly vanished, along with the prisoner.

Facing relentless FBI pursuit, in September 1971 March managed to get to Attica prison during the riots. Between the prisoners within and an unexpected superhuman attacking from without, the police cordon was broken and the riot turned into a mass breakout. The National Guard was mobilized, as were Dowd and Mizurski, but this time the addition of Ian Kraus (p. 222) immediately stilled violence while escalating the fear to hysterical levels. Mass, panicky flight from the site caused some fatalities, but probably fewer than a superhuman battle above a clash between soldiers and escaping prisoners.

The most important result of the Attica jailbreak, however, was Mizurski’s refusal to speak with President Johnson again. Asserting that he’d been victimized by mind control, Mizurski became a prominent figure in the marches and protests against the president.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover

Personality: Passionate, strident, sometimes abrasive or intimidating but always uncompromising with his ideals.

Destiny: After escaping the Attica battle, March reluctantly flees the US. He hides in Europe for a few years, but after murdering his fellow prison-escapee James Earl Ray in 1977, he runs to Africa. There he becomes involved with the ANC and, in the process of trying to help

Winston Koetke (p. 238) hide from persecution, accidentally infuses Winston with dark energy. Koetke’s alternate perspective leads him to change his name to “Å” and found an influential new religion. He also faces a manhunt and showdown of epic proportions with the police and security forces, and flees. It’s not just their willingness to use military hardware on him that scares him off. It’s their willingness to accept scores of incidental black casualties.

Reddy’s connection to Åism is somewhat strained. They revere him as a saint, albeit an unwitting one. He appreciates their adoration and support, but just can’t see it as anything but a stupendous pile of horseshit. He is careful to keep this opinion to himself, of course.

Horseshit or no, Howard doesn’t hesitate to recruit Åites to help him return to the US in 1980 to inflame the race riots in Florida. After doing what he can there to draw attention to racial inequality (by making things as violent and confusing as possible) he leaves the country again, this time hiding out in Mexico. He initially plans to flee deeper into Central America, but love ambushes him when he’s least expecting it. He marries a woman named Malinche Cuellar and settles down, to the extent that he’s able.

During the 1983 crisis, he tries to get back to the United States, but is hampered by the upheaval going on in his adopted home in Tampico. Ultimately, he stays in Mexico to protect his wife and child. But his failure to reach the US and shape the chaos during the Metapocalypse (p. 95) is his great regret until his death.

His last return to the US is in 1992, in the wake of the Rodney King verdict. Tracking down the metahuman cop who electrocuted King and got off, Howard fights and kills him and two other Federal metahumans. But in the process he gets infected with one of the metacop’s intelligent bio-weapons, which reprograms his regeneration powers to tear his body to pieces instead of rebuilding it.

Howard March in death remains a controversial figure. Lauded as a revolutionary for black rights, and as an Åite saint, he’s also condemned as a vigilante, terrorist and anarchist.

Loyalties: Black Power (2)

Passions: Revolution (2)

Power Suite

Race Reversal Ray 10d (100 Points): A beam that radiates from March's hands or eyes, the Race Reversal Ray has two effects on those struck by it. First, it switches their race. If they are black (according to March's subjective standards of what qualifies as black and non-black), it turns them white: They gain caucasian features as well as the skin tone and hair color of a white European. Anyone who isn't black becomes black, gaining the color, hair and facial features common to Africa.

The second and more startling effect is that it instantly creates memories of a parallel reality in which everything was the same except for the target's family's race. For example, a white southern police officer struck by the beam would remember growing up as a black child in the same town—if schools were segregated, he'd remember going to the black school. These artificial memories are proven to be quite accurate: That police officer might never meet a woman who attended that segregated school in his "white life" but could recall a romance and even marriage to her. She would remember nothing of the sort, having experienced only the actual course of reality.

These memories do not replace the individual's native memories, but rather exist beside and interleaved with them. Similarly, though the target's look is completely different, his fingerprints don't change.

It should be noted that March almost never uses this on black people.

Useful (Change into alternate universe self) (+2),
Permanent (+4), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2), Daze (+1)

Mind Freeing 10HD (120 Points): March always believed that most people were sheep, pushed around by anyone with an aggressive personality (like his own). He always said his mission was to wake people up to the oppression that was not only happening, but was blindly accepted. He developed the power to do just



that, though he was disappointed that many who were freed chose to give that freedom away again, almost immediately.

People affected by Mind Freeing gain Width in Free Will tokens. These tokens can be spent to resist mind control and influence powers as if they were Base Will. March uses this power by speaking, and even those who hear him on a radio or TV broadcast can be affected.

Useful (+2), On Hearing (+1), Area (+6), Spray 1 (+1),
Delayed Effect (-2), Mental Strain (-2)

Regeneration 2HD (20 Points): This is just as it's described in Wild Talents.

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3)

Light Armor 5HD (30 Points): Just like in Wild Talents.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3)

Heavy Armor 2HD (24 Points): No surprises here. It's just like Wild Talents.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3),
Interference (+3)

Body 8d+1HD+1WD (56 Points): No changes, just normal ol' superstrength.



Tyler T. Ford, Violator

Career: Crook

History: J. Edgar Hoover (p. 189), whatever his other flaws, was a dedicated lawman who did what he could to put the worst of humankind behind bars. It was that impulse that led him to apply his dangerous powers to people on the Most Wanted list, thereby turning several of them into far greater threats than they were before.

Tyler T. Ford was sometimes called “Model T” by his friends before they disavowed him for (among other things) rape, murdering his grandmother and getting into a shootout with the cops. On the run in 1969, he seemed an excellent candidate for Hoover to find via duplication.

What Hoover experienced as Tyler Ford, he never shared with anyone, not even his close confidante Clyde Tolson. All Tolson knew was that Hoover had said he was going to “make a special investigation,” (their catchphrase for Hoover’s strange new ability). Hoover closed the door to his office, and then there were horrible sounds from within. Tolson rushed in and grappled with someone who was apparently Ford. Tolson

was badly bruised before the figure before him began to shrink back into the familiar form of the Director. Hoover spent the next twenty minutes sweaty, shaking and vomiting.

Ford’s just that kind of guy. Less smart than cunning, his gift of power manifested as protection from detection, and a brand new way to violate people.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover

Personality: An absolutely remorseless sadist. He values nothing so much as power over others, and given the choice between inflicting emotional or physical harm, his response is always, “Don’t make me choose!” Well suited to isolation, Tyler derives all the company he needs or wants from the victims whose memories he devours like candy as their bodies burst in a shower of gore.

Loyalties: His Personal Freedom (1)

Passions: Intimate Ruination (3)

Power Suite

Invisibility 9HD (72 Points): When Model T. doesn’t want to be noticed, your eyes slide right off him. He’s vulnerable to cameras, but during his prime years public closed-circuit TV isn’t that widespread, especially in the small towns he prefers.

Defends (+2), Duration (+2), No Physical Change (-1)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), No Physical Change (-1)

Without a Trace 9HD (180 Points): Indications of Ford’s presence and passage are ignored, suppressed and forgotten. Clairvoyants can’t find him either. Even expert detectives overlook his footprints and fingerprints—unless, of course, he wants them to be found.

Useful (+2), Range Boost (+5), Subtle (+1), Controlled Effect (+1), Endless (+3), No Physical Change (-1), Speeding Bullet (+2), Self Only (-3)

Violate 8HD (96 Points): Tyler’s favorite power works like this. He sees someone. He wants to destroy that person. When he gets in range, he activates his power, slams through the

intervening space (passing harmlessly through anything or anybody in the way) and occupies the same location. The victim explodes, but not before Tyler gets into their mind as well as their body. He steals memories—not dry things like knowledge and competencies, but personal, emotional memories. Sometimes he uses these cherished recollections to taunt survivors, but more often he just enjoys them, the way a kleptomaniac might secretly fondle the underpants he stole off a clothesline.

Attacks (+2), Engulfs (+2), Disintegrates (+2), Exhausted (-3)

Useful (Steal memories) (+2), Exhausted (-3)

Useful (He gains 1 Willpower per kill) (+2), Exhausted (-3)

Useful (Move into victim's space) (+2), Exhausted (-3)

Hyperdodge +2: Even the people who can see him instinctively don't want to watch him.

Hyperskill (+1)

Destiny: Tyler T. Ford leaves a surprisingly small footprint on history, for a mighty Tier Four supervillain. In many ways, his goals are modest. All he wants is a full belly, a tank of gas for whichever car he's stolen, a rape every other week or so and to stalk and destroy someone once a month. In the summer, usually every other month. He phones the media now and again to gloat, sends Christmas cards to his pursuers and mementoes to his victims, but since he's not killing people by the score (like Sét, p. 182), committing mass mind-control atrocities (like Jarvis West, p. 203) or performing flashy, headline-grabbing stunts (like Zipperneck, p. 210) "Model T" doesn't attract all that much attention from superheroes. The normal police are terrified, and rightly so. They have no way to deal with him.

In this fashion, Tyler Ford haunts the small towns of America for seventeen years. Unfortunately for Ford, his poor health habits (smoking, lots of fried food, frequent exposure to blood) take their toll and in October 1985 he collapses in a diner in Vermont. With no ID, no title for his car and nothing but a couple thousand dollars in cash, Ford catches police attention and wakes up in the hospital chained to his bed. He escapes, but without any meaningful medical treatment. Abducting a doctor in Boston and trying to force

him to "fix me," Ford catches the attention of Alyssa Veronne (p. 233) and, after a lengthy chase, her host corners and kills him in early 1986.

Martin Luther King Jr., "The Dream"

Career: Politician

History: The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Junior was born in 1929 to a middle class family of black Americans. He skipped two grades in high school, never formally graduated and entered college anyway. At the age of 19 he got his degree from Moorhouse. He went on to the Crozer Theological seminary and got his Bachelors of Divinity by 1951.

By 1954 he was married to Coretta Scott and serving at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery Alabama. In addition to his pastoral duties, he continued his education, getting a Ph.D from Boston University in 1955.

1955 was also the year of the Montgomery bus boycott, a 385 day contest with the state's racially unequal laws. During that year of nonviolent resistance, King got arrested and his house was bombed. Rather than back down, it spurred him to help found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957.

In 1958 he was stabbed in the chest during a book signing in Harlem, but despite the close brush with death, he continued to organize demonstrations against unjust laws. 1961's efforts in Albany, Georgia were, at best, a mixed success. The police swept up demonstrators in mass arrests, the government made promises and broke them as soon as MLK (and his attendant media attention) left town, and eventually the effort ran out of steam in the face of authorities who refused to get drawn in to an overreaction.

There was no such temperance in Birmingham in 1963. Boycotting racist businesses, organizing sit-ins and deliberately attempting to fill the jails beyond capacity, King recruited the young for his actions and the notorious Eugene "Bull" Connor of the Birmingham police department responded by turning fire hoses and dogs on the protesters—children included. The ongoing cruelty shocked the nation and culminated with a bomb destroying the hotel where King had been

staying. The images of repression were broadcast throughout the world (particularly by the USSR) and buoyed King's numbers for a march on Washington DC later the same year. That march on DC was the occasion of his famed "I Have a Dream" speech.

It was 1963 when Robert Kennedy directed the FBI to begin tapping King's phones. J. Edgar Hoover (p. 189) considered King a grave threat to America and used information from the taps in a campaign of harassment. Hoover's abuse culminated with anonymous threats of blackmail and the suggestion that King commit suicide. King didn't.

His career continued with a march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965—the same year he began speaking out against the Vietnam war. The violence that met the Selma demonstrators was equalled or bested by the rage of Chicago's citizens when King began protesting there in 1966. During one march, King got hit with a brick.

His fame and influence began to wane after Chicago, however. By 1968 he was shifting his focus from the plight of American blacks to justice for the poor of all races. The Civil Rights movement was beginning to face internal tensions when King went to support a garbage workers' strike in Memphis. It was there that James Earl Ray shot and killed him.

Or so it seemed.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover

Personality: Grave, serious and implacable in his pursuit of equality.

Loyalties: Christianity (6)

Passions: Social Justice (6)

Power Suite

Insubstantial 2HD (32 Points): MLK can push through solid matter with the same degree it would take a normal person to push through a similar-sized quantity of gelatin. He does not damage objects (or people) when he phases through them. He can (for example) choose to walk up a staircase and then, midway up, phase down

through it. Or he could simply climb up the side of a sheer face by sticking his hands into it. However, he cannot speak, make sounds or move matter.

Defends (+2), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1), Self Only (-3), 2 Levels of Useful (+2), Out of Phase (-1)

Teleport 3d+6HD+1WD (152 Points): He's got a range over 29 million miles but can't carry anything with him.

Defends (+2)

Useful (+2), Self Only (-3), Range Boost (+7)

Control (Emotions) 10d (50 Points):

While he could use this to turn mild irritation into raging anger, he's more likely to use it to ease aggression and project hope. Of course, he's not above using it to mislead people into trusting deceivers. As long as it's for a good cause. Because it's subtle, people rarely realize he's doing it to them (though it may be more noticeable to onlookers). He has to touch people to do it, but given his teleportation, invisibility and insubstantiality, this is not that hard.

Useful (Control feelings) (+2), Interference (+3), Subtle (-1), Spray (+1), Touch Only (-2)

Useful (Do it telepathically) (+2)

Invisibility 5HD (90 Points): In addition to being unseen, he's unheard as well. He cannot turn this power off, no matter how strongly he longs to.

Defends (+2), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1)

Useful (Invisible) (+2), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1), Self Only (-3)

Useful (Inaudible) (+2), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1), Self Only (-3)

Illusions 8d (8 Points): With some effort, MLK can make people see and hear things that aren't really there. This is not a psychic effect, it's more like a hologram or a tape recording. If he tries to use it to make people think what they're seeing is real, or what they're hearing is coming from something other than thin air, he has to beat a Scrutiny roll. He can only do this once per scene and needs to invest six points of Willpower while the illusion is active. But on the plus side, once

it's up it stays up a whole scene and it can cover everything within a ten yard sphere.

Note that this is his only means of concrete communication with people. Altering emotions can certainly help people become receptive to his ideas, but to speak words or show details, he needs to use this.

Useful (+2), Radius (+2), Exhausted (-3), Duration (+2), If/Then (Only for sight and sound) (-1), Willpower Investment (-1)

+6 Base Will (18 Points): He was a forceful, determined person who wasn't deterred by multiple bombings, being stabbed, and getting hit with masonry even before he had dark energy.

Destiny: King's body gets autopsied and buried, provoking international mourning over his martyrdom. But three days later, a vision of the Reverend appears to his wife and children. Though they can neither hear nor touch him, they all describe a tremendous sense of peace and radiant hope.

J. Edgar Hoover's very first use of his powers had been to scan MLK, and in the process he unwittingly passed that same dark energy on to a man Hoover considered a menace. When the bullet struck, King's consciousness rebuilt itself as an immaterial energy construct. In that form, soon known as "The Dream" to those who witness it, the ghost of a righteous martyr haunts the 20th century.

MLK spends most of 1969 unravelling the mysteries of dark energy powers, meeting Abe Sykes (p. 173) and Jason Weeks (p. 195) in the process. His awareness is key to uncovering an assassination plot against Weeks, which he foils alongside Abe and Amy Sykes (p. 177). He provides advice and consolation to Cynthia Carls (p. 214), encouraging her to think big and trust her ability to change the world. Later that same year, he makes common cause with convicted criminals James Closterman (p. 235) and Jack Grimes (p. 213) along with Deionne Bright (p. 192) to disrupt an international attempt to conspire for control of dark energy and the individuals wielding it.

His influence on history is subtle until 1971, when he helps Jason Weeks plan and execute the

daring rescue of Abe Sykes from the clutches of Vietnamese super-genius Nguyet Cam (p. 164).

By the early seventies, the stories of MLK's ghost appearing to the deserving (or merely the very needy) are circulating with rising frequency. Some even begin worshipping him as a saint.

In 1974, he organizes and carries out an assault on an Indian nuclear test along with LeRoi Mathers (p. 207), two Shavians and a Tier Seven metahuman who perishes during the mission. Nevertheless, the team succeeds at scuttling the device without harming any of the soldiers guarding it or the scientists overseeing it.

1975 sees him helping Jason Weeks again, this time as Weeks negotiates alongside Abbie Hoffman (p. 58) for a peaceful solution to an armed standoff at Pine Ridge Reservation. By 1976, he's a member of Abe Sykes' team ID/EA and is frequently at work in their relief actions. Although he's unable to help with the physical labor of disaster relief, his ability to calm the panicky and restore hope to the despairing is, to many, just as important.

Between 1976 and 1980 there are countless reports of The Dream intervening to prevent spousal abuse, police violence and armed misunderstandings. It's unlikely that he's involved in all of them, but there can be no doubt that he is traveling globally to help people individually.

That's not to say he doesn't also paint with broader strokes. In 1980 he works with a secret American covert action team including Hector Faran (p. 223), Joe Smith (p. 220) and Louis Vaux (p. 189) to destroy a Russian orbital weapon during its launch. This strange new relationship with the US military continues as General Colt (p. 168) recruits MLK to help defend Amanda Sykes (p. 159) from a mob of metahumans sent to kill her by Jean Davis (p. 250), The Disease. Though unusual, it's indisputable that his presence at both operations drastically minimizes deaths and collateral damage. The same pacification comes into play in May of that year when he attempts to ease race riots in Florida, coming head to head with Reddy March (p. 225) as the former Black Panther tries to incite them to greater intensity.

After that, The Dream drops off the world's radar again—perhaps reconsidering his priorities and beliefs after a year of helping the ‘warmongers’ and clashing with a fellow crusader for black justice. During the crisis of 1983-4, there are limitless reports of The Dream intervening, throughout the world, and the practice of treating him as an interceding angel spreads to every continent, despite MLK's own insistence that he's no spirit, no divine being, just a man blessed with some power and choosing to seek the good with it.

In 1985 he helps Alyssa Veronne (p. 233) rescue a kidnapped Polish priest and, though the man himself is profusely grateful, the Catholic Church keeps the incident hushed up.

After that, there are no further public sightings of The Dream, but wherever the poor suffer and the lash of cruelty threatens, there's always the hope of his intercession.

Judith Weissman, Dangerously Addictive

Career: Student

History: At the age of 24, Honduran biology student Judith Weissman took a research trip with Gabriel LaTour and fell in love. LaTour was a burly man with a forceful personality and a dazzling intellect: Judith was petite, conversant in four languages, and directionless. So far, an ordinary story. The addition of LaTour's wife (whom he quickly abandoned) made it sordid, but still unexceptional. It takes a turn with LaTour's master plan: To get rich quick by kidnapping an heiress and using the ransom to flee with Weissman to Europe.

The plan worked, to a point. They grabbed the college-age daughter of a wealthy real estate developer and buried her alive in a ventilated fiberglass capsule. They got the payoff and, after 83 hours, the hostage was freed. But LaTour was not quite the criminal genius he thought himself. A couple lucky cops happened upon the first cash drop, forcing LaTour to abort and Weissman to abandon their getaway car. The vehicle, quickly found by the police, contained more than enough information to identify both plotters. LaTour made another cash demand, got it, and was captured soon after.

Judith Weissman, without the big pile of cash to attract attention, went on the lam and vanished. With the distinction of being the first woman on the FBI's Most Wanted list, Judith got scanned by J. Edgar Hoover. Her dark energy powers provided her with a few narrow escapes, but ultimately she was surrounded in her sleep and, rather than provoke a shootout, she surrendered.

Weissman became the first person with Hypercharm and Hypercommand to receive a trial by jury. She was acquitted on all charges and immediately left for Honduras.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover

Personality: Cunning, selfish, charming, witty, bright, fun and lazy. That last one's important: It's what keeps her from being a global supervillainess instead of merely a menace to South America's richest men. For instance, she never bothers figuring out synergetic science, even though she's one of the few people in the world with the capacity.

Loyalties: Keeps Her Word (1)

Passions: Commanding Men (14), Men Who Are Commanding (10)

Power Suite

Hypercommand 10d (40 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Hypercharm 10d (40 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Hyperbody 3WD (48 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Hypersense 2WD (32 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Hypermind 2WD (32 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Hypercoordination 5WD (80 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Invisibility 5HD (50 Points): Standard per Wild Talents.

Defends (+2), Duration (+2)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

Addict 9d (27 Points): Judith isn't just charming, quick-witted, rich, fairly pretty, inventive and extremely flexible. She's also literally addictive. Those who fall under this power have to touch Judith every day or they start to experience withdrawal. Every day, they take another -1d penalty to all actions until they either (1) touch her again or (2) bottom out at a penalty equal to the Width of the set she rolled to afflict them.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Touch Only (-2), Exhausted (-3), Interference (+3), Subtle (+1), Delayed Effect (-2)

Persuade 1d (1 Point): It's just not easy to say no to her.

Hyperskill (+1)

Destiny: In Honduras, she quickly marries a wealthy man named Joao Perdomo (p. 248) and settles into a pampered life. He divorces her when Jason Weeks' (p. 195) Inoculus syntergene breaks her influence, only to learn that her powers left him physically addicted. Applying his remaining fortune as leverage, he manages to contact Abe Sykes, (p. 173) who cures him. Traveling to Honduras, Sykes confronts Weissman, cures those she's addicted, and elicits a promise that she won't use her addiction power again.

Surprisingly, Weissman keeps her promise for some time. Using only her other abilities, she marries and divorces two more wealthy men (1973-1982 and 1988-1995) before retiring to a private estate where she lives a life of comfortable luxury until 2006.

LaTour avoids life imprisonment because the kidnap victim testifies that he was humane to her. Released in 2001 after decades of good behavior, LaTour buys a boat, sails south from Florida, and sneaks onto Judith's property. He manages to catch her on a night when she's drunk herself insensate, and empties a 9mm pistol into Weissman as she sleeps. He gets apprehended by Weissman's gardener.

On the stand he gives a long, rambling speech about how it should have been him, and that if he'd gotten her powers he'd have subjugated the

lesser peoples of the world. Extradited to the US, he receives a sentence of life in prison with no chance of parole.

Alyssa Veronne, Co-Dependent Supergirlfriend

Career: Professional

History: Alyssa was never self-confident. Pudgy and shy and sensitive, she was a clingy girlfriend who eventually got engaged and became an obsessive fiancée who wanted her wedding day to be just perfect. So she rushed about and hectored the florist and flirted with bulimia in preparation for a day that (though she never really expressed it this way) she subconsciously expected to be the apex of her life.

Every woman is beautiful on her wedding day, and Alyssa's expensive hairdo, designer gown and flush of excitement certainly left her lovelier than she'd ever been. Walking through the botanical garden in flawless spring weather, she felt her heart swell with happiness right before a coarse voice said, "Daaaaym, you lookin' fine! How 'bout you do a little dance f'me?"

Jarvis West (p. 203) had crashed the party. His powers of body control kept the guests from leaving, and his power of pain kept anyone from doing anything to harsh his perpetual buzz. The exception was the groom. He let the groom try to hit him and, of course, the love of Alyssa's life couldn't do it.

Alyssa, then, became the centerpiece of one of West's demented sexual scenarios and, when he got bored, he made everyone conga out of the garden while he pillaged the buffet. When his power over her broke, she turned to her fiancé and... he couldn't even look at her. Alyssa wished she could just disappear.

And she did.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes - Jarvis West

Personality: Brittle, perfectionist, insecure, clingy and obsessive. After she comes into her powers, she adds manipulative, shrill and pushy. One thing she isn't is introspective.

Loyalties: Current Host (2)

Passions: Destroying Villains (2)

Power Suite

Insubstantial 3HD (48 Points): Alyssa doesn't interact with matter, as a general rule. Note that this prevents her from speaking.

Defends (+2), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1), Self Only (-1)

Invisible 5HD (50 Points): What did you think it meant when she wished she could disappear?

Defends (+2), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1), Self Only (-1), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2)

Telepathic Exchange 7HD (28 Points): This is pretty much her only means of communication. She overlaps with someone and interacts with their brain. Usually she stays on her man, but when needed she floats over to someone else and fries their cortex. While this attack ignores armor, it can be resisted with any successful Stability roll.

Attacks (+2), Touch Only (-2), Non-Physical (+2), Daze (+1), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2), Limited Damage (Shock) (-1)

Useful (+2), Touch Only (-2), Endless (+3), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2)

Hyperbody 5d (25 Points): Being insubstantial, she can't use this herself, but anyone she's riding can (at her discretion) be strong.

Hyperstat (+4), Useable by Others (+2), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2), If/Then (Only others can use it, not her) (-1), Speeding Bullet (+2)

Hypermind 5d (15 Points): The weirdness here is surely a function of her self-abnegating tendencies. She's no smarter than she ever was, but she can (when she wishes) hook her man of the hour into a dark energy exocortex that makes him a genius.

Hyperstat (+4), Useable by Others (+2), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2), If/Then (Only others can use it, not her) (-1)

Aces 8d+2WD (96 Points): You know what's nice about having a Tier Four neurotic fixated on your safety and success? You tend to succeed a lot, that's what. Alyssa isn't even sure how she does this one, she just hopes real hard for an outcome for her host and, often as not, it happens.

Attacks (+2), Augments (+4), Willpower Cost (-2), Usable by Others (+2), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2), If/Then (only for Augment) -1, If/Then (Only for the host's actions) (-1)

Defends (+2), Augments (+4), Willpower Cost (-2), Usable by Others (+2), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2), If/Then (only for Augment) -1, If/Then (Only for the host's actions) (-1)

Useful (+2), Augments (+4), Willpower Cost (-2), Usable by Others (+2), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2), If/Then (only for Augment) -1, If/Then (Only for the host's actions) (-1)

Regeneration 2d+2HD (30 Points): This is standard to Wild Talents. As long as she's insubstantial, about the only thing that hurts her is self-inflicted damage from using Soul Fortress (see below), but if she was restored to material form (Abe Sykes, from p. 173, could do it, for instance) she could take normal damage and she'd recover from it quickly.

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3)

Soul Fortress 10HD (40 Points): She is shielded from mind control, influence, coercion and psychic attack. It's hard to even find her with clairvoyance or telepathic searching. This protection can extend to her host. But setting up the shield costs her. Every time she defends against an attack, the Flaws of Mental Strain and Backfires apply, giving her a point of Shock to the head and a point of Killing damage to her torso.

Useful (+2), Touch Only (-2), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2), Duration (+2), Variable Effects (+4), Useable by others (+2), Backfires (-2), Mental Strain (-2)

Willpower Battery 9d (18 Points): Here's the dark side of hosting Alyssa. She wears on you. She draws strength from the relationship and buddy, it has to come from somewhere. Is she literally vampirizing her hosts? Or is it just that the degree to which hearing her constant nagging

and suggestions and encouragement wear down her man is proportional to the strength she steals from the codependency? Either way, the result is the same. He weakens. She thrives. Right up to the point that he crashes.

Useful (Hold extra Willpower) (+2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2)

Useful (Drain Willpower from host) (+2), Attached (Insubstantial) (-2)

Destiny: As an empowering ghost, Alyssa haunts the last third of the twentieth century. When detached, she watches men for one she can admire—often police officers or firemen, but always with a soft or caring side, and always unattached because no way is she sharing with some bitch who has a body. She looks, in other words, for a soul mate.

When she finds one, she makes telepathic contact and offers him a dream array of superpowers. She can make him stronger and smarter, she can protect him from the sleazy attacks of mind controllers and syntergene-hackers. All she asks in return? Love and devotion.

She's surprised how many turn her down, but there are always guys who are arrogant, idealistic or lonesome enough to accept her. Usually they get a few good years out of her before she drains away their resolution, before the effort of keeping up with her bottomless need for praise and affirmation leaves them wrung-out shells of the men she 'fell in love with.' Disappointed and heartbroken, she moves on to the next.

Her very first partner carries her long enough to track down Jarvis West. Along with fellow victim Paige Rampling (p. 236), Alyssa runs him to ground in Brisbane, Australia. Despite lining twenty people along a building's edge and threatening to drop them unless they back off, Alyssa and Page kill him. Nine of the twenty die and Alyssa sees them in her nightmares for along time after that.

Without her nemesis, Alyssa tends to go along with the advice of her hosts. For a short period in 1983 she melds with fellow superhuman Andrew Colt (p. 168) to try and restore order on the eastern seaboard after the USSR deploys

its missiles and orbital kinetic weapons. Colt is the only host to convince her to leave him in peace, and Alyssa accepts it because she doesn't really love him—just accepts that they make a necessary team.

In 1997, Alyssa dies protecting a host with whom she'd been joined only a few months. She uses her Soul Fortress ability far beyond her usual limits against a persistent gang of mind-controllers. Overwhelming her ability to recover from its damage, she dies saving the man she loves, bringing him to a narrow triumph. He never forgets her.

James W. Closterman, Wanted Man

Career: Soldier

History: Closterman was a cop and, if not a great one, at least a clever one. When he got arrested for taking bribes and for theft, he chose not to face the jury. He skipped town, was charged in absentia, and became a full-bore fugitive.

Closterman insists until his dying day that he was innocent and that he ran because he knew the fix was in. Regardless, the fact that it was a cop running away from the bond made everything a bit more intense for his pursuers. After all, he knew the techniques and tricks just as well as they did, and the longer he stayed free, the worse they looked.

Closterman wound up on the FBI's Most Wanted list and he was one of the first fugitives J. Edgar Hoover (p. 189) scanned as his own powers were coming into their full bloom. As with Reddy March (p. 225), Hoover's insight made for close calls, but the new abilities he bestowed more than balanced things out.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover

Personality: Clever, alert, sardonic, but sympathetic to those who are down on their luck or unfairly persecuted. On the other hand, he still thinks most crooks are bozos and scumbags. He enjoys challenges.

Loyalties: His Adoring Fans (1)

Passions: His Own Reputation and Comfort (3)

Power Suite

Immune (Mind Reading, Clairvoyance)

10HD (60 Points): This is standard Immunity, as per Wild Talents.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3)

Telekinesis 8d+2HD (120 Points): Again, ordinary Wild Talents TK.

Attacks (+2), Power Capacity (Mass) (+2)

Defends (+2)

Useful (+2), Power Capacity (Mass) (+2)

Flight 10d (40 Points): No deviations from Wild Talents flight.

Defends (+2)

Useful (+2)

TK Shield 8HD (128 Points): This is just like Heavy Armor from Wild Talents except that it has the Radius extra at 2, meaning that he can project a 10-yard armored sphere around himself. Or he can just protect his own person.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), Radius (+2)

+2 Willpower (2 Points)

Destiny: After his awakening in 1968, Closterman uses his powers primarily to stay hidden. Between domestic attacks by Vietnam and the rampages of figures like Jarvis West (p. 203) and Zipperneck (p. 210), Closterman's willingness to not tear buildings or crowds of people apart for his own amusement guarantees his absence from the top spots of law enforcement concern.

That's not to say he isn't still chased, or even that he doesn't commit crimes. Two armored car heists, in 1969 and 1970, involve the car being levitated off the road and torn open, with the money floating off into the sky on its own. Closterman denies any involvement, and it's hard to pin something like that on a telekinetic who can fly and operate from miles away. No fingerprints, y'know?

Also in 1970, a powerful flying telekinetic battles Jarvis West in Brazil. In later years, Closterman both acknowledges and vehemently denies that

this was him, depending on who he's talking with, but several witnesses say it was him. The fight was a draw, but with heavy collateral damage.

Some deeds he's happy to acknowledge. He performs dozens of fire rescues and accident evacuations in the seventies. In 1971, Closterman definitely battles twisters in Mississippi, using his powers to disrupt and redirect tornados away homes. By 1973, he settles in New Orleans and lives a comfortable life as an anonymous defender against superhuman threats and natural disasters. In July of 1973, he's so popular in his new hometown that, after conspicuously helping defuse an armed robbery turned hostage faceoff, the police refuse to arrest him. Public sentiment rises until that November, when Richard Nixon gives Closterman a presidential pardon.

After that, he's free to join New ID/EA in 1975 before going to work as a well-publicized national superhero for Japan in 1982. He uses his considerable power to shield and rebuilt the island nation during the Metapocalypse (p. 95) and lives there comfortably into the new millennium.

Paige Rampling, "Rampage"

Career: Professional

History: As far as victims of Jarvis West (p. 203) go, Paige Rampling got off fairly easy. He didn't rape her and make her act like she liked it, the way he did with more women than anyone's comfortable counting. He didn't make her put a gun to her partner's head and pull the trigger, like that cop in Boston, or the one in Philadelphia, or those two soldiers in Mexico. All he did was grin at her, say "I'll take all the money in y'drawer, there," and ravage her body with unspeakable pain. When she recovered herself, he was cleaning out every cashier in her bank. He'd gotten impatient by then, so he gestured and, like a puppet, she jerked to her feet and opened the drawer and handed over all the money with a smile.

He made her smile.

When the manager chewed them all out for not resisting, Paige was the only one who tried to argue, and so he singled her out for particular

abuse. Paige started for the door, not saying a word as he screamed, “You keep walking and you’re out a job, missy!”

She could feel that something was building up, and if she didn’t get away, it was going into him. So instead she walked right off the job, went behind the bank, and discharged it into a garbage dumpster. It crumpled like cardboard.

Two nights later, she gave an interview on ABC. The reporter came out to her uncle’s farm and interviewed her outside by a stand of sumac trees. He tried to ask questions about how it felt to be a victim, but Paige just said, “No no. Just film this.” Then she blasted through the trunk of a fallen sumac two feet thick.

Turning to the camera she said, “If you have been victimized by Jarvis West, contact me. I’m going to find him.”

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes - Jarvis West

Personality: She’s a stable, phlegmatic, no-nonsense person. Just the kind you’d want managing your retirement fund. But instead, she winds up trying to balance the scales between dark energy villains and their victims.

Destiny: A cash contract from the Meta-Defense League (p. 54) follows hot on the heels of her TV display. Unlike John Closterman (p. 235), the League’s last meta-hitman, Paige gets the job done. It only takes her (and fellow West victim and power-child Alyssa Veronne, p. 233) three months to track him to Brisbane. Once there, murdering West only costs nine civilian lives and their legal right to return to Australia.

Not long after, Paige joins Metavictims Advocacy and Support, a surprising move given that she’d jobbed out West on the dime of their more militant rival. Paige’s private explanation is that she feels the League valued her without respecting her—that they viewed her as a necessary evil, and she was tired of being their leashed pit-bull. She joins Advocacy and Support hoping to push them away from an unrealistic idealism towards a more practical approach to dealing with metahuman criminals.

Though many in the group disagree with allowing superhumans to join, her status as a victim of

Jarvis West endears her to the group’s founders—and, possibly, her feat in killing him does so as well, however nonviolent Metavictims Advocacy is on paper. Nonetheless, her membership pushes many ordinary members to abandon the group for the Meta-Defense League. Some even decide that the League is too conciliatory. Unified by their revulsion over Paige, the extremist fringe begins coalescing into a group that later matures into real terrorism as Remember November (p. 63).

Ms. Rampling herself remains outwardly unconcerned by the politics of Metavictims Advocacy, going to work for the city of London as an official meta-defender against the IRA and their super-terrorist fringe group Glóir (p. 68).

A successful meta-combatant, Paige leaves Great Britain when West Germany makes a better offer, but continues to work with Lin Wen (p. 216) on occasion. Eventually, she returns to England, working for the nation as a whole and not just the city of London, but she refuses to fight in the Falklands war, insisting that her role applies to the defense of British cities only.

Paige makes superheroineism as predictable and banal as she can (not very) and continues to work



for England through the nineties. But although she fights some memorable battles against Zipperneck (p. 210) and Holocaust (p. 242), her most memorable fight comes in 1998 when she takes a week of vacation leave, flies to San Francisco, and fights Amanda Sykes (p. 149).

Loyalties: Justice (2)

Passions: Revenge (2)

Power Suite

Energy Shield 10HD (120 Points): This is just ordinary Heavy Armor. It looks like an occasional, faint green flicker on her skin.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3)

Massive Energy Blast 6d+4HD (98 Points): When she really puts herself behind the attack, it's pretty awe-inspiring. It puts a point of Shock in her head and she can only use it once per scene, and she can't choke it down from anything but the full force slam. It's deafening, it's a blistering green flash that can light up the sky, visible for miles. It has Penetration 12 and does WSK.

Attacks (+2), Penetration 12 (+12) Mental Strain (-2), Exhausted (-3), Full Power Only (-1), Obvious (-1)

Petite Energy Blast 10d (30 Points): "Petite" is relative, of course. Like the big boom, it does WSK, but it's broken into a narrower fan, giving it Spray 1. Otherwise it's straight up Harm. It produces some light and sound, but it's not as obvious.

Attacks (+2), Spray 1 (+1)

Base Will +51 (102 Points): It would be an understatement to call Paige "driven." She has a focused and dangerous intensity. However, this Base Will and any Willpower it produces can only be used for two things: The Massive Energy Blast, or resisting mind control.

(Note that Jarvis West's primary defense is a passive form of mind control.)

Tier Five

Winston Koetke, or "Å," Dark Energy Messiah

Career: Layabout

History: Winston was born black in South West Africa in 1955. His rustic upbringing was peaceful, and like his brothers and sisters, his quick mind was adequately trained at the hands of Lutheran missionaries. It was all fairly boring right up to the point that an arsonist destroyed his family home. He was the sole survivor. He was thirteen.

Winston was then sent to live on the coast with his uncle, an aging, bitter and unmarried hermit whose life philosophy was equal parts racism, traditional Namibian folk religion, and paranoid schizophrenia. He lived with uncle Mzukisi for four years of back-breaking toil and attempted indoctrination before he was able to sneak out, get to a pre-arranged job loading horse mackerel onto a truck, and then stow away on it to the city.

The next few years could have been very hard indeed for young Winston, but he was smart, he was at least modestly educated, and his uncle's hospitality was excellent training for alertness and suspicion. Moreover, Winston was not afraid of hard work—at least in Keetmanshoop he was working for himself, not for the benefit of a crazy old man.

By the time he turned 20, Winston's resentment towards his uncle had matured into distaste for injustice of all kinds, and he had come to understand that his family's farm hadn't burned as an isolated incident, but was part of a larger pattern of Ovambo repression. He had lost his family-by-blood, but was ready to find a family of choice in SWAPO. Politicized and radicalized, he fled from South West Africa to South Africa and traded his SWAPO activism for work with the ANC's militant wing, the Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Politicized and radicalized, by 1976 he had a price on his head and was overjoyed to watch Howard "Reddy" March (p. 225) single-handedly throw South Africa into violent upheaval. When he met his idol, he tried to convince Reddy

that the death and the massive carnage was not March's fault—that the oppressor whites had pulled triggers and launched rockets, not March, and that of the blacks who died, most had half-lives at best. Though Howard never completely overcame his guilt, he took great comfort from Winston's words, and when the police began closing in again, he did what he could to help Winston get away: He used his race-reversal ray to make Winston white.

Primarily, Howard had thought he'd be making it easier for Winston to hide from the cops. He was right, actually. But he did much more than that.

Along with the skin color, Winston Koetke also got a second set of memories—memories where his parents never died, where he had close friendships with his white sisters, where he was shielded from the brutal realities of apartheid policy by elite schools and a physics education at Université Paris-Sud 11. White Winston wasn't on the run from the police after years as a gray-market street entrepreneur. White Winston was applying to graduate programs at Stellenbosch, Yale and MIT.

But even more important than the split perspective provided by his alternate self, Winston Koetke got some of Howard March's dark energy.

In his flawless disguise, Winston traveled out into the wilderness, undertaking a private vision quest. When he returned, he immediately asked Howard to return him to his native skin—not because he cared about race any more, but because he knew he would need it to form an African army of faith. For the old self Howard knew had gone, and the new self Howard had created was only an image, a phantom, and the truth? The truth could speak through the storm, shake the earth with his will, banish lies with a touch. The truth had a new name, and that name was Å.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Howard "Reddy" March

Personality: Black Winston was intelligent, suspicious, passionate and shrewd. White Winston was intelligent, curious, restless and

creative. Å is intelligent, commanding, grave, ambitious and terribly sure of himself.

Loyalties: Åism (17)

Passions: Justice for Africa (6)

Power Suite

Controlled Vector 2HD (8 Points): As explained on p. 26, most metahumans are stable vectors, some are closed vectors, some are strong or weak. Å has total, conscious control of the descent of his power. He chooses who receives it, and when, and most importantly, he determines the powers his descendants develop. When he uses this power, clouds form overhead and a bolt of lightning strikes him and his chosen follower.

Useful (Deliver or hold back descent) (+2), Obvious (-1), Touch Only (-2)

Useful (Determine spawn's power) (+2), Obvious (-1), Touch Only (-2) Willpower Cost (+0)

Control (Weather) 10d (50 Points): It's a fairly gradual process, as superpowers go, but Winston can calm a storm or whip one up, pull rain in from distant skies and, if needed, bung someone with a bolt of lightning or send devastating winds twisting through a city.

As a general rule, his destructive powers have to be focused on a small area, while his more gradual control is spread over an 80 yard radius centered on himself. Those lightning bolts, while scary, can be redirected with lightning rods or even with improvised grounding devices. They also won't work against someone standing on a good insulator. Rubber-soled shoes are probably too thin, but a car tire would do it.

Attacks (Lightning) (+2), Electrocutes (+1), Slow (-2), Go Last (-1), Obvious (-1), Non-Physical (+2)

Attacks (Hellish wind, rain, sleet, etc.) (+2), Slow (-2), Go Last (-1), Obvious (-1), Area 5 (+5)

Useful (+2), Slow (-2), Go Last (-1), Obvious (-1), Exhausted (-3), Touch Only (-2), Radius (+8)

Control (Earth) 10d (40 Points): He's no Cynthia Carls. When he moves the land, it's slow and gentle and easily predicted, but his power to



conjure fertility, raise buildings from dusty plains and instantly plow or irrigate is nothing to scorn.

Useful (+2), Slow (-2), Go Last (-1), Obvious (-1), Mass Capacity (+2), Range Boost (+2), Mass Boost (+2)

A Voice Heard in the Land 10d (70 Points):

Å can send messages into the minds of those he chooses. It's quite specific—he can choose to broadcast to all whites in his range, or all traffic control officers, or all third sons, or all followers of his religion. They all hear in their minds what he wants heard, and it reaches as far as high Earth orbit.

Useful (+2), Range Boost (+4), Controlled Effect (+1)

Heavy Armor 4HD (48 Points): Standard to Wild Talents.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3)

Hypercharm 8d (32 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Hypercommand 9d (36 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Unmask Psychological Conflicts 10d (10 Points):

You want to know what's a handy ability for a religious leader? Well, inhuman degrees of charisma, of course, but also the power to touch someone and instantly understand their deepest interior issues. That's what this power does. Moreover, when he touches someone, they instantly understand those existential crises or inner conflicts. It's like getting four years with an analyst compacted into the duration of a handshake. Remarkably, it never makes anyone worse.

Useful (+2), Touch Only (-2)

+2 Base Will (6 Points): Does leading a religion make you confident, or do you need confidence to lead a religion?

Destiny: It does not take long for Å to sweep together followers. The disaffected of South Africa, Angola and the future Namibia flock to his banner, enthralled by his inhuman charisma but kept by his genuine ability to make their lives better. Both whites and blacks are welcome to

join the Chosen of Å, but blacks make up 85+% of the early membership.

The earliest acts of Åism are a 1978 attempt to influence events in the Comoros after a coup supported by foreign mercenaries. Å doesn't use his powers over weather and earth at the time, preferring to try diplomacy, but though the followers he has willingly go and protest, in the end there is no resolution.

Åism is an easy sell when Å himself is present, but in the late 70s and early 80s he prefers to let his works and his philosophy draw followers. Good works, as opposed to unearthly power, are difficult to pit against the entrenched religions of sub-Saharan Africa. Nonetheless, Åism continues to grow, particularly in South Africa and its neighbors. By 1980, Å has assembled his Council of Wisdom (p. 358). Two of them—Rafael Kenama and Njabulo Malema—try to accompany Howard March to the US in 1980 during Florida's racial unrest. Jedgar (p. 189) finds out about the plans and is able to prevent Rafael and Njabulo from entering the US, and rather than start an open conflict in a London airport, they stand down.

Later that year, Å personally intercedes with Muslim metahumans in Algeria to secure the release of Abe Sykes (p. 173) himself. Thanks to that connection, he is able to get Amy Sykes (p. 177) and Cynthia Carls (p. 214) to help him open a Temple of Å on Atlantis. In fact, Cynthia and Å work together to sculpt a massive building of pure granite, polished to a high gloss. His churches in Europe and the Americas are far less impressive, being small storefront operations.

Naturally, Å makes contact with Africa's other prominent metahuman, Jason Weeks (p. 195). Since Weeks is intelligent, benevolent and well-adjusted, Å can find nothing to object to, but Weeks annoys him nonetheless. Partially it's the man's gentle refusal to buy into Åist theory, but mostly it's Weeks' insistence that global solutions always go out of control in the long run. Å's determination to prove Weeks wrong does not prevent the church of Å from working with Weeks' Global Human University when Weeks uncovers Selar M., Jean Davis' (p. 250) contagious mind-control tool. 1980 is the year that Weeks and Å's

Councilman Thabo "Garfield" Moloi create an inoculation for the disease.

Throughout the early 80s, Å holds fast to an idealistic notion that "consciousness in conflict is abominable." But the disasters of 1983 break that faith. Under pressure from Kenosi Dlamini, Å admits that their goals cannot be responsibly pursued without violence. Nonetheless, he insists on minimizing injury as much as possible, and makes good on his word when he and Siphon Masango create the nation of Åia by seizing land during the Metapocalypse (p. 95).

By 1987, the ambitions of Å and his movement have shifted from the political goals of liberating African nations from tyranny, to the preservation of mankind outside the cradle of Earth's gravity well. Å concentrates on helping Thabo Moloi create hardy species, with the plan of creating a massive, self-contained and self-sustaining space-ark. In this 'mothership,' the Åites plan to spread throughout the solar system and beyond. He announces this "Doctrine of Solar Destiny" in 1989.

This isn't to say Å stops caring about social justice. He maintains Åia as a safe haven for his old ANC buddies, and in 1988 people who trained and organized in his country rebel openly against apartheid. In 1990, he sees his efforts come to fruition.

The 1990s see Åism go from being a regional power to a global one. In 1992, responding to the development of airborne HIV, Thabo Moloi creates a microbe capable of destroying A-HIV viruses both inside and outside of the human body. He claims it's based on the blood of Howard March, known as "Saint Reddy" to the Åites after his death earlier that year. At the same time, their refusal to offer the "Reddy Salvation" germ to the US (and the United States' refusal to ask for it) understandably strains their relations. Simultaneously, they sell the germ to the USSR for \$10 billion.

There is a slight loss of focus in the movement as Mchinu Modisane consciously tries to blur the line between Åism as a faith and as a national identity. His attempt to make Åia passports available to all followers of the faith fails dismally. But Åia still involves itself in

African politics, allying with the Hutus in the Rwandan conflict against IEG (p. 138) backed Tutsis. Despite their suspicion of one another, neither IEG nor Åites want massive bloodshed. While Hutu grievances and anger towards the Tutsi do find expression in violence, the calming influence of Åism, along with IEG organization of Tutsi evacuation and defense, keeps the body count low. Both sides regard their Rwandan interference as a failure when it devolves into a smoldering, low-intensity civil war.

Soured by their Rwandese experience, the pendulum of Åia politics swings back towards space, and with the collapse of Atlantis' political system in 1994 they're able to recruit (if not convert) many of the metahumans from the island's space program and store large caches of DNA (both natural and Moloi-crafted) on the Hale-Bopp comet.

Å himself is pleased to see it and publicly speaks longingly of the day he and his followers step out to explore the larger cosmos. Unfortunately for him, Å is ambushed and assassinated on February 9, 1995 by fundamentalist Muslim metahumans.

Terrence O'Shay, aka "Holocaust" aka "The Oxygen Bomber"

Career: Laborer

History: Even murdering terrorists have to take a night off and have some fun. Though perhaps it's unfair to suggest that a Sinn Féin supporter who'd never done more than shake a fist at the Union Jack was a terrorist when he began an evening of revelry in January, 1972. He went to a bar where a guitarist named Deionne Bright (p. 192) was mesmerizing the crowd and, in addition to being deeply and decisively entertained, he caught super from the future rock star.

Terrence O'Shay was not that rock fan. That rock fan, when he realized he had become a metahuman, carefully conserved his power until he could get to Ireland and give it to members of the Irish Republican Army. Terrence was one of those members.

Terrence is not your stereotypical hot-tempered Irishman, and he doesn't drink, either. He's an

intense, tightly-wound bundle of anger, but he conceals it behind a quiet, genial exterior. The IRA only realized what kind of man he was when, after some of their boys had jumped an off duty Bobby and beaten him senseless, Terrence came along and set the bloke on fire. "It'll do to send a message," he said mildly as the body fat caught and crackled.

Terry the bomber and arsonist got just what he wanted from dark energy and became Terry the one man firestorm. By and large, he used his powers subtly (or as subtly as they can be used) because he was more valuable to the IRA as a living threat than he would be if he drew the concentrated attention of (say) Andrew Colt (p. 168) or the Sykes family.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes - Deionne Bright - Michael Sepponen

Personality: On the surface, a cheerfully tolerant and laid-back construction foreman. Underneath, an icy sociopath whose chief joy is watching things burn.

Loyalties: Ireland (1)

Passions: Arson With Fatalities (12)

Power Suite

Transform Matter into Oxygen 10d (270

Points): Terry can look at solids and liquids and visible gasses and turn them into pure oxygen. He can transform a maximum of 40 tons, about the weight of a humpback whale. That's already pretty alarming, especially if you're a marine biologist. But he doesn't just gradually dissolve the whatever-it-is into the atmosphere. No, it's an instant change.

Let's break down the physics. A three-foot cube of oxygen weighs about three pounds. That same cube, made of potatoes (for example) weighs about 1,700 pounds. I'm no physics professor, so let's just say that when something that dense gets transformed into something that diffuse, the explosive force is pretty appalling.

If the O₂ being created doesn't have enough space to expand into, its forced density causes an endothermic reaction. That is: If it doesn't blow up, it turns into super-cold liquid oxygen.

Finally, let us not forget that oxygen is flammable. In fact, that's an understatement: Any time anything burns, it's courtesy of oxygen. So when you unexpectedly add 40 tons of it to a system, if there's a spark or open flame anywhere about, it's a recipe for a conflagration.

Attacks (+2), Duration (+2), Range (+2), On Sight (+1),
Mass Boost (+2)

Defends (+2), Duration (+2), Range (+2), On Sight (+1),
Mass Boost (+2)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Range (+2), On Sight (+1),
Mass Boost (+2)

+10 Base Will (30 Points): He finds slaughter and destruction very relaxing.

Destiny: Terrence murders and bombs for the IRA because he believes in it, becoming a founding member of their meta-assault team Glóir. But he also enjoys arson and mayhem just for the hell of it. Rather than reveal what a head-case he is, Terrence seeks out ideological cover for his hobby, and when even the IRA isn't willing to use him as often as he might wish, he makes friends with Germany's Red Army Faction and performs a few missions with them, both successful and... well, kind of a draw. But since Terrence is the only survivor, his version of the embassy attack (p. 73) is the one that gets remembered in the European terror underground.

He continues to get his evil jollies right up until 1985, when Glóir—possibly betrayed from within—is ambushed by heavily armed soldiers without an ounce of dark energy to unveil them to Glóir's detection equipment.

Riley Boetje, "Peacemaker"

Career: Soldier

History: Riley was an excitable boy, the second youngest of six males, in a home where rough housing was the most common form of entertainment. As a child, his voice ranged from loud to painfully loud. He played rugby, soccer and football, he wrestled. He roared at sporting events and got in shoving matches in taverns and joined the Marines. He served a tour in Vietnam before coming home with half his left hand gone.



In 1969 he stumbled into a demonstration that was getting ugly. Without really contemplating any long-term consequences, he picked up a cinder block and readied himself to hurtle it at the protesters who offended him. But then he suddenly didn't want to.

He suddenly felt calm.

Suddenly, he was more tranquil than he'd ever been in his life.

It took Riley a while to realize someone must have used dark energy on him, and then only after he'd discovered his own powers. But he doesn't resent the ancestor who remains, to him, unknown. He likes himself better now, and he feels he's doing more good than he ever did as a soldier.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Martin Luther King Jr.

Personality: In his unguarded moments, Riley is still a butch, boisterous, hard living ex-Marine. He still loves a tightly contested football game. But with people around, he tends to be exactly as loud and gung-ho as makes them comfortable, and not an ounce more.

Loyalties: The USA (2)

Passions: Harmony Between People and Nations (2)

Power Suite

Total Grasp of Motive 5d+5HD (60 Points):

Riley understands. Whatever you're going through, he gets it. What you want, why you want it, how you're planning to get it? Those details aren't important. Whatever it is, he knows how you feel about it. This also means that if you're planning on hurting him, he knows the exact thing to make you change your mind.

Useful (+2), Subtle (+1)

Defends (+2), If/Then (only attackers who hear him and understand English) (-1)

Hyperpersuade 10WD (40 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

Hyperempathy 10WD (40 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

Scalable Grasp of the Emotional Gestalt

4d+4HD+2WD (160 Points): You know how you can observe a crowd and, based on expressions and sounds and body language and what they're waving, know if they're a happy gang of holiday merrymakers or an angry mob set for some lynchin'? Riley can do that too, but with about a million times more accuracy. He can look at four guys at a dinner table and know the average of their emotional states. Or he can use it on one guy. Or everyone in a football stadium. Or everyone within three million miles.

Useful (+2), Range Boost (+6)

Destiny: Riley uses his powers subtly at first, traveling from neighborhood to neighborhood in his native Trenton, but eventually he gets detected by a Federal metahuman. They threaten him with violations of the 1971 Federal Cognitive Sovereignty Act but Riley (of course) knows that this is just the stick they're using to get him to take a carrot by working for them.

As a secret political bellwether, Riley serves several presidents before they let their guard down around him enough to give him access to the real policy-makers. From them, Boetje intuitu-

ally that they primarily see him as an implement of social control.

Riley doesn't let on. Riley just starts lying to them about the mood of the nation. This is why the government is surprised by the Michigan secession in 1983. During the confusion and panic, Riley slips away from his minders and travels off across the country again, a wiser and more paranoid man right up until his death from a heart attack in 1989.

Cassandra Cowper, "The Energy," A Force to be Reckoned With

Career: Layabout

History: Cassie was sixteen when she snuck out with her older sister and her friends to go hear the notorious radical Abbie Hoffman rant and rave and swear about the system. As it happened, they were in his first audience since being scanned by J. Edgar Hoover (p. 189). Hoffman didn't know what he was going to do to them. He knew he wanted them to feel strongly and to laugh and to agree with him, and they did all of that.

Only Cass, however, laughed so hard that she dissolved into a field of sparkling light.

Powers are oddly personal, and sixteen is an age of tremendous transition. Cassie wanted to be special and to blend into the crowd, she wanted to be safe and daring at the same times, she wanted to change profoundly. She did.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Abbie Hoffman

Personality: Cassie's consciousness remained unchanged when she transformed into an energy being, but her pattern of preferences and opinions and beliefs is now held in a matrix of energy instead of a meat chunk influenced by exhaustion, hormones, diet and vitamin deficiencies. Where before her shy good humor and teen enthusiasm were like a concerto played on a piano, it's now the same tune on a Moog synthesizer.

Loyalties: Protecting America's Northeast (2)

Passions: Maintaining Her Superheroine Identity (2)

Power Suite

Alternate Form (Energy Being) 2HD (4 Points): Her weakest power is the one that changed her. If restored to corporeality, she could never (barring even more exceptional circumstances) change into living power again. She would simply be a sixteen year old girl, with no special traits except the memory of however many years she spent as a coherent pattern of dark energy.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), One Use (-4), Always On (-1)

Insubstantial 5HD (40 Points): Her new form is a faint glow that cycles through rainbow colors, shot through with twinkling glitter in contrasting tones. She can pass through walls, floors and furniture without doing more than raise its temperature a few degrees. When she passes through people, it feels like having cool water rinse over your flesh, only it goes all the way through your flesh. It's not painful, just odd and confusing. The pain comes later.

The one thing that blocks her insubstantial attack is powerful electromagnetic fields.

Attacks (+2), Non-Physical (+2), Touch Only (-2), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Daze (+1)

Defends+1 (+3), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2)

Useful (pass through solids) (+2), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2) Go First 1 (+1)

Useful (untouched by physical forces) (+2), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Self Only (-3), Variable Effects (+4)

Invulnerable 6HD (168 Points): As a being of thought expressed through a complicated interaction of electricity, gravity, magnetism and the strong nuclear force, she's exempt from most human bodily miseries.

Defends (HAR) (+2), Interference (+3), Permanent (+4), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2)

Defends (LAR) (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Hardened Defense (+2), Permanent (+4), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for

immunities) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2)

Flight 9d (18 Points): You didn't expect her to walk around, did you?

Defends (+2), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Go First 1 (+1)

Useful (+2), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Go First 1 (+1)



Telekinesis 10d (50 Points): With all those exotic energies flowing through her, it's not too tricky to turn some of them kinetic. At ten yards, she can lift 6.4 tons, and at 2,560 yards she can move 50 lbs.

Attacks (+2), Mass Capacity (+2), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2)

Defends (+2), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Go First 1 (+1)

Useful (+2), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Mass Capacity (+2)

Power Strike 10HD (20 Points): She really doesn't like to do this, but if necessary she can

turn what has replaced her body into a single streaming bolt of intelligent destruction. When she uses this, lights flicker, radios broadcast snatches of her thoughts and car engines stall for nearly a mile around. It also sends out a pulse of light that, while visible as a ghastly chartreuse glow, nevertheless passes through solid matter like an X-ray. This means that everything immediately exposed to her briefly glows yellow-green—walls, floors, trees, people, whatever. As with her normal touch attacks, this can be blocked only by a strong electromagnetic field. But if it hits, it does 13SK to the head, so watch out.

Attacks +3 (+5), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Exhausted (-3), Obvious (-1), Touch Only (-2), Non-Physical (+2), Speeding Bullet (+2)

Destiny: For many years, Cassie stays off the international stage and concentrates on on providing, for lack of a better word, ‘superheroine services’ in the American northeast. Patrolling through Maine and New Hampshire, she responds to car crashes, train derailments, the occasional crime-in-progress but, most commonly, she rescues storm-imperiled ships.

By 1980, she’s twenty years old and has gotten enough of a reputation that Andrew Colt (p. 168) asks for her help when he gets wind of an attack on Amanda Sykes (p. 159). That forestalled attack is a blowout victory for Sykes, Colt and The Energy, and it gives her the confidence to go after larger, international targets. This ends in tragedy when she intervenes during a 1984 hijacking in the Middle East. Though she resolves the situation and gets the plane down safely, it’s not before twelve people die, including the Hezbollah team responsible.

She wears off foreign intervention after that and returns to New England. That’s where she is in 1998 when her powers switch off permanently. Even the re-awakening of the Progenitor in the aftermath of the Battle of San Francisco (see p. 149) fails to restore her powers, leaving her in a sixteen-year-old body with a much older mind.

Chandra Desani, A Woman Against Entropy

Career: Student

History: Chandra has no idea where her power came from, which is not uncommon for those afflicted by mind-clouding. She saw a picture of Tyler Ford in the post office, then saw him at a grocery store. As she watched him pick up a package of toilet paper and walk out without paying, she forgot about the wanted poster. As soon as he was out of her sight, she forgot she’d ever seen him. But his power would not forget her.

In 1965 the US changed its immigration code, little realizing that they were going to prompt an influx of skilled professionals (who were favored under the new rules) from Africa and India. Chandra’s husband, Dr. Pandit Desani, was one of those professionals.

Initially they lived in New York City, where many of the immigrants were rapidly building a cultural enclave. But something went wrong even before Pandit had sent for her. He never spoke about it, but he alienated some powerful and influential men in New York and Chandra was only in the city for two days with her new husband before moving to a mysterious region called Wisconsin.

Pandit treated her well, but he was protective. He could easily provide for them, so why concern herself with matters outside the home? It took a year of oblique discussions and tangential comments before he agreed to let her learn English.

She was four months pregnant and just starting to be comfortable talking with phone solicitors and gas-station clerks when she forgot Tyler Ford. It was not long after that that things started to improve. Literally.

Her kitchen knives became sharper and sharper without the touch of a whetstone. Vegetables looked fuller and plumper after three days in her home than they had on the shelf. Instead of tearing and dimming, her clothes got brighter and more vivid. She never cleaned, but her house was spotless and, more, furniture in it seemed to regenerate until everything appeared brand new.

Pandit made jokes about how his female patients all seemed depressed and broken after delivery, while Chandra got prettier and prettier. Their son was two years old before she finally figured it out.

She'd come out of a movie theater. Pandit and their son Robert were inside still, using the restroom, and while they'd watched Bedknobs and Broomsticks, someone in the parking lot had hit their car and driven off. Frustrated, Chandra glared at the wrinkled bumper and it straightened right out.

After that, she could no longer deny what was happening. She was standing athwart entropy. While everyone else aged, she improved. Once she admitted it to herself, it was clear to see how her body had been growing in strength, even as her mind sharpened.

She was approaching the apex of her human potential, she could heal and repair people and devices with equal ease, and all it got her was a growing sense that she needed something more than raising children and tending house.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Tyler T. Ford

Personality: Raised to be demure and deferential, Chandra resists those attitudes—hard—once she realizes she's one of the

“superhumans” who keep grabbing headlines. By the time she becomes perfect, she is also arrogant and can show a maddening sense of privilege and entitlement.

Loyalties: Feminism (8), Fairness (7)

Passions: Self-Aggrandizement (12), The Safety of Children (10)

Power Suite

Better Now 2d (24 Points): This is much like the Aces power from Wild Talents. In Chandra's case, however, it has no Willpower cost and only works when she's using tools, devices or other components that have belonged to her for at least 24 hours.

Attacks (+2), Augment (+4), If/Then (Must involve a tool, device or component that has belonged to her for at least 24 hours) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) -1

Defends (+2), Augment (+4), If/Then (Must involve a tool, device or component that has belonged to her for at least 24 hours) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) -1

Useful (+2), Augment (+4), If/Then (Must involve a tool, device or component that has belonged to her for at least 24 hours) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) -1



+1d Body, Coordination, Mind, Sense, Command and Charm (4 Points each): These are unadulterated.

Hyperstat (+4)

+1d Body, Coordination, Mind, Sense, Command and Charm (3 Points each): These Hyperstats are flawed.

Hyperstat (+4), If/Then (Only available two years after her transformation) (-1).

+1WD Body, Coordination, Mind, Sense, Command and Charm (12 Points each): These Hyperstats are also flawed.

Hyperstat (+4), If/Then (Only available four years after her transformation) (-1).

De-Entropize 10d (40 Points): This is similar to Abe Sykes' Molecular Restoration power (p. 173), but Chandra cannot defend with it.

Useful (+2), Mass Capacity (+2)

+1 Empathy (1 Point)

Hyperskill

+1 Persuade (1 Point)

Hyperskill

+40 Base Will (120 Points): I mentioned her confidence-to-the-point-of-arrogance, right?

Destiny: Chandra's marriage isn't set up to handle the power differential. Or at least, it's not set up to handle an imbalance that favors the woman, any more than Pandit's equipped to manage being a single father. Chandra gets custody and finds that even solo parenthood cannot triumph over her powers against chaos.

She also gets a job at a hospital. Initially, she uses her power subtly, mostly to help children or to restore illnesses beyond the reach of the normal staff. But when they start taking credit for her work, Chandra gets sick of it. She demonstrates her powers in public and, like Abe Sykes (p. 173) gets swamped with requests for salvation.

After raking in her first million dollars, the Wisconsin District Attorney indicts her for practicing medicine without a license. Chandra organizes a march of her former patients to

protest and a politically astute judge dismisses the case.

But having experienced high dudgeon, Chandra develops a taste for it and picks up the banner of Women's Lib. Her advocacy gets her on the cover of Time magazine when the Equal Rights Amendment passes in 1982.

In 1983, Chandra switches gears from civic advocate to civic rescuer. Wisconsin isn't hit as hard by the Metapocalypse, but there's still disorder, synergenic chaos and failure of civic authority. Chandra's there to repair structures, heal people and (with hypercommand) shame looters. When shame fails, she's got hypercoordination and a pair of de-entropized pistols.

Joao Perdomo, "Seeker"

Career: Politician

History: Joao came from a moneyed Honduran family and transitioned their business from shipping into waste management and hospital support services. He was smart enough, but more importantly he was willing to work twelve- and fourteen-hour days as a matter of course. A little bit of a tyrant, he still managed to impress his employees, mostly because he never demanded that they work harder than him. Just harder than his competitors.

He was a bit of a playboy, too, parlaying his eligible bachelor status, good looks and money into a string of brief dalliances. He never lied to the ladies. He never said he was looking for love or marriage. Most of them just thought they could change him, and they never could.

Until Judith.

Judith Weissman (p. 232) came back to Honduras from the US under a cloud, acquitted of kidnapping but with many questions remaining. She was beautiful and witty and compelling in a way Joao couldn't even comprehend. He just knew he had to be with her, he had to.

That's how she became Judith Weissman-Perdomo and he, within a few years, became an increasingly desperate ex-husband trying to lure her back. He couldn't bear it that she'd

left him, and even while his carefully nurtured business disintegrated around him (half because she callously offloaded assets she'd gotten in the divorce, half because he was ignoring it and he'd always been its driving force) he spent all his time in increasingly desperate pursuit. He could always find her, no matter how she tried to hide, and he could always get to her, no matter how hard she tried to keep him out.

In a brief moment of clarity he realized that something was badly wrong with him and he flew to the US in pursuit of Abe Sykes (p. 173). When Abe healed him, Joao realized what had happened to him, and when he'd explained it, Abe asked to go back with him.

Abe talked to Judith and asked her to stop using her powers of addiction. Unbeknownst to Abe, Joao also asked her to stop. Only Joao threatened to murder her.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Judith Weissman

Personality: A fierce, hard-charging, macho patrone.

Loyalties: Contracted Agreements (4)

Passions: Uprooting Manipulators (15)

Power Suite

Find 2HD (40 Points): Once Joao settles his mind on a target, he can sense the direction towards that individual. While his power gets blocked by individuals like Tyler Ford (p. 228) and James Closterman (p. 235), most of the time he's impossible to avoid.

Useful (+2), Range Boost (+8)

Invulnerable 2HD (80 Points): This is as per Wild Talents.

Defends (HAR) (+2), Interference (+3), Permanent (+4)

Defends (LAR) (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Hardened Defense (+2), Permanent (+4)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Endurance 10d (10 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

Hypersense 8d (32 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

+46 Base Will (138 Points): Deep down, there was always something that understood he was being manipulated and used. When Abe freed him, that something took center stage and swore to never be anyone's puppet again.

Destiny: Joao never thinks of himself as a supervillain or a superhero, he never puts on a cape or a mask, and never robs banks or tries to save the world. He considers himself a bounty hunter. If someone pays him enough, he finds their target.

He's only a supervillain to abused wives fleeing from controlling husbands who can afford his fees, or to outed ex-gangsters in Witness Protection, or to the political opposition leaders he digs out for dictators.

This work makes him wealthy, but he was already wealthy. He considers his work valuable—and if you're one of the runaways or kidnap victims he finds, if your rapist gets arrested because Joao's feeling bored and generous, you probably agree with him.

His main interest, the one that obsesses him more and more as the years pass, is in outing, stopping and stymieing the hidden manipulators. People like Judith (p. 232). He seeks them and reveals them and, in time, he starts to just out and out kill them.

He has particular contempt for those who do their meddling from behind masks and are too cowardly to even give their real names. But once he finds out about Selarosis Maxillae (p. 250), he makes it his mission to destroy Jean Davis and everything she builds. He does a lot of damage to her operation in the thirteen months it takes her to find someone who can take him down. But she does, during the chaos of 1983.

Tier Six

Jean Davis, “The Disease”

Career: Student

History: When a man’s promiscuous, it’s considered eminently natural. When a woman is, it must be because she’s damaged goods with low self-esteem and daddy issues. But, with sincere apologies to all the confident, self-aware, high-libido women out there, Jean Davis really is damaged goods with low self-esteem, and she defiantly acts out by sleeping around a lot. Or rather, she did in her twenties when she was a university student in Ontario.

One of her partners was a handsome young man named James Blaine who had, until two days before meeting Jean, been a homely middle aged man. He happened to be putting the cap back on the gas tank of his truck when “Model T” Ford (p. 228) walked up, slapped him, and drove off in Blaine’s vehicle. Blaine was completely unable to describe his attacker or, more frustrating still, his own truck. But when he woke up the next morning as a strapping six-foot Adonis, it saved the sting. He immediately set out for Ontario and started flirting with the first college cutie he could see. It was Jean.

Jean didn’t understand that she’d slept with a superhero. (Or supervillain. Or perhaps most accurately, super-manslut.) Her own powers were subtle and it took more than twelve months for her to wonder about one of her former flames, a friend-with-privileges named Craig Yucelo who’d moved away to Montreal. As she was idly contemplating him, she found herself sharing his thoughts. She blinked, and tried again. This time, she was looking through his eyes and feeling his sensations as he sat stuck in traffic. When she considered how nice it would be to hear from him, the idea stuck. He called her that night.

Jean had made herself Patient Zero for a sexually-transmitted psychic disease, and she’s the only one with access to the network of infected minds that spread, slowly, through Canada and the United States.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Tyler Ford - James Blaine

Personality: At first, reckless, defiant and self-centered. Later on, haughty, manipulative and self-centered.

Loyalties: Feminism (1)

Passions: Personal Aggrandizement (6)

Power Suite

Selarosis Maxilliae 10d (10 Points): Jean’s body is a host for disease organisms that spread via fluid exchange and multiply rapidly in each new victim’s body, leaving them contagious about a month after exposure if their Body+Endurance roll can’t gobble out the Selarosis’ set. Fortunately, Selarosis Maxilliae is asymptomatic. All of Jean’s psychic abilities are predicated on the presence of Selarosis in the target.

Useful (+2), Subtle (+1), Focus (-1), Indestructible (+2), Secret (+1), Immutable (-2), Exhausted (-3)

Read Minds 7d (56 Points): Jean’s no full-scale telepath. She can receive with a fair degree of reliability, but only those who are hosting Selarosis. No foreseeing attacks or launching headache-blasts for her.

Useful (+2), If/Then (Only works on the infected) (-1), Range Boost (+7)

Puppet 7d (70 Points): This is much like the Wild Talents power of the same name. She can take over someone’s actions, leaving their mind a helpless spectator trapped behind the body’s rebellious face.

Useful (+2), If/Then (Only works on the infected) (-1), Range Boost (+7), Duration (+2)

Plant a Notion 7d (63 Points): It’s not mind control or even hypnosis. She can think a thought, and have the target think he thought that thought. It has no greater control over the target’s actions than any other idle notion. On the other hand, most people aren’t critical thinkers when it comes to their own ideas. Something innocuous is likely to get acted upon, while something outré is most likely dismissed as a momentary fancy.

Jean Davis’ Changes

Between 1976 and 1984, Jean’s Passions split into Personal Aggrandizement (4) and Cocaine Rush (2). In 1985 and beyond, her priorities undergo a major shift, ending with her having the Loyalty Neo-Republicanism (3) and the Passions Personal Aggrandizement (3) and Cocaine Rush (1).

Useful (+2), If/Then (Only works on the infected) (-1),
Range Boost (+7), Subtle (+1)

Last Ditch Escape 3HD (42 Points): She hopes she never has to use this power but, of course, she does. She kills a stranger to extend her own days. That, you see, is what Last Ditch Escape does. If Jean is dying (that is, her head has two or more points of Killing damage, or her torso boxes are completely filled with either Shock, Killing, or a combination) she can choose to possess someone who's ill with Selarosis Maxilliae. If the attack succeeds (that is, it's not gobbled out by some resistance roll like Command+Stability or Body+Endurance) the person targeted physically transforms into a duplicate of Jean Davis and becomes the seat of Jean Davis' memories, consciousness and identity.

Useful (+2), If/Then (Only works on the infected) (-1),
Range Boost (+7), Permanent (+4), If/Then (Only when Jean is dying) (-1), Base Will Cost (-4)

+3 Base Will (9 Points): Comes with being an unseen psychic mastermind.

Destiny: At first, Jean isn't entirely sure what to do with her power, but she knows she wants to translate it into influence, affluence and comfort. As a first step, she founds "Inimos Advertising" in 1973, and tries to push her infected pawns to spread the disease without being too blatant about it. At this point, she won't countenance anything other than consensual sex as a transmission vector, and on a couple occasions even pushes infectees away from underage partners.

Jean does pretty well with Inimos. She also spies on the most affluent Selar M. carriers and abuses their credit card codes and check routing numbers. She's careful to keep her dirty, stolen money separate from Inimos, of course, and in 1974 uses it to start "The Meta-Recovery Foundation," a charity for the victims of dark energy attacks. Her primary agent in this scheme is a lawyer and Selar carrier who readily hires Inimos to run the Foundation's ad campaign when it hits its stride in 1975.

These two organizations, Inimos Advertising and the Meta-Recovery Foundation, give her a pair of versatile venues for gathering and reallocating money. All the time, Selarosis Maxillae is riding a wave of epidemic math into new bodies. Jean loses track of all her potential tools in the late 70s, but she tries to keep abreast of three types of people. The first are people who are both attractive and suggestible. These become her go-to transmission vectors, the ones she can use to try and infect people with cultural influence or political power. Those movers and shakers are, of course, the second group she monitors. Thirdly, and perhaps interesting her the most, are metahumans with Selarosis.



By 1980, she's fixed for cash: Inimos is getting lavish fees from the M-R Foundation, and Jean earns most of it by telepathically shaking down her followers for donations. In addition to paying Inimos, the Foundation provides grants to victims of metahuman crimes. So, when one of her hotties needs a cash infusion, Jean can have a Selar supervillain slap her around. The hottie applies to the M-R Foundation, gets publicity, gets a cash settlement and, as a bonus, maybe meets some news reporters.

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When Habeas Corpus Goes Ad Absurdum

What happens when you kill someone and that person returns to life? This is a very legitimate legal question in Progenitor, but the answer is pretty simple: Instead of being charged with murder, one is typically charged with attempted murder, at least in the United States. Other states pass laws recognizing 'temporary murder' or homicide imperfectus. In France, the punishment for murder remains the same even if the victim returns, though it may complicate an appeal because the prosecutor has the burden of proving the murder occurred in the first place.

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Life is large for Jean, especially when Selar Maxilliae makes the rounds of Miami's criminal underworld. In addition to being well-funded and well-armed, many of Florida's Scarfaces-in-training are sampling products that make them impulsive and irrational. Manipulating a trigger-happy thug had never been so easy, and often the first thing Jean has them do was take another line or two. After all, her power lets her co-experience the rush without the crash.

Her habit or parasitizing coke frenzies may explain her decision to gather twenty-one of her metahuman tools (tiers 7 through 10) and, in April of 1980, incite them to attack Amanda Sykes (p. 159), the Progenitor.

Why attack the world's most powerful woman? Jean has many reasons. First off, she wants to test her organization, her pawns, and her control of them. She figures if she can kill Amanda, nothing's beyond her power. Secondly, she thinks Amanda's a bull in a china shop, a meddling busybody the world would be better off without. At some level, too, she's jealous of Amanda's fame. Sure, Jean has wealth and influence, but she could never tell the world what she's really doing. Since attention is the one thing Jean can't afford, it's the only thing she has left to crave.

The attack's a fiasco. Her strikers get spotted while still making plans and, forewarned, are all captured and imprisoned. Moreover, the mastermind behind the capture—a genius named Jason Weeks (p. 195)—is able to deduce the one common factor in all twenty-one attackers. With the germ isolated and named Selarosis Maxillae, Weeks and his staff at Global Human University join forces with the Åite biologist Thabo "Garfield" Moloi to create a test for Selarosis in early 1981 and, later that year, an inoculation.

None of that might have happened had Jean been actively interfering with the research, but in November of 1980, Jean dies. A metahuman called Pearl (p. 272), a Selar infectee who resisted the psychic call to battle, gets suspicious after hearing about the foiled assault. Using inhuman determination, she succeeds in following the disparate strands back to Jean, the spider at the center of the web.

Reincarnating in West Germany, Jean sparks police curiosity by being in the country without records of how she got there. Despite claims of being a victim of a teleporter, Jean tests positive for dark energy and is detained for some months. She eventually sues her way free, but the attention demanded by her own predicament keeps her from learning about Weeks' investigation.

The inoculation is a nasty shock to her. Nastier is Weeks' calm announcement that Selarosis Maxillae is probably some kind of psychic influence vector. When Å (p. 238) commands all his followers to inoculate themselves, that's insult to injury. Thrown onto the defensive, she turns her attention on finding a way to curtail further research. Only a trio of desperate infectee attacks in 1982 keep Weeks and the CDC from finding a cure. Right at that point, Joao Perdomo finds out about her, applies his remorseless pursuit skills to tracking down everyone involved in the three assaults, and completely eviscerates much of her remaining criminal and metahuman organizations before she's able to get him whacked in 1983.

The year of the Metapocalypse (p. 95), 1983, changes a lot of things. It gives Weeks, Amanda and Å a lot more to deal with than a psychic STD. But moreover, it changes Jean.

Jean's not just a mind reader, she's a co-experiencer. During the horrors of 1983, Jean becomes afraid to check in on her pawns, because so many of them are dying or dead. On three separate occasions she tunes in someone during their death throes and, even when she's able to pull out, that's a scarring experience.

For most of 1984, Jean's too scared to use her powers. She just bunkers, trying to figure out what went wrong.

In 1985, she takes a deep breath, starts exploring the ranks of the Selar positives, and rebuilds in an entirely new direction. Sick of herself for her decadent decades, she decides that America's way forward is through fiscal conservatism, states' rights and a weak Federal government. She founds Freedom Ring magazine as an outlet for her opinions and sets about reshaping Republican politics in the USA.

But while she swings to the right, Jean is never a ‘values conservative.’ Indeed, with the destruction of 1983 mostly concentrated in cities, the Democrat voter pool gets cut more deeply than the Republican. Freedom Ring co-opts feminism and sexual liberation for the right, as a curious fusion of Cosmopolitan and the National Review.

Of course, despite all her emphasis on choice and personal liberties, Jean never hesitates to encourage people to feel good about her magazine and her politics, any more than she hesitated to give her infectees nudges towards products Inimos advertised. She sees no paradox or hypocrisy in using psychic power to force people to believe in freedom and individuality.

Her pool of Selar positives is much smaller in the Freedom Ring era. First off, she stops agitating her infectees towards promiscuity. Second, there are tests and inoculations. Thirdly, her pawns were dying during the Metapocalypse at the same rates as everyone else. While she has access to a second generation, born Selar positive from infected parents, its numbers grow much slower than in the disease’s free-love 70s heyday.

In 1998, Chatelaine Debussy (formerly Pearl) makes another attempt on Jean’s life, but fails. While Jean’s recuperating from those gunshots, the Catholic Church endorses Weeks’ theory that Selar M. is a vector for psychic influence, but to Jean’s shock, a number of people who test positive for Selar voluntarily go public. They aren’t ashamed and some of them insist that Selar is a positive influence in their lives, giving them strength and community that no one can take away. (Some of the people claiming that Jean’s psychic encouragement got them through the Metapocalypse were people Jean never noticed.) In February of 1999, a woman named Janice Stark publicly infects herself, broadcasting her injection on the Internet and encouraging others to join her in the movement.

Jean’s still trying to decide how to handle this when she gets killed again. This time it’s a car bomb and this time she comes back to life in Delhi, where she’s made preparations.

Christofero Muñoz, “El Cucuy”

Career: Crook

History: Christofero was a petty little Mexican scumbag of all work—smuggling people, strong-arming, a bit of pimping for a year until he fucked it up. That’s not to say he deserved to be burned alive, but certainly his power-ancestors victimized people who were much more innocent.

Jarvis West (p. 203) fled to Mexico in 1969 and his wretchedness flowed downward. He rapidly attracted an entourage of sycophants and ambitious crooks hoping to absorb his power, and some did. One of them, Esperanza Soto, took off on her own before Jarvis could get tired of her, and she passed the power on to Adelmo Archuleta, who gained powers over temperature. Christofero didn’t know this when he started competing with Adelmo for Esperanza’s attention, but he figured it out about the time the plastic frames of his sunglasses melted and ran down his face.

Esperanza didn’t like the ugliness and sent Adelmo away, leaving Christofero collapsed on a dusty cantina floor. Eventually he was tossed out the back with the rubbish, and that’s where he changed.

Adelmo had laughed while Christofero burned, and after his own change, Christofero understood the joke. He got it. And then he tracked down Adelmo and made sure he got the joke too. Got it good and hard.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes - Jarvis West - Esperanza Soto - Adelmo Archuleta

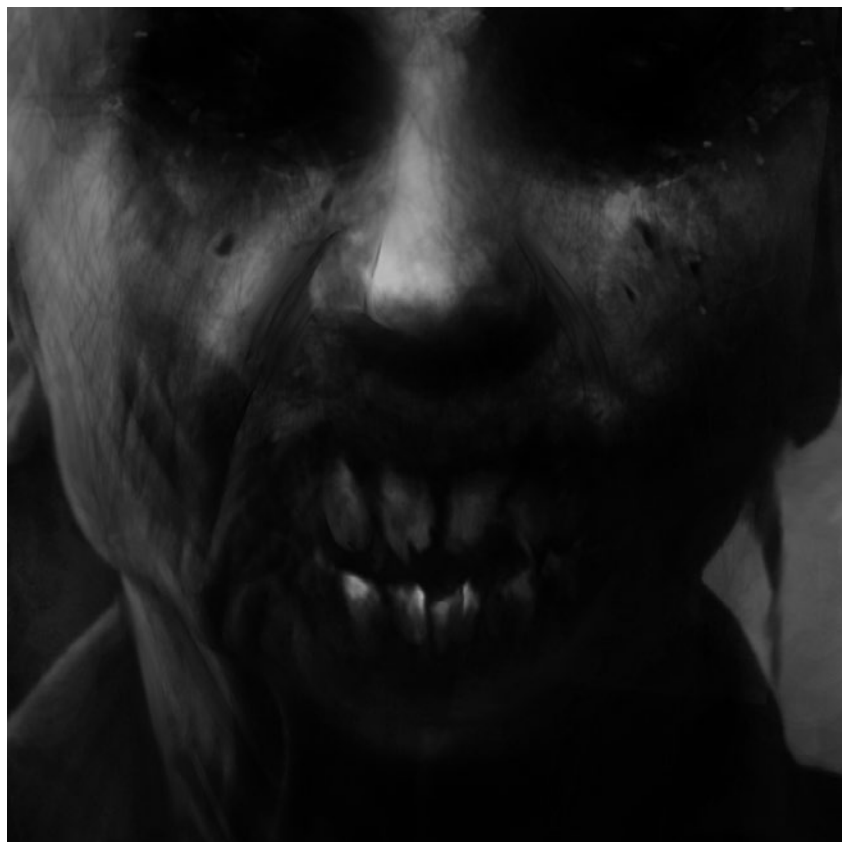
Personality: Sadistic psychopathy. When he changed, his identity and personality did too, altering to fit the new role he saw for himself. Christofero Muñoz was no saint. El Cucuy is the closest thing Christofero could imagine to the devil himself.

Loyalties: His ‘Boogeyman’ Persona (8)

Passions: Sadism (15), Perverse Humor (5)

Power Suite

Alternate Form 2HD (4 Points): Much like Cass Cowper (p. 244), Christofero permanently changes into a different entity and, if changed back, is unable to resume the form. As El Cucuy,



Christofero has greasy black hair and skin wrinkled into rivulets of charred scar. He has no lips, revealing glinting, midnight-black teeth. He wears a natty suit and a hat with a brim and his eyes have no pupils. Like his teeth, they're a deep, shiny black.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), One Use (-4), Always On (-1)

+1WD Body, Coordination, Sense, Mind, Command, Charm (8 Points each): All flawed.

Hyperstats (+4), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2)

Hyperstealth 10HD (20 Points)

Hyperskill (+1), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Speeding Bullet (+2) Extra

Hyperdodge 10HD (20 Points)

Hyperskill (+1) Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Go First 2 (+2).

Hyperweapon (Blade) 10WD (40 Points)

Hyperskill (+1), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Go First 2 (+2).

Hyperintimidation 9HD (18 Points)

Hyperskill (+1) Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Speeding Bullet (+2).

Unconventional Move 10d (10 Points): El

Cucuy is a creature of shadows. All it takes is a second for him to step into a patch of shade and vanish, emerging from another shadow nearby—possibly the shadow of an onlooker, but more often El Cucuy prefers to keep his travel discreet. Rather than lunge up from somebody's silhouette, he's more likely to come out underneath the bed or out of a child's closet.

Useful (+2), Subtle (+1), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2)

Boo! 10HD (20 Points): The first time one sees El Cucuy, it's disturbing all on its own. But 'disturbing' isn't enough for El Cucuy. He needs it to be psychically amplified to the point of madness.

Useful (+2), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2), Daze (+1), Traumatic (+1), Exhausted (-3), Spray 1 (+1), No Physical Change (-1), Speeding Bullet (+2)

+2HD Stability (4 Points): Mechanically, it works like Stability, but it's meant to represent how far beyond human concepts of sane/mad, good/evil and hideous/beautiful he is.

Hyperskill (+1), Attached (Alternate Form) (-2)

+22 Base Will (66 Points): It arises from his passion for his work.

Destiny: Other than helping Zipperneck (p. 210) a couple times—ruining Amy Sykes' 1993 wedding (p. 177) and trying to hold the 1982 World's Fair hostage—El Cucuy is perfectly content to wreak havoc on a small, personal scale. He floats around Mexico, occasionally slipping across the border to rile up Americans against illegal immigrants with a string of rape-murders, sometimes heading south to hire out to smugglers in deals that usually end in doublecross. He stays under the radar, doesn't fall into patterns and laughs, laughs, laughs.

He stops chuckling in 1998, when his powers abruptly break and force him back into the identity of Christofero Muñoz. He holes up with El Cucuy's money and waits to see if the powers come back. When they do, his don't, and he makes his retirement permanent.

Aristophanes Baaden, “Master of Sound”

Career: Professional

History: Aristophanes Baaden—“Risto” to his friends—was one of those quiet people who love sound. Soft-voiced, he played the cello at basisonderwijs in Kortrijk, switched to upright bass in secundair onderwijs and quit playing seriously at eighteen when his family moved from Brussels to Paris.

He was a little disillusioned when he realized that lots of musicians who were much better than him were still struggling for work. But he was also a little relieved. He was not one to crave attention. He studied sound engineering and got a job in a studio. He started with a lot of short radio commercials but eventually worked on records for some of his struggling musician friends. He also met a woman, fell in love, and moved in with her.

They might have still broken up in different circumstances, but c’est la vie. As it fell out, she worked for a radio station and met Charles Priestley. Charles Priestly worked for a record company and had been present when Deionne Bright (p. 192) guested on a track. Priestly caught super, became hypercognitive and super-suave, and passed it on again to Risto’s girlfriend Anaïs Suan. Anaïs became a teleporter and set out to make her fortune.

At first, it was great. She was making money shipping food to famine zones and it was a breeze for her to take them to Tahiti or New York, not just for a weekend, but for lunch. But she started moving around a new crowd. A metahuman clique, and shy Risto felt more and more marginalized, even as Anaïs got more and more preoccupied.

He discovered his powers when it all came to a head and they had an argument. It escalated from cutting words to shouts, and he didn’t really realize what he was doing when he blasted her out the window.

Anaïs teleported to safety, but it was clearly time to divide the record collection. When she got her wits back around her, she reported the

assault to the gendarmerie, and that’s when Risto’s problems really began.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes - Deionne Bright - Charles Priestly - Anaïs Suan

Personality: Formerly he was all gallic resignation masking quiet desperation. On the run from the cops and slandered as a supervillain, his desperation is becoming louder. He’s a normal guy with abnormal powers in a tense situation.

Loyalties: Professionalism (2)

Passions: Music (2)

Power Suite

Master of Sound 10d (180 Points): Risto hasn’t found much he can’t do with sound, if he wants. Imitating a voice with perfect fidelity is as easy as imitating an entire symphony orchestra. Recording and playback and tweaking pitch and timbre are all easily handled without even a studio. Blocking sound, transforming it or rattling someone’s brain with it are all within his capabilities. He can’t exactly create sound out of nothing with his powers, but since he can clap his hands and amplify it until it’s as loud as a jet engine, that’s not much of an issue. Defending himself with it is a bit more difficult, but he’s clever. Between making loud noises right next to an attacker’s ear (forcing a flinch) and setting up sound waves that actually have enough force to shift someone backwards, he can take care of himself.

Attacks (+2), Variable Effects (+4)

Defends (+2), Variable Effects (+4)

Useful (+2), Variable Effects (+4)

Sonic Blast 3d (64 Points): It’s not subtle, but it is powerful. Everyone within a 20 yard radius takes WS to every hit location, probably gets knocked back 4-5 yards, and spends a few seconds dazed and confused. (Not surprising, really.) They also spend a bit of time yelling “What? WHAT?” as if they’d been to a Led Zeppelin concert the night previous. And like

Custom Extra: Deafening (+1)

Exceptionally loud and penetrating sounds can stun or even rupture unprotected eardrums. A deafening attack leaves the character unable to hear clearly, so any sense roll where listening is required gets a -4d penalty. This lasts the remainder of the scene.

that Led Zeppelin concert, it can be heard for miles around.

Attacks (+2), Mass Quality (+2), Radius (+4), Engulfs (+2), Limited Damage (Shock) (-1), Obvious (-1), Deafening (+1), Daze (+1), Touch Only (-2)

Sonic Resistance 3HD (6 Points): This is not a permanent immunity, so Aristophanes has to take a moment to activate it. But when it's up any damaging sound attacks are automatically mitigated for him only.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

Destiny: Aristophanes isn't a spy or a criminal. With no idea how to disappear or escape, he cooperates with the police. Unfortunately, an incident in the holding cell prompts the police to try to drag him into solitary, and Risto panics.

More by luck than anything else, he escapes. Well, luck and the cops' well-founded fear of unknown sonic powers. On the street with his face on every TV, Risto runs and keeps running.

Flash forward a few years and he's working for a shady Iranian ex-pat in Rome. It's understood that Risto will blast anyone who gives the boss trouble, but moreover, Risto guarantees that nobody ever overhears the boss' business talk. Once word gets around that there's a sonic blasting bug-buster around, terrorists like Glóir and the Red Army Faction won't rest until Risto's on their side, and they're not the types to accept a polite 'no.'

Risto doesn't get any peace until he persuades Howard March (p. 225) to turn him black. By that point, he's bitter, paranoid, and has absorbed a pretty callous view of other peoples' property rights. (Not the best attitude for coping with racism.) Creating faked phone calls and incriminating recordings throughout the nascent EU, Risto looks out for Risto and everyone else can go screw.

Lydia Aguilar, "Worldbuilder"

Career: Professional

History: Lydia was never a practical girl. The youngest of five, and the only girl in a wealthy Brazilian family, she was shamefully spoiled by father and mother both. They can't be blamed too much: As a young girl she had a close call with polio. Her fragile health left her bookish and introverted.

A more pragmatic woman in that situation might become terribly bossy and demanding, but quiet, shy Lydia really just liked reading and fashion. Lounging on the sofa or in a hammock, she devoured Vogue, Tolkien, Story, Paris Match, Jane Austen and C.S. Lewis with equal voracity.

As an adult, she attended art school for a few years before giving it up. At that time, her literary tastes moved closer to home—Borges, Vargas Llosa, García Márquez and Puig. She's never been too fond of poetry, except Pablo Neruda.

Lydia, then, became a librarian with an unusually expensive wardrobe (as her parents' doting didn't cease when she moved from São Paulo to Cuiabá) and a quiet, dreamy life. Then she got infused with dark energy.

She has no idea where her power came from. (In actual fact, it was a woman who developed psychic invisibility after being attacked by a man who'd gotten space distorting powers from being tormented by Jarvis West, who's described on p. 203.) But one day, while she was painting a watercolor interior, the paints began to shift. Instead of blurring as one would expect, they sharpened, until she was no longer looking at a canvas. She was looking at a portal into an uninhabited room.

Hesitantly, she asked her downstairs neighbor to look at it and, when he saw it too, they tried to move the painting to show it to someone at the university. But it was immobile, frozen in place and, from the back, merely a stretched canvas on an easel.

Ultimately, she hired a private detective to go in and explore it. He came back and reported that it seemed to be as it looked, a nicely furnished room.

The doors all led to closets, one quite large and filled with exquisite evening gowns, but when he tried to bring one of the dresses out of the window, it dissolved as it crossed the threshold.

That room is still there, in a building that was purchased anonymously and deeded to the newly-founded Federal University of Mato Grosso, who founded a department of Dimensional Physics just to study it. And, if Lydia were willing, her.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes - Jarvis West - Trent Brownback - Maria Escondo

Personality: Initially withdrawn and uneasy in public, the demand for her pocket dimensions rapidly makes her (1) unbelievably wealthy and (2) tremendously fascinating as a celebrity, as an artist working in a medium no one else can, and as a phenomenon defying physical explanation. Her taste for glamor leads her to enjoy more and more of the delights of three elites—wealth, fame and intellectual cachet. She becomes coy, flirtatious, and a little bit manipulative. She's not a bad person though. Why would she need to be?

Loyalties: Brazil (5), Beauty (10)

Passions: Education (5), Personal Comfort (10)

Power Suite

Create Pocket Dimension 10d (130 Points):

Lydia can create a space and all the objects within it. More, she can give that space slightly different rules than apply in the natural world. It's nothing so extreme as time moving slower or entropy decreasing on its own, but she has made spaces with no gravity, or where the gravity is focussed on the center—or the inside surface—of a sphere.

Pocket dimensions are permanent, and the space through which they can be entered remains in a fixed position relative to the nearest multi-million ton object. Initially she had to paint what she was making, and she still prefers to work that way, but it's not necessary.

Many of her spaces are created as refuges or vacation homes for billionaires. A few are in place as the most secret of military bases. But her favorites are those she makes in public parks and museums, for the enjoyment of everyone.



Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Radius (+10), Variable Effects (+4), Exhausted (-3), Touch Only (-2), Delayed Effect (-2)

Destroy Pocket Dimension 10HD (40

Points): Most people don't know she has this power, but she can destroy these peculiar bulges in space even more easily than she can create them. While the collapse is gradual—typically the walls close in until it's gone—anyone who's inside a dimension while she destroys it is likely to suffer.

She can use this power on other people's dimensions as well as on her own.

Useful (+2), Radius (+4), Slow 2 (-2), Exhausted (-3)

Attacks (+2), Radius (+4), Slow 2 (-2), Exhausted (-3), Scattered Damage (-1), Non-Physical (+2), Willpower Bid (-1)

Expert (Microclimatology) 2d (2 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

+26 Base Will (78 Points): She's one of those cool, famous, wealthy people.

Destiny: The department of Dimensional Physics gets two Nobel Prizes out of their investigations,

and Lydia meets a brilliant and charming professor who becomes her first husband. She eases off her efforts with the university (making genteel excuses all the while) right about the time of her divorce. But her Nobel-laureate ex is on the PushCore (p. 372) team that develops space injection (p. 335).

But Lydia, she gains a lot of weight and goes through two more husbands before getting bored with it all and going off on a journey of spiritual exploration in Tibet. She comes back a year later with the weight off, a newfound serenity, and an interest in Áism (p. 358). Not as a religion—she thinks it’s utter bushwah, though she’s too well-bred to say so. But their stellar ambitions speak to something in Lydia, a call to new worlds bigger than any could construct.

When they begin building their world-ship (p. 141) Lydia volunteers to attach a full dozen micro-dimensions to it, and contribute her expertise in climatology to boot. All she asks in return is that they take her along when they go.

Zelda Estillón

Career: Layabout

History: The daughter of a Spanish sailor and an Irish bowling alley attendant, Zelda was always impulsive, emotional, troubled—and lucky. When she and three friends broke into their school and vandalized it, she was the only one who didn’t get caught. When she was in a car where the drunk driver rammed a tree, she was the only one who wasn’t permanently injured or killed outright. And when she joined the IRA, she made friends with Terrence O’Shay six months before he received a dark energy power.

There’s gossip, of course, that they were lovers, but it’s false. For whatever reason, Zelda just didn’t get the creeps like most people Terrence confides in. Maybe because she’s got such a dark streak herself. Just like her power predecessor, she hides it well.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes - Deionne Bright - Michael Sepponen - Terrence O’Shay

Personality: A bit of the wild girl, likes hard drink and smokes unfiltered cigarettes. She’s

spontaneous, vivacious, cheerful, friendly until you make her mad, and then she turns casually vicious with astonishing speed.

Loyalties: The IRA/Glóir (4)

Passions: Personal Success (2), Sadism (1)

Power Suite

Heavy Armor, Layer A 2HD (20 Points):

This is standard Heavy Armor as in Wild Talents, except for its “If/Then” flaw. The essence of Zelda’s powers are a tradeoff between being tanklike, with heavy armor and strength and extra wound boxes, or being a one-woman army of duplicates who look and think exactly like her. If she has all her clones active, the original Zelda has no armor. If she has all her armor up, it means there are no clones about.

It may look a bit complicated, but really there are only six states in which she finds herself. She might have; no minions, ten extra wound boxes per location and HAR 10 10d Body; two expert minions, eight extra wound boxes per location, HAR 8 and 8d Body; four expert minions, six extra wound boxes per location, HAR 6 and 6d Body; six expert minions, four extra wound boxes per location, HAR 4 and 4d Body; eight minions, two extra wound boxes, HAR 2 and 2d Body; or all ten minions.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), If/Then (Not when Minions Group A are in use) (-1)

Minions Group A 2HD (12 Points): Just like the Minions power from Wild Talents, except flawed.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Not when Heavy Armor, Layer A is active) (-1).

Heavy Armor, Layer B 2HD (20 Points):

This is standard Heavy Armor as in Wild Talents, except that it has the flaw.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), If/Then (Not when Minions Group B are in use) (-1).

Minions Group B 2HD (12 Points): As above, mostly.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Not when Heavy Armor, Layer B is active) (-1).

Heavy Armor, Layer C 2HD (20 Points):

This is standard Heavy Armor as in Wild Talents, except flawed.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), If/Then (Not when Minions Group C are in use) (-1).

Minions Group C 2HD (12 Points): This is the Minions power from Wild Talents, except for its flaw.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Not when Heavy Armor, Layer C is active) (-1).

Heavy Armor, Layer D 2HD (20 Points): You get how this works, right?

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), If/Then (Not when Minions Group D are in use) (-1).

Minions Group D 2HD (12 Points): As above, more or less.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Not when Heavy Armor, Layer D is active) (-1).

Heavy Armor, Layer E 2HD (20 Points):

Flawed Heavy Armor again.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), If/Then (Not when Minions Group E are in use) (-1).

Minions Group E 2HD (12 Points): Yep.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Not when Heavy Armor, Layer E is active) (-1).

Hyperbody Level A 1d (2 Points)

Hyperstat (+4) Attached (Heavy Armor, Layer A) (-2).

Hyperbody Level B 1d (2 Points)

Hyperstat (+4) Attached (Heavy Armor, Layer B) (-2).

Hyperbody Level C 1d (2 Points)

Hyperstat (+4) Attached (Heavy Armor, Layer C) (-2).

Hyperbody Level D 1d (2 Points)

Hyperstat (+4) Attached (Heavy Armor, Layer D) (-2).

Hyperbody Level E 1d (2 Points)

Hyperstat (+4) Attached (Heavy Armor, Layer E) (-2).

Extra Tough, Layer A 2HD (12 Points):

You see where this is going, right? Extra Tough from Wild Talents, except it's Attached to Heavy Armor, Layer A. When she takes damage, it hits her "inner layers" first—so if she sheds layers of Extra Tough to create minions, she's giving up open wound boxes, not damaged ones.

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), Attached (Heavy Armor, Layer A) (-2)

Extra Tough, Layer B 2HD (12 Points)

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), Attached (Heavy Armor, Layer B) (-2)

Extra Tough, Layer C 2HD (12 Points)

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), Attached (Heavy Armor, Layer C) (-2)

Extra Tough, Layer D 2HD (12 Points)

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), Attached (Heavy Armor, Layer D) (-2)

Extra Tough, Layer E 2HD (12 Points)

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), Attached (Heavy Armor, Layer E) (-2)

Endurance 2d (2 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

+6 Base Will (18 Points): Of course she's confident. She's always got someone she trusts at her back.

Destiny: One of the founding members of Glóir, her first militant action is the Mountjoy prison break of October, 1973. She develops a particular rivalry with Barb French (p. 218) after the 1974 battle at the Houses of Parliament. Zelda kills one of Barb's boyfriends in 1978, but though she's on the team that goes after French in 1982, it's Veronica O'Malley (p. 280) who lands the killing blow. Zelda never really forgives that.

In 1984, after Sinn Fein disavows them, someone sells Zelda out to the police. While she escapes the cops, and various Ulster loyalists, someone catches up to her in Atlantis (p. 336) where her body is found on the shore, perfectly untouched but stone-cold dead.

Tier Seven

Sascha Michnik, “Invulnerablizer”

Career: Laborer

History: Sascha got superpowers from his beloved wife. Unfortunately, her own were insufficient to save her. She caught them from a supervillain, who caught them from a supercop, who caught them from Zipperneck himself (p. 210)—an impressive pedigree, given how few survive direct experience of Zipperneck’s power. It is, however, one of which Sascha is entirely ignorant.



Sascha worked as a gardener and his wife had a job in a laundry. They were poor but content until a fugitive covered with soldier blood demanded sanctuary and, when he felt Mrs. Michnik was dragging her feet, he zapped her with a bolt of lightning. She survived that attack, and the two attended their unwilling guest’s every whim until the army found him two days later. Mrs. Michnik died in the shelling, as did her power ancestor, and Sascha found that he’d

survived an artillery barrage by hiding behind a piece of corrugated tin.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Amy Sykes - Alphonse Russo - Hal Bryson - Tito Syzgsy - Nanette Michnik

Personality: Glum, simple and a more than a little bitter. He’s gotten something that thousands would kill for, and it’s something he doesn’t want. He paid for it with someone no one else really cared about, and she was the love of his life.

Loyalties: His Wife’s Memory (20)

Passions: Architecture (9)

Power Suite

Reinforce Flimsy Stuff 10HD (40 Points):

With this power, he can permanently give Light Armor to anything that’s rigid but easily torn or penetrated—cardboard, glass, plywood, Tupperware and wall-board would all be fine, but he couldn’t do it on cloth, loose paper or gauze. If a material qualifies, it gains the power’s Width in Light Armor. It can never be used on anything living. He must pay 20 Willpower to use this ability, but can affect 12.8 tons of appropriate material with each use.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-3), Endless (+3), Touch Capacity (+1), Delayed Effect (-2), Exhausted (-3)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Delayed Effect (-2), Exhausted (-3)

Strengthen Durable Stuff 10HD (40 Points):

Anything that might naturally have a LAR or HAR rating can be strengthened by this power. (Again, not on anything living or anything flexible.) It gains Width in HAR. He must pay 20 Willpower to use this ability, but can affect 12.8 tons of appropriate material with each use.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-3), Endless (+3), Touch Capacity (+1), Delayed Effect (-2), Exhausted (-3), Interference (+3)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Delayed Effect (-2), Exhausted (-3)

Fortify the Inanimate 10HD (20 Points):

Anything that his Strengthen Durable Stuff or Reinforce Flimsy Stuff could improve is also eligible for this power. It bestows Width in Wound

Boxes on the subject matter. He can affect 12.8 tons of appropriate material with each use.

Useful (+2), Engulfs (+2), Permanent (+4), Touch Only (-3), Exhausted (-3), Delayed Effect (-2)

Id Architecture (1 Point)

Hyperskill (+1)

+33 Base Will (99 Points): Perhaps there's something to his stolid, stoic outlook.

Destiny: Sascha defects to the West, helping build a tunnel under Berlin in the process. (Tunneling is a lot easier if you don't have to worry about cave-ins.) He rapidly becomes a millionaire by reinforcing buildings, and also does some work for the US military, creating unique airplanes out of impossibly strong, light material. There's some talk about using him to make a space elevator without carbon nanotubes, but it's ultimately not feasible. Instead, he works on Air Force skybases and submarine hulls.

1983 is Sascha's wakeup call. Seeing the carnage wrought by the military he served, Sascha weeps, donates his vast fortune to the Red Cross, and returns to Europe to help rebuild what his work helped destroy. He's partially pulled from his despond by an energetic young architect whose impossible designs can be implemented with Michnik reinforcements. The whimsical buildings—hospitals, museums and libraries—spring up throughout Poland, Lithuania and the Ukraine.

By 1985, he's started to forgive himself enough to work for money again. He takes a reconstruction job in West Germany and gets assassinated there.

Jess Hardesty, Fortune Teller Compeller

Career: Laborer

History: Born with a walleye and a caul, Jess Hardesty grew up handling snakes, had a family bible full of spells and folk potions, and scared her fifth-grade teacher into passing her with the unspoken threat of "the evil eye."

None of her family's rich heritage of superstition did them a lick of good when a mining company decided to force them off their farm and strip mine it for tin. The Hardestys moved to the big

city (in this case, Baton Rouge) and found work as laborers, construction workers, shelf stockers and, in Jess' case, as a fortune teller.

Jess had a tattered deck of Tarot cards that had been her great-grandmother's and more, she really believed everything she read in them. This was all fine until a tall black man back from Vietnam came into her parlor and said, "Just what has fate got planned for me? I been in the war, and I've seen and done and become things I just can't figure around."

That soldier was a Tier Six, in direct line of succession from General Andrew Colt (p. 168). She told him he was in for a spell of bad luck until he worked off his spiritual debt, and to avoid crossing water. Two weeks later he was killed in a car crash when a tire blowout sent him through a guardrail into the Mississippi river.

Jess Hardesty's days of terrifying accuracy had arrived.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Andrew Colt - Jason Blume - Jasper Carruthers - Jackson Kingford - Mason Dean

Personality: Mysterious, dramatic, serenely sullen and fatalistic. Happy to see the good rewarded and the cruel get dirty for dirty.

Loyalties: Family (3), The South (2)

Passions: Drama (2)

Power Suite

Mark With Destiny 2d (2 Points): Jess Hardesty uses this power any time she tells someone's fortune. It effectively implants a seed of her power into the subject, drawing her other powers to him. She cannot direct how this power works, though if she just went through the motions (that is, if she didn't spend the Willpower) it would do nothing more than any other prediction. Though of course, she would never do that. She gives 100% to every prediction and if it works, it works. If not, well, not.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Willpower Cost (-2), Uncontrollable (-2)

Good Omens 5d+7WD (99 Points): If Jess' prediction indicates success in love, or business, or in reuniting with the father you never knew, then you are much, much more likely to succeed at that goal. Functionally, this is much like the Aces power. When a character who is Marked With Fortune is attempting something that is likely to make the prediction come true, he gets to add these dice to his pool.

Attacks (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Can't work on herself) (-1), If/Then (Only someone following a prediction made through Marked With Fortune) (-1), If/Then (only for Augment) -1. Touch Only (-2)

Defends (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Can't work on herself) (-1), If/Then (Only someone following a prediction made through Marked With Fortune) (-1), If/Then (only for Augment) -1. Touch Only (-2)

Useful (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Can't work on herself) (-1), If/Then (Only someone following a prediction made through Marked With Fortune) (-1), If/Then (only for Augment) -1. Touch Only (-2)

Ill Fortune 10HD (60 Points): If Jess tells you you're not going to accomplish something, you are going to find your way barred. Severely barred. Barred at every turn. This one works like Jinx, and again it's only on someone who's Marked With Fortune and trying to defy his foretold destiny.

Attacks (+2), Interferes (+3), If/Then (Only interferes) (-1), Touch Only (-3)

Defends (+2), Interferes (+3), If/Then (Only interferes) (-1), Touch Only (-3)

Useful (+2), Interferes (+3), If/Then (Only interferes) (-1), Touch Only (-3)

+13 Base Will (39 Points): She has the self-assurance of someone who knows just what's going to happen.

Destiny: Jess makes Baton Rouge a world center of weird luck, superstition and gob-smacking coincidence. It gets to the point that Bryson Maas-Thierry (p. 206) notices and, after a week or two of interviewing people, identifies Jess as the epicenter in 1982. When he walks into her parlor, she asks if he wants his fortune told and he suggests that she do a reading for herself. Swayed by Bryson's hypercommand, she does and

finds out she's doomed to die within six months. When the Metapocalypse happens (p. 95) her prediction comes true.

Saichin Rahim, "The Physicist"

Career: Professional

History: It's a painful thing to renounce your name, and all the more so when it's a proud one. Saichin's family were Zamindars, a lineage of authority dating back to the reign of the Mughal emperors. But when the Zamindar divisions were abolished in 1950—the year Saichin was born—his family satisfied themselves with merely being wealthy, storied and cultured.

The wealth was the next thing to go, when their home in East Pakistan was devastated by the great 1970 Bhola cyclone. At the time, Saichin was overseas, studying physics at Harvard. When he heard of the deaths in his family and the destruction of their estate, Saichin hurried home and found that it was worse than he'd feared. Everything they had was gone and, moreover, the country itself seemed to be dissolving into madness.

Worried about old grudges (real or imagined) getting settled, Saichin gathered what remained of the family fortune and moved his two surviving sisters from their native Chittagong to the capital Dhaka, changing their names to the generic "Rahim" and trying to forge new lives from the sodden remainder of the old.

Then, in 1971 came Operation Searchlight, Pakistan's crushingly violent response to the Bengali independence movement. After dragging their feet over Bhola, the butchery was seen as a brutal insult on top of a callous injury. But there was a factor that Pakistan had underestimated: Dark energy.

They knew an expatriate Bangladeshi had teleported supplies in from the US after the cyclone, but they didn't know he'd stuck around to agitate for his homeland's independence. In the process of teleporting people to safety in the face of Operation Searchlight (an activity that got him killed) he spawned a sub-set of Bengal metahumans. One of them used his powers of persuasion on Saichin, and when the soldiers

tried to gun down the noisy firebrand, they found their bullets ricocheting around the interior of an impenetrable barrier—a field that let them breathe, but which blocked all matter from entering or exiting.

Unfortunately, it didn't block radio waves, and the soldiers were able to radio a sniper who picked off Saichin's power-giver. Had they only known how events would turn, those soldiers would have moved heaven and earth to kill Saichin Rahim instead.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes - Deionne Bright - Jonas Dreyer - Salim Taieb - Ram Guhathakurta

Personality: Thoughtful, grave and obstinate. While his courtesy and finicky manners might make him seem sycophantic to some in the casual West, they are actually the trappings of a fiercely proud upper class metahuman who sees no controversy arising from his opinion that he's better than 99% of humanity.

Loyalties: His Family (2), His Country (1)

Passions: Order (1)

Power Suite

Selective Force Field 10d (200 Points):

Saichin has one power, but it's useful and versatile. He can create force fields (planes and spheres only) that are completely impervious to one state of matter while letting the other two through undisturbed. That is, he can make a sphere through which no gas can pass, but which lets liquids and solids through, or a sheet that blocks liquids without interfering with gasses or solids. (That last one's a perfect umbrella.) What makes this power dangerous is the ease with which he can push around gasses and liquids within the human body. Sure, if he creates and expands a bubble that blocks mass, he's going to push back against a person and that person probably moves, carrying his liquids and gasses inside him like water in a jug. But let's imagine a bubble that blocks fluid, pushing down from above and forcing blood away from a target's brain. Or one that blocks gas, expanding in someone's lung, compressing the air down until it congeals. Once the gas turns liquid, the force

field can no longer suppress it, but by that point it's been forced to such a low temperature that it's probably cracking the interior surface of the target's body cavity. That's in addition to shoving people back, blocking bullets and dispersing tear gas. He can manipulate 800 pounds of matter at a time.

Attacks (+2), Controlled Effect (+1), If/Then (Only one state of matter) (-1), Mass Quality (+2), Radius (+2), Non Physical (+2)

Defends (+2), Controlled Effect (+1), If/Then (Only one state of matter) (-1), Mass Quality (+2), Radius (+2)

Useful (+2), Controlled Effect (+1), If/Then (Only one state of matter) (-1), Mass Quality (+2), Radius (+2)

Destiny: As "The Physicist," Saichin battles for Bangladeshi independence and, after that's achieved, he patriotically struggles to keep his nation free and complete. He's not able to stop the president's assassin in 1981, but he's a constant thorn in the side of Pakistani and IEG (p. 77) agents trying to destabilize his country. Widely recognized as a symbol of the nation, The Physicist is a central figure in the government's attempts to maintain order during the Metapocalypse. In fact, at one point, hundreds of men in his signature uniform (which incorporates the simple red-dot-on-green Bangladeshi flag on chest, mask and cape) were deployed to call for peace, calm and national unity.

While he is most passionate about his anonymous shadow war against foreign troublemakers, what gains The Physicist international fame is his work with New ID/EA (p. 89), shielding his nation from monster hailstorms, preventing a disastrous natural gas leak in Cameroon and helping mitigate the 1984 Bhopal disaster.

Connor Sprague, the Human Ham Radio

Career: Professional

History: Connor Sprague was the guy who introduced Anaïs Suan to Aristophanes Baaden (p. 255). He patted himself on the back when they got together, and he felt just awful when Baaden blasted her out that window.

Connor, like Aristophanes, was a sound technician. In his case, instead of recording, he

specialized in broadcast, and worked at the radio station with Anaïs. He also had an enviably large flat in Paris, the outcome of a long story too tedious to relate and only relevant in that, when Aristophanes panicked after his powers went off, the first place he thought to run to was Connor's pad. Risto didn't really think it through before demonstrating his abilities. Connor discovered his own powers within a few months of handing his buddy all the cash he had on hand and helping him get a train ticket to the coast.

It started with voices in his head, but they went away every time he noticed them. Sometimes music. Dreams with plotlines and commercials, but still strangely flat. It wasn't until he was listening to music in his head and heading into the Metro that he realized he was picking up radio broadcasts. But the news agent had a radio on next to his cash register, and it was the same song. Connor wasn't just remembering a tune, he was receiving it.

Unlike many on the higher tiers, Connor had had enough time to grasp the presence of metahumans and, like everyone, had thought about what he'd do if he was one. But he'd never imagined having the abilities he actually got (though, in retrospect, it seemed pretty obvious). Connor Sprague could tune in any radio station, could receive TV signals and even see the images in his imagination, somehow. (They were accurate too—he checked against small details.)

When he found out he could broadcast as well, he gave in to temptation and inflicted the occasional burst of static on rival radio stations. Police bands were wide open to his perceptions, and one day, after learning the codes and seeing a woman get slapped by her boyfriend on their balcony, he broadcast a summons directly into the nearest prowl car.

As powers go, it was sometimes entertaining, or informative, or useful on the job, but hardly something one would use to 'fight crime.' It was minor.

Until cell phones.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes - Deionne Bright - Charles Priestly - Anaïs Suan - Aristophanes Baaden

Personality: Laid-back to the point of laziness, Connor initially seems like a modest and satisfied guy. As cell coverage expands and he realizes that he can learn anyone's secrets, or place a fraudulent call in someone else's voice, his personality leans more towards self-satisfied and smug.

Loyalties: Western Society (1)

Passions: His Personal Comfort (7)

Power Suite

Perceive Broadcast 9d (36 Points): Radio and TV signals are open books to Connor as are, in time, car phone and cell phone signals. He can quickly isolate any signal within 29,000 miles (so, anywhere on earth, but not as far as the moon). Weak broadcasts, or ECM aren't problems as long as he knows the signal's there—he can receive it as if he was an inch away from the source. Now, if he's never called your cell phone and doesn't know its distinct 'identity,' by 1999 finding it is going to be a total needle/haystack situation. But if he's seen or held your phone and bothered to lock on, he can listen to it any time it's active.

Useful (+2), Slow (-2), Go Last (-1), Range Booster (+4)

Decode Radio Signals 2HD (4 Points): The NSA would faint from pure delight if they understood how Connor can do this, but that's not really an issue until they start to suspect his existence in 1989. Besides, even Connor doesn't know how his brain (or dark energy exocortex) decodes a TV signal into an image, let alone how it cracks the layers of encryption on covert military broadcasts. But the fact of the matter is, no matter how disguised or encrypted a system is, as long as it has a radio broadcast involved, Connor can understand the signal. His own theory is that he traces the broadcast back to its source and scans it before it's encrypted, possibly by looking backwards in time. But he's mostly pulling that out of his ass.

Connor can use this power on any signal he can pick up with his Perceive Broadcast power.

Useful (+2), Self Only (-3)

Control Radio Waves 8d (72 Points): It's not just interference, not just snow on the TV or signal loss to a GPS. He can spoof any receiver with perfect fidelity. He can change that call from your mom so that 'I love you' comes out 'I've been unfaithful to your father.' He can make your GPS unit lead you to the middle of the desert. Or he can put an image on your TV screen in glorious technicolor with surround sound.

Useful (+2), Variable Effect (+4), Range Boost (+3)

Broadcast 8d (72): Of course, sometimes he doesn't bother pretending his message came from anywhere other than himself. Instead of modifying an established wave, he can just make one of his own.

Useful (+2), Variable Effect (+4), Range Boost (+3)

Electronics 4d (4 Points): This is a Hyperskill. Being able to perceive the minute fluctuations of radio waves in an electronic circuit makes them much easier to understand.

+4 Base Will (12 Points): Yep. Smug.

Destiny: PushCore Technologies (p. 372) identifies Connor Sprague as a metahuman in 1980 and their Paris security consultant arranges a fake mugging (well... 'fake' in the sense of 'not being a spontaneous and random piece of street crime,' since they do take Connor's wallet) that assures them he lacks offensive and defensive powers. But the speed of the police response, and the mystery of just who made the call on the radio, tips them wise to his abilities.

Foreseeing the rise of telecommunications, Nalinashka Singh (p. 372) makes the 'acquisition' of Sprague a priority and proceeds by imperiling Connor's comforts. After buying the station where he works, one of PushCore's media subsidiaries cuts costs and benefits to make sure Connor worries that he's next on the block. Similar purchases and decisions make his neighborhood steadily less desirable, until a job offer from out of the blue in early 1983 looks really good.

PushCore presents itself as nothing more than what it is: A major company interested in achieving a questionably-legal advantage over its

competitors. (At the time, France's legal position is that the government cannot forbid the use of dark energy powers that have no measurable physical or statistical effect because such a ban is unenforceable. Therefore, mind readers are free to read minds as much as they want. However, communicating private information can still leave one open to a civil suit, but that sort of accusation is difficult to prove.) Were he secure and prosperous, Connor would probably walk, but he's still in negotiations on the day he feels a surge in radio broadcasts and, tuning in, learns that Moscow, Washington DC, and other major cities are under attack. When he hears Paris is also being besieged, he contacts PushCore and begs them to get him the hell out. Having a teleporter on staff, they do so.

Connor also hacks the conversation between the President of the US and the Premiere of Russia, trying to convince each one that the other wasn't responsible. Sadly for the world, he fails. It's quite possible that their suspicions were already at such a fever pitch that a nuclear exchange was inevitable, but the world will never know. His disastrous attempt at atomic democracy is a secret Connor takes to his grave after a 1989 cognac and sleeping-pill overdose.

But between his flight from Paris and his death in his secluded luxury chateau, a depressed Connor Sprague provides inside trading information worth billions to PushCore. That's without considering the frauds he commits to confuse, trip up and hamstring PushCore's competition.

Angelica Ming, "The People's Collective"

Career: Student

History: Born in San Francisco the year Amanda Sykes (p. 159) is identified by name as the Progenitor, Angelica grew up accepting metahumans as part of life, just like the Bomb and the VCR. She was seven years old when "The Basher" bombed San Francisco over its Anita Bryant protests and thirteen when the Metal Virus (p. 283) struck. By that time, she'd been exposed and was ready to fight back.

Angie was lucky to catch it. In 1980, she was ten and got lost. A visiting Atlantean found her

crying and asked where her parents were. When she said she didn't know, the nice Atlantean lady seemed sad, and suddenly Angie did know. Before that point, Atlantean Moon Dawson hadn't known she had a power. With its first use, she passed dark energy to Angie.

Angie didn't realize she had a power until she and a friend were trying to get down a frisbee stuck in a tree. It was just out of reach and her friend offered Angelica a boost. As soon as they touched, they were able to do far more than fetch a lost toy. They melded into a single entity, a blob of roiling flesh that could stretch, grab, roll... until it broke apart, leaving Angie bemused and her friend terrified and sobbing.

With experimentation, Angie discovered she could transform into a powerful, stretchy flesh-blob—but only when someone agreed to help her. Moreover, that blob could absorb up to five people total, as long as they said yes, and they would all be returned to normal when the collective dissolved.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Amy Sykes - Cole Laskin - E.J. Houghton - Sydney Ford - Moon Dawson

Personality: Determined, optimistic, even chipper, Angelica's forceful nature is shaped by the constant need to form a coalition to activate her powers. Without dark energy, or with a different ability, she might have become bossy and shrill. As it is, she's assertive but respectful, and a good listener.

Loyalties: San Francisco (7)

Passions: Justice and Security (7)

Power Suite

Assimilate Person 2HD (4 Points): If someone agrees, he can melt into The People's Collective and make Angelica stronger. Clothes come along and are returned after the Collective disperses. While melded, people still have individual identities and free will—but they contribute to a psychic gestalt, understanding and understood-by everyone else added in. In theory, Angelica has no greater control over The People's Collective than anyone else she admits, but (1) she's used to operating the Collective body, (2) she's used to

managing the psychic din and (3) she can eject people whenever she wants. Still, the Collective is unpredictable, which is why so many of her other powers have the Flaw "Uncontrollable."

On the plus side, however, when a person joins the gestalt, it can use any Skills that person possesses. This can make struggling with The People's Collective an interesting proposition, depending on who she's recruited. If she pulled up a high school girls' basketball bench, she's going to be quicker and difficult to tire. If she dragged in that 90 year old Kung Fu instructor and gave him a young and impossibly stretchy giant frame to strike with... that's different.

Useful (+2), Touch Only (-2), Duration (+3), Horrific (-1), If/Then (Only works on the willing) (-1)

First Body 1d (2 Points): When she has sucked in one person, the Collective's Body Stat goes up one. While the Collective is chaotic, it is necessarily well adapted to splitting its attention, which is why this Body point has the Spray Extra. At this point, the Collective has Body 3, but if she wants to use that Spray effect, it's Body 1.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Assimilate Person) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 2 (+2)

Second Body 1d (1 Point): When she has sucked in two people, the Collective's Body Stat goes up again. With three brains combined, they all work faster. The Collective at this point has Body 4, but only Body 2 if it decides to use the Spray.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Assimilate Person) (-2), If/Then (Must have two people absorbed) (-1), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 2 (+2)

Third Body 1d (1 Point): By three people, the Collective is impressively quick and very strong. Body 5, Body 3 for Spray effects

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Assimilate Person) (-2), If/Then (Must have three people absorbed) (-1), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 2 (+2)

Fourth Body 1d (1 Point): With four people in the gestalt, The People's Collective has Body 6, or Body 4 for Spray effects.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Assimilate Person) (-2), If/Then (Must have four people absorbed) (-1), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 2 (+2)

Fifth Body 1d (1 Point): Topped out, she's readily able to hoist up your Subaru Impreza. Body 7, or Body 5 for Spray effect.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Assimilate Person) (-2),
If/Then (Must have five people absorbed) (-1),
Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 2 (+2)

Meat Shield A 2HD (8 Points): In the small print of the unspoken contract is the agreement of the absorbees to take hits for the Collective. Each person absorbed provides more cushions and, only after they've been exhausted are Angelica's wound boxes touched. After they separate, the total damage done to the meat shield boxes is assigned as Area dice, divided equally among everyone but Angelica.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Engulf (+2),
Attached (First Body) (-2)

Meat Shield B 2HD (8 Points): You've already figured out how this is going to work, right?

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Engulf (+2),
Attached (Second Body) (-2)

Meat Shield C 2HD (8 Points): Here's another.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Engulf (+2),
Attached (Third Body) (-2)

Meat Shield D 2HD (8 Points): Yep.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Engulf (+2),
Attached (Fourth Body) (-2)

Meat Shield E 2HD (8 Points): Last one.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Engulf (+2),
Attached (Fifth Body) (-2)

Multiple Actions A 2HD (8 Points): I mentioned the chaotic nature of The People's Collective, right? That doesn't prevent it from functioning. In fact, synergies can form—fast!—between multiple courses of action. Functionally, this is like the Multiple Actions power in Wild Talents. The Uncontrolled Flaw indicates that often times, these actions are not Angelica's highest priorities and are sometimes things she doesn't want to do at all. But the will of the collective is strong and sometimes a leader gets shouted down. Note that the actions she takes aren't timed as if they were four points Wider.

Using Multiple Actions, she takes an action to get her bonus dice, and that action—the action of getting the bonus dice—is what happens lightning-quick.

Useful (More actions) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), Attached (First Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Go First 4 (+4)

Useful (Noncombat) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), Attached (First Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Go First 4 (+4)

Multiple Actions B 2HD (8 Points): I wish there was a shorter way to do this.

Useful (More actions) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), Attached (Second Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Go First 4 (+4)

Useful (Noncombat) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), Attached (Second Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Go First 4 (+4)

Multiple Actions C 2HD (8 Points): But I was concerned it would get confusing if I compacted iterative powers together.

Useful (More actions) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), Attached (Third Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Go First 4 (+4)

Useful (Noncombat) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), Attached (Third Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Go First 4 (+4)

Multiple Actions D 2HD (8 Points): Oh well.

Useful (More actions) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), Attached (Fourth Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Go First 4 (+4)

Useful (Noncombat) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), Attached (Fourth Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Go First 4 (+4)

Multiple Actions E 2HD (8 Points): Sorry.

Useful (More actions) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), Attached (Fifth Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Go First 4 (+4)

Useful (Noncombat) (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), Attached (Fifth Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Go First 4 (+4)

Size Shift A 2HD (8 Points): As she absorbs people, she gets bigger. Fortunately for this

writeup, only two layers of this are required. With the second person she absorbs she has generally grown to eight feet tall and around 4-500 pounds.

Defends (+2), Attached (Second Body) (-2), Endless (+3), Automatic (-1), Horrifying (-1)

Useful (+2), Attached (Second Body) (-2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3)

Size Shift B 1HD (4 Points): The fourth person sucked in is roughly equivalent to another Hard Die of growth, leaving her around nine feet tall. When she's at capacity she could weigh as much as a thousand pounds.

Defends (+2), Attached (Fourth Body) (-2), Endless (+3), Automatic (-1), Horrifying (-1)

Useful (+2), Attached (Fourth Body) (-2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3)

Unconventional Move A 1d+1WD (5 Points): The plasticity of The People's Collective lets her spread herself out to float on water, or flow up the side of a building like a climbing squirrel.

She has also been known to brachiate between buildings with stretched out tentacles of flesh, but that's more an "Elasticity" thing. With one person absorbed, she can move about five yards a round these ways.

Useful (+2), Attached (First Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2)

Unconventional Move B 1d+1WD (5 Points): With two people absorbed, she can move about twenty yards a round.

Useful (+2), Attached (Second Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2)

Unconventional Move C 1d+1WD (5 Points): With three people absorbed, she can move about eighty yards a round.

Useful (+2), Attached (Third Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2)

Unconventional Move D 1d+1WD (5 Points): With four people absorbed, she can move about 320 yards a round.



Useful (+2), Attached (Fourth Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2)

Unconventional Move E 1d+1WD (5 Points):

With five people absorbed, she can move about 1,280 yards a round.

Useful (+2), Attached (Fifth Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2)

Elasticity A 2d (2 Points): Her growing stretchy springiness actually defies most laws of physics for common human bodies, but by the time she has three people absorbed she's well beyond everyday biology anyhow. With the first person she assimilates, she can stretch 20 yards.

Useful (+2), Attached (First Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2)

Elasticity B 2d (2 Points): The second person she assimilates extends her range to 80 yards.

Useful (+2), Attached (Second Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2)

Elasticity C 2d (2 Points): The third person she assimilates extends her range to 320 yards.

Useful (+2), Attached (Third Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2)

Elasticity D 2d (2 Points): The fourth person she assimilates extends her range to 1,280 yards.

Useful (+2), Attached (Fourth Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2)

Elasticity E 2d (2 Points): The last person she assimilates extends her range to 5,120 yards.

Useful (+2), Attached (Fifth Body) (-2), Uncontrollable (-2), Spray 1 (+1), Go First 2 (+2)

Rampaging Free Will A 2HD (4 Points): One advantage of her internal mental chaos is that it makes it much harder for an external mental force to take advantage of her. This power works as an immunity to all unwanted psychic effects.

Useful (+2), Attached (First Body) (-2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Daze (+1)

Rampaging Free Will B 2HD (4 Points):

Yeah, the more toys in the attic, the louder playtime gets.

Useful (+2), Attached (Second Body) (-2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Daze (+1)

Rampaging Free Will C 2HD (4 Points):

Lotta static now.

Useful (+2), Attached (Third Body) (-2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Daze (+1)

Rampaging Free Will D 2HD (4 Points):

Headache city.

Useful (+2), Attached (Fourth Body) (-2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Daze (+1)

Rampaging Free Will E 2HD (4 Points): This is the kind of thing that leaves a mind-reader screaming "Oh God, get me out!"

Useful (+2), Attached (Fifth Body) (-2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Daze (+1)

Empathy 1d (1 Point): If you'd been that many people, you'd be sensitive too.

Hyperskill (+1)

+14 Base Will (42 Points): If you had to keep that many minds in line, it'd toughen you up too. Besides, she always wanted to be a superheroine.

Destiny: With too many Latino friends to be comfortable with government authority after 1983, Angelica conceals her identity from the police and does her civic protecting anonymously. She stays resolutely apolitical as much as she can, and when faced with violence simply tries to control fighters without 'favoring' either side. Of course, that's far more an ideal plan than an actual strategy.

She also manages to indirectly create (and, for a while, date) another metahuman defender, "The Lawn" (p. 278), but he leaves San Francisco at the turn of the millennium. Angie stays local for college, and her mother's protracted battle with cancer in 1989 keeps The Collective's actions to a minimum. But after graduating with a political science degree, Angelica starts working with the city's social services by day, while continuing her crime-fighting habit at night.

In 1998, Angelica has a wake-up-call when powers fail. She applies to graduate schools and gets accepted to a program in Syracuse, New York—just about the time her powers return.

The Bottom Tiers

Below Tier Seven, the numbers of metahumans continue to surge, and these bottom tier metahumans find themselves in a strange, suspended position. While often (though not always!) frail in comparison to their ancestors, they're still quantum levels above the capabilities of 'mere humanity.' Whether they find their fates as civil defenders or selfish marauders, at the very least they have plenty of company.

Tier Eight

Gina Tzanetakos, "Justine Time"

Career: Professional

History: Gina was eight when her neighbor Todd got squished.

They weren't friends at all. Todd was thirteen and had no time for little girls. He was going to the quarry to swim (something his parents had forbidden) and the quickest route there involved walking across a railroad bridge. If he hadn't had his bicycle with him, he might have made it. Gina saw it from a mercifully great distance. The junior high athletic field, where Gina spent many of her weekend hours, was due east of the rail yard. It was late afternoon, so it was in silhouette. It wasn't graphic, it didn't give her nightmares. But it did make her realize at an unusually young age that, hey, kids die.

What gave her nightmares was Todd's mom when she got the news. One of the older kids at the field had run back to tell her and all the others, sensing that something was up, trailed along. Todd's mom didn't believe it and yelled at them, then got in her car and drove off. Next time Gina saw Todd's mom she was weeping in her husband's arms and moaning, "If only I'd been there! If only I could have gotten there!"

That was the first time she saw a grownup totally out of control, and she wouldn't see it again until she was in college and one of the girls in her dorm attempted suicide. Gina heard the screams and ran to see what was happening. What a

mess. Blood everywhere. The room mate was hysterical. But Gina remembered something about direct pressure from her Girl Scout first aid course, so she flipped the girl over on top of her bleeding arms and sat on her back. Then she told the room mate to go get an ambulance.

The suicidal girl had cut her wrists crosswise instead of lengthwise, so she lived. At least, she lived three more years before doing it the right way, but by that time Gina had transferred to nursing school and was just about to graduate.

Two years into her nursing career, she took a trip to see her cousin in Baton Rouge and submitted to a fortune reading by Jess Hardesty (p. 261). Jess told her she'd be lucky in love, and after that Gina had her pick. Doctors, bond traders, lawyers—she was suddenly getting invitations to glamorous soirees and exclusive country club parties.

At the same time, she was finding herself unexpectedly teleporting into danger, confusion and incipient disaster. She quickly learned to carry a disguise, and the police dispatchers in her home town of Nashville, Tennessee soon learned that when that gal calling herself "Justine Time" tells you to send cops and firetrucks and ambulances somewhere, you don't ask questions, you send 'em.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Andrew Colt - Jason Blume - Jasper Carruthers - Jackson Kingford - Mason Dean - Jess Hardesty

Personality: Sober and demure, unfailingly polite and equipped with gracious southern charm, Gina ably conceals her considerable inner steel. Moreover, her abilities reflect a long-suppressed urge for thrills. She has, however, come to appreciate preparedness to a degree that would seem paranoid in someone with different powers.

Loyalties: The USA (3), The South (3), Her Gentleman Callers (2)

Passions: Helping the Needful (6)

Power Suite

Perceive (Trouble) 8d+2HD (36 Points):

There is something of her power detached from Gina, something restlessly vigilant, constantly



evaluating Nashville and its environs (or anywhere within about 300 miles). This sense homes in on dams about to burst, pissed off wives reaching for the meat cleaver, suicides sealing up the garage and children finding unsecured handguns. Then it moves Gina to the site without ever giving her warning. Luckily for her, the power rarely bothers

her when she's asleep, it usually waits until she's alone to kick in, and it seems to understand that she needs to rest sometimes.

Useful (+2), Variable Effect (+4), Exhausted (-3), Range Boost (+2), Uncontrollable (-2)

Trouble-Centered Teleportation 6d+4WD (88 Points): When the aforementioned Perceive (Trouble) power goes off, it doesn't do anything as sensible as send her a gentle memo. It just takes her directly to where the action is. While the Uncontrollable Flaw gives her teleportation a mind of its own, in this case that metaphorical 'mind' is friendly and helpful. It just has no interest in anything other than heroics. So in the middle of a crisis, if she asks for some useful teleportation, she's likely to get it. (It won't move her furniture or get her to a hairdresser's appointment on time, however.) The Defensive aspect of her power is not at all capricious. It's fully under her control.

Defends (+2)

Useful (+2), Range Boost (+2), Uncontrollable (-2)

Navigate 1d+1WD (5 Points): Her sense of direction and location is completely infallible, possibly as a side effect of her Perception power.

Hyperskill (+1)

+7 Base Will (21 Points): I referenced 'inner steel' previously, right?

Destiny: She spends about a decade saving lives around Nashville and has a very complicated romantic life before finally revealing her secret life to two of her suitors (Dr. Steve Rawls and an attorney named Marcus Bain) and marrying the one who accepts it (becoming Gina Bain). There's still tension, since she relies on Dr. Rawls to patch her up off book when needed, but it's stable until Ravager decides Nashville is just too peaceful.

No one knows where Ravager comes from, or who he is, or even what powers he has, exactly. All Gina knows is that she finds herself being dragged, not to her usual fires and stroke victims, but to nightmarish and elaborate scenarios, games of torture and mass murder and pure madness. Despite her teleportation and determination, Ravager is always a step ahead (leading to speculation that he's a hyperbrain). She requests and receives help from Ian Kraus (p. 222), LeRoi Mathers (p. 207) and even Abe Sykes himself (p. 173), but is unable to find her nemesis. Whenever a new metahuman comes

to town, Ravager goes into hiding until the interloper leaves. Then he strikes again.

Ravager spends years getting the measure of Gina's powers. Then he kills her husband. Then he kills Dr. Rawls. Then he kills her. In the process, he slaughters dozens of Nashville residents (often with devices on timed delay, or operated by remote control) to pull her to the exact point he wants.

As a side note, once she's dead, 'Ravager' is never seen or heard from again. At least, not in that identity.

Chatelaine Debussy, "Pearl"

Career: Layabout

History: Detroit was not kind to Chatelaine. She moved there with her boyfriend—well, really it was more that he moved there and she followed him and he wasn't her boyfriend anymore but she was really sure, really really, that they were going to get back together, except they didn't, and she'd dropped out of school and everything.

So Chatelaine started turning tricks. One of those tricks happened to be a salesman from Canada in for the car show and, in addition to a simmering case of venereal warts, he was infected with *Selerosis Maxilliae* (see p. 250). Oh, and dark energy. When he used his newfound persuasiveness to talk her out of charging, she got all three.

As her pimp yelled at her and started folding up a coat hanger to teach her a lesson, Chatelaine—with a sensation very similar to what she'd felt when she'd run away from her mom and creepy step-dad—decided to be done. What was coming didn't matter, what was past was just prologue, the important thing was being done with that moment, that imminent beating, that numbing use and humiliating servitude.

When her pimp turned away from the coat closet, the hanger dropped from his slack fingers. Chatelaine had changed.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Tyler Ford - James Blaine - Jean Davis - Edmund Moore

Personality: Once she was a low-self-esteem case with not too many brains and a whining habit, dead on trajectory to find some substance to addict her. But what she really wanted above all else was to stop being that, stop being hurt, stop being accessible to pain. So now she is remote, distant, uncaring, yet in some abstracted way interested in changing the face of Detroit. Now, she is Pearl.

Loyalties: The Principle of Individual Freedom (2)

Passions: Her Individual Freedoms (18)

Power Suite

Body of Pearl 2HD (4 Points): Chatelaine's transformation is drastic, complete and permanent. While still humanoid, it has no sexual characteristics. Its mannequin body is flawless, but sterile, and its surface is lustrous, pearlescent, all whorls of subtle color.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), One Use (-4), Always On (-1)

Invulnerable 6HD (120 Points): This is just like Invulnerability from Wild Talents, except for its flaws.

Defends (Heavy Armor) (+2), Interferes (+3), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1), Attached (Body of Pearl) (-2), Obvious (-1)

Defends (Light Armor) (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Hardened (+2), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1), Attached (Body of Pearl) (-2), Obvious (-1)

Useful (Protection from harm) (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), Always On (-1), Obvious (-1)

Stability 5HD (10 Points): No one is going to cause Pearl emotional pain. Ever.

Hyperskill (+1)

+16 Base Will (16 Points): Its physical invulnerability is matched by its determined intractability. This has the Flaw Attached (Body of Pearl) (-2).

Destiny: Asexual and more 'humanoid' than human, Pearl replaces its own pimp and rapidly becomes an ordered and tightly controlled

procurer. Not quite up to the private call-girl level, Pearl's Girls nevertheless have a pretty good deal and know it. Pearl doesn't beat 'em and doesn't let anyone else beat 'em. This loses it a lot of the more damaged and psychologically needy whores from its old boss' stable, but they were more trouble than they were worth to Pearl.

After a few years as a madame (or whatever its androgyne equivalent is), Pearl starts shaking down other Detroit pimps, threatening them with horrendous death unless they start giving it a percentage. It takes only one gruesome torture-murder (something it can easily manage, thanks to its inhuman psychological stability) to bring the others into line... except for Fantasmobile (p. 294).

They fight. It's inconclusive, but they agree to avoid one another afterwards, with about a third of Detroit's sex-managers taking refuge behind him rather than pay a tithe to Pearl. Pearl becomes sedentary and satisfied, right up to the point that it gets an itch to kill Amanda Sykes (p. 159). No dummy, Pearl figures this for some kind of telepathic mind-witchery, and after the April, 1980 attack on Amanda, Pearl realizes someone was setting metahumans up as metapatsies. This offends Pearl, who pauses only to terrorize the pimps who'd been hiding behind Fantasmobile and get them obedient. Then Pearl takes off to find out who was trying to control it.

Five months later, it kills Jean Davis (p. 250), never realizing that Davis was its power ancestor. Jean takes the hint and stays out of Pearl's mind.

Pearl thinks that's done, until it learns about Selarosis Maxillae and figures out that Davis is the mastermind behind it. When it finds out Davis is effectively unkillable, Pearl gives up on assassination and, instead, shifts its attention to hamstringing Davis' socio-political ambitions. As a result, the Progressive Right never really catches on in Detroit and nobody there carries Freedom Ring magazine.

That goes on until Pearl's powers break in 1998. Hoping against hope that Davis is similarly depowered, Chatelaine Debussy uses Pearl's cash and connections to get to Davis and attempt a second assassination. But without Pearl's

uncanny focus, most of the shots go wide and Davis escapes alive.

Chatelaine retires to a small town in Alabama, telling people she's a doctor's widow, and lives out the rest of her normal life there, sitting on the skimmings of decades of sex-trade transactions.

Kevin Weist, "Traveler"

Career: Professional

History: Kevin fell in love with a flight attendant but, well, she was flighty. She was pursuing the pre-AIDS era zipless fuck, he was a closeted romantic who believed in love at first sight and if either of them had been good at communication, or less attracted to the other, or sober, it might have all been a close call. Instead, it turned into a metaphorical mid-air collision.

Cyber-stalking wasn't really possible in 1981, and chasing her all over the globe would have rapidly depleted his school-teacher salary. But one day the bank he was in got robbed by a guy with a glowing red energy field and Kevin was the hapless customer selected to to show off how the robber's power worked.

The hospital did good work, but getting cheese-textured flesh burns peeled off in the hot-water therapy tub just cannot be made tolerable. He wished he was somewhere else, anywhere really but his home in particular and then there was a strange wobbly moment before he, his doctor, and the whole damn hydrobath crashed down into his apartment. The pain of dropping six feet was even worse on his skin than the pain of treatment, but as he looked dumbly around at his own walls, and up at the ceiling of the hospital, Kevin's life was already beginning to change.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Amy Sykes - Eloise Tyburn - Melanie Randel - Ron Clute - Fiona Schott - Sebastian Wainwright

Personality: Inside every romantic is a bitter, selfish cynic just waiting for heartbreak and disfiguring burns to set him free. Even after a dark energy healer fixes his body good as new, Kevin's wounded. He's bitter, resentful, a prima donna and he comes down with a major sense of entitlement.

Loyalties: Cynicism (1)

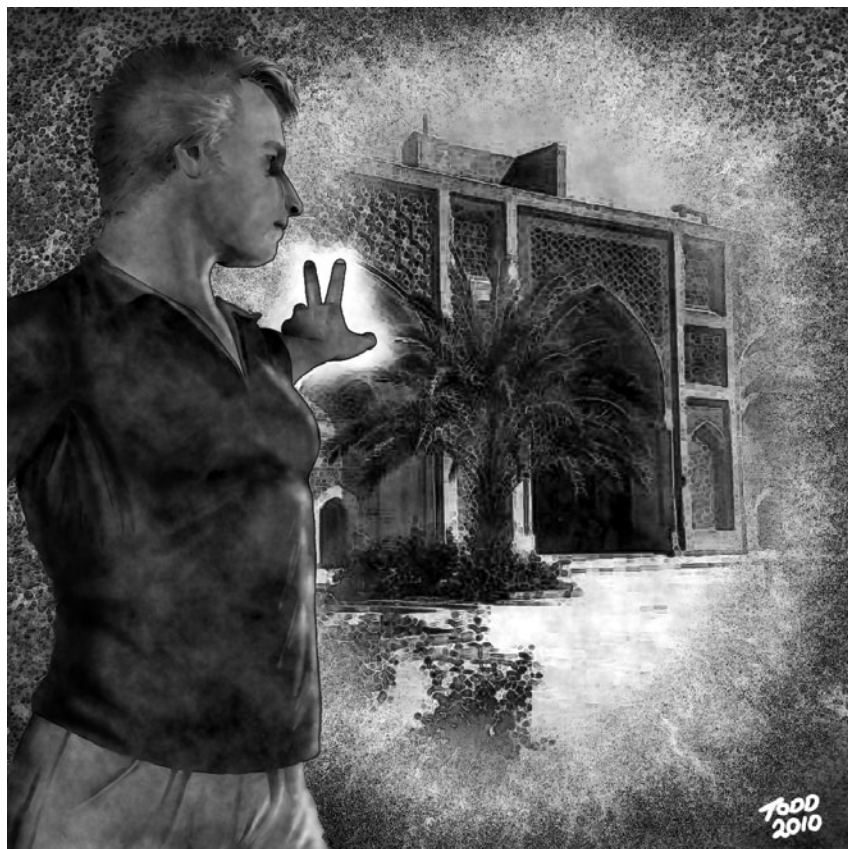
Passions: Selfishness (3)

Power Suite

Space Warp 6d+4HD (98 Points): Kevin can make non-adjacent areas adjacent with temporary space distortions. These warps last only a few seconds and are limited to about five thousand yards, but within that range he can circumvent the open space between "here" and "there."

If he holds on hard, he can make a hole big enough to step through, letting him travel about the area of his range. It's effectively teleportation. Dropping someone through such a portal when they're on their guard isn't really feasible though. To hurt you with his power, he simply hooks together two parts of your body that aren't supposed to be contiguous: Having one's brain space-warped into one's lung is not healthy for people or other living things. Defensively, he either moves himself out of the way, or moves something in the way, or moves any incoming peril in another direction.

Attacks (+2)



Defends (+2), Spray 1 (+1)

Useful (+2)

Space Tear 10d (40 Points): This is bigger, stable, and in every way more impressive. He can open a hole in the air (though, as a nod to not freaking the squares, he makes many of them on walls or in floors) that has a corresponding hole anywhere within 29,090 miles. (In other words, anywhere on Earth and pretty much anywhere in orbit up to the geostationary level.) What goes in either hole comes out the other hole. Each hole is a circle roughly two feet across and, as long as Kevin doesn't mind it being open, it stays open come hell or high water (or some other kind of dark energy manipulation). His ability to maintain multiple tears is limited, but by allowing manufacturers to completely ignore shipping costs—even just for a year—Kevin becomes a very wealthy man.

Useful (+2), Exhausted (-3), On Sight (+2), Endless (+3), Willpower Investment (-1), Range Boost (+4), Slow (-2), Go Last (-1)

+4 Base Will (12 Points): It all comes from that sense of entitlement.

Destiny: Kevin's abilities are really paying off right about the time America falls apart in 1983. Despite President Reagan's pleas for meta-volunteers, Kevin won't work for free. He makes a mint evacuating unstable cities and moving material for reconstruction, but the disrespect of his metahuman peers grates on him. For a few years after, he serves as the 'transportation coordinator' for New ID/EA (p. 89) but, again, he expects to be paid. When Abe Sykes (p. 173) finally gets fed up and chews him out for selfishness, Kevin bails on everything.

He goes to nice places for a few months, then tracks down the stewardess and tries to make her life miserable by flaunting what he can do. Sadly for him, she's married and has two kids by that point, and refuses to crawl back to him in a satisfactory way. And, well, he'd been drinking, so he tears apart her suburban split-level.

No one's hurt, but using dark energy in a felony makes the consequences greater. If Kevin had any friends in the government he might get a pass and a slap on the wrist, but he made only

enemies who are all too glad to put the screws to someone they rightly regard as a wiener.

So Kevin has to flee, and when his assets get frozen, he becomes a criminal. He still chooses the easiest path (and when you can simply warp your way into a bank vault, that's pretty easy). But despite all the wealth and all the gold-diggers, he's itchy and unsatisfied. He tries one act of genuine super-villainy in 1993, taking part in the assault on Amy Sykes' (p. 177) wedding as a way to get back at Abe, but it doesn't satisfy him either. Eventually, he winds up working off-book for a small Middle Eastern nation, repelling foreigners and (again) moving building materials right up to the point that he pisses off a co-worker who fatally poisons him in 1997.

Brianna Mihulniac, Bringing Beauty to the Lives of Men

Career: Professional

History: In art school, they said Brianna was competent, but pedestrian. Privately, that's what some of her ex-lovers said about her too, not that she had many. She was as plain, portly and shy as the heroines of the books she illustrated were luscious, willowy and vivacious.

Yes, Brianna took her art school education and went to work in the romance industry, turning out cover after cover of women with their pouty lips in ovals and men with their shirts in disarray. Wavy hair, dewy eyes and glistening pectorals were her stock in trade.

Remarkably, it was healthy for her. Familiarity breeds contempt and seeing a parade of aspiring male models willing to pose and strut and bend over for reference photos, all in exchange for some bucks or something in the portfolio... she started to get jaded to masculine beauty. This opened her up to romance with an appearance-challenged manager for a coffee-supply company. (A sharp dresser, but gangly, and with an unfortunate predisposition to skin tabs.)

She never knew when she got exposed. Her first inkling was when Ron, her boyfriend, asked if she wouldn't like him better if he was handsomer. Even as she opened her mouth to demur, the notion crossed her mind and—with a shower of

green sparks—Ron was suddenly bursting out of his shirt (though not as artfully as her illustration subjects) as he gained probably twenty pounds of plank chest, rippling abs and beautifully delineated deltoids. He had changed, instantly, into an Adonis.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - James Closterman - Quentin Tillson - Harper Bradbury - Owen Cole

Personality: The combination of power, uncontrollability, sudden wealth and unpredictable power backlash leave Brianna subject to extreme mood swings. One day she's energetic, excitable, giddy with giggly good cheer and bursting to use her abilities to their fullest. A week later can find her locked in her home, hiding from the world, afraid of another tragic accident.

Loyalties: Aesthetics (5), Those She Transforms (5)

Passions: Luxury (4)

Power Suite

Man-tastic Makeover 2d (8 Points): When this power works, it permanently alters the target, turning him or her into a heartbreaking man who, yes, wouldn't look out of place on a romance novel cover. All of Brianna's 'creations' are unique, they range widely among ethnotypes and body shapes, from soulful wan Saint Stephen types to Samoan giants with sculpted cheekbones and bedroom eyes. But they are all indisputably, functionally male. Forever. Even Abe Sykes' Molecular Restoration (p. 173) proves unable to reverse the transformation.

The power works only on human beings, which is fortunate, but it is utterly beyond Brianna's control. It strikes without warning, capriciously reworking the entire lives of its targets. Even people who want to be made young and handsome have terrible identity problems once they no longer match their drivers' licenses. (Though oddly, their fingerprints stay the same.) It's even worse when it cuts loose with an unwanted gender reassignment.

This power has to succeed before she can use her Heal or Improve powers on someone.

Useful (+2), Uncontrollable (-2), Permanent (+4)

Heal 4HD (24 Points): The kick in the teeth is that the power she can control is a real gem. Wounds and illnesses and toxins are all as dust before Brianna's wind, and for many who are maimed or grievously sick, the chance to feel well is paramount and the chance of a new career as a male model is either a nice benefit or a price the patient's willing to pay.

Useful (Repair damage) (+2), Attached (Man-tastic Makeover) (-2), Engulfs (+2),

Useful (Cure ills, toxins and age) (+2), Attached (Man-tastic Makeover) (-2)

Improve 10HD (80 Points): This is like Abe Sykes' Corporeal Refinement power (p. 173), except that it only works on physical Stats. She spends Willpower for the dice she wants to throw, and if she gets a set the target permanently gains a point of Coordination, Sense or Body, whichever is lowest. (If they're equal, pick randomly.) Someone who has benefitted from Improve cannot benefit from Corporeal Refinement, and vice versa. It is permanent.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Attached (Man-tastic Makeover) (-2)

Perform (Create sculpture or visual art)

5d+3WD (17 Points): Her aesthetic sense was already pretty developed when she became imbued with dark energy, and her skills were already reliable, if not extraordinary. But with the power coursing through her, she has become, overnight, one of the world's finest sculptresses and painters.

Hyperskill (+1)

+7 Base Will (21 Points): She's empowered by her visions of beauty.

Destiny: She makes a ton of money with the healing and the instant mega-plastic surgery, and loses it all again in a string of lawsuits from three accidentally-altered women. Ron drops her—the transformation is kind of an insult, but he could have forgiven it if she hadn't gotten so erratic and bipolar so fast. Isolated and out of control, Brianna retreats.

Purchasing a thousand acres in Montana, Brianna opens a studio-cum-clinic. During the mornings, she paints and in the afternoon, if

you're sick, you can visit her and maybe get fixed and remade.

At first, she's only open to the fabulously wealthy and the truly needy, but in time she broadens her standards... with a twist. Anyone who wants to get better, or simply become a supermodel, can come and get the treatment if he agrees to stay on the ranch for two years afterwards.

The lurid speculation about what goes on in an isolated farmstead populated by one artist and (at its height) up to two dozen straight-up stud ranch-hands moves a lot of tabloids and never really dies down. When she finds that female metahumans can (with an effort of will) resist accidental transformation, she issues an open invitation to them to come visit whenever they like.

Brianna's Retreat becomes an epicenter for metahuman socializing, and her onetime ranch-hands often come back to visit, making it a place to be for Hollywood and haute couture gossip as well. Her self-imposed exile is luxurious, but mainly what the ranch-hands are there for is to provide company. Then again, you put that many healthy young men in isolation with one woman, well, nature takes its course.

When Brianna catches Selar M. in 1990, Jean Davis (p. 250) considers it a major coup. She never gives Brianna a single psychic suggestion until Jason Weeks (p. 195) figures out Brianna's infected and encourages her to have everyone who receives her treatment get inoculated. That's when Jean suggests to Brianna that Weeks is laughing at her and that she's better off as part of the Selar M. culture. Brianna instead gets Chandra Desani (p. 246) to cure her, starts curing everyone she's transformed, and gives Global Human University a huge grant for their biology department.

Padraig McTavish, "The Boiler"

Career: Layabout

History: Padraig grew up hearing his father (whom he idolized) perpetually grouching about the government, the taxes, the unfairness of it all. In Padraig's mind, that was simply the definition of adult masculinity—a stout opposition to the

government. It didn't hurt that they were growing up Catholic in Belfast.

Padraig wasn't one of the chosen IRA stalwarts who was exposed to dark energy deliberately. He caught it randomly from a slow spreader during a street battle against the police. But once he realized what he could do, he dropped out of school to join Glóir (p. 68).

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Abe Sykes - Deionne Bright - Michael Sepponen - Terrence O'Shay - Marcus Collins - Gavin Burroughs

Personality: He has the intensity, conviction and utter unwillingness to compromise that is so often the purview of youth. He also has its traditional chip on his shoulder on the subject of his age. He has a romanticized, absolutist view of his side of the struggle, and only death or falling hard in love could turn him from his crusade of destruction.

Loyalties: Glóir (2)

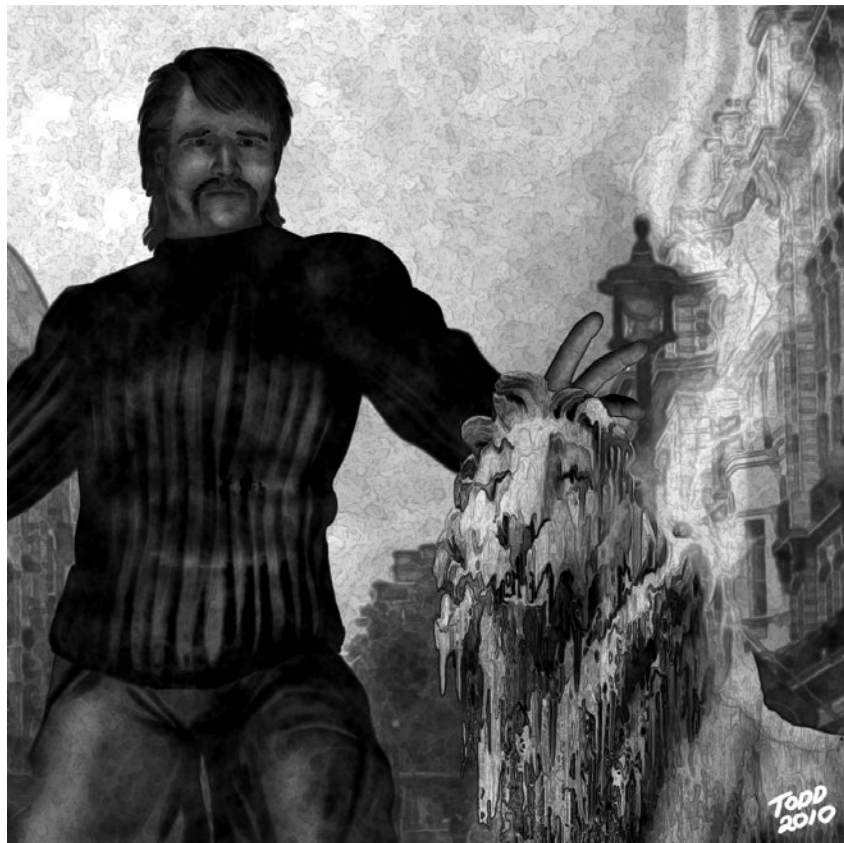
Passions: Revenge (2)

Power Suite

Change the Temperature at Which a Material Changes State 5d+4HD (143

Points): Padraig has one power, but it's a doozy. There are a hundred university physics departments that would love to spend a few years devising experiments around him but, given his beliefs and attitude, they're unlikely to get a chance.

Padraig can change the temperature threshold for changing a gas to a liquid. He can change the point at which a solid melts, or a liquid freezes. He might even be able to turn normal matter into plasma, if he knew about plasma, which he doesn't. If he doesn't like you, he can make your skin melt or your blood turn rigid in your veins. If he's under attack he can turn the bullets into liquid in midair (which still stings and spatters, but given how it evaporates and spreads and deforms, it's unlikely to do any real harm) or he can freeze his blood and tissue for a micro-second to keep the shockwave from spreading through his flesh. (He has no idea he's doing this—it's entirely unconscious.) Extremes of temperature pose no threat and blows are simply slowed with brief blood freezes and thickening of



the air. (He doesn't automatically injure those whose punches he stops this way—to attack he has to concentrate and keep the effect operating more than a sliver of a moment.)

Sadly for Padraig, his reflexes are slow when it comes to aiming this and he's never able to break a lifelong susceptibility to the head-fake. Anyone who can succeed at a Coordination+Stealth roll can avoid the power. Even if Padraig can see the target clearer, a fakeout breaks his attack.

Attacks (+2), Non-physical (+2), Willpower Bid (-1)

Defends 2 (+4), Spray 1 (+1), Willpower Bid (-1)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2)

1d Knowledge (Physics) (1 Point)

Hyperskill (+1)

+2 Base Will (6 Points)

Destiny: Padraig goes on a few operations in 1975, the year he joins up, but he never actually kills anyone until the attack on London in 1976. During that battle he melts a police officer and immediately stops, stunned by the magnitude of his act. It's only luck that leaves him merely seared after a Barb French (p. 218) power beam rakes his position but, though it injures him, it also snaps him out of his stupor and sends him

on a rampage. Padraig does millions of dollars of damage that day and kills seven more people, one of them a Glóir comrade who startles him.

That seals it for him. Though he tries to deny it and blame the Brits, his colleagues no longer trust him to stay cool in combat. He's relegated to a second string, funding the group through armored car robberies and jewel heists. Of his own initiative he kills the occasional police officer or soldier, but mostly his life is one of frustration and resentment until 1983. After Metal Virus (p. 283), all bets are off. Glóir storms London and Padraig redeems himself—at least in his own eyes.

Padraig sticks with Glóir after its 1984 repudiation by Sinn Féin, but after the IRA turns its back on them later that year, Padraig drops out. He's living off the grid for most of the next four years, which isn't terribly difficult after the Metapocalypse. He reads about the 1988 destruction of Glóir's remnants with a mixture of bitterness and regret. But when one of its last survivors murders him in 1989, he never sees it coming. He never dreams that anyone in the group would think he'd betray them.

Tier Nine

Dale Webster, "The Lawn"

Career: Student

History: Dale's family lost the farm when he was twelve, and they had to move away from all his friends and sell off his horse and stay in an apartment rented to them on the cheap by his mom's brother Chad. They moved to a city and it was noisy and crowded and most of the time you were indoors and couldn't tell autumn from spring.

The only cool thing about the city was that it had its own superhero. The first time he saw The People's Collective (p. 265) Dale just stared with his jaw slack, like a total yokel. The kids at school had a good time with that one, the snide city jerks.

The second time he saw her was right after his first view of a Metal Virus killbot (p. 285). The bot was pushing over a streetlight in order to reproduce, but when he stopped to stare at that, it spotted him and turned. And then the

Collective slammed into it like the world's biggest booger and he ran forward, reaching out, wanting nothing more than to join The People's Collective, to join the fight.

He spent the whole day sharing space and experience and mind with Angelica Ming (p. 265) and afterwards they dated for a while. But she wasn't his power ancestor. Instead, he got it from one of the Tier Eight weirdos that Angelica fought. But that was OK with Dale. He wanted it. He'd been chasing supervillains for months, chasing exposure, chasing his dream. He was just one of the few who caught it.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Amy Sykes - Cole Laskin - E.J. Houghton - Sydney Ford - Moon Dawson - Angelica Ming - Leo Dap

Personality: Dale's a stoic with a rather simplified view of right and wrong. Not a big talker, but he's got a big heart and he wants to be a superhero. The parks of San Francisco are never the same.

Loyalties: His Chosen City (2)

Passions: Superheroic Good-Doing (2)

Power Suite

Lawn-Dependent Invisibility 2HD (16 Points): Actually, what happens is that Dale sinks into the turf in a very small, slight version of Hector Faran's power (p. 223). He's easier to hurt than Hector, as one might expect when comparing a Tier Three to a Tier Nine. But he can move through any contiguous areas of grass unobserved.

Defends (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Only on grass) (-1)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only on grass) (-1)

Lawn-Dependent Invulnerability 2HD (68 Points): Note that "easier to hurt than Hector Faran" still leaves room for a whole load of tough. This is typical Wild Talents Invulnerability, only he has to be blended with the sedges.

Defends (HAR) (+2), Interference (+3), Permanent (+4), If/Then (Only on grass) (-1)

Defends (LAR) (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Hardened Defense (+2), Permanent (+4), If/Then (Only on grass) (-1)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), If/Then (Only on grass) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Blade of Grass 8d+2WD (16 Points): It looks sort of like a vegetable whip. One strand of grass strikes, suddenly very long, incredibly strong, remarkably sharp and, of course, mobile. It only has these traits for a moment, long enough to slice someone's arm or leg nice and deep before it's gone. Given the size of his pool and its WSK damage, it's possible to cripple a limb in one shot, which tends to silence anyone who snickers at it.

Attacks (+2), If/Then (Only on grass) (-1)

Destiny: Dale's one of the few costumed adventurers who doesn't quit between March and September of 1998, and the experience gives him the courage to rely less on his dark energy and more on his guts. He gets aggressive after that, and by the turn of the millennium he's contemplating a change of cities and a change of persona.

Dino Corliss, the Man Who Changes Things

Career: Professional

History: Dino grew up ancillary. Not quite powerless—there's a romanticism about being an oppressed and pitiful victim of the status quo. At least, there is from the outside. But Dino wasn't poor, he just wasn't rich. He wasn't neglected, he simply wasn't loved like his brothers. (No, really. His parents treated him well and never abused him, they loved him in a perfunctory way, but unlike his older brother who was on death's door two or three times as a child, and his youngest brother who was a sports and school prodigy, Dino was just kind of there.) Dino was, throughout, one of life's many C+ students, the fat at the middle of the bell curve, an unobjectionable element of the majority. If he vanished, the ripples would be slight.

He managed a fast-food drive-thru in Indiana that got robbed by a nerve-scrambling Tier Eight. Coming right after a night spent trying (and failing) to install a home dishwasher, it was too much. The robber made him hurt and

Dino didn't give a shit, he grabbed the punk and then the thief made Dino's senses explode with confusion, noise and light and nausea and Dino was pissed. Who was this dickhead? A supervillain, a no-shit metahuman and he was robbing a burger joint? C'mon, seriously?

Then everything snapped back to normal, only not really. Normally, there wasn't blood all over Dino's hands and chest and brown polyester uniform. Normally there wasn't a mangled man lying in the middle of his restaurant. And normally, the people who worked with him weren't screaming, and fainting, and barfing, and looking at him with total attention. Granted, that look in their eyes was mostly horror and shock, but to Dino it looked a lot like respect.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Judith Weissman - Joao Perdomo - Christina Rodriguez - Olive P. Marceau - Scott Draper

Personality: A mouse that's ready to roar.

Loyalties: Traditional Masculinity (1)

Passions: Self-Aggrandizement (3)

Power Suite

Transform _____ **to** _____ **10d (100 Points):**

Lead to gold? No problem. Flesh to stone? On it. Radioactive isotopes into harmless table salt? As good as done. It'll turn back pretty quick, and it's about 250-260 pounds, not shipping containers full of stuff like Jack Grimes (p. 213), but it's still fucking useful! And scary! You may not want to compare Dino to Grimes, by the way. He hates that.

Though he doesn't know it, his power can be blocked by moderately strong electromagnetic fields. In fact, since he never once attacks someone who's covered with a dozen refrigerator magnets, no one else figures this out before Dino decides to play the fool with a Tier Two.

Attacks (+2), Variable Effects (+4), Non Physical (+2), Willpower Bid (-1), Touch Only (-2), Horrific (-1)

Defends (+2), Variable Effects (+4), If/Then (Only defends easily against impact weapons) (-1), Willpower Bid (-1)

Useful (+2), Variable Effects (+4), Reduced Capacities x2 (-2), Duration (+2), Willpower Bid (-1), Slow (-2), Go Last (-1))

Destiny: Oh, he goes supervillain almost immediately. He starts small, melting cameras off ATMs before gassing them open to snatch the cash, but once he gets the hang of it he snaffles a couple banks. In the course of his second bank robbery (the first time he wears a costume) a cop shoots him. The bullet doesn't injure Dino, because he wears a helmet and he instinctively turns it to steel at the moment of impact, but it does hurt like hell and knock him silly. He halfway recovers as the cop starts cuffing him and he vaporizes the guy. That's the point of no return.

Dino flees to Atlantis (p. 336) half because it's a country without organized law enforcement, and half because he's unconsciously hoping for some metahuman dustups. He gets his semi-wish when Amy Sykes (p. 177) herself beats the crap out of him and forces him to run like a whipped dog. That freaks him out, since she's the first thing he encounters that his powers fail to change. He moves on to sub-saharan Africa, where he serves as a super-mercenary to a rotating roster of authoritarian rulers. He rides out the Metapocalypse there (p. 95) and remains settled into his niche as a thug-of-all-work until he finds out about Amy's wedding in 1993. When Zipperneck invites him to crash the party, Dino eagerly agrees.

After killing the groom's parents, Dino gets sucker-punched in the back of the head and turns around to see Abe Sykes (p. 173) glowering at him. "What're you going to do," Dino sneers, "Heal me to death?" Then Abe reverse-ages him into a fertilized egg cell and that's the end of Dino Corliss.

Veronica O'Malley, "De-Oxygenator"

Career: Student

History: Want to make sure the next generation of troublemakers really feels it? Beat the hell out of the current generation in front of their kids. Those cops didn't need to kick Veronica's pappy so hard, in such a tender spot, so many times.

He threw up and there was blood in it and, sure, he'd been fighting against them, he'd resisted putting the cuffs on again, but still. There were three of them with truncheons. They didn't need to do what they did.

It was Veronica's brothers who got drunk and sprayed slogans on walls and gave false tips to the police and beat up Protestants now and then, but it was Veronica who caught the power.

She was coming home from an early morning mass, where she'd been praying for peace and trying to find a way to forgive those awful Britons. She was walking home from the bus stop in early light, there were people all around, when suddenly she froze. So did everyone else. Everything was moving at glacial speed, and trying to take a step was like pushing through heavy clay. It took her a full five seconds, by her count, to blink. But the hands that came around from behind her, sliding up her ribs and groping her chest, they moved with no problem at all. The man behind her ripped her clothes as if she was a mannequin. "G'day love," he said in that voice Americans use when they think they're speaking with an Irish accent. "You and me, see, we're going to have a little fun here right in the street. Don't worry about modesty though—we're out of time, they'll only see a blur. But I wanted you to be able to enjoy the whole experience."

He gave her Scleroderma Maxilliae (p. 250) and she never even saw his face, just the back of his head for a moment as he strolled away, and then a blurry wisp as time snapped back to normal and she crumpled to the sidewalk screaming.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Tyler Ford - James Blaine - Jean Davis - David Cowles - Evan Broward

Personality: Haunted. She is by nature a forgiving person, a middle child who wants to make peace with everyone, but she has been pushed way too far. If her brittle feelings are pressed too fast or too hard, she strikes to kill and feels bad about it later.

Loyalties: Ireland (1), Catholicism (2)

Passions: Action Instead of Indecision (1)

Power Suite

Alter Oxygen 10d (100 Points): Veronica can, with a fair degree of precision, make oxygen into a noble gas. (Noble gasses are those like helium and argon that can't combine with other elements to form compounds. They are chemically non-reactive.) Is this a 'big whoop' power? Well, if she could make an element like beryllium non-reactive, it would take a lot more effort to find applications. But oxygen is among the elite when it comes to everyday reactions, like the ones that let fire burn, or let you breathe. If she changes the oxygen in your gun, it's not going to shoot. If she changes the oxygen in your cells, it's going to leave the ER doctor scratching his head and blinking. Unless she keeps it on you. In that case, it's probably the coroner. That's without the mischief she can cause by making oxygenated compounds (like rust) spit out their oxygen, near an open flame say, right before she turns it back to normal.

The hassle with her power is that it's disrupted by natural noble gasses. While body armor or superpowers doesn't necessarily protect you, standing under a neon sign or behind a helium balloon does.

Attacks +1 (+3), Non-Physical (+2), Engulf (+2), Limited Damage (Shock only) (-1), If/Then (Only works on oxygenated creatures) (-1)

Defends (+2), If/Then (Only for combustion-based attacks) (-1).

Useful (+2), Radius (+2)

Destiny: She gets pulled in. At first, it's just a matter of knocking out cops when they're getting out of hand, but the pressure from just about everyone is gradual, and steady, and it pushes her into Glóir.

She's conflicted, of course she is. On one hand, she genuinely believes the British are utterly wrong and unjustified, but she doesn't believe that makes the excesses of Terrence O'Shay (p. 242) excusable. Once she's going on missions with the team, she finds herself using her powers most often to keep flames from spreading disastrously to civilians.

To keep her sanity, Veronica gradually slides her attitudes to align with her comrades, but she never slaughters without compunction. In the end, even after she's killed more soldiers and police than she can count, she consoles herself that those were in battle, that they could have retreated. She only ever kills one person in cold blood—Barbara French (p. 218)—and that's the one that haunts her.

Perhaps if she could have kept to hot wars, and restraining the flames from the innocent, she could have continued supporting Glóir, but when Sinn Fein rejects them in 1984, Veronica loses faith. But by that point, Arturo Lambruschi (p. 300) has joined and she sees herself at the only thing standing between him and thousands of innocent English children. After Glóir's attempt to assassinate the British cabinet turns into a blood-soaked fiasco, Veronica realizes she's barely even slowing Lambruschi down.

In late 1984, she volunteers to murder a supporter who had proven links to British intelligence. Instead she warns him off and gets in contact with his controller. From that point on, she serves as a double agent—even to the point of helping British army troops ambush O'Shay in 1985. But with Lambruschi still active, she has to stay with the group and live the lie, until she decisively betrays them in 1988.

After that she takes the veil, winds up working in the village of Swatragh, and becomes a very discreet alcoholic.

Namerlie Sarpong, Contrary Empath

Career: Student

History: The child of Africa's middle-class, Namerlie lived with her family in the city of Kumasi in Ghana. Working as a clerk in her father's store, she nodded to a customer with a peculiar accent. That was all it took.

That very afternoon, a warm and lazy day, Namerlie found herself stultified at her job, while her father and mother both became more and more lively and absorbed in their tasks. Every client that day seemed to find any item considered diverting, to the point of fascination. But as soon as Namerlie noticed this pattern

and became curious about it, it ceased. The frustration over this radiated satisfaction to everyone who entered, for Namerlie's peculiar talent was to impose the opposite of her own feelings on those around her.

When she realized this, Namerlie felt outraged and betrayed by her own abilities. (This was, of course, radiated to others as contentment and gratitude.) She learned to focus her abilities, turning them off when happy and switching them on when depressed or upset. (After all, she figured that others might as well benefit from her misery.) But too often the prospect of brightening the days of those around her, along with their cheerful attitudes and sunny smiles, would chase her gloom away and return the moods of others to an unadulterated state.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - Bryson Maas-Thierry - Coco Shively - Ronald Strong - Marie Claire Aden - Célestin Bandetsa - Djovi Koroma

Personality: Thoughtful, contemplative and introverted. It's a chicken-and-egg question whether Namerlie's power was an outgrowth of her penchant for abstract thinking, or whether the conundrums her abilities posed naturally enhanced the tendency.

Loyalties: Africa (2), later shifts to Global Human University.

Passions: Understanding Emotions (2)

Power Suite

Control Emotions 10d (100 Points):

Namerlie can influence the feelings of others, even to the point of jerking a man at a funeral into a state of giddy laughter, or of leaving a happy bride weeping and unaccountably sad. But while she can turn her power off and on, focus it on an area or target it with great finesse, she cannot control which emotion she projects. She can only predict it.

Namerlie is a reverse empathic imposer. Everyone under her spell feels the opposite of what she does. If she's remorseful and depressed, she can make people cheerfully self-satisfied. On a good day, she can make those around her

glum and morose. If she's feeling tranquil and in harmony with the world around her, she could provoke riots and blind fury.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Only the opposite of her feelings) (-1), Area (+6), Controlled Effect (+1)

Destiny: Namerlie goes on with her life, quietly and subtly using her power to leverage her own bad moods into mild civic improvement. If nothing else, it's a boon to her parents' shop, and it enables them to take a family trip to Paris in 1983 just in time for the Metapocalypse. Namerlie's terror and horror flood the city with calm resolve.

Namerlie becomes convinced that her powers are too valuable to leave unused. Unsure what to do but certain that she doesn't want to follow Å (p. 238), she writes a letter to Jason Weeks (p. 195) and, with no small bit of luck, manages to get it to his office at Global Human University.

Weeks comes to visit her personally, buys her coffee and offers to underwrite her travels. He proposes a very simple opportunity. He will send her to any scene of violence and horror she could stand to witness. After all, her witness could very well turn rage to regret and sorrow to hope. She agrees, only to be shot dead by an inexplicably cheerful sniper in 1993, in the former Yugoslavia.

Rudolph Phelps, "The Metal Virus"

Career: Professional

History: When do they call you a monster?

Some use that word on the physically hideous, whether they're equally monstrous in deed (like El Cucuy on p. 253) or civic-minded and noble (like The People's Collective, p. 265). Others save it for those whose power makes them implacable, unstoppable and selfish, like Jarvis West (p. 203) or Tyler Ford (p. 228). Still others would call those men monsters who have no power to tempt them, but who perform their murderous acts by the sweat of their own efforts.

But if you go by strict body count, and you permit death-by-proxy instead of insisting on the personal touch, the great monsters of the twentieth century are a select group. There's

Hitler, obviously. There's Stalin. And there's Rudy Phelps.

If you look at his history there is nothing to make you think him capable of arranging the deaths of many millions of people. He grew up in Nebraska. His parents stayed together. There was never any abuse or molestation. He got picked on in school, but no more than most and much less than some. He had girlfriends and heartbreaks and dead end jobs and he was making OK money as a repair technician for document copiers. When he got dark energy, he didn't even know it. A woman made him forget he'd seen her, not realizing he wasn't paying her any attention in the first place.

He found out when he was working on his car. He wasn't thinking about anything in particular—daydreaming about horror movies and action films, his favorites, and then he felt the engine block shift under his hand. It was moving. It was dancing.

More than many others, Rudy intuited that he was forming a power, that it was happening, and it was dreamlike as he saw it all unfold. He'd thought about killing people all the time, of course, in a vague way. He'd thought about armageddon. But this would be his only opportunity to make it happen.

If he'd read some different comic books the night before, his power—and the world—might have been a very different place.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Amy Sykes - Jack Grimes - Leon Salvetti - Sophia Pendergrass - Ahn Peng - Zhou Wu - Carlotta Yorn

Personality: A dreamy, introverted sociopath. Shy, quiet, and you'd never guess that half-smile on his face comes from his fantasies of mass murder.

Loyalties: Keeping His Promises (1)

Passions: Destruction (3)

Power Suite

Create Metal Virus Seed 6d (6 Points): Rudy cannot, by himself, make a Killbot. He can only make the seeds that eventually form Killbots.

Just to be clear. It takes him about fifteen or twenty minutes to make one, and he breaks a sweat when he does.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Delayed Effect (-2), Exhausted (-3).

Turn Iron or Steel Into Killbots 2HD (4 Points): This power is not Rudy's power. It is the seeds' power. Each seed can make six Killbots before it's used up, assuming it has enough metal. (The seeds grow hundreds of little legs and skitter around looking for metal, but if they don't find any within ten feet, they run out of strength. But if they do build a Killbot, they just hitch a ride on it until they find more material.)

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Attached (Create Metal Virus Seed) (-2), Delayed Effect (-2), Depleted (-1)

Body 6d (12 Points): Not Rudy's, nor the seeds'. This, and the following powers, are all qualities of the Killbots.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Turn Iron or Steel Into Killbots) (-2)

Reproduce 4d (4 Points): Each Killbot has one shot at making another Killbot, with about a 50/50 success chance. Some part of Rudy wanted his apocalypse to be fair, apparently.

Useful (+2), Attached (Turn Iron or Steel Into Killbots) (-2), Permanent (+4), One Use (-4)

Extra Tough 6HD (36 Points): So yeah, each Killbot has six wound boxes at every location. They cease to function if the 'head' or body is destroyed.

Useful (+2), Attached (Turn Iron or Steel Into Killbots) (-2), Engulf (+2), Self Only (-3), Permanent (+4)

Immune: Human Weakness 2HD (4 Points): Good luck trying to smother a Killbot, or electrocute it, or distract it with a sexy display of cleavage.

Useful (+2), Attached (Turn Iron or Steel Into Killbots) (-2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), Variable Effect (+4), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), Always On (-1), Full Power Only (-1)

Sense 2d (4 Points): Just enough to spot the obvious—meat, metal.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Turn Iron or Steel Into Killbots) (-2)

Coordination 2d (4 Points): Quick (with that high Body score) but indelicate.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Turn Iron or Steel Into Killbots) (-2)

Mind 1d (2 Points): Effectively, they can 'think' like a very, very stupid person—but only within the parameters of their instructions (reproduce, kill, wander around if there's nothing to murder).

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (Turn Iron or Steel Into Killbots) (-2)

Heavy Armor 3HD (24 Points): Otherwise, it's just not sporting.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), Attached (Turn Iron or Steel Into Killbots) (-2)

Destiny: In 1975, Rudy gets his power and defines it. It's the ability to create what he thinks of as 'seeds.' Each seed looks like nothing so much as a slightly flattened iron ball bearing. Weighs about a pound. Pitted surface, a bit oily, a bit rusty. He can make them with his bare hands, but he prefers using hammer and tongs to avoid cramping and bruises.

When placed in contact with metal and activated, the seed constructs moving metal monsters that Rudy terms 'killbots.' Each killbot can, in turn, create one duplicate of itself, if it finds sufficient metal supplies (roughly a thousand pounds of steel or iron, slightly more if it's rusty). Farting around with his creations near a landfill, he satisfies himself that they reproduce with scrap metal (well... at least some of the time), that they follow his instructions, and that they're damn hard to put down.

After that, it's just a matter of saving his money. Rudy doesn't have a girlfriend or a kid, and he lives on crackers and peanut butter and marked-down vegetables in a cramped apartment with insufficient insulation. He lives like a hermit and probably makes a seed or two a day, sometimes as many as five or ten over a weekend.

He does that for five years. He makes 4,000 seeds and then starts traveling.



A Word on Killbots

They've got HAR 3 and six wound boxes at each location. That's it for defense. They don't block or dodge and with their Coordination Stat, the best they're going to do in the agility department is navigating steps. They roll 6d to strike and their blows do WK damage. They sprint 25 yards per round and can jump eight horizontal yards from a running start. With a two yard vertical, they might actually dunk, if they could keep hold of a basketball.

They follow a very simple behavior algorithm. If they see a person, they chase it until they catch it, hit it until it stops moving, then run over its head. If there aren't people around and the machine is a virgin, it looks for metal so it can reproduce. (It takes about the weight of a car engine or a car frame to make one Killbot.) If it has already reproduced, or if there's no metal around, it calculates the direction to the sun and moves 50 yards in that direction or until blocked, then hits "GOTO 10" and returns to looking for people to kill. If it can't move towards the sun, it sort of jiggles around (turning fifteen degrees right, trying to move, then moving five degrees left, on and on until it finds something interesting).

Let's take a look at the math on these beasties.

Each of the US cities he targets get 150 seeds, and each seed can make 6 Killbots. But some seeds get found, or moved, or run out of metal before they're fully done. Rudy's careful, but let's suppose that, due to various dud factors, each seed produces an average of 4 Killbots. That gives us 600 Killbots per city, just from the seeds. (Foreign cities get more, but it's later in the day there when they start activating, so more of them get interrupted before they finish.) Each of those 600 Killbots has a 50% chance of making another of its kind, but with the same vicissitudes that might prevent a seed from doing its thing, let's presume that they only have a 30% success rate on average.

It takes about ten minutes to make a Killbot, so after two hours, each city has its 600 (on average) murder machines bumbling around in the junkyards and subways. Those 600, on average, create another 180 Killbots by, hell, call it three in the morning in New York, midnight in California, eleven AM in Russia. Those 180 create 54 (ish) in the next hour and eventually those 50-some kick out sixteen more offspring. So DC dawns with $(600+180+54+16) = 850$ implacable machines rampaging through the

streets doing their damndest to kill every person they come across. Each 'bot has armor like a light tank. Let's imagine their body count.

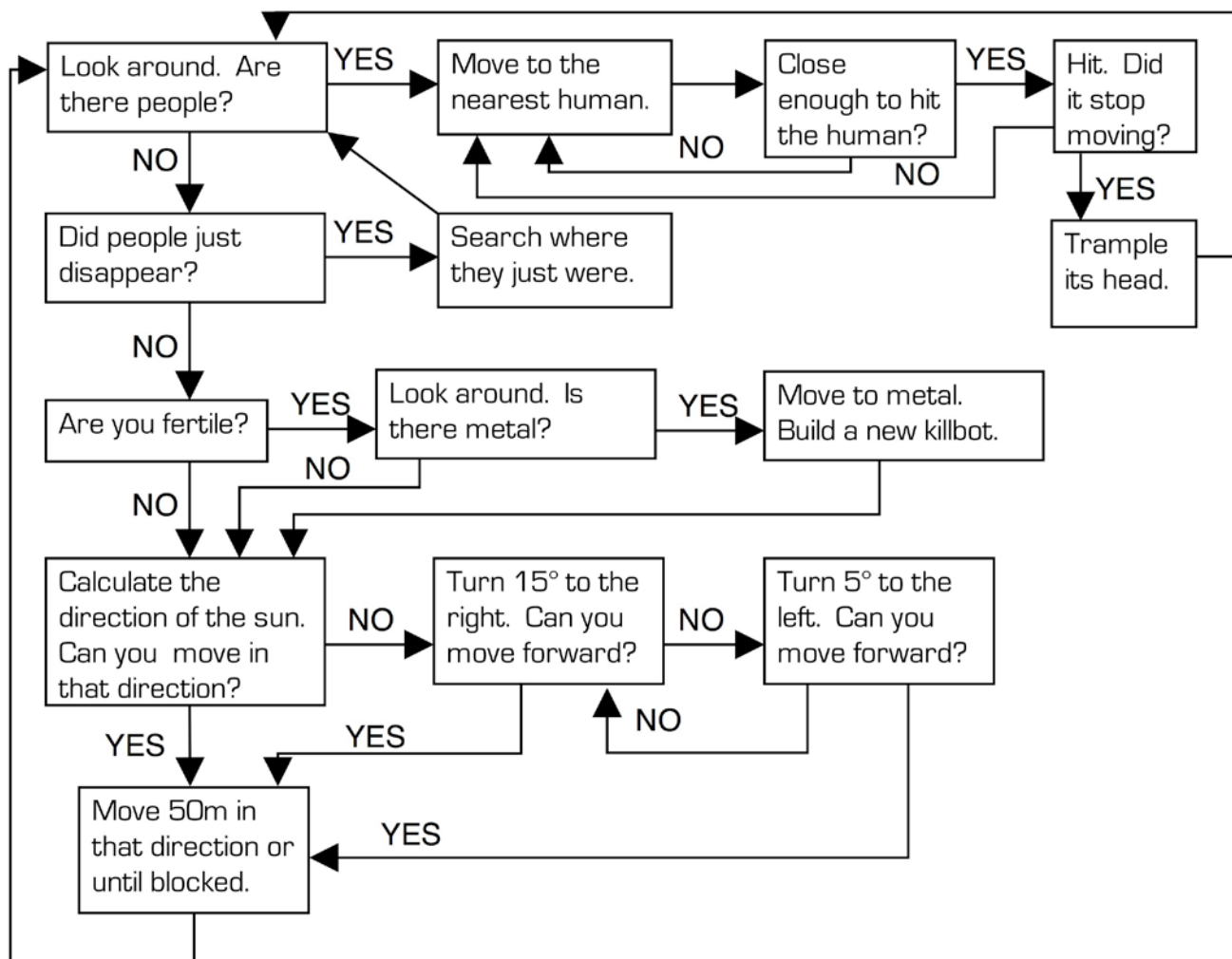
Now add in the deaths from people getting trampled in panic.

Now the deaths from accidents as people ram their cars into them or one another.

Now the occasional subway car crash or building collapse when they undermine a critical load bearing wall.

That's a pretty horrifying toll, isn't it?

But of course, that's all small beer next to Rudy's real goal, which is to convince the US and USSR that they're under attack from a hostile foreign nation. He slam-dunks it. In the aftermath, there are conflicting stories about which nation goes for the big red button first, but as soon as one does, the other retaliates, and allies get pulled in, and China isn't going to be left out, and everyone also spares a couple ICBMs for the IEG because they figure it's either to blame, or that they just aren't going to get a better chance to turn Progressive Harmony into a bad memory.



He travels like he lived—painfully cheap. He drives all the way to the east coast with the trunk of his car nearly scraping the ground and he tours forgotten places where industry has moved on. Junkyards outside of DC get seeds, abandoned factories with rusting machinery get seeds, railroad switching yards and seldom-used dock cranes are left with an insignificant metal oval tucked somewhere dusty. Or two ovals. Or ten.

New York City and Washington DC each get 150 seeds on that first trip, and on his way back home he stops by to plop 150 in Chicago too. They are all set to go off on May 9th, 1983, a date he picks entirely at random, and at midnight Eastern Standard Time so that each ‘bot spawned has some alone time to create progeny before it comes across a person.

1981’s vacation is out west. Los Angeles and San Francisco each get their allotment, though it takes all his willpower not to put any on the

Golden Gate Bridge. Too great a chance of premature discovery.

In 1982 he sells everything he owns and travels to Europe, after carefully arranging shipments of seeds ahead of him. The Paris Metro and the London Underground both get hit, along with any scrap yards he can identify. Getting farther east is the real challenge, and by the time he gets to Moscow and Leningrad he’s nearly destitute. He hops trains and works for pay under the table and tells sob stories to strangers to get back as far as Bonn, and there he’s able to call his parents to send him a plane ticket home.

Right back to document copier repair, though for a different company and for reduced pay, since there’s that big 1982-sized hole in his résumé. He buys a sturdy little cabin outside of town, installs a composting toilet, and spend most of his weekends layering it with cinderblock and metal plate, just in case.

Late in April of 1983, he gets inside his shelter with its gas generator and canned food and huge water tank, he turns on his TV and waits for May 9th. When the first news reports trickle in, he giggles. When the carnage blooms fully, he laughs. And when the superpowers each blame each other and deploy the nukes and the plagues and the orbital kinetic weapons, he howls. Then, when it's all over, he goes back to his repair job, along with everyone else trying to reassemble society.

It doesn't last. In November '83, the Soviets invade the crap out of Afghanistan (again), citing farcical intel that "Metal Virus" is there. Jason Weeks (p. 195) doesn't want to see the specter of Metal Virus become everyone's rationale for warfare, so he assembles a team to track the robots to their source. In August of 1984, they succeed.

The tapes get played a lot. Just this guy Rudy admitting what he did, with a big shit-eating grin on his face, demonstrating the creation of a seed and how it makes a Killbot, explaining his travel itinerary, complete with dates and locations. "I figured someone would find me," he says. "I'm ready. I took a big shiny dump on human history and I'm going to die happy. Hell, I'm surprised it took you this long."

Then someone off-camera blows his brains out.

Tier Ten

Barnabas Rommel, "The Original"

Career: Layabout

History: Barney was never really anything special. A petty grifter without the brains for the long con, a shoplifter without the leg speed for a long career, and a burglar without the skill to hit high-end targets. He was a loser, too lazy to hold down a steady job, living day to day off petty crime and sponging off his loving girlfriend Acey. He just happened to scam the wrong gal one day, a metahuman who was, lucky for him, non-ironically named Dana Burns. No, her power was telepathy and once she realized he was on the fake, she pounded him with psychic headaches

until she got her money back. But she pounded something else into Barnabas as well.

Barnabas' power is odd and complicated, but once he and Acey figured out exactly what was happening, they were up to their old tricks, only with a new tool.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Amy Sykes - Cole Laskin - E.J. Houghton - Sydney Ford - Moon Dawson - Angelica Ming - Egon Steinmetz - Dana Burns

Personality: Equal parts ingratiating and calculating. Barnabas genuinely is friendly and he truly likes people. It's just that he has no compunctions about stealing cash from people he likes. He's more 'lovable rogue' than supervillain and he has no stomach for the rough stuff, zilch. He's head over heels for Acey, and she's the only one who gets to call him 'Barney.' Even she knows he hates being called 'Barney Rommel.'

Loyalties: Acey (1)

Passions: Acey (2), Doing Things The Easy Way (1)

Power Suite

Turn People Into Me 4d+2HD (48 Points):

When he activates his power, everyone within ten yards is transformed into an exact physical and mental duplicate of Barnabas Rommel. Because the power has the 'Loopy' flaw, they are all momentarily disoriented, but after that they generally get their acts together and function in concert. At least, they do until the power wears off and they all change back. That takes a number of minutes equal to the activation roll's Width times Height.

One nasty side effect of his power is that if he (the original Barnabas) gets hurt, everyone who is currently reflecting him also gets hurt, and the injuries persist when he changes back. If a duplicate gets hurt, only that dupe is hurt and, again, the damage remains. Hypothetically, if Barney got an arm amputated, he could activate his power on a crowded street, change forty or fifty people into him and, when they change back, they'd all be missing the same arm.

A typical Barnabas caper is something like this. He watches an armored car and figures a place its route crosses a stop sign. He waits

there and when the car pulls up, he gets near it and activates his ability. Now he's confused, as are the guards in the car, as are any pedestrians nearby. At this point, Acey usually shows up (she's careful not to become Barnabas whenever she can help it) and herds the Barneys into action, having the Barneys in the truck open the back and the other Barneys haul sacks of money into the trunk of her car. Then she tells them to scatter in a bunch of different directions. When the effect wears off, the real Barney calls her and tells her where to pick him up.

Attacks (+2), Radius (+2), Duration (+2), Loopy (-1), Exhausted (-3)

Useful (Change bodies into Barnabas Rommel) (+2), Radius (+2), Duration (+2), Loopy (-1), Exhausted (-3)

Useful (Change minds into Barnabas Rommel's mind) (+2), Radius (+2), Duration (+2), Loopy (-1), Exhausted (-3)



+2 Willpower (2 Points): Realizing he's a metahuman gives Barnabas a temporary surge of purpose and confidence. It does not last.

Destiny: Once he and Acey figure out what the hell is going on, they steal a pile of money, blow it in Vegas, steal more money there, get roughed up by some Vegas enforcer metahumans, barely escape with their lives, head to New Orleans, steal, go to Atlantic City, party until broke, go to St. Louis, steal and wind up on the eastern seaboard in May of 1983. To his own great surprise, Barnabas uses his powers to quell a riot, and then to evacuate a retirement home, giving mobility and focus (sort of) to retirees who would otherwise get burned alive.

Then more stealing until his retirement in 1990 and death (complications arising from lip cancer) in 1992.

Janice King, "Intensity"

Career: Professional

History: Little Jan was a stubborn girl. Not the tantrum kind, but the sort who pouts and stomps her feet and then just digs in. If you tried to put her to bed when she wasn't ready, you could expect some incredible displays of truculence.

As she aged, she got good grades and ran fast in track and was active in extra-curricular activities, but that stubborn streak stayed. In fact, it contributed. At the Colorado state track championships, she drove herself from third place to second in the hurdles, pushing the champion to a record-setting time. After the race, they both threw up, but only Janice actually collapsed.

In college, she encountered Simone de Beauvoir's *The Feminine Mystique* and that was it. 1974 had her gratefully throwing out constricting undergarments, decrying injustice and stubbornly hating Phyllis Schlafly. In one of her marches supporting the ERA she got in the face of a counter-protester, a smug white male who, on top of it all, happened to be metahuman. When he couldn't out-shout her, he grabbed her by her shoulders and flew up a hundred feet above the demonstration. Just as he was about to make some smart-alec comment, she gouged his eyes as hard as she could.

Screaming, he started to fall as she wrapped her legs tight around him, pointed his face towards the clouds and shouted, “Fly that way or we both die!”

He did as she said, and she piloted him like her personal hang glider until they set down on top of the campus rec center. She left him sobbing and terrified on the roof while she tried to decide if she’d just become a superheroine, or if she’d really always been one.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Tyler T. Ford - Brent Coleman - David Grossinger - Wanda Stross - LeighAnn May - Andrew “Kip” Kiplinger

Personality: Calm, collected, matter-of-fact and infuriatingly sure of her self.

Loyalties: The US (6), Fairness (8)

Passions: Feminism (5)

Power Suite

Power Through 1+2HD (5 Points): If she’s at less than half her Base Will, she can take an action to gather herself and attempt to come back fierce. If she rolls a success, she regains a point of Willpower.

Useful (+2), Exhausted (-3), Go First 2 (+2)

+15 Base Will (45 Points): She started stubborn, but she ends up superhumanly stubborn.

Destiny: Janice gets her journalism degree and chases corruption through Illinois for a few years, then Washington DC, and then spends a few years as a war correspondent. After 1983 she goes back to school for her law degree and becomes a public defender, then a prosecutor (for a change of pace) and then gets elected as a judge in Kentucky. Eventually rising to the state supreme court, she makes some tough calls, gains national attention, and gets appointed to the US Supreme Court in 1991.

Right up to the point she takes the bar, she sometimes dresses up to fight crime and injustice as “Ms. Intensity” and then as “The Intensity” before settling on a simple “Intensity.” But honestly? After she gets her law degree, she feels she can do more through legitimate channels.

Matilda Schwartzenhelm, Neutralizer

Career: Profesional

History: Matilda kills Zipperneck!

Okay, this should be her history, but c’mom. She kills Zipperneck. Alphonse Russo, way back on p. 210 in the Tier Three list o’ badasses. The guy who rips off Fort Knox and fights all kinds of superheroes to a standstill and Matilda takes her wimpy, bitch-ass Tier Ten power and kills him deader’n shit!

Now that that’s off my chest: Matilda Schwartzenhelm worked in a credit union, processing home equity loans and facilitating mortgage refinancing. She got exposed by Jake Cutter, a Tier Nine who didn’t even realize he had a superpower. He’d subtly gotten jacked up with Hypercharm and he used it to get an extension on his overdue loan payment. (I know: What a waste, right?)

Matilda herself didn’t realize that she had a power until the guy came back, a month later, cocky as all hell and not even trying to hide the fact that he was manipulating her. Now, she couldn’t help finding Jake likable and convincing, but there was part of her thinking, “I bet he’s using some kind of dumb dark energy head hoodoo and I can’t resist it, good grief. I should be glad he’s not trying to seduce me, although... no, nah, ugh, I just wish he’d knock it off.”

With that, she nullified Cutter’s power and rejected his extension request.

Her ancestor never twigged to the fact that the sudden end of his lucky streak coincided with trips to the bank.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Andrew Colt - Jason Blume - Jasper Carruthers - Jackson Kingford - Mason Dean - Jess Hardesty - Ishmael Jackson - Claudia Crosswine - Jake Cutter

Personality: Brisk, businesslike, no-nonsense and down-to-earth. She doesn’t like surprises and has little patience for people who make spectacles of themselves. Equipped with permanent power-stripping, she is the worst nightmare of many flamboyant criminals and not a few fast-and-loose vigilantes.

I Want That!

I’ll level with you. Jan’s Power Through ability is a bit of a gray area and runs the risk of being tagged as meta-gaming or min-maxing. I gave it to her because Willpower (and Base Will) are her whole freaking schtick and, compared to ten dice of ADU flight or something, it’s a fairly modest (though versatile) ability. I would not permit someone to take this power just because they liked the idea of never running out of Willpower gas. Is Jan one of those damn GMCs who don’t work by the same rules established for PCs? Maybe a little. On the other hand, if a PC wants to Willpower as his only power, it might be just fine.



Loyalties: Social Order (3)

Passions: Tidiness (1)

Power Suite

Nullify 2HD (16 Points): This is standard per Wild Talents. It specifically removes all dark energy powers from a target for a few minutes.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2)

Nullradicate 2HD (12 Points): This has the same effect—suppressing all dark energy powers. The difference is, it’s a bit slower and it doesn’t ever go away. It only works on those she’s already temporarily suppressed.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Attached (Nullify) (-2), Slow (-1)

+7 Base Will (21 Points)

+1 Willpower (1 Point)

Destiny: I mentioned that she kills Zipperneck, right? He’s just flying around, terrorizing her home town of Pittsburgh and fighting another one of his interminable battles with Amy Sykes (p. 177). Matilda gets there just as Zipperneck picks up an SUV, flies up into the sky and prepares to power-dive it on top of Amy. So Matilda points at Zipperneck and he falls. Splat. No flight, no invulnerability, no hope, just a fifty foot drop onto concrete with an Escalade landing on top of him.

As soon as the death of Zipperneck is confirmed and a gutsy photographer publishes a picture of her pointing at him, Matilda is in high demand. She takes the best offer from the European Union and works for them neutralizing dark energy menaces for five years (1999-2004) before dying at the hands of a mixed suicide squad of low-tier terrorist powers and mundane (but skilled and well armed) assassins.

Danny Gore, “Plasmäctopus”

Career: Student

History: 100% regular kid, fourteen years old in 1983 and in the middle of nowhere. To him, the abortive war fomented by the Metal Virus (p. 283) was just something you saw on TV. No global power cared enough about his home town to bother dropping a nuke on it.

He thought Reagan’s “Patriot Spring” was about the neatest thing ever and did school projects on it and everything. One of the groups that stuck together afterwards (“Dark Energy Defenders”) based itself in his state capital, and it was a major influence on his decision to go to college there. (He studied political science. His GPA was 2.9. Partial soccer scholarship.)

When D.E.D. split up, it broke his heart. He was at the press conference where they announced their dissolution. (He was taking a class on “Metahumans and the Social Contract.”) Afterwards he pushed his way to the front and demanded to know why from one of the group’s more charismatic members. Instead of an answer, she made a gesture and his mouth stopped working for half an hour.

But that night, oh, that night. That night he dreamed.

He dreamed of fire and grace and (for some reason) of sea creatures, and when he woke up he was climbing up the side of the Capitol rotunda with one of his former idols circling in the air, eyes wide. “Wait,” Danny tried to say, “I’m a good guy!” But he wound up getting blasted with force bolt and being chased off by the very heroes he hoped to emulate.

A rocky start, but Danny was always an optimist. He saw the glass as half full. Half full of fire and octopus tentacles.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Ngoc Vo - Charles Dooley - Morihei Sugamoto - Yuki Ittei - Carol Berry - Augustus Pryce - Marcia Gordimer - Alice Szynetski

Personality: Chipper, energetic, enthusiastic and possessed of a puckish sense of humor.

Loyalties: The Superhero Ideal (4)

Passions: Spectacle (3)

Power Suite

Plasmäctopus Form 2HD (4 Points): He closes his eyes, holds his breath for a second, and then turns into an octopus with eight-foot-long arms, wreathed in fierce red and yellow flames. The transformation occurs with a blinding flash visible for some distance.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Obvious (-1), Exhausted (-3)

Elasticity 3d+2WD (11 Points): This works just like the miracle from Wild Talents, except that it’s limited to his plasma octopus shape and—this is important—it’s not limited by the normal laws of momentum and inertia and such. He’s not a physics major, remember.

Useful (+2), Attached (Plasmäctopus Form) (-2), No Physics (+1)

Multiple Action 6HD (12 Points): Just like the Multiple Actions miracle from Wild Talents, except it’s attached and it’s natural to his eight-armed form.

Useful (+2), Attached (Plasmäctopus Form) (-2), Native Power (+1)

Regeneration 2HD (4 Points): The flames just flow into injuries and fill in the gaps. He regains two Shock and two Killing every other round.

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), Attached (Plasmäctopus Form) (-2), Slow (-2)

I’m Covered in Fire, Bitches! 10d (10

Points): I mentioned the flames, right? The easiest way to handle this is to just treat it as Hyperbrawl with the flaws and extras. He can roll 10d to hit people and, when he does, it does WSK and sets the poor motherfucker alight.

However - keep that Horrifying Flaw in mind, because crisping people into nugget form is scary to watch, especially when you’re not even human-shaped. Additionally, he can only strike ten times before he has to take an action to stoke the fire back up. (That’s the ‘Depleted’ Flaw.) After ten such recharges, he has to change back into Danny and spend an hour contemplating a bright,



hot flame. (He keeps a blowtorch in his trunk for emergencies.

Hyperskill (+1), Attached (Plasmäctopus Form) (-2),
Burns (+2), Deadly (+2), Depleted (-1), Horrifying (-1)

+3 Base Will (9 Points): Hey, he's a superhero! With a secret identity and everything! And he's unjustly considered a villain. He needs some inner resources to keep him going.

Destiny: Plasmäctopus sticks around the capital for a while, but his wrong-footed introduction to some former D.E.D. members gets him branded as a supervillain. Deciding that if he has the name, he might as well get some mileage out of it, he launches an ill-conceived attempt to get the Dark Energy Defenders to reunite. (It fails.) Luckily for Danny, the heroine who captures him and forces him into his natural shape remembers him from at least three separate autograph-signing sessions and gets the whole story out of him.

Well, after that he's so embarrassed he just has to move. He transfers to the Chicago campus of Global Human University, gets an apartment in the crappiest neighborhood he can find, and sets about trying to "clean up the streets." To his great surprise, he finds that a big fiery octopus only has to really manhandle one or two petty crooks before everyone else decides crime doesn't pay. Thereafter, Plasmäctopus starts working as a community organizer and resource, cleaning up trash, transforming vacant lots into gardens and performing crazy media stunts to buy shoes for midnight basketball leagues.

Tilda Gräss, the Pod-Personator

Career: Layabout

History: Ugh, so much molestation. Really, just take the sickest thing you can stand to imagine happening to a child, and that was Tilda's life until the age of seven. She hated it, but it was her normal.

Then a Tier Nine psychic touched her mind. Astrid Petronov was a minor mind reader, keeping her power secret and making a quiet fortune, but once she'd scanned Tilda and flinched away, what she'd seen—what she'd

been—wouldn't let go. It was like a sore tooth that the tongue keeps touching, Astrid went back to Tilda and then Tilda's parents and Astrid learned all she needed to get into their pleasant home in Bonn and kill the sleeping monsters with a hammer. Even though the husband was much bigger, she hit the wife first. She knew that waking confused and seeing his wife hurt would blind Tilda's father with grief, and then he'd be easy to strike. It took one swing for the mom, three for the dad. Astrid washed off the hammer and dropped it at a construction site, she took off the poncho she'd worn and burned it, and then she called an off-duty police officer at home said two people had been murdered. She gave the address and waited until the cops arrived, she made sure the little girl Tilda was rescued.

That's when it all went wrong. Tilda didn't want them to touch her, and when one social worker went in alone to gently but firmly pick her up, Tilda's power kicked in.

What the German police saw was the social worker emerge, looking stunned and confused. Inside the room, the little girl had changed, she looked like a mannequin—even, forgettable features, plain bowl-cut hair, and blank gray eyes. Realizing that the child was metahuman they called in every superhero they could think of.

The mannequin girl became a media sensation—she could speak and read, she retained skills, but she could recall no events in her life. The social worker was very vague about what had happened, and one day she just didn't show up to work. That was the day the mannequin girl turned into the social worker and another mannequin, this one male, was found in Berlin.

What was really happening was that Tilda's power was harnessing her overwhelming desire to be a different person and to have her horrible past belong to someone else. As the social worker, she knew she was a fraud and felt guilty about the life she'd stolen, and the boy was just confusing and sad. But Tilda won't stop until she finds the perfect life to steal, the perfect person to be.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Amy Sykes - Cole Laskin - E.J. Houghton - Sydney Ford - Moon Dawson - Phyllis Frye - Egon Rust - Astrid Petronov

Personality: No.

Loyalties: Principle of Personal Freedom (1)

Passions: Escaping Confinement and Danger (3)

Power Suite

Turn Person Into a Living Mannequin 10d (10 Points): She can touch a person and, if her power beats them in a Command+Cool contest (the two Willpower Stats produce gobble dice), that person loses all identifying features. He or she becomes a vague creature, of identifiable gender, with common brown hair and gray eyes, unremarkable and even features, and no moles or tattoos or fingerprints. If she does this on a hurt or injured person, their problems remain—in addition to the host of new problems that identity loss causes. All the people she duplicates are reduced (or expanded) to weigh what Tilda would weigh if she were in her natural form. When she deactivates the power, their weight (along with their memories and appearance) returns to normal through means unknown.

Useful (+2), Exhausted (-3), Endless (+3), Touch Only (-1)

Inflict Amnesia 9d (9 Points): Those she touches forget the events of their lives. A truck driver would still know how to drive, but he wouldn't remember that he could until he got behind the wheel. All pools remain the same. It's only identity that's lost.

This power is resisted with a Command+Mind roll, gobbling the Inflict Amnesia pool's set. But only people with six or more dice in one of those stats are permitted resistance.

Useful (+2), Exhausted (-3), Endless (+3), Attached (Turn Person Into a Living Mannequin) (-2), Automatic (-1), Speeding Bullet (+2)

Copy Skill Pools 4d (12 Points): Tilda picks up the skills and knowledges of the person she duplicates, to a point. This can't duplicate superpowers or stats. Moreover, she can only use this power a few times before she has to focus her mind and reinforce her stolen sense of identity. (This is the Depleted Flaw.) Every four rolls she augments, she has to pause to remind herself who she's supposed to be. After four 'reloads' the lack of physical synaptic connections and muscle

memory just overwhelms her ability and she can no longer duplicate Skills. That's usually when she finds a new victim.

Attacks (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only to get a pool equal to the victim's pool, never higher) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) (-1), Attached (Steal Memories) (-2), Depleted (-1)

Defends (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only to get a pool equal to the victim's pool, never higher) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) (-1), Attached (Steal Memories) (-2), Depleted (-1)

Useful (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only to get a pool equal to the victim's pool, never higher) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) (-1), Attached (Steal Memories) (-2), Depleted (-1)

Steal Memories 9d (9 Points): When she is masquerading as someone, Tilda has a sort of double consciousness. Part of her is aware of the imposture, but another part completely inhabits the role. Because of this, she doesn't have to make Lie rolls (for example) when she's saying something that is not, for her stolen self, untrue. After she changes bodies, she can still remember the experiences she took from the others (if she chooses to do so). This doesn't help with languages or PIN numbers or firing a submachinegun, but it does include things like first kisses, great shames and personal victories.

When she successfully uses this on people, it stuns them, per the Daze Extra.

Useful (+2), Exhausted (-3), Endless (+3), Attached (Inflict Amnesia) (-2), Daze (+1)

Duplicate Physical Appearance 10d (10 Points): When she touches someone, the first thing that happens is that she looks like them, while forcing them to become blank-faced. And if having their mind rummaged-through doesn't phase the target, the physical duplication may well do so.

Useful (+2), Exhausted (-3), Endless (+3), Attached (Steal Memories) (-2), Daze (+1)

Destiny: Tilda wanders Europe, flitting from nation to nation and person to person, amassing an ever-growing pool of half-memories and semi-identities. Unfortunately, she gets her powers in 1981 and is already confused when

the Metapocalypse (p. 95) occurs. Absorbing strings of terrified, wounded and shell-shocked people makes her aggregate personality paranoid and desperate, with the callous self-interest that privileges survival. Mistrusting the 'return of civilization' she flees to familiar, reliable anarchy in the middle east. She spends eight months as a sociopathic crime-lord in Saudi Arabia before she meets Jedgar (p. 189) in 1988.

Jedgar convinces a relief aid organizer named Magda Katz to lend her identity to Tilda for a while, and after four months as Magda, Tilda reverts to her natural form for the first time in seven years.

Jedgar takes the fourteen-year-old Tilda to Jason Weeks (p. 195) for therapy. She remains at Global Human University (p. 201) for

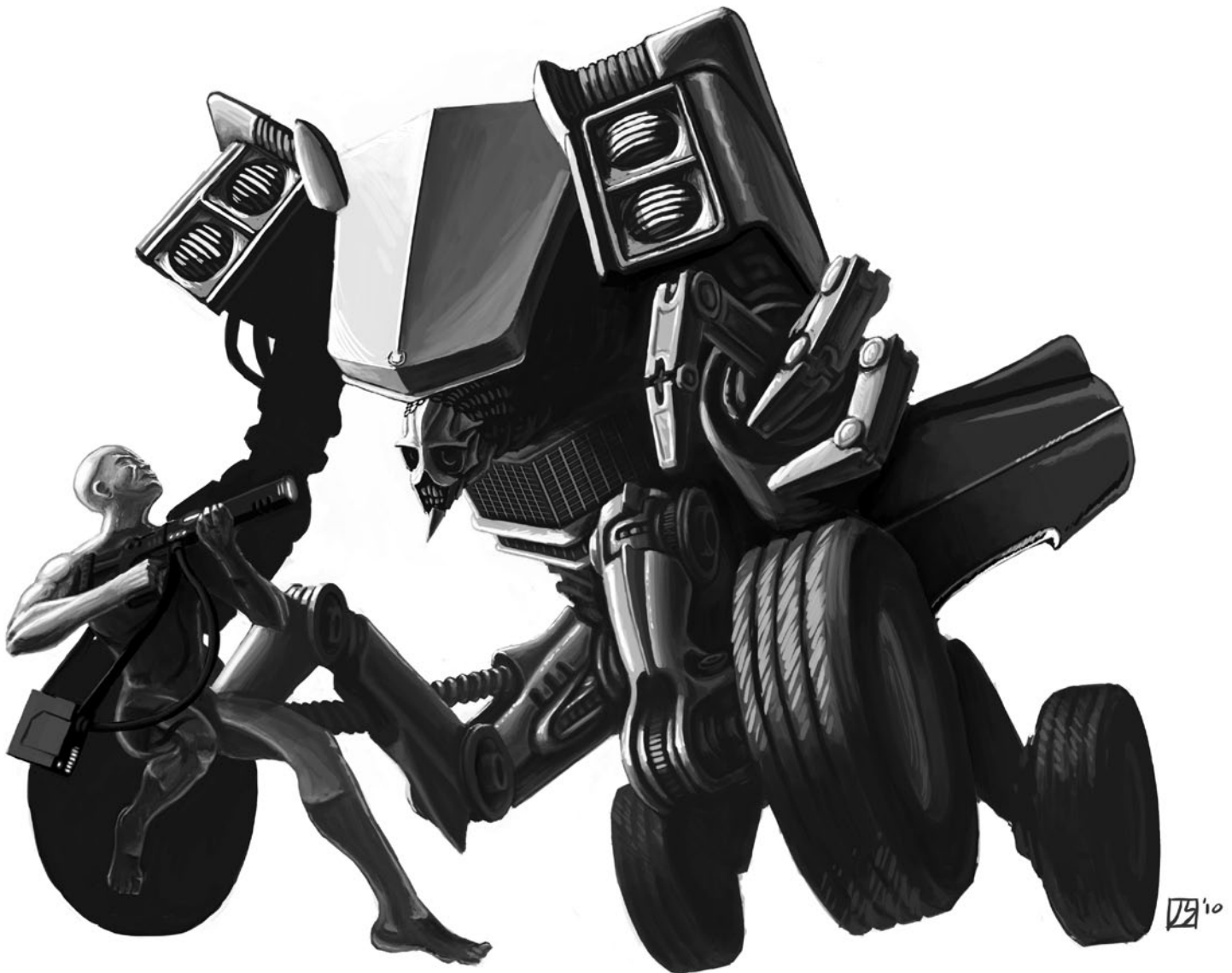
treatment at its Department of Meta-Psychology. When she's eighteen, she becomes a student, graduates with a degree in psychology, and sets up a practice using her unique talents to give disturbed, suicidal or brain damaged people a vacation from themselves while she gets insight into their psychological issues.

Keyo Prince, "The Fantasmobile"

Career: Crook

History: Some people are born into a family business like, say, an automotive repair shop. They're expected to follow their parents' footsteps, join the old firm as soon as they're of age and, like it or not, that's their fate.

Keyo was born to pimp.



He'd really have been happier as a mechanic, but no man-child of Detroit's famous Howard "Prince Pleasure" Prince was going to get his hands dirty working on engines, or waste time going to school when there were hos to knock and tricks to turn out. Keyo knew no other life, respect for women was as alien to him as the surface of Mars, but at least he got a fly ride for his sixteenth birthday.

Flash forward a few years. Keyo's dad retired to battle kidney disease, leaving his handsome, fresh-faced son to manage the stable. Keyo's now known as "Prince Fantasy," he's cruising along in his cherry-red caddy when someone just appears next to him at a stoplight, yelling something about his daughter and then the guy's in the car, grabbing him, and then they're in the middle of the street, and then they're on top of a building, this deranged white sumbitch yelling the whole time. Keyo finally realized he was looking for his latest recruit, Sara, and he managed to stammer out her hotel and room number. Then Keyo and the crazy white guy were in midair over downtown Detroit, and then Keyo was alone in midair.

When he woke up in the hospital, all his girls came to visit. After the first week, about half had dropped off. After nine days, he checked himself out against his doctor's wishes and set about recovering the hookers who had strayed to other protectors. He could barely walk, but he could still drive, and when he saw one of his former employees handing money—his money, as he saw it—to a competitor, something in him snapped. He saw red and then busted leg and broken arm didn't bother him at all as he smacked that fool hard enough to send him across the street. Witnesses later said it was a red metal robot, and that was the first report of "the Fantasmobile."

Sometimes it took the form of a red Cadillac, parked for hours before starting up, driverless, to run down a rival procurer or give a warning bump to a delinquent streetwalker. Once the 'robot man' was seen rampaging through a brothel, and when one of his girls ran off with some earnest college punk, a centaur-like thing, four wheels and two long arms and a scowling man's face worked in metal with a feathered hat perched on top, chased them down on the freeway.

But what Keyo really wants to do is find the teleporter who put him in the hospital. He wants to thank the man personally and give his cute little daughter a job that could last the rest of her life.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - Tyler Ford - James Blaine - Jean Davis - Evan Moore - Otis Rounder - Kevin Cody

Personality: Keyo is bad by upbringing, not by nature. He has systematically been taught that women are commodities to be manipulated and exploited. That warps his interactions with everyone and everything. But while he's casually violent to protect what he considers his property or rights, he isn't sadistic or cruel.

Loyalties: Masculine Dignity (2)

Passions: Cars (2)

Power Suite

Transform to Car 2HD (4 Points): Keyo can, at will, change himself into the form of his classic 1970 Cadillac sedan. It's in flawless condition every time he changes. Even if he's hurt, the car shape looks okay. Transforming to or from car form does not affect his wound boxes in any way. When Keyo is not in car shape, the car is simply... elsewhere.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

Transform to Carlike Humanoid 2HD (4 Points): Kind of robotic, kind of automotive, but manlike in outline.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

Transform to Automotive Centaur 2HD (4 Points): Similar to the carlike humanoid, only with wheels instead of legs.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

Hyperbody 5d (10 Points): When he's in one of his alternate forms, he is much stronger... as long as there's gas in his tank.

Hyperstat (+4), Attached (One of his 'Transform' powers) (-1), If/Then (Requires gasoline) (-1)

Hyperrun 8d (8 Points): When he's in a wheeled form, he's fast. What you'd expect, really.

Hyperskill (+1), Attached (One of his wheeled 'Transform' powers) (-1), If/Then (Requires gasoline) (-1), Power Capacity (Speed) (+2)

Light Armor 3HD (12 Points): When he's transformed, he's a bit more durable than a typical person.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Attached (One of his 'Transform' powers) (-1)

Heavy Armor 2HD (8 Points): Only as a fully inhuman car is he really hard to damage. Also, while he's changing there's a brief span of time (the Slow rating there) between when he turns and when he settles enough for the armor to protect him.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3), Interference (+3), Attached to 'Transform to Car' (-2), Slow (-2)

Destiny: Initially, Fantasmobile goes into conflict with Pearl (p. 272), a transformed androgyne procurer who works on consolidating Detroit's sex trade under its own control. As Pearl's only metahuman competition, their battles are lively until they work out a grudging truce that leaves about a third of the pimps paying Fantasmobile for protection from Pearl.

Keyo's just fine with that and spends some time skimming their profits, delegating authority and stealing their finest hos before he gets it into his head that Amanda Sykes (p. 159) just has to die. In April of 1980 he tries (along with many other low-tier metas) to kill her, only to find that the attack is expected. He's not just attacking the world's most powerful superhuman with weird car powers, he's attacking her, a trauma reflector (p. 22), an energy being (p. 244), and the ghost of MLK (p. 229). He, along with all his fellow fighters, gets arrested, tested, and locked away.

They don't stay there long. El Cucuy (p. 253) sneaks into prison, offering to bust Keyo out if he helps hold the World's Fair hostage in 1982. Keyo agrees, Zipperneck (p. 210) breaks the jail open like an egg, and the three of them attempt their hostage maneuver before getting foiled by Ian Kraus and LeRoi Mathers (p. 207). Zipperneck flees Kraus, as he has to fairly often, while El Cucuy vanishes into the shadows, per his idiom. That leaves Keyo to face two high-tiers

on his own and, when he attempts to flee, LeRoi weakens him into immobility and sends him back to jail.

Lucky for Keyo, he gets sent to a meta-security prison in Virginia, placing him well within the carnage zone of 1983's Metapocalypse (p. 95). When orbital energy strikes crumble half his prison and EMP satellites put the electric fence and cameras out of commission, Keyo leads a jailbreak and has a fair bit of Mad Max-style fun getting back to Detroit to resume his rightful place as King of Pimps. Unfortunately for him, he runs into a junkyard full of Metal Virus killbots. Faced with the unattractive choice between getting killed as a man or remade as a car, he waffles, gets dragged to the ground and is torn apart in an in-between state.

Fred Cronwahl, "Playground"

Career: Layabout

History: Something is broken in Freddie's brain. Maybe he was dropped as a child. Maybe several times. Maybe it was something more extreme than that. Or maybe some people are just born mixed up, cross-wired, their instinct to treasure and protect the young misapplied to sexual attraction. That's when you get a potential pedophile.

Fred Cronwahl might have stayed only 'potential' and, hell, talk about your horrific existences! Can you imagine being sexually drawn to children and never, ever, ever acting on it because you know it's sick and horrible and wrong? You might redirect your desires a bit, depending on the extent of your damage and the level of your libido, but some part of you would always hate yourself, hate that treacherous damaged section down in the lizard brain that looks at the little ones that way.

Fred's got that part that hates himself but, unfortunately, his libido is very strong and his degree of damage is quite severe and his attachment to the rules of society and abstract concepts like 'right' and 'wrong' or 'twisted' or 'perverse' is pretty loose. He was a child molester even before he became a metahuman.

Only one time though.

That's what he'd say if someone confronted him about it. Not that anyone would, because one day he got exposed through a subtle effect of which he was entirely unaware. (A woman named Monique Scarry had the ability to psychically 'borrow' the unused brainpower of those around her and fuel her own intellect. Fred was in the library returning some CDs when she was working on a particularly tricky chaos math problem operating in seven hypothetical dimensions.)

A portly waddling man with a slack and stupid face, Fred was never good at luring children close. He got lucky that one time, but usually he had nothing they wanted. That changed though. He could lure them close, while hiding from all those nosy cops and parents. And when they were close, close enough to touch, he could take them away and keep them forever.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Amy Sykes - Eloise Tyburn - Melanie Randel - Sandy Davis - Raoul Sadhil - Regina Pretorious - Sean Blotch - Monique Scarry

Personality: In some ways, Fred is much like a child himself. He is self-centered, unwilling to defer gratification, sulky and afraid of 'adults.' He's a coward, but only a bully when wheedling fails.

Loyalties: His Vision of What People Want (2)

Passions: The Children (2)

Power Suite

Create Extradimensional Space 2HD (4 Points): He made himself a neverland, a dream world, a private hole in reality where he and his 'friends' (as he thinks of them) can be away and alone and never have to go home to take baths and eat broccoli. It is, of course, a fantastical playground amply stocked with slides and swings and bushes behind which one cannot be seen. Towards the edges, it fades away to fog.

Useful (+2), Touch Only (-2), Radius (+4), One Use (-4), Subtle (+1).

Move People Into and Out Of Extradimensional Space 2HD (12 Points): All he has to do is want it. The power does the rest, even waiting until no one's watching. A

Body+Endurance roll can resist its pull, if the roll can gobble away his 2x10 set. The person who successfully resists feels a stretching sensation, as if gravity was going in every direction... but only for a moment.

Useful (+2), Subtle (+1)

Melt Into the Environment 8HD (32 Points):

Like "The Lawn" (p. 278) or Hector Faran (p. 223), Freddie can blend in in a very literal, physical sense. He can only do it in playgrounds, of course.

Defends (+2), If/Then (Playgrounds only) (-1)

Useful (+2), If/Then (Playgrounds only) (-1)

Hyperstealth 2d (2 Points): Even when he's not in a park, his power protects him a little bit.

Hyperskill (+1)

Destiny: He quietly molests a fair number of kids until he's killed by weaponized brucellosis in 1983. When he dies, his extradimensional playground/prison collapses, killing the six children it contains.

Misty Leighton, Knowitall

Career: Laborer

History: You think being a single working mom is easy? No, of course you don't. You know that no matter what culture you're looking at, be it neolithic tribes in the jungles of New Zealand or the heights of the jet-set glitterati scene, the sub-category that's working harder than the average and getting less satisfaction from it is the woman raising kids without a man.

Misty Leighton dropped out of eleventh grade and started waiting tables after getting pregnant and married (in that order). Her husband Montel skipped town when their daughter Monique was fourteen months old. This cowardly retreat was timed to take maximum advantage of Misty's father's funeral. (Her dad had been an MP in the Marines and the wedding was, in many ways, more his doing than anyone else's.)

Let's flash forward a few years. Misty's daughter was five, she was in kindergarten and struggling, not because she was having trouble with the work

but because it was too easy and the teacher had to help the kids who couldn't grasp basic math. Monique's grandmother tried, God bless her, but her own health was starting to fade and keeping up with a fiercely intelligent young girl was more than she could handle.

It was coming up on the anniversary of Misty's father's death (and Montel's abandonment) which always left Misty sad, and she was stressed over waiting for the results of her mom's biopsy, plus Monique had been sent to the principal for fighting again. That sort of strain can tax your immune system, so Misty was battling a cold.

Before you judge her harshly for continuing to toil at food service with the sniffles, consider that a busy Saturday shift was, for her, often more relaxing than being at home with her daughter. In any event, it was lucky for her. A man who looked uncomfortable in a nice new suit was sitting down with his whining wife, gaudily overdressed.

"Why here?" the woman asked. "We've got money now. We should be somewhere classy, not this shit-hole diner."

"I really like their reubens," the man said mildly, just as Misty walked by, unable to stifle a cough.

"Here," the man said. "Let me help."

Even as the wife said, "What? Don't do her, she can't pay!" he touched Misty's arm and her life changed.

Her sickness was gone, of course, but it was more than that. For so long she'd been unsure what to do, how to act, how to help her family. After that touch, she'd never be unsure again.

The first thing she did after her shift was burgle a liquor store. She knew just how to disable the alarm and open the lock. Two days later, it was a jewelry store. A week after that spontaneous healing she quit her job and hired her daughter a tutor.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Andrew Colt - Mark May - Misette May - Gloria May - Zahur Hossain - Mina Kefer - Melanie Dreyer - Bruce Konieck

Personality: Before empowerment, she's harried, sad and a little bit martyred. Afterwards she's

confident, assertive, a bit smug and, if you get in her way, bitchy.

Loyalties: Family (2)

Passions: Revenge (1)

Power Suite

Perfect Form 1WD (+36 Points): Whenever she physically acts, she can choose to do so with perfect form. There's nothing subtle about this. Glowing patches of light appear, floating in the air in front of her and showing her exactly how to move and where to look. These blobs and streaks change color, thickness and intensity in a code that is intuitively clear to Misty and a bit baffling to everyone else. Oh, and if you're thinking that a smart fighter might decode the patterns and anticipate her moves... well, yeah. But whatever exocortical dark-energy guidance is leading her might factor in that very anticipation. Have fun with that chess match (and let the dice fall where they may).

In practice, she adds a WD bonus in the Resolution phase, to any Skill-based action. It's not limited to gross motor skills, either. Perfect Form Empathy produces little spotlights on people's faces that indicate subtle emotional tells. Perfect Form Research gives her a trail to follow through the library to exactly what she needs (or lights up keyboard keys later on, when there are computer search engines). The only Skills it won't work on are Stability, Lie, Knowledge, Language and Persuasion.

Attacks (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only for most Skills) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) -1, Obvious (-1)

Defends (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only for most Skills) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) -1, Obvious (-1)

Useful (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only for most Skills) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) -1, Obvious (-1)

Athletics 2d (2 Points): Her power is a better fit for some things, and those things are, by and large, covered by the Athletics Skill.

Hyperskill (+1)

+4 Base Will (12 Points)

Destiny: Misty uses her power selfishly, but not cruelly, for close-on a decade. Once a year or so she leaves her daughter with a friend or relative and goes on vacation to a big city, which then experiences a rash of exquisitely carried-out cat burglaries. She starts out in New York City, then Los Angeles, then Miami for a change of pace. Pretty soon she makes some contacts in the art-heist underworld and is stealing to order for the wealthy and amoral.

At some point in there, Montel comes back, having somehow learned of her new prosperity. She laughs in his face, right before pounding it bloody with perfect form hook kicks that a Kung Fu master might envy.

Her prosperous and competent lifestyle continues apace right up to the day her daughter's killed in the Metapocalypse in 1983. After that, Misty completely re-evaluates her life. Instead of selfishly getting rich, she decides to do something meaningful. She decides to assassinate Republicans.

She is, at that point, insane of course. Perfectly insane.

Henry Hatchett, Perfect Soldier

Career: Soldier

History: Henry always wanted to be a soldier. The things he saw growing up, the film from Vietnam, it didn't bother him. He just thought it looked fun. Unfortunately, he was a fat boy with a stutter, and his military fancies only provoked the laughter of his peers. They provided plenty of incentive for violence, but something always stopped him. It wasn't fear, but a peculiar shyness. The idea of beating someone's face in bothered him less than the thought of being watched. So to avoid drawing more attention he put up with it and suffered in silence. Until the day he didn't.

It was all a series of accidents and coincidences. A coincidence that he suffered a particularly severe spate of teasing that lunchtime. An accident that he was made to stay after as punishment for not knowing the answer in History class—an answer he actually did know, he just hadn't been able to get it out. Mere happenstance

that the ringleader of his tormentors was alone, walking to a car parked in a tree-shaded corner right beside Henry's route home.

Henry was walking by just as the other boy was opening his car door, and Henry tripped on a fallen branch. The other boy turned and laughed and started the taunting again as Henry stood, and Henry really put his weight behind it as he launched the branch, end over end, into the other boy's face. With a look of pure surprise, the boy dropped to the ground, out cold.

If Henry had just walked away, things might have been very different. But he was pretty sure that if he just did that, he would be on the top of that kid's list for the rest of his high school career. Henry needed to do something permanent.

He knew the other boys hated weakness, and that if this boy became weak, they would reject his leadership. So Henry went over to the unconscious boy and, with no expression on his face, stomped both his knees as hard as he could.

The police came to get him that night, and that was when Henry's fate really changed. He was sent to a juvenile home for wayward boys and might have become another victim or victimizer if the school had not been run by a Tier Nine whose powers focussed, like his career, on a desire to inflict pain, ensure control, and dominate those around him.

When The Principal (as he was called) realized that some of his broken and remade young men were developing powers, his ambitions grew in proportion.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Ky Thientong - Achille Riitzi - Yuka Masataki - Esteban Sanchez - Wanda Blake - Anita Dresden - Shannon Lovelace - Conan Scott

Personality: An idealist whose highest ideal is get-it-done pragmatism. Henry the Hatchet is patriotic, cold-blooded and willing to countenance any atrocity in the name of the greater good for America. In later years he sees himself as a liberator, instructor and protector of the downtrodden peoples of the world. At all points in his life he is willing and ready to rescue those in danger, not out of any real sympathy,

but out of an eagerness to live out his fantasized ‘hero’ role.

Loyalties: His Current ‘Commander’ (2)

Passions: Violence (2)

Power Suite

Athletics, Block, Brawling, Endurance, Dodge, Stealth, Perception, Survival, Tactics, Stability 1WD (4 Points each):

His mastery of these many talents makes him a versatile and deadly soldier against conventional forces and many metahumans. As he ages, he supplements his metahuman skill with training and experience, becoming steadily more formidable.

Hyperskill (+1)

Weapon (Knife), Weapon (Firearm) 1d+1WD (5 Points each)

Hyperskill (+1)

Destiny: At first, Henry is just muscle for The Principal as he tries and, eventually, succeeds in taking total control over a small Nebraska town. Henry does pretty well under The Principal, thanks to weak will, undeveloped moral sense and petty vengefulness.

It all comes down when Jason Weeks (p. 195) finds out about it. Using his clairvoyance to check on the town’s anomalous crime statistics and economic habits, Weeks realizes what The Principal is doing. Jason tells Abbie Hoffman (p. 58) and arranges for Boris Mizurski (p. 217) to show up the day after Abbie liberates the town from The Principal’s influence, gleefully flipping the control freak’s human chessboard into the air. Hoffman has a hard time holding off The Principal and all his students single-handedly, but once Mizurski shows up to embody the town’s outrage and yearning for justice, it’s over. Henry fights the good fight, but he can’t even slow Mizurski down.

Unfortunately, Henry and Boris never get to compare their experiences being enslaved by authority figures. It might have made a difference in Henry’s life.

Or maybe not. Like The Principal’s other Pupils, Henry blames his master and claims he’d done all his crimes while mind controlled. He—rather timidly—asks the judge if maybe he could join the Army or the Marines instead of serving time, and the judge thinks that’s a fine idea. Henry goes on deniable commando missions in South and Central America, then a couple in north Africa, and is on the tip of the spear when conventional forces are thrown across the Bering Strait in 1983.

For years after, he bitterly laments being withdrawn from the front during the Metapocalypse. “If only we’d kept pushing we coulda taken ‘em all!” he says, over and over. “Who gives a rat turd if they actually did it or not?”

That attitude gets him promoted straight into the CIA, where he works until the year 2000.

Arturo Lambruschi, “Holocaust Junior”

Career: Student

History: He hates being called “Holocaust Junior.” He’s not real fond of “The Second Oxygen Bomber” either.

Arturo didn’t even grow up oppressed in Ireland, for Pete’s sake. He was upper middle class in Padua, Italy, and stupid. As Janice King (p. 288) eventually phrased it, “It’s hard to resent Arturo’s patriarchal privileges when he’s spent his entire life pissing away every advantage he ever received.” A habitual boozier by age 16 and a mean drunk his whole life, Arturo rebelled against anything he could get his hands on.

He was always fascinated with the terrorist organizations of the seventies, reading everything he could comprehend on the Red Army Faction and jerking off to old photos of Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin. But what really cranked his knob was Glóir, who had the same insurgent terror badass vibe and superpowers. So when the world fell apart in 1983 and a shot-down satellite blew up his family home, he lit out to the north figuring that the super-rebels would end up on the top of the heap and he wanted to be there to help them find good cocaine and build thrones out of English skulls.

In a less crazy world or less crazy time, he would have died. He should have died. But instead he got dark energy and, though he was only a pale reflection of the Tier Five Holocaust (p. 242) he still found Glóir—or its shaken and bitter remnants—welcoming him with open arms.

Lineage: Amanda Sykes - Lyndon Johnson - J. Edgar Hoover - James Closterman - Quentin Tillson - Harper Bradbury - Owen Cole - Brianna Mihulniac - Günter Marsden

Personality: He's a dick. I could get into his arrogance, sexism, cruelty and willful ignorance but - yeah, really, he's just a dick

Loyalties: Glóir (1)

Passions: Raising Hell (3)

Power Suite

Transform Matter to Oxygen 8d (48 Points):

Just like the original Oxygen Bomber, he can transform any matter in range to pure oxygen, with all the conflagratory potential that entails. Unlike Terrence O'Shay (p. 242), however, he lacks the control to use his power defensively. He gasses out mighty quick and he can only transform 40,000 pounds of matter. ("Only.") Usually he does this slowly (that's the Useful version) which doesn't create the instant gas-expansion explosion but which can still decay vehicles and small buildings and can still leave an awful lot of Nature's Perfect Accelerant in the atmosphere. If he uses the Attack version, he's rushing it, can't transform nearly as much, but it is sudden enough to really detonate.

Attacks (+2), Range (+2), Radius (+2), Area 2 (+2),
Willpower Bid (-1), Mental Strain (-2), Exhausted (-3)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Exhausted (-3), Range (+2),
Mass Boost (+2), Willpower Bid (-1)

+2 Willpower (2 Points)

Destiny: He joins Glóir late in 1983 and is at the forefront of their actions in 1984. In fact, his indiscriminate bloodlust is part of what pushes Sinn Féin, the Provisional Irish Republican Army and Veronica O'Malley (p. 280) to turn against Glóir. But he never suspects Veronica, blinded

by a puppyish crush completely at odds with his self-image.

Arturo has plenty of inconsequential sex during his time with Glóir. He's not even shy about paying for it. But something about Veronica speaks to a better part of him he has no idea what to do with, a part no one else even suspects.

Attempting to impress Veronica, Arturo buckles down, takes big risks and seeks ever bigger, ever nastier ways of making his point. After Terrence O'Shay dies in 1985, Arturo gets more and more prominent within the movement (which, in consequence, moves farther and farther into realms where political policy meets sociopathy). By 1987, he's the face of Glóir to much of Europe, and he's criticized by name when the British Defenders are founded to destroy Glóir once and for all. In March, 1988, the Defenders succeed, killing Arturo and six other Glóir metahumans. With his dying breath, Arturo tries to tell Veronica he loves her, but he can't get the words out.

Straightforward Villains

In among all the complicated motives and moray grayness of the setting, I thought it might be nice to include some straight up menaces. These guys do not have canonical impact on the timeline. They do not have important progeny. They exist only to menace your PCs.

The Imposter

Similar to the Pod-Personator (p. 292), only s/he does it deliberately and always maintains his/her own personality on some level. S/he's a manipulative sociopath whose choicest pleasure is humiliating others, and s/he's well beyond duplicating them and dropping pants in public. S/he likes to sleep with other metahumans' spouses, then prompt arguments, or get caught philandering in a different persona. His/her peak experiences, of course, are when s/he can get a different metahuman's own friends or teammates to kill him.

Career: Professional

Power Suite

Copy Skill Pools +2d (6 Points): This is just like Tilda Gräss' power of the same name.

Attacks (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only to get a pool equal to the victim's pool, never higher) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) (-1), Attached (Steal Memories) (-2), Depleted (-1)

Defends (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only to get a pool equal to the victim's pool, never higher) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) (-1), Attached (Steal Memories) (-2), Depleted (-1)

Useful (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only to get a pool equal to the victim's pool, never higher) (-1), If/Then (Only for Augment) (-1), Attached (Steal Memories) (-2), Depleted (-1)

Steal Memories +10d (20 Points): Again, just like Tilda, except that the Imposter doesn't inflict amnesia or stun victims.

Useful (+2), Exhausted (-3), Endless (+3)

Physical Duplication +2HD (12 Points): It's like Tilda's, only without the Attached flaw.

Useful (+2), Exhausted (-3), Endless (+3), Daze (-1)

Power Mimic +10d (90 Points): This is standard to Wild Talents except that its power Qualities are all Attached to Physical Duplication.

Attacks (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Must touch subject) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect must match subject's powers) (-1), Attached (Physical Duplication) (-2), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Defends (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Must touch subject) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect must match subject's powers) (-1), Attached (Physical Duplication) (-2), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Must touch subject) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect must match subject's powers) (-1), Attached (Physical Duplication) (-2), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Hyperlie 9HD (18 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

Base Will +18 (54 Points): It comes from doing what s/he loves.

The Objectivist

Robbing banks isn't that bad when you hold someone up against Tyler Ford or Jarvis West. But giving lengthy philosophical rationales that mix willfully misunderstood Nietzsche with blathering Ayn Rand pastiche? And insisting that newspapers print the whole mess or she's coming for the editor's children? That's gotta be a put on, right?

Sorry, no. She won't just rip you off and beat you up, she wants—no, insists—on being admired for it.

Her powers take the form of weirdly fluorescent violet energy blobs.

Block +10HD (40 Points): Standard to Wild Talents.

Defends (+2)

Bind +5HD (40 Points): Also standard.

Useful (+2) Mass Capacity (+2)

Containment +5d (70 Points): Straight from the book.

Defends (+2), Controlled Effect (+1, Radius (+2), Range Capacity (+2)

Useful (+2), Controlled Effect (+1, Radius (+2), Range Capacity (+2)

The Hater

A murderous bigot. No, more murderous than you're thinking. He literally cannot stand to see a black person walk down the street unless said black person is cringing.

Invisibility +6HD (60 Points): Standard to Wild Talents.

Defends (+2), Duration (+2)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

Immunity (Mind Reading, Clairvoyance & other Psychic Hassles) +10HD (100 Points): Standard Immunity except for its versatility.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-3), Variable Effect (+4), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Only against informational powers) (-1)

Harm +10HD (140 Points): It's pretty nasty. The target's cells lose their cohesion and simply liquefy.

Attacks (+2), Engulfs (+2), Penetration 2 (+2), Speeding Bullet (+2), If/Then (Won't work on white folk) (-1)

Townshend

The last and most dangerous of these living perils is also the most pitiable. Hugo Townshend isn't evil like the others. He's just hugely, baldly schizophrenic. His perception of reality is utterly and irrevocably warped. Unfortunately, he has the power to take his warpage out on the fabric of the universe.

When Townshend has a freakout, buildings, roads, cars and streetlamps just get sucked in to him, forming a fifty ton, five story tall humanoid form.

Size Shift +10HD (60 Points): It's standard Wild Talents size shifting, with two flaws. First, its Defends Quality has Armored Defense (-2). Secondly, there's an If/Then Flaw that prevents him from activating it when he's lucid. Sorry.

Defends (+2), Attached (Useful Quality) (-2), Permanent (+4), Armored Defense (-2)

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only when lucid) (-1)

Hyperbody +10HD (80 Points): It's the same ol' Hyperstat, but when he attacks it damages every hit location thanks to the Engulfs (+2) Extra, and it's Attached (-2) to Size Shift.

Hyperstat (+4), Engulf (+2), Attached (Size Shift) (-2)

Extra Tough +10d (10 Points): It's ordinary Extra Tough except for its Flaws. One is that he can't heal the extra boxes and the other is that he can only use the power when injured. Finally, instead of Permanent, it's Endless, and note that it's not Hard Dice. This means, when he's hurt he can roll his ten dice and gain Width wound boxes to each location, but they only last until they're blown off. Then, when they're all gone and he gets hurt again, he can suck in more.

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Endless (+3), Self Only (-3), Attached (Size Shift (-2), If/Then (Can't heal extra boxes) (-1), If/Then (Must be injured) (-1)

CHAPTER FOUR:

DEVICES AND DEVELOPMENTS

The big, gaudy difference between Progenitor history and real history is the people in capes flying around destroying and creating. But the small, incremental difference is that metahuman inventors and exocortical geniuses push technology forward at an even faster rate than the baseline 20th century.

Syntergenics

Biologist Richard Dawkins' book "The Selfish Gene" drew a parallel between cultural concepts and biological information. Specifically, ideas with survival traits tend to linger and spread, just as genes for beneficial mutations pass on to offspring and eventually become common traits to an organism. Dawkins called these cultural behaviors "memes." Then he went apeshit on religion.

In the timeline of Progenitor, the parallels between traits swimming in a genetic sea and ideas moving through a cultural soup were obvious to geniuses like Jason Weeks (p. 195) and Ngyuet Cam (p. 164) even in 1968, the dawn of the media era. Ngyuet, with a country to conquer and defend, didn't have the time to start writing and releasing viral thought-forms. It was Weeks who created the first viral thought-form, thereby initiating the science he named "Syntergenics"—a name conflating synergies, genetics, syntax and interaction.



His first “syntergene” took the form of a meandering, discursive book entitled *Inoculus*—a play on the words “innocuous” and “inoculate,” as explained on its page 64. Touching on culture, free will, pop psychology, politics and sociology, it was rich with wordplay, amusing anecdotes, and oddly syncopated sentences. Its thesis, never stated but inexorably emergent from the text, was that you, the reader, really ought to think for yourself.

Jason initially approached *Inoculus* as a gadget, but the idea-deployment techniques he developed soon became available to others who weren’t gadgeteers—as long as they had superhuman intelligence or, just as good, a superhuman understanding of how to bend others to their will.

It’s ironic, of course, that the first example of a thought-virus was intended to manipulate people to become less susceptible to manipulation. Nor was *Inoculus* merely an experiment or a random gesture of beneficence. Jason had heard LBJ (see page 169) and his mighty mind recognized that something had been done to his perspective. He wrote the book in an attempt to break himself free of Johnson’s pull and, once he achieved that, he released it to help others do the same.

Unfortunately, *Inoculus* wasn’t up to the task. Coupled with Weeks’ considerable willpower, it could help him reset his opinions to back to their unaltered state. The effect on the general public wasn’t quite so smooth. The anti-war movement, unfocussed after the war’s surreal turns in 1968, took new energy from *Inoculus*, railing against LBJ’s cult of personality. It didn’t exactly give them focus, but it did break them out of their confused inactivity and spur them to a spate of confused action.

Inevitably, a copy of *Inoculus* fell into Nguyet Cam’s hands. Indeed, it happened sooner rather than later, because it was released in Vietnamese two months after the initial English release. Nguyet engaged the text, not like a person examining an idea, but like a cop on the bomb squad examining a ticking package. She took it apart and quirked up an eyebrow, thinking, “Oh, very clever. I do not like this clever American. I do not like that anyone is this clever.” She took

a month out of her busy schedule to write a ten page refutation of *Inoculus*, entitled “The Cure is the Disease” and got it published in *The New Yorker*, but by then Jason was on to a collection of poems, *Fog in the Swamps of Free Will*.

Human culture had been opened as a new battlefield for superhumans, and the greatest of the syntergene-warriors hadn’t even penned her first construct.

What Is Syntergenic Engineering?

People have been creating syntergenes as long as there’s been language. Any time someone presents a durable idea—anything from the recipe for bread, to the fashion of wearing tie-dyed shirts, to democracy—it’s a syntergene that may die off, explode across the mindscape, or simply find a niche where it remains stable.

Syntergenic Engineering implies elements of deliberation and intent that are absent from the randomly generated concepts falling from culture as unconsidered byblows. A Syntergenic Engineer has an idea which he presents in a very specific fashion. It has a tailored effect. It is intended to survive and to spread.

The closest analogue is an ad campaign. It’s meant to change your behavior (a little), it’s got a (vague) idea of who it’s aimed at and it (hopefully) stays in your mind long enough to influence you. A well-engineered syntergene can change behavior drastically, be focussed on a tiny segment of the public, and suck in your attention to the point of obsession.

Who Can Do This?

The techniques of Syntergenic Engineering are beyond normal people. To attempt to create a syntergene, one must possess inhuman levels of ability in one or more of three categories: Mind, Command or Charm. For the purposes of syntergenic construction, “inhuman levels of ability” means 20d, or 10HD, or 4WD spread across the the relevant Stats. Thus, someone with 3WD in Mind and 5d in Charm could do it, or someone with 10HD in Command, or someone with 7d in each of the three.

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Creator’s Immunity

Someone who creates a syntergene is immune to the effects of that syntergene. Otherwise, no one would do those fun suicide songs! This does not make syntergineers immune to other people’s syntergenes, of course.

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Noticing Syntergenes

Once a syntergene is in effect, it seems perfectly reasonable and natural to its victim. He doesn't question why he's willing to break off his engagement just because she said something nasty about his new favorite cola. He wonders why anyone wouldn't.

But while the syntergene is sinking in, one might realize something hinky is happening. (For one-round absorption, this is impossible.) Syntergenes are subtle, so only people with tremendous resources of attention or analysis can catch them at it, but someone with 5+ dice in Mind or Sense could realize their consciousness is being altered before the changes become irrevocable. This requires any successful roll of the unaltered Mind Stat, or Sense+Empathy. With this roll made, the perceiver picks up that something is operating on her identity. If the Height of the roll was 5 or more, she figures out the source of the change—the book, that picture, this song. She can then, without further ado, break contact with the media and leave with the syntergene incomplete and ineffective, as long as she can avoid further exposure. She might even get a bonus to resistance if exposed to the same syntergene later.

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The exception is those who have an instinctive understanding of syntergenes (or rather, a superpowered understanding that operates so far outside the confines of their pre-energy consciousness that it might as well be getting mailed into their brains from the moons of Jupiter). It is possible to buy “Syntergene Engineer” as a Miracle, as described in the box.

How Is It Done?

A constructed syntergene has three elements: Breadth, length and depth.

Breadth indicates how many people it has the potential to effect (or infect). For instance, a syntergene written in Tamil won't affect someone who doesn't understand Tamil. A syntergene that makes perfect sense to elderly white male American racists might be perfect gibberish to young black female American racists. It is possible to create syntergenes that are independent of all language, but they're much more difficult. But by the same token, nonverbal syntergenes can be incredibly fast-acting.

Length means the same thing for a syntergene as it does for any other cultural information packet: How much time does it take the average receiver to digest it? Whether you want to persuade someone to volunteer at the Red Cross or go on a murderous rampage, it's a lot easier to do it if you have 200 pages of dense text to make your case. That's not to say it's impossible to make drastic changes quickly. It's just a lot harder.

The depth of a syntergene indicates the profundity of the changes it makes when it takes effect. It measures the payload. A shallow syntergene would be something like “turn your pants pocket inside out on the left side and leave it hanging out, it's cool!” A deep syntergene would be “Forget your native language.”

Getting Down to It

If a character qualifies to create a syntergene and wants to do so, the first thing to do is figure out which pool he's using. This can be Command, Charm, Mind or the Syntergenic Engineering Miracle. There's no Skill that combines with the Stat. Every syntergene-builder starts on his own

and proceeds alone. There's no real difference in how the four options operate, other than one may be a +10d pool and another may be +5HD. Depending on your needs, either might be the preferable option.

The second thing to do is determine how much time he's pencilling in for it on his calendar. Even creating a lightning-fast syntergene requires lots of time, effort and thought. Indeed, the faster the syntergene is in practice, the more time it probably took to create.

The time to create a syntergene is measured in units and in scale. Scale means, are you spending days, weeks, months, years or even decades working on your idea? Units simply indicates how many days or months or decades it's going to take.

The number of units equals eleven minus the number of dice in the pool you're using, down to a minimum of one. If you have +8d in Mind, it takes three days, or three weeks, or three whatever. If you have +2WD in Command, it could take nine weeks or nine decades.

The person building the concept picks the scale on which he's working. If he gives himself plenty of time he gets a lot of advantages with the parameters of his syntergene. If he's on a tight deadline, his syntergene may suffer. The chart below breaks it all down for you.

Scale	Effect
Days	+2 Difficulty, -2 Width, -2d penalty
Weeks	No change Difficulty, Width or dice pool.
Months	-1 Difficulty, +1 Width, +1d or offset a -1d penalty
Years	-3 Difficulty, +2 Width, +1d or offset a -1d penalty
Decades	-6 Difficulty, +5 Width, +3d or offset a -3d penalty

Nobody, no matter how brilliant, can construct a syntergene in less than 24 hours.

Of course, for this to make any sense, one needs to understand what the Difficulty of making a syntergene is, and how much Width is required, and how the dice pool gets penalized. As explained below, they map directly onto breadth, length and depth.

Conventional weapons are indiscriminate. You drop a hand grenade in a town hall meeting, you can't decide who it hurts and who it doesn't. Syntergenes are just the opposite. The more specific the target, the easier it is to make an idea comprehensible, then acceptable, then inexorable.

This is represented by a Difficulty, as explained in Wild Talents. The Difficulty of all syntergenes starts at 13, which is utterly impossible. But for every factor that narrows the targeted group, that Difficulty drops by one. Thus, if you target your syntergene at one person and one person only, its Difficulty is zero. If you want everyone on the globe to be susceptible, regardless of gender, race and education, you have your work cut out for you. Some factors that can reduce Difficulty are listed below, but they're by no means exhaustive. If someone wants a syntergene that only works on left-handed people, that's worth -1 Difficulty.

Narrowing Factors

Species: Does it affect only humans? If you're going to break down based on gender or race, you can probably take Species as a 'gimme' but then it excludes Shaw monsters (p. 205, page 374) or Marshall's metal officers (p. 171). One could also create syntergenes for those other intelligences. Many of the other narrowing factors just don't apply in such a case, but that's the difficulty of writing for an inhuman audience.

Language: A big one. A syntergene intended only for German-speakers can be written in German. One that operates regardless of language, through an image or a rhythm, is more challenging. Even if one is developing a wordless, silent image targeted at speakers of (say) Hindi, understanding how the language has shaped the brain is invaluable.

Gender: One's from Mars, one's from Venus. Or so I've been told. Both society and biology contribute to differences in perception and cognition, subtle or obvious. Women have more color receptors in their eyes on average, a factor to consider when creating a syntergenic image. Men are hopped up on the mind-altering effects of testosterone.

Religion: The underlying images that can grab a Sunni Muslim's attention include some that would mean little to an agnostic. Similarly, some images that might appeal to the average agnostic might repel that Sunni (or a Christian, or a Jain).

Age Range: Not only does brain chemistry change over the decades, the references and opinions sculpted by current events can't be fully exchanged between age groups. For the purposes of these rules, the age groups are: 2-6 years old; 7-12 years old; 13-17 years old; 18-26 years old; 27-40 years old; 41-60 years old; and 61+ years old.

Social Class: Generally this fragments along a continuum that runs "destitute," "third-world poverty," "developed-world poverty," "lower-class," "middle-class," "upper-class," "global elite."

Location: This is quite specific, to within five miles. Climate, geography and local history inform opinions and sculpt how one understands one's immediate place in the world.

Traditional Background: There are many elements to a culture beyond race and religion, of course, and a white Christian male who grew up in New Orleans is still likely to have a very different view of things than a white Christian male who grew up in Alice Springs, Australia.

Intelligence: Easy enough. Syntergenes can be targeted to any specific Mind Stat rating ("Mind 2 only"), or any adjoining group ("Mind 3-5 only") or can use a level as a cutoff, either above or below ("Mind 4 and below only").

Education: As with Mind, only using the Knowledge Skill as a rough gauge of how much studying has been done.

Mass Culture Exposure: The age of "movies everyone has seen" and "songs everyone has heard" is only starting to cross the horizon in 1968. Using a particular novel, song or movie as a key to unlock a syntergene's development can be a very handy constraint. Thus there can be syntergenes that only work on those who've seen Cool Hand Luke or heard the Carpenters' "Close to You."

Syntergene Engineer (U; 6 per die)

With this Miracle, the character can engage the syntergene-creation rules to modify the attitudes of others.

Useful (+2), Delayed Effect (-1), Permanent (+4), If/Then (Requires time and attention) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect creates syntergenes only) (-1), Variable Effect (+4)

Aesthetic Taste: Similar to Mass Culture Exposure, but depending more on what the targets enjoy and identify with. Thus, instead of all people who've heard Elvis sing "Suspicious Minds" (whatever they thought of it) a syntergene could dial in on people who like rock 'n' roll, or people who hate foreign films, or people who enjoy romance novels.

Professional Field: The thoughts of a bricklayer are differently shaped from the thoughts of a dental hygienist, and understanding those differences can help a syntergene-maker tailor their appeal.

Personal Beliefs: Republican, Democrat, or simply a belief that "all people are really good at heart"—this sort of credo can single one out for a syntergene just as easily as an ethnic or national identity.

The other way to drop this Difficulty, of course, is to take longer by increasing the time scale, as explained above.

Length

Consider a thought-form as if it were a medicine. Is it fast acting, something that's taking effect as soon as the plunger pushes down the needle? Or is it slow, like a regimen of pills that only show effect after months? It's largely the same with syntergenes. Some hit like a punch. Some take a long time to sink in.

Length is influenced by carrier, and by carrier I mean the technique by which the information travels. The most common syntergene carrier is written text, like the one you're reading right now. But they can be released through music, through images, even through interpretive dance. But no matter how the information gets in, it takes time, and the more time it takes the easier the syntergene is to create. This is managed through dice pool penalties. The quicker the syntergene acts, the more dice get knocked out of your pool before you roll to create it.

Note that many syntergenes don't need to be absorbed all at once. That haunting picture that could implant an idea if you stared at it for an hour would have the same effect if you looked at it for five minutes, then left, then came back to

look at it for fifteen minutes, then went to France for a year, then came back and really soaked in its ambiance for forty minutes. Needless to say, if the picture got destroyed before it did its work, the syntergene would be incomplete and have no effect (other than perhaps a nagging sense that you missed something).

Penalty	Speed
-7d	Instant. The syntergene takes effect in one combat round.
-6d	Rapid. The syntergene can be absorbed in just one minute.
-5d	Fast. The syntergene could be a five-minute lecture, a four-page document, or an image that takes effect after being looked at five times for a minute apiece.
-4d	Reasonable. The syntergene takes roughly an hour to absorb, possibly in the form of an operetta or a one-act play. Syntergenes in this range take about 40 pages to express, if words can contain them at all.
-3d	Average. Five one-hour exposures, or a marathon five-hour speech, or a 200 page book.
-2d	Slow. The syntergene gets absorbed after ten total hours of contemplation. Call it a 400 page book.
-1d	Leaden. The syntergene takes sixteen hours of exposure to sink in. This could, of course, be 32 half-hour sitcoms or the like.
-0d	Glacial. Twenty-five hours of exposure or a thousand pages of text. Now, if the exposure is not voluntary—getting strapped into a chair with a catheter and your eyelids pried open like in Clockwork Orange—it can be done all in one long, miserable session. To the guy in the lab coat running the projector, twenty-five hours doesn't seem very long at all. When you're in the chair, it feels like a lifetime.

Depth

Depth measures the good stuff: What the syntergene inclines its hapless victims to do. It's measured with Width requirements. Making someone want to do something they initially don't give a rip about is simple. Urging someone towards actions they abhor or ideas that violate the core of their identity? You can expect a little more push-back.

Most syntergenes simply move people along a continuum, illustrated below.

I Confess!

Is the "units = 11 - pool" equation a little arbitrary and odd? Yeah, it is. But it's also simple and quick and it plays into the balance of breadth, length and depth. So it's a game mechanic convenience. I figure it's only likely to be noticeable if there's a syntergineer in your group. If there is someone creating a lot of syntergenes, I figure it's better to keep the unit yield as simple as possible.

***Abject Loathing - Hatred - Dislike -
Indifference - Favor - Love -
Passionate Identification***

These are pretty self-explanatory. “Passionate Identification” means it’s a central element of how you see the world and/or how you see yourself. Abject Loathing is something that repulses you on all levels and fills you with the urge to eradicate it. (Most people’s feelings never reach that depth, which is a mercy.) Consumer products rarely provoke anything stronger than Favor or Dislike. Cigarettes might reach Love or Hatred, depending on whether you’re addicted or whether they rotted your mommy’s lungs with cancer. But you get the idea. Most people Love their families and Passionately Identify with only a couple people or ideas, if any. Most people Dislike a hundred things for every thing they truly Hate.

Many syntergenes, then, shift or create opinions on that scale. Moving someone off Indifference is the easiest, in either direction. The best an ordinary ad campaign can do is move someone from Indifferent to Favor. The scariest political propaganda, at best, shifts folks a level down the scale. Moving someone from Hatred to Love is far harder and requires titanic, long-term, romantic-comedy degrees of effort. Or a good syntergene.

Width

Required Depth of Change

2x	Nugatory. Move someone one step upward or downward from Indifferent.
3x	Significant. Move someone one step in a given direction, or two steps if they start on Indifferent.
4x	Large. Move someone three steps from Indifference, or two steps from another position. Cause someone to forget something minor, like what his car looks like.
5x	Huge. Move someone to either extreme from Indifference, or three steps from another position. Cause someone to forget something significant, like her home address. Force an immediate Stability check by thrashing up psychotic delusions from the subconscious.
6x	Vast. Five steps on the continuum. Cause someone to forget something crucial, like his name.
7x	Enormous. From one end of the continuum to another, or make the affected person go from whatever their state is directly to a specific

level of affection. This is the level at which a syntergene could give everyone affected a mild Dislike for, say, PETA. Regardless of whether they previously Loathed it or were Passionately Identified, they go directly to Dislike. Or if you prefer, you can make someone forget a key element of her identity, like how to speak her mother tongue.

8x	Radical. A syntergene with this Width can cause someone to adapt a completely different ethos and set of values. Or it can give him total amnesia.
9x	Deadly. This is the Width you need to make someone immediately suicidal. Or to immediately lust for the death of one person in relation to himself—“kill your son,” “kill your wife,” “kill your Senator,” etc.
10x	Complete. With a Width of 10+, just about anything goes. You can take a saintly nun and program her towards a sociopathic killing spree, murdering everyone she’s ever loved, ending with suicide.

**Resisting Syntergenes;
or, ‘That Pesky Free Will’**

At this stage, you may be thinking, “Well crap. Humanity had a good run, but for sure some misogynist out there is going to put in the time and effort to make every woman in the world top herself, and the Sykes women aren’t going to be near enough to repopulate the planet, no matter how invulnerable they are.”

Not quite. Syntergenes work as described, generally, but not universally. It’s true to say that planes fly from one airport to another carrying passengers and cargo, and 90+% of the time it’s also factually accurate to say that. But some planes crash. Some people blink at a crucial moment in syntergene absorption, or his ears pop from a draining sinus infection, or some comment someone made in passing when she was 16 years old just happened to provide a random neural connection that shakes the syntergene to pieces.

Syntergenes only work on a given target once. Take a cola ad for example. An expertly crafted syntergene, it takes effect in sixty seconds and improves your opinion of the product from Indifferent to Favor. Milo, who initially had no opinion, hears it and goes up a level. If he hears the syntergene again, it does not change his

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Multiple Actions and Syntergenic Engineering

The Multiple Actions power from Wild Talents allows a character to reduce the time increment of an activity, so that fixing a car becomes a task of minutes or seconds instead of hours. This scale reduction doesn’t work on Syntergenic Engineering. Building a syntergene is all thought-work. Being able to move faster doesn’t make a character able to think faster.

.....

opinion again. He's as changed as he's going to get from that ideological payload.

Moreover, while synergenes can make you want things, they can't make you do anything you don't want. Some people, no matter how synergenically inclined they might be to take their own lives, simply don't have it in them to jump off a bridge. A shy person afflicted with a "get naked in public" synergene is in a miserable position, trapped between two equally powerful and utterly contradictory urges.

On top of that, and on top of the inevitable transmission or copy errors that can blunt a synergene's power, they often do an incomplete job of shifting opinions. Sure, they can make you hate anything from chocolate donuts to the Green Party, but if you had strong positive feelings for those things, you're as likely to end up with conflicted feelings than completely shifted ones. People are good at holding contradictory opinions. Ask a dieter how she feels about that chocolate donut, you'll see what I mean. Or is there maybe someone in your past (or present) that you really disliked, someone who irritated you, someone disagreeable who was, nevertheless, kinda sexy? Like, annoyingly sexy? Mm hm. It's like that.

So, when someone's exposed to a synergene, what happens? Well, the target rolls Stability. The synergene rolls a pool equal to the Width that established it. If the synergene's result can gobble out the target's Stability, he's infected. He wants what the synergene makes him want.

Spending a point of Willpower can enable a character to resist taking actions in accordance with the imposed opinion. This is only an option for people who have Willpower, however.

Once a person is aware he's been synergened, he can spend a point of Base Will to get rid of it. Even people who normally can't spend Willpower can spend Base Will to do this.

There are two other ways to get rid of an unwanted synergene. One is to go into therapy. Once someone has hit a Knowledge: Psychology

roll with Height equal to the synergene's Width, you can master the feelings from the synergene and recognize them as artificial. The other option is to go on a huge bender. Booze, pills, psychedelics, uppers, downers—as long as you get yourself totally, totally wrecked for a good 24+ hours. Once you sleep it off, your brain is sufficiently different, causing the synergene to lose purchase. Of course, depending on what the synergene's doing, the cure may be worse than the disease. Especially if it's a "Stop Abusing Heroin!" synergene.

The Power of Synergenes

On the individual scale, it's obvious what synergenes do. They make you want something and if you have no Willpower (or simply choose not to waste Willpower fighting the urge) they make you act in accordance with that desire.

But Progenitor is not only a game of individual scale. The factors of breadth, length and depth all contribute to how a synergene impacts the broader world. A narrow synergene's effect isn't huge effect because it doesn't change enough opinions. Similarly, one that's too long won't cast a big shadow because in this busy modern world, not that many people have ten hours to contemplate a thought form. As for depth, that's more subjective, but it's easy to see that a synergene for "liking Coke a bit more than Pepsi" is going to have less effect on the world than a synergene for tolerating fascism, or one for complaining when you feel your rights have been squashed.

Here, then, is the formula for determining the effect of a synergene on the global metrics.

The Insignificance Test

If a synergene has a Difficulty of 4 or less, it has no global effect. Even if it targets a powerful global elite, there just aren't enough carriers to give it momentum. By the same token, if its length gives it a penalty of 0d to -2d, it's just too time consuming to stick with a sufficient base.

Stickiness

World-changing synergenes last from one to five years in the public consciousness before they either become irrelevant, collapse, or achieve such saturation that they're just common wisdom. The number of years a synergene abides—its “stickiness”—depends on how many people are susceptible. So this maps directly to the Difficulty of creating it.

Difficulty	Years of Effect
5-6	1
7	2
8	3
9	4
10+	5

Intensity

The specificity of a synergene determines how many people might get it. The bigger the pool, the stickier the synergene because there are just that many more who can be affected. But the length of a synergene—the time it takes to absorb—determines how many of those do get it. A thousand page synergene book might linger for five years because it's accessible to many people who pick it up. But a lot fewer people do pick it up. A specifically aimed synergene that affects only the French working class living outside of cities has a lot fewer people who might be swayed, but if it hits fast, almost all the French rural laborers are going to get it. Thus, while its effect may be shorter, it's likely to be more intense. This is based directly off the length penalty.

Penalty Intensity of Effect

-3d to -5d	Raises or lowers one metric by one point.
-6d+	Raises or lowers two metrics by one point each.

Interestingly, it's possible for intense synergenes to have self-defeating effects. A synergene that redirects wealth from rich to poor somehow, inflating the middle class, would have some positive effects (Economy +1) as the many use their new wealth to purchase things. But by the

same token, there are negative effects (Economy -1) as the upper class reduces its investment in capital projects and growing companies.

Effect

Now that we know how much of a change the synergene wreaks, and how long the change stays in effect, we get to the question of what the effect is and here I have to throw up my hands and say, “I don't know.”

Really. The number of synergenes that a player might think up is huge, and with enough coffee and time I could fill a book this size just with synergenes and explanations of their long term impacts. But that would matter less for your game because I still wouldn't cover every synergene every player could conceive.

So it's up to the GM. In her judgment, would this idea encourage technological innovation, or stifle it? Would it help the economy? Hurt it? Make people more suspicious or more open? The metric impacted is her call.

That said, if it's a PC making the synergene, the player should certainly make a case for what he's trying to do and why he thinks it'll work that way. I can only encourage GMs to be generous with PCs in this matter, especially synergeneers who are hyperbrains. Give them the benefit of the doubt.

Besides, it's perfectly kosher for a GM to decide that after the synergene wears off, there's a crash. Pendulums are well known for swinging back, and economic policies that result in a boom of fast cash can have the opposite effect in the long term. Think of the mortgage bubble, right? Similarly, many policies that are intended to suppress violence—and which work for a while—often end up creating revolutionaries in the long term. Shooting the Kent State protesters broke up that protest efficiently, but did more to create widespread discontent than suppress it.

So, once again: The GM picks the metrics and whether the effect is positive or negative.

A Few Syntergene Examples

Just Say, “Nope”!

A fresh-faced Republican Iowan supergenius is concerned about the rising tide of heroin abuse and decides to do something about it. He’s got +5HD in Command and +2WD in Mind, so he’s qualified to construct a syntergene.

He starts with his time units. He’s going to use Command, obviously, so it’s 6 units (11 minus his 5HD).

Breadth? It’s unique to humans (-1), he supposes he can limit it to only the lower classes (-1), it really only needs to affect people whose personal beliefs include “heroin is desirable” (-1) and, to get it a little more manageable still, he decides to base it on the song “Cloud 9” by the Temptations (-1). Only people who’ve heard that song are susceptible. So, with a base Difficulty of 13, he’s trimmed it down to Difficulty 9.

On to Length. Suspecting that heroin junkies have short attention spans, he wants this to work fast, which would be a -5d penalty. But as that would wipe out his pool entirely, he clearly needs to settle on something less ambitious. How about “Average” with a -3d penalty? He decides his syntergene is going to ride a public service announcement radio spot, five minutes long. Once someone has heard that PSA ten times, the syntergene strikes.

Finally, there’s depth. He figures that a change of this magnitude is going to require an x4 result at least, preferably x5. But with the -3d penalty from its length—already way longer than he wishes—he’s going to have to come up with a couple more points of Width somehow. Luckily, he’s got a clear schedule. He’s not ready to dedicate six years of his life to combatting heroin. Or rather, if he is, he plans to use most of that time doing something more direct than refining the catchiness of his syntergene’s jingle. But six months maybe... yeah, he can spare that.

Because he’s operating on the scale of months, he gets -1 Difficulty, +1 Width and he buys off a -1d penalty. So the Difficulty is down to 8. Hell, he might as well trim off economic class limit, he’s got Hard Dice. The -3d penalty has been

shaved to -2d, leaving him an automatic 3x10 result. With the +1 Width bonus from taking his time, he can count on a 4x10 result from his PSA. Total addicts are going to drop two points, down to a manageable Favor, people who started out Favoring heroin are going to Dislike it. But people who didn’t have an opinion, or who already disliked it, are unchanged because it only targets those who think “Heroin is Desirable.”

Let’s Be Friends

A charming (hypercharming, in fact) young man called “Carlos the Grin” has +8d+2WD in Charm and +2d+5HD in Command, neither of which has kept him from being railroaded through the Turkish prison system and thrown into solitary confinement. (Troublesome, not being able to speak the language.)

Carlos has picked out one particularly brutish guard as being his best hope for survival, so he uses his time in the hole to work on a syntergene. Naturally, he’s going with Charm. His face is his fortune.

The Difficulty is going to be manageable, since it’s focussed on a single person. Carlos doesn’t know the guard’s first name, but he knows he’s a Turkish male human, 27-40 years old, prison guard... he’s down to Difficulty 7 without much effort and figures he can make some decent guesses about education and social class if it becomes an issue.

Length... oh, always the sticker. But the Grin has a fat pool, so maybe he can handle a -6d penalty to have his syntergene absorbed in sixty seconds.

Finally, there’s depth. He figures that as a new guy, the guard probably Dislikes him automatically but hasn’t had time to Hate him yet. So a Width 4 outcome to shift him 2 steps would be enough to take him up to Favor at least. If the guard’s Indifferent, getting bumped up to Love would be even better.

Carlos wants to get this thing done before he finishes his three days in the hole. Luckily his pool’s big enough that he can construct it in one and spent the other two rehearsing. (He’s going to release the syntergene through a sixty second

Imperfect Transmission

The best way to handle the transmission of damaged syntergenes is by giving bonuses to the Stability roll. If one page out of 200 is defaced or torn out, the syntergene still might work, but it’s easier to resist. Hearing a syntergenic song over a scratchy radio or on a busy street isn’t as hypnotic as hearing it performed live.

A +1d Stability bonus is fine for minor communication barriers. Severe distortions merit a +2d bonus.

pattern of drumming based on the guard's own observable biorhythms.)

Doing it that quick pushes things. Working on the scale of days gives him +2 Difficulty, -2 Width, and an additional -2d penalty. As is, that puts him at a Difficulty 9, rolling eight fewer dice, looking for Width 5. No way man. Something's got to give in that equation. Doing it in a week isn't feasible—by that time he'll be in the general population and, in all likelihood, distracted from his intellectual pursuits.

Back to the drawing board, he decides to add on factors of poor education, working lower class, and an assumed Turkish background to get his base Difficulty down to 4, or a modified 6.

Instead of working after sixty seconds, Carlos grits his teeth and resigns himself to an hour total of exposure. He further breaks that into ten six-minute doses, with the repetition helping drive the point home. That's only a base -4d penalty, cranked to -6d by the rush.

If he sticks with his Width 4 goal, he's going to be aiming at it with a -2 Width penalty and a 2d+2WD pool. Impossible. The best he can possibly do in this situation is get a Width 2 result and that only if both his two regular dice come up a match that's over 6. Not good odds. But probably better than his chances of surviving unmolested, or of getting an opportunity to drum rhythms around the guard for a total of five hours.

Suicide Solution

Let's hypothesize a worst case scenario. Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207) with her mighty +12HD syntergineering pool decides to take a page from William Burroughs and exterminate all rational thought. She's maxing out all the gauges. No limits means the base Difficulty is 13. Onset of seconds is -7d penalty. "Suicide is painless" requires x9 Width.

The only way she can do this is if she sets her time scale to decades. That gives her -6 Difficulty, buys off three dice of penalties, and reduces the needed Width by a whopping 5. Doing it that way the Difficulty is 7, she takes a -4d penalty and needs Width 4. Easily within her capacities, but doing it in a year puts it out

of reach. (If you're interested, the one-year plan gives her -3 Difficulty, +2 Width and buys off one die of penalty. That leaves the syntergene at Difficulty 10, a -6d penalty and needing Width 7. Just out of reach.)

Granted, it's only one decade, but ten years doing nothing but working on a single syntergene? She could probably provoke a global thermonuclear war with less effort in half the time.

The killer syntergene project is premised on someone with either massive intellect or unspeakable persuasiveness deciding there's nothing more fruitful she can do with her time than kill everyone inefficiently. So of all the things to fear in Progenitor, a fast syntergene that wipes out the human race shouldn't be too high on your list.

A Syntergene Bestiary

Some of the canon syntergenes from Progenitor are explained and dissected here.

The Python Joke

Monty Python's Flying Circus ran a sketch about a joke that was so funny, anyone who heard it died laughing. In the sketch, it was translated into German (in pieces, to protect the translators) and used in World War II.

When asked for an ideologically-sensitive weapon to use in Afghanistan, Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207) developed a thought-form expressed in Pashto, causing widespread suicidal thoughts. When British spies acquired it, they dubbed it "The Python Joke."

The Python Joke targets male human Afghans who speak Pashto and who are passionate about ridding their nation of foreigners. It deploys in one minute of rapidly-spoken Pashto. Infected listeners immediately long for their own deaths.

As a military maneuver, the Python Joke was a mixed success. In pitched battles, many of the Afghan fighters would shoot themselves, but often it had the effect of inspiring suicidal courage as the Pashtun attempted to kill himself charging a Soviet tank with a satchel charge.

The Stupid T-Shirt Marketing

Syntergene

Jason Weeks (p. 195) wanted money to outfit himself with a proper lab and to pay rent while he pursued his projects, so he asked his subconscious how to achieve the best “pay to time and effort” ratio with the least disturbances of culture or mass psychology. The answer was to create a cutesy T-shirt design (flowers and peace signs and upward pointing arrows in an ersatz Peter Max style) with an insipid slogan (“Peace UP!”) and develop a marketing syntergene for the damn thing.

The Stupid T-Shirt Marketing syntergene targets upper-middle-class American Christian women (human, of course) ages 18-26. It sets in after five one-minute exposures to an advertising jingle and shifts their opinion of the shirt two stages upward from Indifference to Love. People at Dislike or Favor only shift a point.

Jason knocked that syntergene off in a couple weeks, taking breaks only to win some seed money in poker games. Then he printed the shirts, ran the ads, and raked in his cash.



The Identity Wash

When Abe Sykes (p. 173) came to Vietnam in 1970 to do disaster relief, Nguyet Cam (p. 164) made it her business to capture him. Unwilling to leave his control to the vagaries of Command and Charm (which his Willpower let him resist) she tailored a syntergene to erase his memories. It took her a week, but once he'd been locked in a room with the droning words pounding into him, so loud he could hear them with his ears covered, so loud his lungs vibrated in time with them like drums... once he'd gone through that for 25 hours, Abe Sykes was a new man. Then Cam started in with Command and Charm.

'Member?

Jason Weeks throws together a little defensive syntergene soon after Cam refutes Inoculus. He deploys it through an odd facial contortion, a sudden posture shift and by speaking the word “Remember?” with its first syllable truncated. This syntergene cannot be performed by anyone else, since it leverages Weeks' appearance and mannerisms. It targets only those who are human, angry at Jason Weeks and in Jason Weeks' presence. Anyone affected immediately has his opinion of Weeks move one step up the opinion chart, or two steps if Indifferent.

Nightmare Reality

As Shavians become more and more common, Jason Weeks decides to beef up his syntergenic defenses. ‘Nightmare Reality’ takes the form of a rather garish fractal pattern in tan and ecru, which he often wears as a shirt or (when he wants to be presentable) worked into a tie. It takes effect instantly and targets any sentient entity who is angry at Jason Weeks and is in his presence. He must say the phrase ‘nightmare reality’ to trigger it, but anyone who fits the criteria immediately makes a Stability check.

The Gender Preference

Reassignment Program

In 1986, a company incorporates in Colorado, boasting the ability to reprogram “unwanted, sexually deviant urges” through a process

blending focussed prayer and linguistic-contextual analysis. The company (named the Crucible Corporation) says this because syntergenes freak people out.

That's all the program is, though. It's a syntergene that targets American humans who are homosexual, Christian and have read *Arise Above From Within*. (*Arise Above From Within* is not, itself, syntergenic, but its peculiar blend of science and spirituality moves a lot of units. It's available only in hardback and is cruelly overpriced for a 120 page book with a lot of white space, but you can find it in Christian book stores starting in 1985.) After five one-hour "classes," the target undergoes a fundamental orientation shift. He or she "stops being gay." But given the underlying biological elements that can influence sexual preference, it's not quite the clear, clean break that Crucible wants you to believe.

Some of their male clients become attracted to women and have a diminished appetite for male sex, but retain their old longings. Some lose their attraction to the same gender and have nothing replace it. Some find themselves with confused and complicated mixed feelings—simultaneous, equal and opposite attraction/repulsions to each gender.

On the other hand, in 1986 there's a huge market of guilty gay Christians who want to turn straight. Many are willing to settle for "straight with exemptions." Most who graduate from the program are simply too ashamed to complain about unwanted or imperfect results.

True and Abiding Faith

Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207) is a Christian. She likes the idea of holding all things in common, but the Marxist antagonism towards religion annoys her. So when she becomes the world's smartest woman and greatest syntergineer, she's faced with the choice of trying to take control of the USA (mostly Christian but with an economy she finds inimical to sharing) or the USSR (nominally a communal economy, but anti-Christian). After focussing her attention on the problem for a full thirteen minutes, she decided that making the Soviets into Christians looks easier than breaking American consumerism.

Bringing down the USSR from within is, of course, a big job. But Bich has a big brain, and after a week spent at home "with the flu" she produces the *True and Abiding Faith* syntergene. It's verbal and can be caught either by reading an engaging 40 page booklet or by listening to an hour-long recitation. It targets Russian-speaking humans who are upper class, educated, and are familiar with the works of Tolstoy. Once in effect, their opinions of Christianity as a guiding principle for life shifts upward three stages, or four stages if they were Indifferent.

Bich handles this very carefully, but uses it to efficiently assemble a cadre of secret Christians at the top levels of the Kremlin.

Dedication to Progressive Tranquility

Nguyet Cam (p. 164) has big plans for Vietnam, and they require a public loyal to a novel political structure with some counter-intuitive elements. This philosophy—"Progressive Harmony"—is a hard sell, but Nguyet's a hard woman. Her syntergene of ideological loyalty helps the program go down a whole lot smoother.

The syntergene targets Vietnamese-speaking humans who have experienced violence and are familiar with Vietnamese culture. It takes the form of an hourlong speech (delivered stirringly by her puppet-head, Bao Verong, described on page 355) and shifts people's opinion towards the Progressive Harmony government upward by a stage, or two stages from Indifference.

The Fairy Glyph

Nguyet Cam (p. 164) was amused by the Crucible Corporation's tinkering with sexual mores and decided (after foreseeing the course the AIDS plague was likely to take in the USA) to do some syntergenic social restructuring of her own. The result is a complicated spiral pattern, black and white and just within the ability of a newspaper to faithfully reproduce. A full-page newspaper ad with the spiral is sufficient to convey the effect. It takes only a single round to sink in.

It targets heterosexual-identified American human males and shifts their opinions about homosexual acts two steps upward, or three steps

from Indifferent. Given the fluid nature of human eroticism and the wide intermediate zone between ‘totally exclusively hetero’ and ‘totally exclusively homo,’ the main effect of the Fairy Glyph (as it comes to be known by a few gay-bashing superhumans who have the Willpower to resist it) is to drastically increase the American population of bisexual men.

The effect of a sudden legion of inexperienced men experimenting with gay sex blasts the AIDS epidemic wide open. While it creates an epidemiological spike, it also results in a far more aggressive policy of education and treatment, reducing the long term effects of the plague. Finally, it makes people stone-cold paranoid about syntergenes.

The net metric effect of the syntergene is nothing. On one hand, the widespread use of a syntergene to alter firmly held beliefs is terrifying and yields +1 Suspicion. But on the other hand, the syntergene’s effect targets a sore spot of American intolerance and rather forcibly soothes it, creating -1 Suspicion. But despite leaving the metrics unchanged, the syntergene definitely plays in to anti-brainwashing paranoia and hysteria.

Gadgeteers and the Metrics

It is possible to have the “unique gadget” character who makes one (1) prototype of his flying armored suit or space warp machine or whatever, but Progenitor tends to shy away from that trope. If you want someone whose device is actually just a psychological crutch for his inherent dark energy powers, that’s fine—people confabulate elaborate structures to allow them to handle their powers, like Deionne Bright’s devil (p. 192) or Lydia Aguilar’s paintings (p. 256). It looks like a gadget and acts like a gadget, but it’s really just a mask for innate abilities and it could just as well be made of sticky tape and bottle caps.

Of far greater concern for Progenitor and its change metrics are those many cases where it’s the invention, not the inventor, that’s doing things. Something like one of Rudy Phelps’ Killbot seeds (p. 283) could be neutralized by the right power because it’s not really a machine.

But an advanced AI like Echo (p. 335) isn’t run on dark energy. She’s completely ‘normal,’ for want of a better word.

These gadgeteers are the ones who can influence the global metrics (particularly Technology and Economics) directly by creating something new. The invention must have the Manufacturable Extra to change a metric, and the inventor must make the Base Will investment to explain to mundane people how to build it.

After that, it depends on what it does.

It Hurts People: Anything that has the Attacks Quality is going to primarily work on the Warfare metric, because even if its peaceful uses are far more practical, armies are going to see destructive potential, slap a “Top Secret” label on it redact the operating manual with a thick black magic marker.

Mass-produced personal weapons, like laser pistols, take a little while to build up their influence. A year after they hit the market, they give a +1 boost to Warfare, and that boost stays in effect for three years until people in conflict zones get as used to laser zaps as they were to gunfire.

Large and unusual weapons like KE spears or syntergenic warfare (p. 312) don’t change any metric until they’re used. After the first deployment, they cause a +2 to Warfare and +1 to Suspicion, but these effects only last a single year.

It Helps People: Things like medicines, new educational techniques, or improved communication technologies usually act on the Economy gauge because, as people get healthier or more productive or better educated, their work reflects the improvement. If it’s something that applies to a narrow segment of industry, it might give a +1 Economy bump for a year. If it helps only the developed world (or the Third World), that +1 Economy raise might last two or three years. If it’s something that potentially helps everyone, everywhere (radically cheap medicine, cell phones, an entirely revolutionary set of market efficiencies) it puts a +1 on Economy for up to five years and maybe gives a -1 to Suspicion for a year or two.



It Does Something Else: The grab-all for new technologies is, unsurprisingly, the Technology gauge. If it doesn't obviously hurt you (like a shiny new gun) or help you (like an STD panacea that tastes of caramel nougat), it increases Tech. Things like new materials (ferrofluids, aerogels and carbon nanofibers) or new vehicles tend to show their influence on the Tech gauge. Most commonly they add a +1 Technology bonus for a year. Something has to be really revolutionary to give the bonus for three years or more (like the space elevator, if it was open to everyone). Big game changing devices like that tend to send echoes through other metrics as well.

A Catalogue of Creations

What follows is a list of devices created by dark-energy infused geniuses in Progenitor. Discussion of what it is, what it does, and its Wild Talents stats are included. They're arranged in order by year of introduction.

Water Purification Conduit aka SuperHealthScreen!™ (1968)

Jason Weeks comes up with this after perceiving just how much of a problem unsanitary water is. The SuperHealthScreen!™ is a stout plastic pipe about five feet tall and six inches wide, with threaded ends to easily connect it to pumps and the like. If cracked open, there are mildly radioactive isotopes inside (made from nuclear waste, actually, and used to kill germs and microorganisms), so make sure to return it for the refund when it wears out. (If the isotopes escape, they're not really dangerous, and they wear out after about 15 years. Far less likely to kill someone than a depleted uranium slug in the soil. Or a landmine.) (No, they can't be easily weaponized. It would be much less effort and more deadly to just make ricin.) It filters out just about everything except radioactivity (and the water that comes out would have to be left in the pipe for over a month to pick up enough rads to make a drinker sick).

Useful (purifies water) (+2), Booster (+3), Delayed Effect, (-2), Native Power (+1), Depleted (-1), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Immutable (-1)

Each SuperHealthScreen!™ can purify about 12,000 gallons of water before it needs to be replaced. It has 2HD in its "Purify Water" pool. It takes Jason Weeks two months and 2 Base Will to produce. For the first year after its release, SuperHealthScreen!™ technology has no effect on the global metrics. The year after that, it produces a -1 reduction in Suspicion for five years.

Inoculus (1969)

While this is technically a syntergene (see page 304), it's built with the rules for gadgets. Creating it costs Jason Weeks four months and four points of Base Will. But anyone who reads it gets to roll 8d for his next Stability check.

Hyperskill (+1), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Immutable (-1)

Fog in the Swamps of Free Will (1969)

Again, it's a syntergene built on gadgeteering rules. Instead of helping resist mental domination, it helps remedy the situation after the fact. If someone reads it while under some kind of persuasive influence—a syntergene, Hypercharm, quaint old fashioned Manchurian Candidate brainwashing—the book rolls an 8d pool and, with any set, suppresses the memory of the persuasion. It doesn't directly confront the person's newfound passion for Progressive Harmony, or goofy T-shirts, or murder. It simply makes him forget he has it. He remembers all the events of his life, and probably understands the event that set him on a new path of behavior, but the arguments that seemed so compelling aren't refuted. They're just painted over.

Useful (+2), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Immutable (-1), Delayed Effect (-2)

Nguyet Cam's Original Dark Energy Monitor (1970)

Not long after she gets infected with dark energy, Nguyet Cam very reasonably wants to understand exactly what it is that has happened to her, and how. Being a scientific genius, she scavenges as much electronic equipment as she can, repurposes a lot of radios, copper wire and a lucky-find oscilloscope, and eventually builds

her first dark energy monitor. It permits her to detect and track the flows of this mysterious force through herself, others, and the landscape. It should be noted that its output consists of a list of letters and numbers running through an electric typewriter, along with a green sine wave on the oscilloscope monitor. To get a full picture of what's going on, one needs to see the wave while reading the tape, though the print without the wave still provides clues about the intensity and direction of local energy discharges.

Useful (Detect dark energy) (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Operator Skill (Knowledge: Physics) (+0), Bulky (-1), Delicate (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Range Boost (+1)

Useful (Interpret dark energy flows and direction) (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Operator Skill (Knowledge: Physics) (+0), Bulky (-1), Delicate (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Range Boost (+1)

When using the device, the reader either uses its 8d pool or his own Mind+Knowledge: Physics pool, whichever is lower. It takes Ngyuet Cam eight months and eight points of Base Will to create this device. It has a range of about 13 km (or 8 miles).

Commercial DETector (1973)

Vietnamese scouts and agents are using hand-held dark energy detectors as early as 1973. They go on the civilian market in 1976, though they're terribly expensive. As the years go by, they get cheaper and smaller until, by 1999, they're the size of your thumb and cost about \$20 each, or \$9.72 for "mousetrap" DETectors that send off a single electrical pulse the first time they detect dark energy.

For that is what the DETector does: It detects dark energy. Unlike Ngyuet Cam's monitor, it doesn't measure strength, direction, concentration or any of the exotic frequencies that require her massive intellect to understand. Initially, it's just a hand-held device, roughly the size and shape of a flashlight (runs on two D batteries) that lights up or makes a noise when a DEntity (like a Shavian or a Turf Warrior) or someone hosting dark energy comes within twenty yards.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1)

It rolls 2HD to detect the energy. By the late 1980s, wristwatch-sized DETectors don't even need batteries, they power up off residual DE radiation.

While a DETector may seem to make certain steal powers obsolete—and it indisputably makes life trickier for those who rely on them, like Tyler Ford or Joe Smith—they aren't a silver bullet.

The hand-held versions register out to twenty yards and don't tell how many sources are within the area. You get enough of them and you can triangulate within five or six feet, but in the time it takes you to set that up, your invisible opponent may already be upon you. Moreover, as dark energy spreads, an invisible man who'd have been unique in 1977 may be able to enter a building undetected because there's another dark energy user (even just a Mark) inside. Suddenly, the lone-wolf stealth master needs to recruit other dark energy users as protective coloration...

Optical Computing Chip (1973)

The first fiberoptic computer chip is developed in 1973, but they don't really become practical until they incorporate ZRI glass technology in 1975. By 1976, Apollo Computers is founded at Cal-Tech and optical chips begin rolling off assembly lines.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Delicate (-1)

The team behind the chip invests 9 months and 9 Base Will to create it. It has 3HD in its "Computing" pool, if that's necessary.

ZRI Glass (1974)

Invented in 1974 by a Utah housewife named Norma Mae Lewis, glass with zero refractive index rapidly becomes phenomenally successful for use in windshields and lens coatings.

Ultimately, its use in loss-free fiberoptic cable is much more important.

To be clear (no pun intended), the "refractive index" of a transparent substance determines

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Air Stations

In the early 1970s, engineers in the US develop and execute plans for "Air Stations"—permanently flying docking stations for aircraft. They're lighter-than-air structures, acres or even miles across. Military Air Stations serve like aircraft carriers, only floating. Heavily armed, the major drawback of early military Air Stations is that they can only land a few planes at a time. Planes are launched from them straight down, so of course there's no real way to handle a commercial aircraft.

While the military stations get used in warfare, the real utility of Air Stations is space exploration and exploitation. Lighter-than-air NASA craft rise to a first-stage Air Station carrying personnel and material, then transfer to a second stage craft that could never land on the ground, but which can make the shuttle run between a low-flying Air Station and one close to the troposphere. From that high-altitude Air Station, there's a transfer to a third sort of craft, which can take astronauts into orbit or beyond.

No stats are provided for Air Stations. Most groups can use them as scenery. If there's going to be a thrill-packed meta-battle on, in or around one, individual GMs should construct them to challenge and play to the individual abilities of their PCs.

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how much light gets distorted while passing through. With no refractive index, ZRI glass is completely invisible. It does not distort light any more than air. (This can make it hard to handle, but typically it comes with edge markers to keep people from bumping and smudging it. It has no glare or distortion, but it still gets dirty.)

Using a ZRI glass coating over a normal glass or plastic lens (or windshield) goes a long way towards keeping it from picking up scratches or blemishes. The ZRI glass gets dinged up, of course, but the flaws are as invisible as the unflawed glass—or, they are as long as they stay clean.

Useful (+2), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2),
Permanent (+4), Adaptation (-2), Immutable (-1),
Always On (-1)

ZRI glass takes six months and 6 Base Will to develop. It has 2HD in invisibility. When introduced, it provides a +1 global Economy raise for one year, then nothing, then +1 global Technology for two years when optic computers catch up to it.

The Anti-Shavian Gun (1974)

Chris Marshall's troops (p. 171) are clearly a huge problem for the Viet Cong, and when he got a chance, the Progress Cadre's chief designer Dinh Quang Phung (p. 356) set about doing something about it. When the Shaw Monsters (p. 205) started turning up and provoking hysteria, the Vietnamese knew they had a marketable product.

The Anti-Shavian Gun (marketed in the west as the "DEntity DEfender™") is roughly the size of a pistol-grip shotgun, though not as heavy and terminating with a peculiar yellowish lens instead of a hole. When turned on, it emits a low hum and gradually gets warmer until a red light on the back indicates its ready to fire. (It has a Slow 1 fire rate.) Then you point it in the general direction of a Shaw Monster, Turf Warrior or other entity animated entirely by dark energy, and you pull the trigger. It does WSK damage to every hit location, but has no effect on ordinary living creatures at all. If fired at a metahuman, it produces a mildly irritating tingle

in the extremities and a brief warm sensation, but no real harm. By 1978, it's discovered that aluminum blocks the beam, even if it's just a thin layer of foil.

First prototyped in 1974, it's available for sale in the west in 1977 and gets copied by American companies in 1979. It takes Phung 18 months and 18 points of Base Will to build.

Attacks (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Depleted (-1), If/Then (Only DEntities) (-1), Non-Physical (+2), Slow (-2), Engulf (+2)

Remarkably, the weapon's invisible non-linear info-energy projection does not really respond to the holder's aim or lack thereof. You just point it in the general direction and pull the trigger. It rolls 6d in the hands of a child or a Marine sniper. It comes equipped with six "charge cartridges," each of which is good for six shots. The Vietnamese military charges can be reloaded by baking for an hour in a 450 degree oven. The ones they sell to civilians simply go dud once emptied, forcing you to buy new ones. If you survive being attacked by DEntities and still need more ammo, that is.

Superdiode (1974)

The typical laser is an inefficient converter of electricity to light. Only 15% of the power gets converted, and the rest just leaks out as waste heat. But in 1974, an invention goes into development that eventually changes all that: The superdiode.

Using a superdiode, conversion rates around 70% are typical, and can get near 80% in optimum conditions. What does this mean? Cheaper light bulbs, initially, but in the long run it means lasers the size of an ice-cream cone that can fry someone's ear off without melting your hand. It also means optical computer chips that don't cook the keyboard.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1)

The superdiode is well-represented by 2HD in converting electricity to light, and you can

hand-wave the exact effects of this unless your players are electrical engineers. (If they are, I recommend explaining to them what the superdiode is and then just basing the entire campaign around the no-doubt civilization-wrecking devices they produce from it.) It takes Nalinashka Singh (p. 372) eight months and eight Base Will points, and boy is he pissed off when one of his investors rips him off and leaves him the scraps. He gets even though.

Mk. 1 Laser Munitions System (1975)

First seeing use in 1975, the Soviet Laser Munitions System (nicknamed the “evil eye” by American troops) was not a Buck Rogers style ray pistol. Rather, it’s mounted on the side of a sturdy helmet with a flip-down reticle lens. When the crosshairs are down, the safety’s off. A cord leads from the helmet to a switch designed to be stuck to the back of a glove or on a wrist cuff when not in use. (The cord is bound to the outside of the arm by a series of button-down flaps.) To shoot, you flip down the aiming lens, look straight ahead at whatever you want to zap, and push the button. To spray, wiggle your head—“No no no!”

Attacks (+2), Natural Power (+1), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Depleted (-1), Spray 1 (+1), Go First (+1), Locational (Head, right arm) (-2), Booster (Range) (+1), Subtle (+1)

Anyone who attacks with this weapon rolls 5d. It’s easy to use, but the mounting on the helmet and the interior construction of the laser unit aren’t great. Unless the helmet is treated with great gentleness, the beam gets jarred off true from the reticle. Even a poor shot can get pretty close, but an excellent marksman is finds the beam isn’t exactly where he’s aiming. It does WSK. Someone who jiggles or shakes his head and holds the button down gets 6d and can keep every set. Furthermore, whether one shoots singly or sprays, the hit is timed as if it had an extra point of Width.

It is a battery-vampire though. The power cells are stable enough that they won’t blow up or leak acid even if shot, and they’re only about the size of a laundry marker. They’re heavier than lead,

though, and that’s irritating when it’s weighing down a helmet on the back of your neck. Each cell is good for 25 shots. Using the weapon to spray uses two shots. It takes its designer five months and 5 Base Will to create.

Power Station Tu Do (1976)

Tu Do is widely considered the first black eye for Progressive Harmony policies (see page 343). A power plant constructed in Vietnam in 1976 and touted as being able to free the country from energy imports, Tu Do is expensive, plagued by delays and, despite the oversight of the “Great Designer” Dinh Quang Phung (see page 356), in the end the “third world nuclear reactor” winds up producing only a trickle of net energy gain.

The station is based on the Farnsworth Fusor, a nuclear fission generator created in the 1960s by the same man who invented TV, Philo T. Farnsworth. But where Farnsworth’s original design needed more energy to run than it produced, and required deuterium, the Tu Do runs solely on hydrogen and, once it’s up and running and optimized, it produces modest energy gains (along with massive quantities of helium-3, a non-radioactive helium isotope).

Undoubtedly, creating electricity from ordinary hydrogen is a laudable goal, but for the infrastructure costs of building the first Tu Do generator, Vietnam could have completely paid for its nationwide electricity needs for a year. All Bao Verong (p. 355) has to show for the colossal effort is a miniscule impact on the nation’s energy demands and a growing stockpile of helium-3.

While Tu Do is being constructed, Vietnam also quietly builds several coastal plants to produce its needed hydrogen. A year after Tu Do opens, foreigners start seeing strange, silent cars driving around Hanoi and Saigon. Lacking tailpipes and bearing government license plates, one is eventually stolen and examined. That’s how nations outside the Harmony learn about the Xem Trat Tu engine, described below.

Useful (Generates Energy) (+2), Duration (+2), Native Power (+1), Booster (+2), Focus (-1), Bulky (-1), Crew (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Adaptation (-2)

Useful (Creates Helium-3) (+2), Duration (+2), Native Power (+1), Booster (+2), Focus (-1), Bulky (-1), Crew (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Adaptation (-2)

Tu Do has 10d in its pool to generate energy and produce helium-3 (it makes about 1,280 tons of it a day, assuming an adequate supply of hydrogen). Designing it takes Phung ten months and 10 points of Base Will. It does not, by itself, effect metrics.

Small Fusion Generator *Xem Trat Tu (1976)*

The Xem Trat Tu is the size of a car engine. It is roughly as powerful as a car engine. The government of Vietnam uses them primarily as car engines, at least in 1976 when they first roll out of the factory. But there are some important differences between an internal combustion engine and a Xem Trat Tu, not the least being that its fission reaction exudes no harmful pollutants. Running on helium-3 (which a Tu Do refinery, above, produces to the tune of 1,280 tons a day) and deuterium (which is produced in quantity by the same coastal plants that generate Tu Do's hydrogen) they require no hydrocarbons.

Engineers outside of Vietnam understand what Xem Trat Tu is during the middle of the OPEC oil crisis. Building copies is hard, but Ford and GM manage it. What they can't manage is the helium-3. On Earth, it's a very rare isotope—or at least, it is before 1976 (and after that time, remains so outside of Vietnam).

Hyperstat (+4), Endless (+3), Focus (-1), Bulky (-1), Environment Bound (requires helium-3 and deuterium) (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Unwieldy (-1)

The engine generates power equal to Body 6. It takes Phung 15 months and costs him 15 Base Will to build it. The first year it's introduced, it gives Vietnam a +1 boost to Economy. The next four years, it provides +1 boosts to Vietnam's Economy and Technology metrics.

Geogenerator (1976)

Designed by Jason Weeks (p. 195) over the course of most of 1976, the "Geogenerator" is, first and foremost, an adaptive mechanism designed to monitor, adapt to, and provide feedback to unstable geothermal sites (primarily volcanoes), thereby preventing violent eruptions while releasing a steady stream of electricity.

Useful (Relieve volcanic pressure) (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Bulky (-1), Crew (-1), Environment Bound (-1), Operational Skill (+0), Obvious (-1), Booster (+3), Touch Only (-2)

Useful (Generates electricity) (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Bulky (-1), Crew (-1), Environment Bound (-1), Operational Skill (+0), Obvious (-1), Booster (+4), Touch Only (-2), Go Last (-1)

Once established on the Murara volcano attached to Mount Nyiragongo, the Geogenerator produces about 42 gigawatt hours per year—roughly enough to power 4,200 American homes in the suburbs.

Ferrofluid (1976)

In the real world, ferrofluids were initially developed in the 1960s, but didn't see widespread practical use until the 21st century. In Progenitor, earlier breakthroughs produce dramatic ferrofluid demonstrations in 1976.

But what is a ferrofluid? It's a liquid with particles suspended in it. The particles are susceptible to magnetic influence and are small enough that they don't settle out. Thus, by applying a magnetic field to the fluid, one can move it, change its density or put it into new shapes.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), If/Then (Require magnetism) (-1)

If you really need dice mechanics for ferrofluids, they have 1d+1WD. They're good for creating low-friction shaft seals, quiet solenoids, high-sensitivity switches, smaller electrical transformers, and speakers with greater fidelity at high volumes. They may also work for making planes look smaller on radar.

Soviet Space Mirror (1977)

In real history, 1993 saw the first use of a Soviet space mirror, the Znamaya-2. A 66-foot diameter foil reflector in orbit bounced sunlight down onto Europe during the night, illuminating a 2.5 mile wide stripe for six minutes. It was about as bright as the moon. The Znamaya-2.5 was supposed to be five to ten times brighter, but its hyperthin reflective fabric got snagged on an antenna while deploying from Mir and was ruined.

In Progenitor, the Soviets' mirror is up in 1977 and it's bigger, stronger and lasts longer.

Its position allows it to place a circle three miles across anywhere within a 200 mile radius of Moscow, roughly from the hours of sunset to midnight. The projected light is about five times as bright as a full moon.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Immutable (-1), Bulky (-2), Delicate (-1), Environment-Bound (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Slow (-1), Go Last (-1), If/Then (Only after spending loads of cash) (-1), Obvious (-1), Delayed Effect (-2), Limited Width (-1), Range Boost (+2), Radius (+6)

When needed, it rolls a 6d pool. Usually, the mirror sweeps around its range throughout the night, raising temperatures a fraction of a degree and giving crops an extra half-hour of light. But even weak light and mild heat can have an effect on a cloud system miles across, so the device allows for very slight weather modification. It has military uses as well, though they're indirect: Chasing fugitives at night is a lot easier when there are no shadows to hide them.

Carbon Nanofibers (1977)

In the real world, carbon nanotubes were discovered by Sumio Iijima in 1991. Lightweight, flexible like plastic, and a hundred times stronger than steel, as of 2007 it was really impressive that a hardworking lab had managed to manufacture a string of it four centimeters long. It is not, to say the least, cheap.

But in Progenitor, it's conceptualized by Dinh Quang Phung (p. 356) in 1977 and goes into limited production in 1979. It never gets as cheap as tinfoil, or even as cheap as titanium, but

if you want a really, really nice cell phone that can stop a bullet, Pushcore has one available by 1982. Just watch out that it doesn't get mixed in with your business papers and accidentally thrown away. Yes, that's a risk: A cell phone with a carbon nanofiber body and ZRI optical circuits (see page 321) is about the size and weight of four playing cards stacked together.

Defends (+2), Native Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Interferes (+3), Armored Defense (-2), Always On (-1), Focus (-1), Accessible (-1), Adaptation (-1), Immutable (-1), Manufacturable (+2)

A millimeter thick shirt made of carbon nanofiber has 2HD of Heavy Armor to protect against things ripping or tearing it. It's so flexible, however, that if you get shot while wearing one it's likely to just deform into your body. But if you composite it with more traditional materials, you can get some impressive protection.

It takes Phung eight months and 8 Base Will to create carbon nanofibers. The year after they hit the market, they produce a +1 Technology bonus that lasts two years. After that, the tech bonus dies out, but they produce a +1 Economy bonus for another three years.

Nuryarya, the New Rational Language (1977)

Jason Weeks (p. 195), Nguyet Cam (p. 164) and Bich Thi Nguyen (p. 207) don't agree on much, but they do agree that reasoned thought is the cornerstone of a better future. Their ideas of "a better future" are radically different, but they all want to get there with logic. So they pool their resources to craft a new language from the ground up, one that emphasizes logic, clarity, consistency and efficiency while retaining elements of deep symbolism, multi-layered meaning, nuance and tools for coping with ambiguity.

New Rational Language, or "Nuryarya" uses an alphabet based on the Korean Hangul script and, like Esperanto, has single consistent pronunciations for every vowel and consonant sounds. (Unlike, for example, the English "C" in "cake" and "cease.") (Using Hangul does mean that Weeks had to sacrifice the separate Western

“r” and “l” sounds, which often cause confusion to ears raised on Japanese, Korean or Cantonese languages.)

While its pronunciation and grammar are extremely simple, there is a tonal element that gives secondary meaning to the words. Nuryarya, when spoken, takes advantage of rhythm, emphasis and inflection to add a dimension that exists above, alongside, or through the inflexible and unambiguous clarity of the vowels and consonants.

When internalized, Nuryarya provides a clearer and stronger platform for reason, recollection, deduction and induction. It is an intelligently designed cognitive tool, as opposed to other languages that are, by and large, spontaneously evolved and influenced by the histories of their speakers.

What does this mean for students of Nuryarya? It depends on how great their command of the language is. The three geniuses tried to make it as simple as they could, but it's still a radical reconfiguration of most people's thought-styles. (Mathematicians seem to have the easiest time of it.)

It can be studied and learned like any other language Skill, and basic Nuryarya gives a +1d bonus to a single Mind-based roll after the Mind+Language: Nuryarya roll sets it up with a success. It can only be attempted once per scene.

Useful (Enhanced thinking) (+2), Augments (+4), Native Power (+1), Go Last (-1), Exhausted (-3), Focus (-1), Adaptation (-2), Immutable (-1), Indestructible (+2), Manufacturable (+2), Operator Skill (+0)

Once someone becomes fluent at Nuryarya (which happens only after they learn have 3d in their Language: Nuryarya Skill pool and then receive additional coaching from someone else who's fluent, and then spend a point of Base Will) it no longer needs to be rolled to activate. It simply adds a +1d bonus to any and all Mind based rolls. Moreover, the speaker can communicate even very complicated ideas or plans clearly and concisely to others who have any Skill rating in Language: Nuryarya.

Useful (Enhanced thinking) (+2), Augments (+4), Native Power (+1), Permanent (+4), If/Then (Must have some Skill in Language: Nuryarya) (-1), Base Will Cost (-4), Focus (-1), Adaptation (-2), Immutable (-1), Indestructible (+2), Manufacturable (+2)

Basic Nuryarya takes Bich thi Nguyen and Jason Weeks two months and a point of Base Will each to create. Working from their foundation, Nguyet Cam refines and completes full Nuryarya after three months and 3 Base Will.

The year after Nuryarya is introduced, Vietnam gets a +1 national Technology bonus. For five years after that, the language creates a global +1 Technology bonus.

Advanced Organic Plastics, aka Superlast™ (1978)

The opposite end of the material-fabrication spectrum from carbon nanofibers (see page 325) is Superlast™, (marketed in Europe and Africa as “SuPlast™”). It's introduced in 1978 because its creator, Clovis Knightley, says she feels there simply is no future in petro-plastics—those resources were limited and in far greater demand as fuel. She set out to derive something with most of the qualities of plastic, but which could be made inexpensively from organic material such as grass or feathers or bamboo. What she eventually finds ideal is the fast-growing kudzu plant.

Though Superlast™ is inevitably opaque, it feels like plastic, can be worked like plastic, and by 1981 is about 1¢ cheaper per pound to make than plastic. In theory it lasts for eighty years before harmlessly degrading, unless treated with a chemical fixative that roughly doubles the price, but which (Knightley says) “ought to keep it around at least a thousand years.”

By 1991, Superlast™ is found in everything from toys and brasseries to fighter planes and high-precision scientific equipment.

Defends (+2), Permanent (+4), Armored Defense (-2), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Immutable (-1), Durable (-1)

An inch-thick shield of high-density Superlast™ provides LAR 2 (it was made with 2HD). It takes Clovis six months and 6 Base Will to bring out of the lab. Surprisingly, it has no effect whatsoever on global metrics until ten years after it hits the market, at which point it provides +1 Economy for two years.

Mk. 2 Laser Munitions System (1978)

Soviet soldiers complained and the engineers listened and incorporated their feedback. The result is a lighter, stronger and more accurate laser weapon.

The helmet and sight are unchanged, but the laser emission array is affixed more firmly to eliminate “wobble.” Instead of an arm-mounted button, the firing switch is placed on the center of the chest so that it can be triggered with the left hand if the right is injured.

The biggest changes are to firing rate and power supply. The new cell is bigger, lighter and carries a much greater charge. The firing mechanism is limited to a single brief string of pulses, so to get multiple shots one has to hammer the trigger. While many soldiers dislike the loss of spray capacity, more are happy with a lighter, more accurate weapon that has (for all practical purposes) unlimited ammunition.

Attacks (+2), Natural Power (+1), Focus (-1),
Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1),
Immutable (-1), Go First (+1), Locational (Head, chest) (-2),
Booster (Range) (+1), Subtle (+1)

When using the Mk. 2 “Evil Eye,” the soldier rolls 1d+1WD and his set is timed as if it’s one wider. It still does WSK. Each battery contains thousands of shots, so just hand-wave away reloading and assume it happens during downtime.

Biochip (1978)

1978 sees the advent of the fully biological computer chip, developed by Microbos Incorporated. It functions much like optical and silicon chips, except it’s cheaper to produce and not quite as fast or reliable.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1)

It has 2HD in its “Compute” pool, if needed.

Tidal Neutralizing Generator Array (1979)

In the real world of 2008, physicists built an array of pillars and channels that very effectively

redirect waves of water around a central chamber. In Progenitor, this idea is conceived in 1979, a working prototype is constructed in 1981 and thousands of tidal generator arrays are in place by 1999.

Invented by Niles Barstowe, the array has two components. The first is the pillars and channels that use the natural hydrodynamic and viscous qualities of water to redirect wave energy around the central chamber. The water’s movement is used to drive turbines and generate electricity.

Though built in various sizes, the most common and efficient factory build is about 240m across and has a protected, stable core 80m across in the center. The arrays are columnar, with their height depending on the depth of the water in which they’re deployed. Usually they’re half submerged, giving them more than enough height to deal with the biggest waves. (A wave that’s higher than the column gets undermined as its front slope hits the array and gets shunted around and aside. This causes a V-shaped dip in the wave crest, centered on the array. But truly huge waves still can go over the top, which is why the arrays are usually lidded.)

An array with 40m submerged and 40m above generates about as much electricity as a 600 horsepower engine. Not a ton, but not bad for something that never needs fuel and has material costs roughly equal to putting up a radio tower and a highway overpass.

Useful (Neutralizes Tides), (+2) Radius (+6), Permanent (+4), Always On (-1), Touch Only (-2), Full Power Only (-1), Obvious (-1) Focus (-1), Adaptation (-2), Manufacturable (+2), Environment-Bound (-1), Bulky (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Immutable (-1), Crew (-1)

Useful (Generates Electricity) (+2), Endless (+3), Booster (+4), Obvious (-1) Focus (-1), Adaptation (-2), Manufacturable (+2), Environment-Bound (-1), Bulky (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Attached (Neutralizing Tides) (-2), Crew (-1), Operator Skill (+0)

This device has 2HD in its effects. It takes four months and 4 Base Will for Barstowe to develop. For three years after its creation, it gives a +1 boost to the Economy metric.

The Space Elevator (1979)

People have been talking about building space elevators (or, if you prefer the tepid name, a “tethered satellite”) since the late 1800s. In *Progenitor*, it’s designed in 1979 and completed by 1982 on Halmahera Island. It is the brain child of Ngyuet Cam, (p. 164) whose access to celestial real estate soon causes tremendous alarm throughout the rest of the world. Rightfully so: Orbital kinetic energy weapons are some of the earliest projects the space elevator (official name: Thien The Thang Máy) puts in place.

The satellite at the end of the ribbon is 600 tons and 62,000 miles from Halmahera. The lifting car from earth to sky travels about 100 mph and can lift five tons. It takes almost a month to get to the very top at that speed, but trips to the last stop are rare at first. More common are trips 300-400 miles up to put objects in asynchronous orbit, or up to the geosynchronous strip at about 22,200 miles (a nine-day trip each way). That’s where Vietnam starts a space station called Tham Vong in early 1983 (though it’s not completed until 1992).

After a certain point (15,500 miles up) mass no longer has to be lifted along the ribbon. If

you can get it that high, centrifugal force pulls it to the end and, if it isn’t braked and stopped, it catapults into space like a ball from a jai-alai stick. By 1995, there’s more than one elevator running up and down Thien The Thang Máy. The base elevator shuttles from the ground to either the asynchronous orbit level (a six-hour round trip) or it takes the 222 hour trip to Tham Vong and unloads tons of material. Two smaller elevators at Tham Vong go either up or down, carrying material on to the top of Thien The Thang Máy or down to asynchronous height.

Useful (+2), Range Booster (+5), Mass Capacity (+2), Mass Booster (+2), Native Power (+1), If/Then (Requires lots of carbon nanofiber to build) (-1), Delayed Effect (-2), Obvious (-1), Slow (-2), Full Power Only (-1), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Bulky (-1), Crew (-1), Environment Bound (Must be tethered at equator) (-1), Immutable (-1), Unwieldy (-1)

Thien The Thang Máy has 10d for lifting things up to 62,000 miles away from the Earth’s surface. It takes Ngyuet 5 Base Will and five months to design the thing. If the global free market is given access to Thien The Thang Máy, for two years it produces a +1 global Technology bonus, and then a +1 global Economy boost



for three years. If she keeps it for the sole use of Progressive Harmony nations, they get +1 bonuses to War and Technology for two years, and then +1 bonuses to Technology and Economy for three years. But they produce a global +1 bonus on Suspicion if kept for Vietnam alone.

Personal Ground Effect Vehicle (1980)

Ground Effect Vehicles (or GEVs) are the missing link between airplanes and hovercraft. They can't fly higher than their wingspan (and get the most efficient lift at half their wingspan or lower) because they rely on aerodynamic effects arising from close proximity to the ground.

While GEVs saw limited use even before the Second World War, it's the science of Progenitor's hyperbrains that lift them from obscurity in the 1970s.

Mass-produced personal GEVs hit the market in 1980 and, while they're initially an affectation for the wealthy, their versatility and ability to cross water steadily increases their market share. The first GEVs seat four, or six with no cargo, but eventually sport versions come along (smaller and faster) as do utility GEVs (with more cargo space). Naturally, after 1983's atrocities, the ability to go off-road is more valued than ever.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Operator Skill (+0)

Hyperbody (+4), Attached (-2), Speed Booster (+1)

An individual GEV has Body 9, letting it carry over six tons and, with its boosted velocity, reach speeds up to 100 mph. As for its Useful trait (which is low-altitude flight), one either rolls the vehicle's 7d flight pool or one's Piloting Skill, whichever is lower.

Advanced Kelp/Fish Oceoculture Installation (1982)

As soon as he saw a tidal neutralizing generator (see page 327), Aban Lango knew just what he wanted to put in the middle: An efficient ocean farm growing nutritious kelps, algae, and a mixture of fish. In 1982 he built the first AKFOI and by 1999 a good two-thirds of the generators

are protecting them. (The rest mostly contain computer servers.)

Useful (Creates Food) (+2), Permanent (+4) Booster (+5), Native Power (+1), Always On (-1), If/Then (Must be in calm ocean water) (-1), Delayed Effect (-2), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Environment-bound (-1), Bulky (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Immutable (-1), Crew (-1)

A good acre of dry farmland, farmed traditionally, can produce about 350 pounds of soybeans a year, or 45 pounds of meat. The interior of the tidal generator is about an acre and a quarter across, and for farming there has to be a minimum depth of 40m. To get an installation's yearly production (if you need such a thing), roll its pool of 1d+1WD. Width times Height equals the production of edible fish. Height times 20 yields the production of edible kelp and algae. So, 2-20 pounds of fish, 20-200 pounds of veggies. It took three months and 3 Base Will to develop. For one year after its rollout, it causes a -1 penalty to Economy because it removes some perceived need for massive food transportation. For three years after that, it provides a +1 bonus to Economy.

American Space Mirror (1982)

You can't expect the Americans to sit by and let Russia and 'Nam whip 'em in the Space Race, can you? Especially with air stations and metahumans offering undreamt-of access.

The first American space mirror is larger than the Russian one, and possesses a curve that makes it brighter. Its location allows it to play over a radius of 200 miles centered on Sioux City Iowa. Moreover, its position puts it into operation from the hours of 10 AM to 10 PM Central time. Working by day, not night, makes the provision of sunlight to croplands less disruptive to farming, and permits greater latitude for weather influence and 'cloud busting.'

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Bulky (-2), Delicate (-1), Environment-Bound (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Slow (-1), Go Last (-1), If/Then (Only after spending loads of cash) (-1), Obvious (-1), Delayed Effect (-2), Range Boost (+2), Radius (+10)

One other key difference between the Soviet and American approaches to orbital heliography is their communication methods. The Soviet mirror is programmed from the ground with pulses sent by a laser from a hidden military base. Signals from any other location are ignored. (Indeed, sometimes valid signals are dismissed.)

The American satellite takes instructions through encrypted radio signals, meaning it's theoretically possible for an outside actor to hack in and take control. (That's the 'Accessible' flaw.) But this does make connection much more reliable, which is why the American space mirror rolls 5d+1WD in its pool.

By 1999, the US has three of these flying.

Commercial Aerogel (1982)

First created in 1931, aerogel is what you get when you replace the liquids in a gel with a gas. Specifically, it's a hyperlight solid that looks like frozen smoke but feels like styrofoam. Though it can shatter, aerogel has a very high load capacity by weight, due to the strength of its uniform dendritic structure. But it's even better as a thermal insulator. You can put a marshmallow on an inch-thick aerogel plate and apply a blowtorch to the other side without any melting.

Defends (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Always On (-1), Armored Defense (-2), Durable (+1), If/Then (Only protects against heat)

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Durable (+1), Always On (-1)

In game terms, this stuff can easily be used to provide 2HD of HAR against heat-based attacks.

Orbital Kinetic Spear Platform (1983)

The problem with cruise missiles is that they're so darn expensive. You have to pay for the guidance system, the fuel and the payload. The idea behind orbital kinetic energy weapons (or "KE weapons" for short) is that if you can get something heavy enough into orbit and keep it from losing mass on reentry, the force of its impact is just as destructive as a chemical explosive.

Once the IEG has a tethered satellite up, they start putting KE spears in orbiting weapons platforms. These are pure tungsten rods, shaped roughly like a crowbar and about ten feet long. They're nicknamed "rods from God."

Attacks +10 (+12), Engulfs (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Radius (+10), Penetration 7 (+7), Bulky (-1), Environment Bound (-1), Full Power Only (-1), Slow (-2), Delayed Effect (-2), Go Last (-1), Obvious (-1), Horrific (-1), One Use (-4)

Each KE spear rolls 1d+1WD to attack. If you want to drop one on somebody, and you have the sort of access you need to call in an orbital strike, you start rattling off coordinates on one round and roll the spear's pool the next round to see if it's on target. Then it's anywhere between 1-5 rounds before the damn thing actually hits. (It has to fall all the way from outer space after all, and the trajectory may be long or short depending on where your platform is in relation to your target.) When it hits, it does W+10KS, PEN 7 to every target within 160 yards of impact.

Wide-Use Commercial Superconductor (1983)

A conductor channels electricity, with varying degrees of loss to resistance as heat. A superconductor channels electricity with no resistance. This is important: If you have a power plant in one state, after a certain point it's economically unfeasible to transfer its electricity through miles of copper wire. But if the energy is going through superconducting wire, it doesn't matter if the circuit is ten inches long or ten thousand miles. (Also, superconductors expel magnetic fields.)

Superconduction has been studied since the 1900s, with the first commercial superconductor produced in 1962. In Progenitor a breakthrough in superconductors occurs in 1983, permitting superconduction at 35 Kelvins. (To put that in perspective, that's just shy of -400° Fahrenheit.) In our world, that breakthrough has to wait until 1986.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible



(-1), Immutable (-1), Environment Bound (-1), If/Then (Requires extreme cold) (-1)

If needed, these superconductors have 2HD for conducting electricity.

Liquid Nitrogen-Temperature Superconductor (1983)

It didn't take long after the real world's 1986 breakthrough for another researcher to push the temperature way up to 92 Kelvins (nearly 300° degrees below zero on the American thermometer). That's important because those superconductors can be cooled with liquid nitrogen, which is cheaper to produce than milk.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Environment Bound (-1)

It has 2HD of superconduction. This is the sort of thing useful for particle accelerators, powerful electromagnets of all descriptions and extremely sensitive detection equipment.

Modular Cars (1985)

Honda's 'modular car' concept is based around the observation that people with tiny cars sometimes needed more space, while people with big cars usually wound up driving alone and wasting a lot of fuel. Their solution was to produce a small, one-person "commuter" car with an electric engine—easy to park, capable of going fifty miles before running down, recharging after three hours plugged-in.

For transporting the family, a passenger pod mounts to the driving capsule. With its own electric engine, the passenger pod adds seating for six.

For moving cargo, or making longer trips, a storage module can fit to either the driving cabin or to the passenger pod. Equipped with a gas engine, it drastically increases the vehicle's range.

By 1988, the electric motors can be recharged using the storage unit's gas motor, and the 1992 models allow drivers to 'daisy chain' up to four pods of any type onto a single drive cabin.

The drive cabin has the following stats.

Hyperbody (+4), Speed Booster (+1), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Operator Skill (+0)

An individual drive pod has Body 6. It can carry up to 300 pounds in addition to its own weight. It has a top speed of 50 mph. One either rolls the vehicle's 6d pool or one's Driving Skill, whichever is lower.

The cargo cabin has the following stats.

Hyperbody (+4), Attached (-2), Speed Booster (+4), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1)

It simply adds another point of Body to the driving pod, raising its total cargo hauling capacity to 900 pounds (in addition to its own weight). Its effective speed rises to almost 130 mph empty.

As for the family pod, just assume that its engine balances out its weight and drag. A pod with a family unit moves at the same speed as it does without one, even when hauling six plus a driver. It's just a lot harder to park.

Elastic Conductors and Semiconductors (1986)

Debuting in 1986, Plinio Centeio Gachineiro's flexible conductors and semiconductors free the circuit from rigidity. Displays for cell phones, computers and anything else that shows pictures or text can thereafter be made lighter, tougher and easier to store. By 1988, computers with screens that roll up like a window blind are appearing in the briefcases of stockbrokers and the backpacks of their spoilt children. But it doesn't even take six months from their debut for the fashion industry to begin producing ghastly clothes with constantly shifting, glowing images, patterns and colors.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1)

The Gachineiro components have 2HD for conducting (or semi-conducting) electricity. It

takes Gachineiro eight months of passionate toil and 8 points of Base Will to create these.

Trans-African Vacuum Access System, or TAVAS (1989)

Jason Weeks' design, proposed in 1989, involves digging a network of straight tunnels under the surface of the African continent and evacuating the air from them. Wrapped in superconductors (see page 330), the tunnels themselves drive engineless cars. A sealed car containing cargo and atmosphere gets blasted into the tube by air pressure behind it, and accelerated to high speed by a magnetic pulse—like a slug from a gauss rifle or a watermelon seed squeezed between two slick fingers. As it approaches its destination, a hatch at the front opens, releasing the atmosphere from within the car. That gas slows the car two ways, first by reverse thrust as it hisses out, and secondly by forming an increasingly compressed cushion in front of it.

Weeks (p. 195) intends for the tunnels to revolutionize Africa's economy. He throws the switch for the inaugural Kampala to Kinshasa run in 1991. The 1,230 mile journey takes two hours and hits a top speed of 800 mph, with the cargo of soy beans, rice and brake pad assemblies arriving undamaged. Weeks lives to be one of the TAVAS' first human passengers, going from Maputo to Casablanca in three and a half hours. He does not live to see the system perverted into a high power "train gun" in 2002, an act of terrorism that kills 582 people in Khartoum.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Mass Boost (+1), Speed Boost (+1), Mass Capacity (+2), Environment Bound (-1), If/Then (Requires vacuum and superconductors) (-1), Obvious (-1), Delayed Effect (-1), Slow (-2), Exhausted (-3), Range Capacity (+2), Range Boost (+5)

The TAVAS rolls 4d+1WD. It gives the world a +1 Economy bonus for three years.

Zero Degree Superconductor (1990)

In 1990, Jason Weeks' (p. 195) Global Human University demonstrates a substance that superconducts at the temperature of frozen water.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1)

It has 2HD in superconduction. It provides a global +1 Economy bonus from 1991 through 1994, and then a +1 Technology bonus from 1995-1996.

HIV Inoculation (1992)

Developed by Laotian scientists, the HIV inoculation is a series of injections, two administered together and a third a week later, that gives a human immune system the ability to rather handily deal with all strains of the virus, including the 1991 airborne variety.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), If/Then (Only works if it gets there first) (-1)

When someone with this inoculation is exposed to HIV, the medicine rolls a 7d pool to fight off the infection.

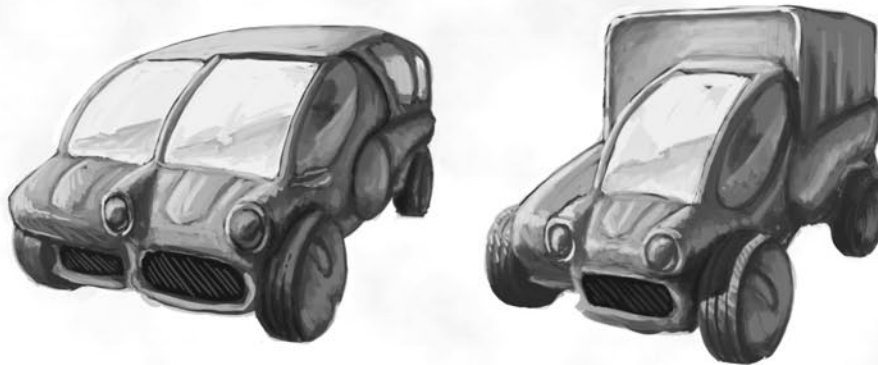
A-HIV Hunting Microbes, or "Reddy Salvation" (1992)

Garfield Moloi (p. 369) crafts a microbe that preys on the A-HIV virus, excreting harmless proteins and glycogens while reconfiguring the viral RNA into a sterile shape. It can perform its function of destroying the virus both inside the human bloodstream and out in the atmosphere.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1)

It takes Garfield a year and 12 points of Base Will to create Reddy Salvation. It rolls 6d to oppose A-HIV.

THE ONLY CAR YOU WILL EVER NEED



NEW HONDA MD-45-X
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AIDS Cure, or
“The Alabama Protocol” (1994)

Presented in 1994 (and winning that year’s Nobel Prize for medicine), the Alabama Protocol is a series of treatments that can inhibit HIV and, in some cases, even reverse the progress of active AIDS.

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1)

The protocol rolls 5d to oppose the virus and its symptoms.

Syzekipam Immuno-Booster,
aka ImmoBoost™, aka Turbo T™ (1996)

1996’s big medical breakthrough is the drug Syzekipam, an immune system supercharger whose impact is so great that the research consortium that develops it sues the Nobel Prize committee when they give the Medicine prize to the Japanese doctors who create the first viable human clone the same month that Syzekipam gets on the cover of *Nature*. (The suit is immediately dismissed as groundless and frivolous.)

Useful (+2), Natural Power (+1), Permanent (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2), Adaptation (-2), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Depleted (-1), Duration (+2), Augments (+4)

The way Syzekipam works is, you take the pill and the next time you’re exposed to a disease, you add a +1WD bonus to your Endurance roll. It works for one roll after that, and then it’s done. It provides the world a +1 Economy bonus from 1997-1999.

Space Injector (1997)

Seonaid Gladwell invents the space injector in 1997, mostly by accident. Engaged in pure research into the origins of the universe, she’s attempting to recreate conditions resembling the Big Bang in a Pushcore Technologies matter/antimatter collider. Gladwell’s particular interest is the topography of unfolding space, and as she idly wishes there was a less energy-intensive way

to temporarily create warps in space, she figures out a way to do just that.

The result is a device about the size and weight of a large flashlight. In its final configuration, it creates about a nine-inch diameter sphere of “new space,” which exists for about a tenth of a second before snapping back out of reality. Any matter that happens to be in the area around the sphere gets distorted, ruptured and damaged, no matter how strong or dense.

Useful (+2), Focus (-1), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Touch Only (-2)

Attacks+4 (+6), Focus (-1), Accessible (-1), Immutable (-1), Touch Only (-2), Non Physical (+2)

That nine-inch diameter is the extreme width before the power requirements start to increase at a rate that makes “exponential” look turtle slow. Creating a nine-inch sphere has such low power demands that the device can be discharged a hundred times on four D cells. A ten-inch sphere would require as much power for one use as a snowblower needs for an hour of heavy operation. But if you need bigger holes, it works just fine to arrange multiple devices in overlapping arrays. This quickly becomes the standard replacement for the wrecking ball, being more precise and quieter.

As a tool, this just breaks things up—like a jackhammer that doesn’t make your arms tired. As a weapon, you roll 10d, it ignores all armor and does W+4KS. Of course, people who are hosts to dark energy can spend a point of Willpower to distort the field harmlessly away, something that many attackers learn to their dismay.

Artificial Intelligence (1998)

A consortium of computer companies, led by Apollo and Microbos, instigates an Artificial Intelligence initiative in 1995 and, by 1998, has an entity named “Echo” ready for a ten-person jury of psychologists, philosophers and hyperbrains, including Jason Weeks. In a 7-3 vote, the committee declares that Echo has full consciousness.

In 1999, Echo files for a voter registration card in California.

Hypermind (+4), Focus (-1), Manufacturable (+2),
Adaptation (-2), Uncontrollable (-2)

Echo has 1d+1WD in her Mind pool. She's not really any smarter than the average voter... she just doesn't make mistakes.

Ever.

Atlantis

The history of Atlantis is a curious and atypical one, starting with its rise from the ocean floor in 1969 and ending with its destruction in 1996. Other nations arose from the convenience or necessity of the many: Atlantis was commanded into existence by the will of one woman. Other nations evolved their culture and governance over generations: Atlantis attempted to create itself by dictating the best ideas onto a blank slate. And where the fates of other nations were, despite the influence of a few singular visionaries, usually dictated by the masses, Atlantis was always a nation of singular powers.

Geography

In 1969, a woman with massive powers to control earth and stone strode out into the ocean, rejecting the land of her birth and creating a new one. With an initial area of less than ten square miles, its maker Cynthia Carls (p. 214) gradually expands it to triple that number, making it larger than Bermuda (though never as thickly populated).

Initially, Atlantis is a small mountain about a mile in diameter, with a profile familiar from volcanic islands. Completely bare of vegetation at first, Cynthia levels the hilltop and builds a fantastical palace of quartz and white marble at its summit. Initially, the castle is Cynthia's home, and she quickly builds a switchback road (later widened into Carls Highway) down the hill to the coast. The corners of the road branch off to terraces along the mountainside, all perfectly level. Lattices of stone, mimicking volcanic aquifers similar to those in Hawaii, gathered and purified rainwater, discharging it in a pond at the base of the mountain.

When she brings in the first settlers, they quickly make suggestions. A perfectly sheltered cove is installed at the end of the road. A horseshoe-crescent ridge rises up, about half the mountain's height, sloping down to a beach on the outside and to a perfectly flat sheltered valley within. This plain, about two miles across and four long, is soon planted with tropical crops and irrigated by the Ormand Pond (named after the engineer who designed the landing cove).

As the population of the island grows, Cynthia adds more horseshoes opening to Peace Mountain at the center. Ultimately, Atlantis has four such wings, each successively longer.

History

Formed in March of 1969, by May Atlantis has twenty inhabitants planting thoughtfully considered tropical subsistence crops in the fertile soil. By September, careful recruiting has brought in another hundred settlers, all dedicated to escaping the mistakes of Western culture's past and making a fresh start in a new land.

But their Eden has a serpent pre-installed. The nation from which they long to escape becomes aware of the island in late April, realizes it's inhabitable (and inhabited) by the end of May and is deploying ships to watch it by June. In October, the US and Great Britain are cooperating in a naval blockade, prompted in part by the arrival of Barbara French (p. 218), the island's second high-Tier metahuman.

At this early stage, Carls has made no attempt to publicize her island, and certainly the navies blockading it have made efforts to keep it secret, but it just can't be hidden. In November, a German magazine publishes grainy photos smuggled off a blockade ship and, after some pathetic denials, the US and Great Britain admit that they're watching a mysterious island that 'just appeared' in the Atlantic.

The blockading nations' suspicions seem to be confirmed when Zipperneck Russo (p. 210) tries to flee to Atlantis after robbing Fort Knox. Despite the conflict with French and Carls, the incident fixes Atlantis firmly in the world's imagination as a rogue nation.

This is no doubt what attracts Jack Grimes (p. 213) who, assuming the identity of “Carlos Moses,” claims to be an Atlantean ambassador. Leveraging his ability to replace the gold in Fort Knox, he gets safe conduct to the island, carrying a shipment of supplies. He also negotiates the option of a one-time safe return for Americans willing to give up their Atlantean identity.

On Atlantis, “Carlos” quickly becomes a prominent citizen, even a hero. Creating food and other necessities gives him considerable influence, but his rising clout is checked by the arrival (in March of 1970) of Ngoc Vo (p. 186). She, the island’s fourth high-Tier, gives the island an easy way around the blockade with her potent teleportation abilities. She also gives Atlantis access to a huge pool of potential immigrants, many from her home country.

The conflict between Vo and “Moses” is immediate, but initially confined to rumors and character assassination. “Carlos” sows seeds of suspicion among the formerly-American Atlantean population by playing to propaganda about Vietnam. Given the numbers of refugees Vo imports, the notion that she’s deliberately trying to shift the demographics of the island in her favor seems very plausible.

By August 1970, the population is over a thousand and the developed nations of the world have placed a trade embargo on the island. Between Grimes and Vo, this has no practical effect. But Grimes uses it to demand some sort of governing body that can make peace with the outside world.

In 1971, “Carlos Moses” has his supporters formally pledge allegiance to him, and makes the pledge matter by refusing to transmute matter for anyone but his followers. Ngoc Vo responds by refusing to teleport anyone who has taken the pledge, and ups the ante by revealing his real identity as a wanted American felon. Grimes’ denials or excuses satisfy some and, indeed, push many to greater suspicion of the Vietnamese on the island. He begins to arm an inner cabal of ‘pragmatists,’ as well.

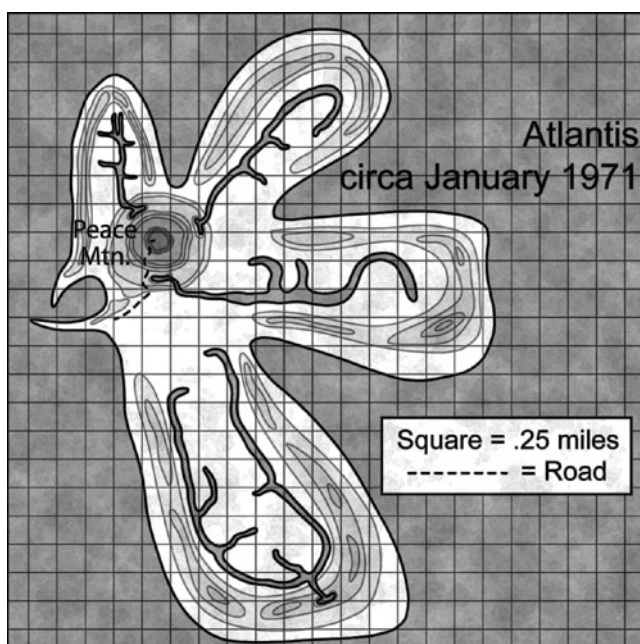
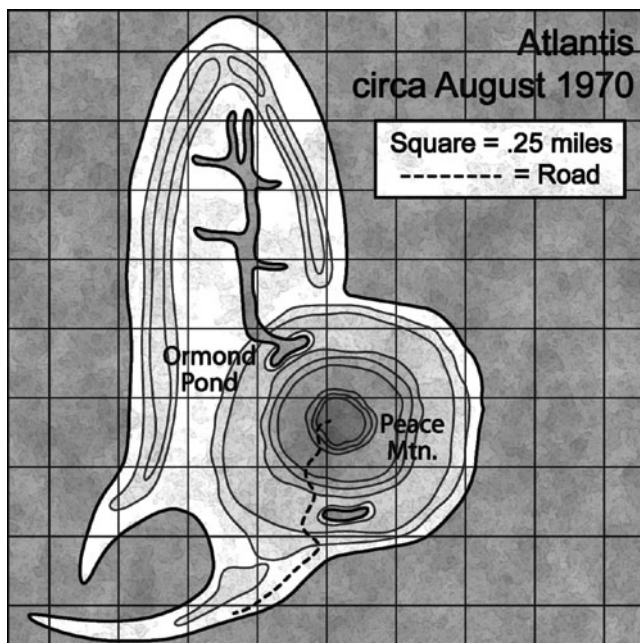
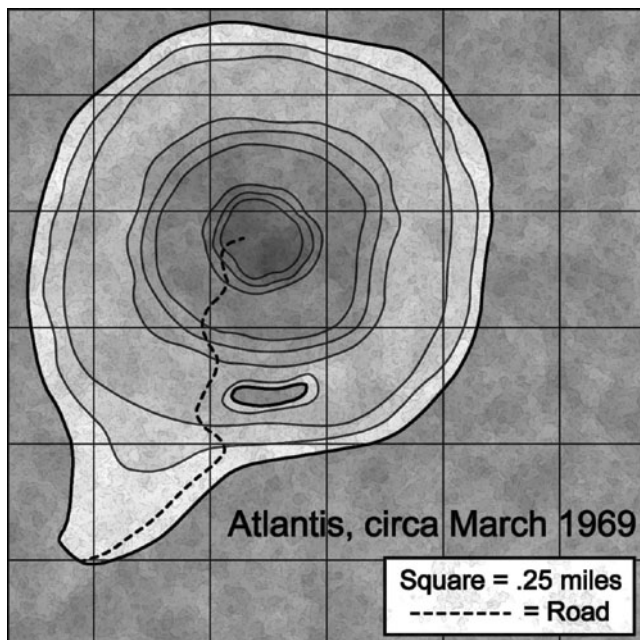
At the start of 1972, Cynthia Carls asks Vo to stop importing people and, when Vo agrees, it drives out a vocal minority who had previously

followed one of the two meta-women. These outcasts are just as disgusted with Grimes as they are with Vo and Carls. Eventually, they form the core of a group called “Faction Four” which moves to the south of the island.

Grimes, meanwhile, travels to Europe as “Moses” and begins bribing every politician he can reach. The outcome of this is a surprise UN agreement to designate Atlantis as the official home land of Shaw Monsters or “Shavians.” (Shavians are discussed on page 205.) As the year proceeds, more and more of the strange and ugly creatures flock to Atlantis. However, while Grimes claims the loyalty of nearly half the Shavian émigrés, almost as many prefer the company of the staunch individualists in Faction Four.

Meanwhile, the original Carls followers, who had intended for marijuana to be Atlantis’ cash crop, bring in their first harvest and are unable to find a way to get it past the ongoing blockade. But when the pot can’t get to the sybarites, some sybarites come to the pot. Private yachts run the blockade by night and deposit the island’s first tourists, come to marvel at the architecture, the doob and the social optimism. They depart impressed with the first two.





1973 dawns with an assassination attempt. Some of Grimes' pragmatists attempt to kill Cynthia Carls and, in response, she splits the Grimes group's easternmost horseshoe off the island and puts it across a hundred-yard causeway. This leads to legal wrangling as other nations attempt to claim the island, while Grimes makes the case that his island is now Atlantis. Cynthia reconnects it and a fed-up Ngoc Vo teleports Grimes directly to Leavenworth penitentiary. With him out of the way, they then proceed to the constitutional convention his followers had long desired. Without "Moses," of course, they no longer want it and attempt to delay the process as much as they can. But over their objections and dissent, the laws are ultimately enacted, providing for a deliberative body ("The People's Voice") and an executive ("The People's Servant"). Cynthia Carls is appointed executive pro-tem until the first elections can be held in 1974.

In February of 1974, Tina Shaw (p. 205), then the sole source of Shavians, moves to the island. While the presence of yet another high-Tier—this one with powerful sway over a growing mob of bulletproof flying monsters—could have propelled Atlantis into yet more turmoil, Tina makes it clear again and again that she has no interest in bossing people around. Since she's only 17 years old, people accept this more easily than they might from someone older. Or from a man.

During Atlantis' first election, the seething power groups of the island crystalize into four parties. One is "Faction Four," the stubborn outsiders unified, primarily, by their refusal to kowtow to a metahuman leader. Jack Grimes' followers (many of whom insist he's really Carlos Moses, a saintly victim of a frame job, whose escape from prison was entirely justified) formalize themselves as "the Progressive Party." Cynthia Carls tries to be as hands-off as she can with her followers as they form themselves into "One World Energy." The Vietnamese-Atlanteans overwhelmingly come together under the aegis of "Atlantean Socialism."

In the first election, platforms are primarily smokescreens for personality politics. The Progressive Party platform is based on creating

incentives for superhuman contributions to society. They win two seats on the Voice, despite the shadow cast by their founder's legal troubles.

Faction Four, plagued by poor organization, is barely able to articulate a philosophy of vague Libertarian self-sufficiency. They get one seat on the Voice, in the person of the sole Faction Four candidate who never shrilly decried anyone else in the party as a communist, fascist, or apologist for child molestation.

If Faction Four is too fractious, One World Energy is too hesitant to offend. Valuing accord above all, they have a wishy-washy platform based on universal respect and acceptance. It falls back on humanity's goodwill as a solution for crises, and glosses over the idea of entrenched ideological conflict. But its sunshiny warmth and the cool monuments Cynthia creates have an effect, getting One World Energy three seats on the Voice.

The biggest winner is Atlantean Socialism, which offers the most traditional solutions. It's a plain, vanilla socialist platform that wouldn't look out of place in any democratic ex-French colony. They get three seats and appoint the first Servant, a bilingual Vietnamese pharmacist and refugee named Dith Ngyuen. His biggest promise is to build Atlantis' first hospital. In an elaborate ceremony, Cynthia Carls moves out of the house she built and donates it to the island as a dwelling for the People's Servant and his staff, re-christening it "The People's Palace."

But amidst all the back-patting and self-congratulation over birthing the world's newest democracy, there are dark forces at work. A cabal with zero interest in Atlantis, except as a place where lots of Shavians are gathered together, slowly insinuates over a dozen mercenaries and fanatics onto the island over the course of the year. They start soon after the Shaw family moves there, because that's their target. In November of 1974, the group (called "Remember November," referring to a Shavian atrocity from November 1971) launches a midnight attack on the Shaw household and kills Tina, despite the efforts of several loyal Shavians and Amy Sykes (p. 177).

In shock over the first blatant murder carried out on Atlantis' virgin soil, Faction Four and the Progressives demand the formation of an army. This issue so preoccupies their representatives to the Voice that only the formation of the Atlantean Progressive Harmony Party in July 1975 gets them to grudgingly work on other bills and initiatives. The Voice remains so disorganized and intransigent that the year's major accomplishment is issuing stamps. Atlantis has no currency of its own, and when a bank tries to implement an independent monetary system in 1976, it's forced out of business.

In April of 1976, while the Voice is still wasting time daily arguing about the Shaw assault, a bomb kills 13 in Atlantis' biggest fish market. No one ever claims responsibility. Three people are killed in retaliation and no one is ever charged with anything, despite evidence after the fact showing that two of the lynch mob's victims could not have planted the bomb. The law and order debate becomes central, with the Progressives agitating for personal identity registries and a broad-power central police force. Faction Four wants to separate legal judgment and investigation from the physical enforcement of law, while One World Energy wants to impose a "Department of Peace and Mediation" to defuse problems before they reach the point of violence. But perhaps the most daring proposal is the one which eventually passes: The Atlantean Socialists' suggestion that, with its small population, the island could rely on a few superheroes, kept honest by constant public scrutiny, instead of a police force of interchangeable and corruptible officers.

The superhero system works fairly well. It can't prevent a gas attack in 1977, (once again perpetrated by Remember November) but it does greatly limit the fatalities. Eventually, Amy Sykes (p. 177) becomes one of Atlantis' meta-defenders.

With civil order of a sort in place, Atlantis gradually creeps upward in global esteem. The US recognizes the island in 1978, just in time to meddle with the second election. The Atlantean Socialists attempt to stir up some enthusiasm by announcing an all-metahuman space program, but when Dith Ngyuen refuses to stand for re-election, that's hard to spin positive.

In desperation, they beg Ngoc Vo to run and, reluctantly, she does. But it works: She becomes People's Servant.

In the legislature, Vo's fame helps the three Socialists keep their seats, but One World Energy loses a seat to Progressive Harmony. As for the Progressive party, it had begun to come unglued with the death of "Carlos Moses" in early 1977. Faction Four takes one of their seats, catching up with One World Energy.

The big trouble of 1978 arises from a marijuana legalization syntergene released in the United States by an Atlantean creator. The so-called "Burning Spear" image has its desired effect and allows Atlantis to sell a crop there before the thought-form is de-constructed and countered by American Hyperminds. The backlash is considerable and the US almost breaks off diplomatic relations, only relenting when Vo tracks down the originator (a mid-range Hypermind named Trudy Newhouse) and deports her to stand trial. It's an unpopular decision, and not just because Newhouse was an influential Progressive. Insisting that the accusations are a frame, the Progressives push through a recall election. They have help from One World Energy and Faction Four, who want Vo out because she

wants to institute taxation. She's replaced by a Faction Four firebrand.

With Vo out, Atlantis calms down. Continual immigration and Cynthia Carls' willingness to make buildings, sell them, and give the money to the Atlantean government keeps the nation solvent. By the end of the year Carlsville, the central city (figuratively and literally), has a population of 2,500.

In 1982, Atlantean Socialism is looking bad. Ngoc Vo teleports a corrupt official she'd appointed back to Vietnam when his crimes come to light, but it doesn't restore confidence. After the election, Atlantis has its first People's Servant from Progressive Harmony, a woman named Brenda Mills. The nine-person Voice is almost perfectly balanced: Progressive Harmony, Atlantean Socialism, Faction Four and One World Energy all have two seats. The Progressive party only retains a seat by virtue of its representative's personal charisma. Well, that and the fact that he can't be blamed for much and no one wants to see a more valid rival get the seat.

Then comes 1983.

Servant Mills had already been having a tough tenure: Without structures dictated top-down, Progressive Harmony is a hard system to implement. When the Metapocalypse strikes (p. 95), Atlantean superheroes put up a noble fight, but they're unprepared to deal with a full-court military press. Still, the damage to structures and people is minimized. It's the culture that turns out to be the most vulnerable.

While Atlantean superheroes have proven their worth against massive threats (like an incoming ICBM), the aftermath of the Metapocalypse mutates into hundreds of minor problems. The heroes simply can't be everywhere they're needed, and when they fail to respond, the citizens lose faith. By July, Progressive Harmony and One World Energy have consolidated into a single camp occupying Peace Mountain and the first valley, relying on Cynthia Carls to personally defend them against raiders from the fierce Shavians who have become the dominant force behind a merged Faction Four and Progressive party, now calling itself the New Progressive Army. Ngoc Vo holds the second and third



valleys, protecting the Atlantean Socialist Front (as her onetime political party is now known). Amy Sykes refuses to back any faction and, instead, strides the entire island dispensing justice as she sees fit. Ironically, she's about the only person trusted by the majority of all three gangs.

This arrangement is largely stable for several months, with violence confined to borderlands, until Cynthia Carls leaves the island to soothe an eruption under Mexico. She's assassinated abroad. As the One World Energy compound is stormed by both the Progressive Army and the Socialist Front, Ngoc Vo leaves the island in disgust. The Shavians on all sides give up ideological identities and come together under the banner of species. With the exception of Amy Sykes, there are few metahumans on the island who can stand up to them in numbers.

The UN dispatches peacekeepers in 1986. The Shavians use their small size, mobility and defenses to avoid pitched battles until the Atlantean Socialist Front agrees to help them wipe out Progressive Harmony on the island once and for all. When the UN attempts to intervene, they lose and lose hard. Even the return of Ngoc Vo is insufficient to completely restore order, but her banishment of several prominent Shavians creates enough breathing room that an election can be held.

One World Harmony (the fused remnants of One World Energy and Progressive Harmony) boycotts the election. The Atlantean Socialist Front gets six seats on the Voice and installs its man, Lawrence Regis, in the People's Palace. The remaining three seats on the Voice are taken by the New Progressive Party, and it's not enough for them. A month after the election, a group of Shavians finally manages to ambush and assassinate Ngoc Vo. Regis flees to Europe before he even has a chance to sign a single piece of legislation.

The UN forces entrench themselves, making sure everyone there is equipped with DETectors and anti-Shavian weaponry. With Vo's death, they send more troops, declare a curfew and finally impose some order on the wreckage of Atlantis. In 1990, even as refugees from the Middle East

conflicts begin to trickle onto the island, the surviving power groups agree to submit to the one authority they both trust and fear: Amy Sykes. She's given broad political autonomy on top of her (already considerable) law-enforcement purview until a 1990 election. With the UN backing her up, she makes it stick, and Lawrence Regis returns to the island. He strikes triumphal poses but is always heavily guarded.

That 1990 election sees the Voice remain unchanged, while a moderate Atlantean Socialist named Doyce Walton takes the Servant role after making extensive overtures to One World Harmony and the New Progressive Party. But even as Amy Sykes gratefully relinquishes her position (and falls in love!), the balance begins to tip again. Shavians from all over the world, reeling under renewed prejudice when science discovers a way to let them reproduce, flee to the only 'homeland' they've ever had. Despite the alarm of One World Harmony and the Atlantean Socialists, Shavians world-wide pool their resources to create their first Birth Chamber in Valley Four of Atlantis. Finished in May of 1991, the first new Shavian created since Tina Shaw's death emerges from it that August.

With the numbers of Shavians growing, the Atlantean Socialist Party moves radically rightward, and in June of 1992 boldly proposes a measure denying Shavians the vote. Despite the global suspicion of the creatures, few international voices are willing to endorse stripping votes on the basis of species. While the few surviving Atlantean astronauts try to distract the world by announcing a plan to place human genetic material on the Hale-Bopp comet for safekeeping, the Voice decides to disenfranchise the Shavians but to put an enfranchisement measure on the ballot for a full public vote. Amy Sykes resigns in protest and leaves the island.

The 1994 election is a bloodbath. Atlantis has only four superheroes remaining to keep order, and three of them are killed trying to keep Shavians away from the polls. While a dozen Shavians are also destroyed in the fight, they clearly have the upper hand until Amanda Sykes (p. 159), the Progenitor herself, arrives. After casually slaughtering over a hundred

Shavians and threatening to disintegrate the birth chamber, she restores order.

Soon after, the entire Atlantean space program defects to Åia (pages 107, 136, 241).

While the Shavians are unwilling to open hostilities again for fear of another Progenitor crackdown, resentment, intimidation and vandalism are rampant throughout 1994. The simmering wrath flares up when One World Harmony successfully lobbies the Global Philosophical Alliance to deploy warships to the island in order to protect them. Those Shavians with the firmest grasp of human thought are incensed that humans who are permitted full and free participation in government are claiming they're the oppressed minority, and they incite the rest to clash with the ships. The US, China and the USSR remain neutral while the United Nations dithers.

The first months of 1995 feature sporadic clashes between the GPhA fleet and the Shavians. The

Shavians are unable to do more than sink small scouts, thanks to GPhA anti-Shavian technology. But the GPhA are unable to land in the face of Shavian and human defense of the bay. The impasse breaks when China shifts position, the USSR reverses itself, and the UN agrees to support a GPhA ground invasion. The next six months see continued debate in Europe while the Shavians and dedicated Atlanteans dig in, the forces of Progressive Harmony build up, and other Atlanteans (notably Children of Å and believers in the Emerald Virgin) begin to evacuate the island.

The Shavians borrow a tactic from Vietnam and use teleporters to make deep strikes into every Progressive Harmony nation on Earth. But despite their destructiveness and their frenzied defense of the island, the GPhA seizes the birth chamber in December of 1995.

A tense and deadly calm descends as Progressive Harmony holds the chamber hostage. Jason Weeks (p. 195) promises to build a second



chamber if the Shavians stand down and renounce violence, at least for one year. Cowed, the Shavians agree, but once the occupation force lets down its guard, Atlantis' human population begins a program of resistance, sabotage and assassination against the invaders. Amanda Sykes then threatens to erase the entire island if a peaceful arrangement can't be made. Over the protests of her daughter Amy and Shavian insistence that she guarantee the safety of the birth chamber if she sinks Atlantis, Amanda sets the date of November 20, 1996, as a deadline for Atlantean tranquility.

In October, the birth chamber is destroyed. The GPhA forces claim it was a surprise mortar attack from Remember November, but while prominent Shavians call this a bald lie, they urge calm in the hopes that Jason Weeks keeps his promise. Meanwhile, Atlanteans are fleeing in droves, afraid that Amanda Sykes will keep hers. Once she's satisfied that the island is completely void of life, Amanda does it.

Progressive Harmony

Nguyet Cam (p. 164), Vietnam's Great Conductor, positions Progressive Harmony as a sane alternative to both capitalism and communism. It's first presented to the world outside Vietnam in 1971 in her book "Social Harmony and Social Dissonance." It uses an elaborate musical metaphor to argue that while the individual is valuable and deserving of government protection, the proper focus for social organization is the collective. Only through collective organization can the variances caused by individual inability or willfulness be canceled out into a melodious whole.

Principles of Progressive Harmony

One principle of the free market is that "if you build a better mousetrap, the world beats a path to your door." Communism's counter-principles are "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Progressive Harmony (or ProgHarm, in its shorthand form) holds that if everyone can be induced to build a better path to the door, everyone can get mousetraps according to his needs. But where communism

underestimates the power of personal selfishness, and capitalism privileges it, ProgHarm emphasizes a collective selfishness that supports all within the gestalt.

Belonging Is Essential

People are social creatures who suffer when exiled from the company of peers. Many people deliberately stay in a bad situation with their friends and family (or just with people they know, if not necessarily like) rather than take a chance on a better life with strangers. Progressive Harmony seeks to harness that urge by providing social roles (see "Castes," below) that integrate with one another and permit people to easily know how to treat one another. In a capitalist society, if you put an upper class person and a lower class person together, it's awkward. Communism's worse, assuming that the only honest dialectic between proletariat and bourgeois is conflict. But once filtered into castes that suit them, even people from wildly different backgrounds can accept one another as part of a larger, progressing whole.

Inspiration Is the Best Reward

Material rewards are all well and good, but they're not what ultimately satisfies the human consciousness. There are countless examples of people who are stultified and jaded by their wealth, and countless counter-examples of those who are materially far poorer, but who are content because they're working for something in which they believe. Instead of stringing people along with fleeting, tangible rewards (or 'vacation time' they may have no idea how to fill), Progressive Harmony seeks to match people with work that satisfies. The goal of the philosophy is to have every worker lie down at night feeling like he or she has made a positive difference.

Individual Revenge is Counterproductive

The greatest flaw of most governments and societies is an obsession with "punishing evildoers." If the point of a government is to improve the quality of life for every single

member, penal systems are fatally flawed. They do not reduce recidivism: Indeed, it's possible that a criminal who escapes capture is less likely to commit a crime than someone who is placed in prison for a decade, is exposed to other people who are overwhelmingly violent and maladjusted, emerges cut off from typical social expectations, and labors under social opprobrium that drastically reduces his chances of getting a legal job. From his perspective, certainly, those ten years are wasted. Any harm prevented by his imprisonment must be balanced against the good he certainly didn't do while waiting out the clock.

The purpose of the typical justice system is not to turn criminals into law abiding citizens. Its first and foremost objective is to punish. This harms the criminals, but there's an argument that they deserve it. But is the massive expense of courts, prisons, jails and law professions a worthwhile investment simply so that the victims of crime (or their survivors) can feel the pleasure of revenge? Or would that great investment be better applied to transforming those criminals in a way that helps everyone? For if the socially maladapted can be brought into willing conformity, then their victims can know the true and enduring satisfaction of having contributed to the criminal's healing and remorse, as opposed to the vicious and short-term sadism of "knowing he got what he deserves."

Castes

The needs of a smooth-functioning society are best met by experts, specialized workers who are not only competent at their designated tasks, but who are eager and delighted to carry them out. In Progressive Harmony, no caste is superior to any other, inasmuch as members in each can find reasons to prefer their position to a different one.

Toilers

The foundation of the society is the stratum that toils. Manual labor is, at the beginning, the single necessary ingredient for farming and industry. Toilers are free from the intellectual labor of organization and decision-making. Their position is to obey the orders of a particular other person, who is referred to as their 'Term Holder.'

Toilers cannot be held responsible for actions they were ordered into, with the exception of sexual crimes, in which case they are as guilty as the Holder who commanded the act. (Crimes committed of their own free will redound solely on them.)

The work to which Toilers can be set is often heavy, and a Holder who feels his Toiler is not making enough of an effort can call a Risker to beat the Toiler. (A Risker who feels he's been called frivolously or that the Holder's expectations are excessive can report the Holder to a Representative if he wishes or, at his discretion, inflict the beating on the Holder instead.) Technically, Holders aren't supposed to beat Toilers themselves, but it's accepted that many do.

Holders can belong to any caste: Indeed, some Toilers have their terms held by other Toilers, setting up chains of obligation that can get long and complicated.

But though their position seems to have a lot in common with slavery, there are important limits to what a Holder can do to a Toiler, along with certain tangible and intangible privileges which are unique to the Toiler caste.

Toilers Eat First. The government's collective farms follow this law with scrupulous honesty and anyone found guilty of taking food from a Toiler, or even of taking food from collective stores before all Toilers have had a chance, can be sentenced to a term of Toil.

Twelve-Hour Nights. Every Toiler must receive twelve hours of rest for every twelve hours of work. With special licenses, some Holders can have Toilers work twenty-four hours shifts, but these licenses are rare and given only for emergencies or other circumstances. Of course, a Toiler who volunteers to work longer is welcome to do so. It happens more often than outsiders might think.

Social Prerogative. Toilers are admired and regarded as the noble (and sexually desirable) backbone of the society. This elite position is encouraged through Attitudinal Engineering. It cuts both ways, however: Toilers who commit crimes or who fail at their duties are not regarded



as weak (the way a slave might) but are instead seen as failures who chose to let their people down.

Sexual Autonomy. Toilers can't be ordered to engage in sex acts for their term holders or anyone else. The penalties for a holder who rapes a Toiler are severe—often a life of Toil. Of course, with some people it's difficult to define a 'sex act.' If a master orders his Toiler to put on high heels and dance while he watches through a peep hole, is that a sex act? The answer varies from district to district, between different Intellectual judges, and with the opinion of any Risker the Toiler calls in.

Nevertheless, some Toilers run. They flee their holders and try to start new lives as Citizens or even as Riskers or Intellectuals. If caught, they're typically sentenced to additional Toil for the government (under far more strict controls) after completion of their held term.

Toilers do not have to remain Toilers. Upon being registered and marked (initially with tattooed text, then with barcodes in the late 1970s, finally with RFID chips in the mid '80s) the term of service is designated. Those who are sentenced to Toil for crimes have as many years as an official deems appropriate. Those who volunteer for Toil choose how many years of indentured service they wish to sell. Holders bid on contracts in a competitive market. The term begins when the Holder pays. For voluntary Toilers, the central government bank (which is the only bank in a Progressive Harmony culture) holds the funds in escrow until the term of Toil is complete. For sentenced criminal Toilers, the funds go directly to the government to offset costs. In some cases, a portion of the proceeds go to the crime's victim.

In the same way that communist orthodoxy predicts "the withering away of the state," Progressive Harmony predicts an eventual decline in the Toiler class. While there may

The flight into Hanoi was so long that I was actually asleep when the wheels touched down. My eyes popped open and my heart started racing. What awaited me? A harsh brainwashing session from a paranoid science regime? Endlessly touring "workers' paradises" of forced, inflexible smiles and monumental buildings that, despite their size, failed to leave any lasting impression? A tattered façade of modernity over a bruised and impoverished nation teetering on the brink of disaster?

Well, the first thing waiting for me was June Thi Huang, a demurely smiling Vietnamese woman in a tidy skirt and jacket with a vague uniform air to them. She shook my hand with forthright firmness and said, "Hello, and welcome to Vietnam." Her English was perfect, the emphasis musical but with no more accent than a newscaster.

"I'll be your guide to the world's first Progressive Harmony state," she said, taking my arm and walking me across the tarmac. "I've been hoping to get you an audience with Bao Verong himself," she said, with clear reverence in her voice. "I'm optimistic."

The Hanoi airport was unlike any other I'd been in, and I've done a lot of air travel for the AP. Its soaring ceiling was more like a cathedral than a drab switching-station for fliers. The floors were covered with panels of a cushiony, rubbery material with a subtle swirling pattern of brown, gray and taupe. The walls were wood-lined, all the way up to the skylights at the roof's apex. The windows were intermittent and so thick they were cloudy.

"How do you keep it clean?" I asked.

"Excuse me?"

"The floors."

"Oh. I believe they're double sided and get flipped once a day. There's a grate underneath allowing custodial access. Comfortable, isn't it?"

I had to admit it was. Quiet too. The whole place had me off-balance, and it took me until we reached the customs station to figure out why. I was asking June questions about life under Progressive Harmony, and she was replying with an impressive store of facts and figures, when I realized we were speaking at conversational levels. Every other airport discussion in my life has either been with voices raised over the sound of announcements and countless feet on tile, or I've been hunched in to confide. Instead of crowd sounds and the rumble of planes landing and taking off, the background noise was a pleasant and unobtrusive instrumental tune, calm but penetrating and rhythmic.

"What's that song?" I asked.

"The Airport Song," June said, as if this should be obvious.

"It was written to be played in airports?"

"Oh no. It was composed for this airport. Depending on your destination, the music changes as you approach its gate. It becomes brassier as one nears the European portals, for instance, and incorporates koto strings for the Japanese departures and arrivals. And of course, its pace is appropriate to travel."

As she spoke, I realized that she and I were stepping at the same time, my tread instinctively shortened to let her keep up. A moment later, I saw that everyone else was subtly guided by the tune as well.

* * * * *

The customs check was imperceptible. "Don't tell me that any American can enter Vietnam this easily?"

"I made arrangements," she said, her smile almost mischievous. "The first 'unofficial' American journalist is a matter of interest for the bureaucracy, and I suggested that you might actually warrant a deeper inspection. That it was quick and imperceptible was a happy coincidence."

I blinked, then got it. "Are you telling me my mind was just read?"

Her smile broadened. "Surely you have nothing to hide? If you did, a Risker would have stopped us by now."

"In the United States, we have laws regulating the use of mind reading on the unsuspecting."

"Indeed. Pray tell me how they're enforced?"

I sighed. "You've probably got me there."

"I stood for election to this job, you know," she said abruptly. "International Liaison. The West fascinates me. So I may attempt to satisfy my curiosity with you, just as you do with me."

I'm good at concealing blushes. I just hope their government mind-reader wasn't scanning me as I ran over the potential double meanings in my mind. Though from what I've heard from telepaths, you get used to smut fast in that job.

"Therefore," she considered. "Know that it's free from sarcasm when I ask why the United States passed a law against something in which there is no harm."

"No harm? What about privacy?"

"Surely the arc of technology will render privacy an obsolete concept within thirty years," she said. It sounded almost like she was reciting a tautology, and it stopped me in my tracks.

"There's no privacy under Progressive Harmony?" I asked.

"There's no right of concealment from proper authorities," she said, "Any more than there is in the US. I'm sure there are exemptions for government clairvoyants looking for rapists and murderers. Aren't there?"

"I'm no legal expert. I know information gathered with metahuman powers is inadmissible in court, but in extreme circumstances the police and army are permitted to... but not for something like a reporter coming through customs!"

"Not every reporter warrants special treatment." She opened the trunk of a sleek, tiny car and put my bags in the back with my hurried assistance.

"Look, privacy matters," I said. "Would you want someone watching you while you were in the bath?"

"No." She turned the key in the ignition and my instinct was that we'd have to get another car, or get towed. I was actually startled when the car started moving. It was so silent it felt like we were in neutral, but somehow rolling uphill onto the road.

"So shouldn't there be laws against voyeurism?"

"If I don't know I'm being watched, in what way am I impinged-upon?"

I was momentarily speechless. "It would feel creepy," I said at last.

"Mr. Newcombe," she said, "It's 1977. I'm twenty-four years old. When I was sixteen, an American metahuman threw one of our tanks through the building where I lived with my parents. I'm afraid that something has to be worse than 'creepy' before it concerns me unduly."

She sounded truly apologetic as she said it.

always be a market for obedient human labor, automation is expected to relieve the need for it—indeed, budgets and agendas from Vietnam’s early days of Progressive Harmony proved to be very accurate in their ambitious scheduling of tractor, harvester and paver production.

Progressive Harmony dogma insists that as the society grows into perfection, there will be less need for punitive Toil terms. Whether this is a result of genuine social balance or simply excellent use of Attitudinal Engineering is known only to Cam and her synergetic cronies. The citizens of Progressive Harmony believe the music helps them focus and provides a unifying rhythm to life, but they don’t believe they’re being controlled. They can’t believe it.

Representatives

Representatives are government bureaucrats at all levels. Ambassadors, city managers, mayors, economic coordinators and the like are all elected offices, usually for three to six year terms. There are elections going on all the time in a ProgHarm nation.

As an aside, Progressive Harmony nations have full enfranchisement of anyone and everyone over the age of sixteen. Even foreign visitors are allowed to vote in ProgHarm elections if they can prove their age and that they’ve resided in the country for a year or more. By and large, people only vote for offices that they care about, or for candidates in whom they have some kind of personal or professional stake.

There is no re-election. Reps cannot campaign while in office, for themselves or for others (though this is unenforceable for anything but the most blatant endorsements). Theoretically, they could indulge in negative campaigning by insulting and denigrating every candidate but the one they favored, but this is held to be crass and uncouth. Anyone who engages in such slanders is seen as being self-interested and possibly unworthy of office. (This attitude, openly presented as an obvious truth everyone knows, is covertly reinforced by AE. Especially the AE that plays during official government events.)

While in office, Representatives’ room and board is supplied by the government; they cannot amass money. (Representatives in the lowest positions may be shoehorned into bureaucratic dormitories, often repurposed military barracks. High echelon Representatives get mansions and filet mignon.) Upon completion of their term, they receive a single lump-sum payment and are then free to run for another office. While they cannot run for the same office, they often find positions within the same hierarchy and, indeed, it often develops that two Representatives trade off the positions of (say) Managing Director of Municipal Sanitation and Executive Secretary for Municipal Sanitation if they both expire at the same time.

While Representatives are (metaphorically and sometimes literally) ‘fed second’ after the Toilers, they do not have the Toilers’ presumption of admiration. Many Representatives are charismatic and charming: To get better jobs, they have to be. But any adoration they amass arises from their own efforts. AE does not reinforce hero-worship for Reps.

Good Reps find an area of bureaucracy that interests them and fits their talents, then bubble around in it for decades going from position to position, gradually rising and falling until they earn enough to retire (or until they decide to change castes). Bad Reps get jobs, take bribes and spend a lot of time hiding funds because (remember) the central government runs the only bank. While a little graft is expected (or at least tolerated) excessive graft is considered a symptom of dissatisfaction with the abstract rewards of being a good venue for the people’s will. This (according to Progressive Harmony theory) arises from disconnection with the visceral reality of the common life, and is easily cured by a bracing period of Toil.

Indeed, it’s a matter of faith that only those who have experienced life at its most fundamental can properly understand how it should be ordered on the broad and abstract scale. Therefore, before one can stand for any office one must have served a minimum of five years as a Risker or a Toiler. (Exceptions are made, in the early days, for veterans and experienced government functionaries in the old Vietnams.) Interestingly, even those who are sentenced to Toil as a

Attitudinal Engineering (AE)

Progressive Harmony is an intensely musical culture. Factories, fields and highway construction zones ring out with work tunes, offices begin the day with pep songs and end with anthems, public areas are blanketed with haunting melodies that infect the ears of everyone who passes.

Most of these songs were composed by Nguyet Cam, though she only takes credit for a fraction of them. Specifically, the fraction that, while stirring, are not synergenically active.

That is the real secret of Progressive Harmony: Synergetic instructions encoded in the omnipresent melodies erode resistance, lubricate the interactions of castes, reinforce the attitudes that propel the society and keep everyone content in their particular boxes.

criminal punishment are, if they serve long enough, eligible for politics afterwards.

Riskiers

Most people avoid peril, uncertainty and stress, but some people seek these things out. Rather than frustrate their lust for kicks (and possibly drive them to crime), Progressive Harmony provides an outlet for these otherwise dangerous tendencies. These people go into the Risker caste.

Firefighters, medical professionals, soldiers, police officers and spies all fall under the Risker purview, getting the third claim on public foods stores (or second, taking precedence over Reps, in time of war). Anyone can become a Risker... as long as he has never been sentenced to Toil.

Fairly small in number, Riskers often have considerable autonomy within their area of expertise. Soldiers and firefighters are exceptions, as a disciplined chain of command is necessary for emergency response. But the fields of intelligence and law enforcement, in particular, have a lot of latitude for their investigations. Often, they resolve minor issues without drawing in legalistic Intellectuals at all.

Citizens

Citizens have few cultural responsibilities, but enjoy few civic securities. They are not guaranteed food access like Toilers, Reps or Riskers. On the other hand, there aren't taxes in Progressive Harmony nations (just funds earned from selling Toiler terms and fees from the central bank) so whatever a citizen earns, he keeps. Everyone, regardless of parentage, is born into the Citizenry. Their parents typically pay for their room and board. (If they can't there's the option of Toil, either for the parent or for working aged children.)

By and large, Citizens are skilled workers who can earn more day-by-day running their own lives than they can get hiring out as Toilers. Often ambitious people in Progressive Harmony nations enter a term of Toil to get startup funds for a private Citizen business after their term is up.

Doctors, farm owners, salesmen, importers, repairmen, exporters, greengrocers, prostitutes and butchers are typically Citizens.

Intellectuals

Free government-sponsored education is available to everyone, until death. The state won't conform to the convenience of a student who doesn't participate, however. If you don't go to class, you don't learn. If you're disruptive, you're ejected. But if you want to learn French, you can sign up for a community French class and learn. If the closest class is twenty miles away in town, it's your lookout to get there for class.

In Progressive Harmony, then, an Intellectual isn't necessarily just someone who studies professionally. Anyone can study anything and, if they want, take tests and get certified as an engineer or a physician or a licensed sanitary food handler.

An Intellectual is something different for Progressive Harmony. He (or she) is a specialist focussing on the sciences or on the practice of law.

Anyone can become a probationary Intellectual simply by going to the nearest academy (that's where Intellectuals work) and applying. There follows a year during which the candidate makes himself as useful to the intelligentsia caste as he possibly can. This may take the form of research, legal aid, or simply running errand after errand for tenured Intellectuals. During this time, he gets a small stipend from the Academy and, often, some bare-bones barrack space.

At the end of the year, the members of the Academy may vote on whether to bestow full Intellectual status or not. (Many abstain.) If 51+% of the responding voters agree, the candidate gets tenure and becomes a full Intellectual. About 75% of the people who take the year get in: Only those who make enemies or are clearly flawed get voted out.

Half the Intellectuals are charged with research, with creating new things and inventing new products. The rights to any discoveries are retained by the caste as a whole and any profits from them are shared out yearly to all Intellectuals. There is therefore a steady

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Orphans

Orphans may, in extreme circumstances, be offered the chance to voluntarily Toil for the government. These orphan Toilers are usually put to 'work' at a centralized government school. (The literal translation is 'knowledge factory'.) Wards of the state are bombarded with intense AE as a matter of course, but their education results are usually excellent. The knowledge factory studies its charges carefully and helps them find the caste to which they are best suited. Often highly placed Representatives and heroic Riskers come from the knowledge factory. As Progressive Harmony grows, the Citizens begin demanding that the knowledge factory be opened to their own children. Ever responsive to its people, satellite factories are opened where (for a nominal fee) people of all castes can send their children to be educated.

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They could find me if they wanted. The question really was, how important was I? Or maybe the question was, how long would it take June to discover I'd skipped out of the villa? Or, maybe the question was how many telepaths they had available, or how willing they were to rouse a metahuman in the middle of the night to seek out one rogue journalist.

I guess the question really was, how much time did I have?

But I put those questions behind me as I came to the stocks at the edge of the rice paddy. I focussed my mind on wondering, "What happened to the man who was in there?" I'd gone off the planned tour, stolen one of those queer, quiet cars and risked an encounter with the mysterious Riskers to talk to someone on the wrong side of Progressive Harmony, and now I couldn't find him.

With no better options, I went up to the stocks. Amidst all the gleaming efficiency of rebuilt Hanoi, these were a brutal relic of a bygone age. They wouldn't have looked out of place at Salem during the witch trials.

I leaned in to see if there was blood, and I heard music.

Off in the distance, soothing and stern at the same time, uplifting and hopeful and determined. I started picking my way along the trails and came to a long, low building with one light on next to the doorway and one man sitting on the top step, bare feet dangling above the mud. He had a book in his hand and looked up as I approached.

"Hello?" I asked. My Vietnamese wasn't anywhere close to June's English, but I hoped it would do for this Toiler.

"Who are you?" he asked, standing.

"Please," I said, "Don't go. I'm a reporter." When he looked confused I said, "I ask people things so I can tell others the truth."

"You're American." I was doing well just to follow his words, I couldn't tell if there was reproach in his voice or not.

"Yes. I want to tell the truth about Progressive Harmony. Will you help me?"

He looked at me for a long time, then closed his book and stood up to his full height, squaring his shoulders.

"I will."

"Do you know who was in the stocks this afternoon?" I asked.

"I was."

When I looked surprised, he held out his wrists. They weren't bloody, but I could see they were red and chafed. "I do not sleep because I did not work and am not tired."



"What are you reading?"

"A book of the law," he said. "When I complete my toil, I may stand for an election."

I nodded and waited.

"I am not a criminal," he said. "I chose toil."

"Why?"

"Because I was hungry," he said. He stepped down into the mud and sat back on the step again, gesturing me closer. "When I finish my term, I will have money of my own. Is it so with workers in your country?" Again, the tone was a mystery, but from his jutting chin I think he was challenging me.

"Workers in my country get paid as they go," I said, "And no one can lock them up."

"Except your Riskers," he said.

From "Vietnam: Monster or Miracle?" by Aubrey Newcombe

"They're called 'police' in the US."

He shrugged. "My term holder was right to lock me up."

"Excuse me?"

His mouth twisted and he looked down at the book in his hands. "I was pilfering and my work was not meeting quota. So he put me in the stocks. I wish he had beaten me instead."

"He's allowed to do that?"

"Of course!"

"Why not just... call the Riskers, tell them that you stole from him?"

"What would that gain him? An extension of my term, perhaps. The term of a bad worker, what reward is that?"

"What did you steal?"

"Liquor." He sighed. "I was a fool. He said I had wronged myself and my work cadre and that if he beat me, the drink would mask the pain. So he gave me the stocks where the others could see my shame and told them to make up my quota."

"Collective responsibility," I said.

"I do not know that term."

"It means that when one does wrong, everyone is punished."

"Ah. Collective responsibility, yes that is good. Is there any other kind?"

"What else is your master allowed to do to you?"

"I have no master!" he said, head jerking up and eyes flashing. "He holds my term, but when it ends we are equals!"

"He can beat you, lock you up, take away your rights..."

"No, he cannot. He has no right to work me beyond half the day, nor to deny me food and lodging. In your country, millions sleep on streets with no roof and empty stomachs, is this not so?"

"Not 'millions'..."

"I work for my term holder, but all is work for Vietnam, for Harmony, for the culture! I wish I could work fourteen hours, twenty hours!"

His voice was rising and I saw a light go on in a farther building. Was that where the master—I'm sorry, 'term holder'—lived?

"I'd better go," I said. "If the Riskers catch me, what will they do?"

He shrugged. "All crime is an implicit critique of society." He said it like it was a folk aphorism.

When I got back to the car, the door opened in front of me. I jumped like I'd seen a ghost.

"Have you found the disgrace you sought?" June asked, lips tight and eyes fierce. "Have you uncovered the shocking exploited underbelly of Progressive Harmony?" Her hair was in curlers under a net and she was wearing a long coat over pajamas and rubber boots.

"I spoke with a Toiler," I said, climbing into the car.

"And?"

"And that's between me and him," I said. Then a thought struck me. "He won't get in trouble, will he?"

"For speaking his mind? There's no law against that." Even awakened in the middle of the night, her English was clipped and precise. "Let's get you back to the villa."

pressure to discover and earn and make money, and to help your fellows do so.

However, the government also underwrites the Intellectuals as needed. (Historically, they support them for about a decade in Vietnam until their patents and foreign investments are sufficient.) The early stipend is pretty basic, but the government is happy to pay in order to get half the Intellectuals as its court system.

Here's how it works. Every five years, each tenured Intellectual is evaluated by her peers, who vote on whether her research is valuable or poor. If it's valuable, she gets another five years to contribute, hoping to produce a big breakthrough like a popular medicine or a more efficient engine. If she gets voted down, she has to spend five years in the legal system as a defender, prosecutor or judge. (Many like legal work just fine and never apply to leave it.) Half the Intellectuals are always working on laws, and half on science. It's inflexible. While petty rivalries and personal vendetta sometimes push a brilliant researcher into law, by and large the Intellectuals know it's in their best financial interests to have the science brains doing science.

The practice of law in Progressive Harmony nations gives foreigners fits. Laws are passed by Representatives, often after extensive consultation with Intellectuals, but the interpretation of them is entirely at the discretion of the individual judge who draws a case in a lottery. Precedent may be a point of argument, but it is not binding, opening Progressive Harmonious law to charges of capriciousness and imbalance. The Intellectuals reply to these accusations by pointing out that at least they're helping their criminals, not just trapping them as a despised permanent underemployed underclass. Every individual is unique, therefore every case is unique, therefore judges get latitude to make every decision unique. There are no hard and fast minimum sentencing rules, though there are many plain guidelines. Judges can mete out terms of Toil up to life and can command property seizures up to 83% of an individual's total worth. But there is no execution. There is no official prison system. However, many involuntary Toilers who attempt escape are sent to 'closed factories' which are as secure as any maximum security jail in the US.

Cultura

One can be officially recognized as an artistic creator simply by filling out an application. However, one cannot be only of the Cultura. One must also belong to another caste—so there are Cultura/Riskers, Cultura/Citizens, even Cultura/Toilers. Members of the Cultura are officially considered for government artistic grants (disbursed by representatives from all castes except Citizens and Toilers). It's possible to make some tidy side-cash as an artist, but ProgHarm has no patience for those who do nothing else.

The exception is musicians and composers. Music is considered such an integral and important element of human thought and existence that anyone who wants to be a professional musician can apply for a government job doing nothing but.

The audition for such sinecures are strict, and the would-be musician only gets one chance. In her life. Fail that and she can busk on street corners or croon at weddings all she likes, but she's not a musician.

But if she passes, she has a job for life. Two months of the year she has to go to a musical conservatory to study, hone her skills and learn new official music. (This isn't any kind of hardship: By 1981, the conservatories are like four-star hotels.) The rest of the time she gets official appointments as determined by a central coordinating committee. Factory openings, awards ceremonies and similar events often have government performers—even bands or orchestras. Single musicians, or smaller groups, are often dispatched to play in public at transport hubs, in the lobbies of buildings or to tour small settlements giving concerts.

This is all about AE, of course. If you think of Attitudinal Engineering as a synergenic disease, Nguyet Cam is Patient Zero, but she herself is immune to the symptoms. Her goal is to expose as many people as she can, as often as possible. But most people don't have the skill or the musical comprehension to recreate the embedded synergenes. (That's one reason AE relies heavily on recordings.) Average folks can catch the 'illness' and display its symptoms

of national loyalty, mild xenophobia, and a productive tension between class satisfaction and an indefinable personal anxiety that keeps them working, hoping to fill the void. Musicians, however, can spread the disease to others, and they exhibit all its symptoms. Indeed, their synchrony with the program is more pronounced than others'. Other Progressive Harmony denizens hear the music, but the professionals are within the music.

Part of their extensive training involves reading crowds and instinctively playing syntergenic rhythms the crowds are primed to accept. Thanks to this training (much of it performed subconsciously through 'practice exercises' ripe with AE) people at their live concerts never get bonuses to their Stability rolls when resisting the thought-forms (see page 311).

The Progress Cadre

The first and best-organized group of metahumans is the North Vietnamese "Progress Cadre." Nguyet Cam (p. 164) hand-picks its members and exposes them to her powers, giving them each into Tier Three powers. Thanks to her careful selection and her psychological manipulation, Cam's eight offspring develop powers useful to her crusade against South Vietnam, the US, and (eventually) to the defense of Progressive Harmony (p. 343).

In theory, any supergenius could similarly mold power-offspring, either by choosing personalities carefully or by using equal care with brainwashing. (Cam does both.) In practice, her willingness to treat people as objects makes this much easier for her than it would be for (say) Jason Weeks. Moreover, she does face the considerable inconvenience of not using her powers on people until she has found someone she wants to bestow dark energy upon.

Linh Thi Li ("Leen Tee Lee"), Human Cornucopia

Cam's master of materials, Linh Thi Li has exactly the same powers as Jack Grimes (p. 213), despite having few observable personality traits in common. Unlike Grimes, Li is calm,

somewhat passive and generally obedient to those in authority. Despite this lack of aggression, Linh Thi Li serves as a pivotal element during Vietnam's invasion of Laos. Her destiny is to die in 1971 during the "Laotian Götterdämmerung."

Tuan Cong Thach ("Twon Con Thatch"), Earth Mover

Cam's earth sculptor shares the powers of Cynthia Carls (p. 214), though not Carls' gender. Initially a hotheaded young man, Tuan's enthusiasm and poor impulse control demand fairly extensive conditioning at Cam's hands, which leave him more malleable but with very little initiative. As a puppet to both Cam and Bao Verong (see below), Tuan Cong Thach is essential to Vietnam's recovery, easily creating buildings as needed, healing the scars of war, laying hundreds of miles of road, and reshaping agricultural land for greater productivity. Of course, his powers are also used on the offense. Like Linh Thi Li, Thach is deployed against Laos with devastating effect and, like her, he is destined to perish in the Laotian Götterdämmerung.

An Toán Do ("Ann Twahn Doe"), Astral Assassin

Vicious, resentful, and poisoned by his own pride, An Toán Do is one of Cam's most dangerous creations. This is due not only to his powers of infiltration and assassination, but to his personality and willpower. Unlike some members of the Progress Cadre, An Toán is his own man and more than willing to pursue his own strategies, poorly-considered as they might be. His discovery of Bich Thi Ngyuen (p. 207) in the USSR spurs him to wantonly slaughter those around her and effectively prevents her from forming her own version of the Progress Cadre. His assassinations of US Senators produces equal parts caution and rage in the US, but Cam protects him because he acted on her orders. He places Chris Marshall (p. 171) in ethical stalemate and later does the same thing to Tina Shaw (p. 205) while inflicting wholesale destruction on the "Shaw Monsters" born of her powers. But those successes lead him to go too far, and once he murders Lady Bird Johnson, Bao

Regardless of how socially advanced (or confusing) Vietnam was, it couldn't make my last morning in the country any less awkward. I cursed myself for losing objectivity, but it was halfhearted. If I had it to do over, I'd do it sooner.

June was collected over breakfast, wearing the clothes she'd had when she first picked me up. I now recognized the subtleties that indicated her position in society, her Representative caste. The half-heard music piping through the hotel lobby, I could almost hear how it fit, how it was right for travelers and those of respectable office, how it would sound unusual to a Toiler accustomed to work songs, perhaps making him uncomfortable unless he was in his proper place, carrying bags or cleaning linens for his term holder.

"You look lovely this morning," I said, and her cheeks pinked a little. Did she put on that particular skirt and jacket to touch on our first meeting? To complete the circle as she left me at Hanoi airport, like a musical movement?

Outside, workmen were widening the street. Their equipment was eerily quiet. Here there was no jackhammer racket, no diesel roar. The tools were electric, they hummed and buzzed and purred as they cut into stone. They almost harmonized with the music discretely emerging from shops and from speakers on light poles.

"Have you made up your mind?" she asked, as she pulled into the smoothest, quietest busy traffic I'd ever experienced.

"About what?"

"About us?" Then she blushed again. "I mean, about Progressive Harmony."

"I could stay here a decade and not make up my mind."

"Indeed," she said, quietly.

At the airport, Hanoi's basilica of transportation, I saw men in jumpsuits doing what I at first thought was remarkably skilled mime. Then I saw them pulling a window from the wall and realized they'd been manipulating a replacement plane—ZRI glass a foot thick and utterly invisible.

"Progress," I said, nodding my head at it.

June smiled. "Always."

I found I scarcely had to think about where my gate was. The passengers ambled up to it casually, at just the rate to be seated without undue haste, without undue waiting. The airport song was familiar and new at the same time.

"Goodbye, Aubrey Newcombe," she said, shaking my hand.

"I'll be back some day." Before it came out of my mouth, I had no inkling I was about to say it.

June flung herself into an impulsive hug and her breath tickled my ear as she whispered, "My real name is Phuong."

She kissed my cheek and left without a backward glance, while I got on the plane humming a tune I couldn't perfectly recall, but knew I would never, ever forget.

Verong puts him on a show trial and executes him before the US can pass a law authorizing the use of nuclear weapons in retaliation.

Power Suite

Harm 9HD (108 Points): An's most feared power creates a dark energy "pseudo gravity" inside his victim, crushing them into a fleshy pellet roughly the size of a shoebox. For some reason (probably one reflecting some tawdry aspect of An's personality) blood is not affected by this pull and, instead, squirts and sprays violently during the process. Fearsome as the power is, it is limited. First off, it cannot target those who are already infused with dark energy. Secondly, it requires some effort on his part, and cannot be used often in succession (that's the "exhausted" flaw). It works just fine on Shaw Monsters, however, despite their dependence on dark energy just to exist. It also doesn't work on those he can't clearly see. Therefore, people who know they're being targeted can save themselves with total darkness.

Attacks (+2), Range Boost (+6), Non-Physical (+2), If/Then (No metahuman targets) (-1), Exhausted (-3)

Astral Projection 1d+2HD (40 Points): This is similar to the "Ghost" power in Wild Talents. An Toán's consciousness leaves his body and is projected immaterially outside it.

Defends (+2), Endless (+3), Willpower Bid (-1)

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Willpower Bid (-1)

Flight 10d (50 Points): When he is out-of-body, An can fly. He can't any other time.

Useful (+2), Attached (Astral Projection) (-2), Speed Boost (+5)

Invisibility 10HD (60 Points): Again, this power is only available when he's astrally projecting.

Defends (+2), Attached (Astral Projection) (-2), Duration (+2)

Useful (+2), Attached (Astral Projection) (-2), Duration (+2), Self Only (-3)

+35 Base Will (141 Points): Like I said, he's his own man.

+1 Willpower (1 Point)

Bao Verong ("Bow Vayrong"), Blustering Figurehead

Cam needed someone who would distract attention from her maneuvers, someone who would be like a bright, sparkly distraction while she worked her magic tricks behind the scenes. Unfortunately for her, the kind of psyche that cries out for attention and subservience doesn't easily knuckle under, even to her superhuman levels of persuasion. Fortunately for her, Bao was not too bright but thought himself smarter than any around him, and therefore handed her many easy levers to manipulate. Bao really, truly believes he's in charge of Vietnam and that while Nguyet Cam is a schemer, he has her well in hand. He agrees with her sometimes, disagrees often, and is ignorant of her opinions often. This does not stop her from manipulating every meaningful political decision he makes. It doesn't even slow her down.

Bao Verong serves as the beloved and idolized leader of Vietnam until the formation of the Indochinese Economic Gestalt in 1976. He serves as the leader of the IEG until his death in 1983. Throughout, he is revered to the point of near-deification. Although he is completely Cam's creature, almost no one knows this—Not Bao himself, and certainly not the millions who hang upon his word, or the hundreds of thousands who would die to preserve the principles they think he embodies.

Power Suite

10WD Charm (160 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

10WD Command (160 Points)

Hyperstat (+4)

Defensive Radiance 3HD (66 Points): Bao Verong can clothe himself in a glorious glow of brilliant, shimmering energy. It's lovely, almost hypnotic to look at, and it can stop a bullet. Unfortunately for Bao, while it's on he can't smell, ingest or feel the texture of anything, so he switches it off to eat and on most social occasions. He can, however, breathe through it just fine.

Mechanically, this is like Invulnerability, except for its flaws and for being Endless instead of Permanent.

Defends (HAR) (+2), Interference (+3), Endless (+3), Obvious (-1), If/Then (Blocks sensation and ingestion) (-1)

Defends (LAR) (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Hardened (+2), Endless (+3), Obvious (-1), If/Then (Blocks sensation and ingestion) (-1)

Useful (+2), Self Only (-3), If/Then (Only for Variable Effect) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for immunities) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), Endless (+3), Obvious (-1), If/Then (Blocks sensation and ingestion) (-1)

Light Armor 2HD (12 Points): There's nothing special about this, it's just regular light armor, no light show, always on, an ugly surprise to anyone who tries to shank him in bed.

Defends (+2), Armored Defense (-2), Endless (+3)

Empathy 2d (2 Points): This is a Hyperskill.

Dinh Quang Phung ("Deen Kwang Foon"), Inventor With His Head in the Clouds

It didn't take Cam long to find a curious and inventive personality just perfect for the role of Progressive Harmony's fountainhead of technological innovation. Dinh is an energetic, high-strung cricket of a man. Though easily irritated, he quickly swings back to cheerfulness and forgives rapidly. He shares Cam's fascination with space (though he is far more optimistic about what's out there) and when she hasn't gently suggested another path for his investigations, space exploration is where he directs his considerable energy. He has the stats for a Tier Three Gadeteer as listed on page 23. He survives up to 1999, pottering in his lab the whole time. Of course, after 1982, his lab sits at the top of the space elevator Thien The Thang Máy (p. 328), and rather than let the IEG rescue him in 1983, the US military severs the tether, sending the satellite drifting off into the deeper regions of the solar system, not to return until 1988.

Tuyet Thi Dang ("TooYET Tee Dahn"), Soothing Presence

In the Vietnams of the late 1960s, there's plenty of injury, disease and disaster. A genius like Cam, looking for someone longing to make things better, is spoiled for choice. So to fill out the Progress Cadre's roster with a healer and repair power, she looks specifically for someone who's easily persuaded, shy, deferential, cautious, and shows initiative only to the extent of trying to foresee the needs of her superiors. Tuyet Thi Dang, a sweet nurse in her sixties with her first grandchild on the way, fits superbly. Until her untimely death in 1984 (assassinated while attempting to treat the victims of biological warfare), she's a quiet but steady force of stability in the Progressive Harmony nations. Her killer is found to be under the influence of a 'murder syntergene' and is therefore not held fully accountable for his actions. (For powers, just use the stats of a Tier Three healer from page 24.)

Mai Thi Chung ("My Tee Choon"), Gossip to the Nth Degree

A lively and inquisitive young woman, Mai Thi Chung happily tells Ngyuet Cam her life story and, in the process, reveals how fascinated she is with the lives of others. No vindictive neighborhood spy, Mai never judges and always sympathizes. She just wants to know. She finds it interesting.

Empowered at the tender age of seventeen, Mai's curiosity expands from human concerns outward to national and international politics, foreign cultures, scientific advancements and current events. This is due in no small part to her newly minted abilities to perceive nearly anything.

As she ages, Mai develops a close (though platonic) relationship with Dinh Quang Phung and comes to share his fascination with space, turning her considerable abilities outward with greater frequency throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In 1997, she sees something in deep space which prompts her to kill herself after giving a thorough report to Ngyuet Cam through Duc Van Ho (see below), who also kills himself afterwards.

Power Suite

Perceive (Hugely Freaking Variable)

7d+1WD (396 Points): While she can't read minds or predict the future, Mai can detect just about any movement of matter or energy that she turns her attention to. All spectra of light, gravity waves, matter density, and particles down to the level where Heisenberg effects kick in (call it individual molecules just to be conservative). She can't sustain the concentration very long and it takes some effort to recalibrate scale, but on the other hand, she has a range of 1.28x1020 kilometers. (I'll save you the math: That's 13 million light years, encompassing all of the Milky Way galaxy and the 30+ galaxies in the Local Group, along with a few outliers.)

Useful (Perceive Matter) (+2), Variable Effect (+4), Range Boost (+20), Delayed Effect (-2), Exhausted (-3), Fragile (-1), Locational (Head) (-1), Willpower Bid (-1)

Useful (Perceive Energy) (+2), Variable Effect (+4), Range Boost (+20), Delayed Effect (-2), Exhausted (-3), Fragile (-1), Locational (Head) (-1), Willpower Bid (-1)

Mind 1d (4 Points): A Hyperstat.

Duc Van Ho ("Dyooch Vahn Ha"), Fortified Psychic Switchboard

Duc is a stalwart communist, a believer in the inevitable rise of the proletariat and the withering away of the state. He becomes a favorite of Ngyuet Cam's after his change, for he's one of the few who can understand (at least partially) the goals and methods of Progressive Harmony. Given his psychic abilities, she can be sure his mind is lipping-full of her philosophy. Right up to his suicide in 1997, Duc regrets his inability to fully grasp Ngyuet's intent and analysis. But he never doubts it. His dying words are, "Forgive my weakness great leader, but I cannot continue, having beheld the Unsided."

Power Suite

Telepathy 9d (72 Points): This is the stock-standard Wild Talents power. As with General Colt, its attacks can be shaken off with Stability.

Attacks (+2), Non-Physical (+2)

Defends (+2)

Useful (+2)

Form Psi-Link 10HD (20 Points): For every Hard Die in this power, he can use it on one person and induct them into a sort of psychic gestalt. It's not a true sharing of the minds and it's not constant, but once he has attuned someone to his frequency, he can contact them (and vice versa) thereafter. Initially, his ten available slots are allocated to himself, Ngyuet and the other members of the Progress Cadre.

Useful (+2), Touch Range (-2), Endless (+3), Slow (-2)

Immune (Mind-Based Effects) 10HD (160 Points): Duc is not only an impenetrable psychic wall, he can share this protection with others whom he has marked with his Psi-Link. Of course, this protection only stretches out for 500,000 km.

Useful (+2), Endless (+3), Range Boost (+5), If/Then (Can only protect those bearing his Psi-Link) (-1), Willpower Bid (-1)

Brain Radio 4d+4HD+2WD (40 Points):

At relatively close range, his telepathy has all the bells and whistles of forestalling attacks and rummaging through memories and creating migraines, and it can affect anyone. The Brain Radio is far more limited. It permits two-way communication, and it doesn't show deep feelings or communicate complicated ideas any better than, say, talking about them over a radio would. But it is quite handy for members of the Progress Cadre to have a constant and secure channel of communications. Surprisingly, it is not instantaneous.

Useful (+2), Range Boost (+5), Attached (Form Psi-Link) (-2), Slow (-2), Go Last (-1)

Backup Consciousness 20WD (80 Points):

Duc can touch someone and copy their mind into his. This "second self" is independent, self-willed and self-aware, though Duc can keep it sedated and usually does when he doesn't need to consult it. A scanned enemy could be coerced (or simply mind-read with telepathy, weirdly enough) while a duplicated friend's mind can be permitted access to Duc's senses.

For every die of Backup Consciousness he possesses, he can duplicate one die of Mind. If he lacks the capacity to hold all the Mind dice of a target, he can't copy in that consciousness (it disintegrates with only partial structure). To duplicate a WD of Mind, he must allocate a WD of his power, and once spent, he can't reallocate it without dumping the current consciousness.

Useful (+2), Touch Only (-2)

4d Mind (16 Points): A Hyperstat.

+4 Base Will (12 Points): He is a fervent true believer.

Åism

The Chosen of Å begin as a sect, become a regional power, and eventually grow into a nation, a global faith with a mission to spread humanity to the stars. But it begins with one man and his six loyal apostles, his saints, his Council of Wisdom.

Å's personality is a unique fusion of a black South African revolutionary and a white South African physicist. He acts with total conviction in his cause and while he lives, his vision directs the religion with uncontested authority. It's only after his death in 1995 that fissures appear.

Tenets and Principles of Åism

The core of Å's beliefs are set out in a book entitled "The Revelations of Å." It's not long—shorter than Mao's little red book—and like Å himself it's a confusing melange that manages to be more than the sum of its parts. It's written in the language of myth, but it periodically breaks into complicated mathematical proofs. In the end, however, its lessons are direct, if not simple.

The Åite Council of Wisdom

Amidst the multitude of metahumans, Å is one of the precious few who can control the creation of his progeny, and he's by far the highest-tier to pick the exact powers his descendants receive. Between this, his incredible persuasive abilities and his ability to interface with interior conflicts, he's able to hand-pick a group to follow him and enact his goals of unifying humanity with the

cosmos through dark energy. He calls his six followers the "Council of Wisdom."

Refiliwe "Rafael" Kenana ("REEahFillihweh KehNAHnuh"), Liberator of Ė

Artist (of modest talent) by inclination, and farmer by necessity, Refiliwe was always torn between his desire to take power away from tyrants and his hopeful belief that people were basically good and would use power wisely if given it. Shy by nature, Refiliwe (or "Rafael," as he's known to his English speaking friends) is passionately optimistic about Å, especially in the early days when the movement tries to work nonviolently. Unfortunately, his powers push him into conflict with a lot of his fellow metahumans. But under that blushing, smiling façade there is great strength.

Power Suite

Power Reset +8d+2WD (64 Points): To a good Åite, it's the place of those with powers to spread them as broadly as possible. Therefore, sterile powers—those that don't affect other people and therefore can't create offspring—are a worrying blockage to the desired flow of energy. Refiliwe can take away non-affective powers like invulnerability or weather control and replace them with... a second choice. The only limit is, the second choice has to be something that can be aimed at a normal person without turning him into vapor. Note that Refiliwe can only reset powers that don't affect other people. Thus, Cynthia Carls (p. 214) would be a legitimate target because she has no powers that can make her contagious. While he could reset Amy Sykes' (p. 177) defenses, he couldn't do a thing to her explosive powers.

On a rules level, all you have to do is take the points that were spent on the non-affecting power (or powers) and re-spend them on a different power that can spread the Ė.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Willpower Cost (+0), If/Then (Only works on powers that don't affect other people) (-1), If/Then (Only creates powers that affect other people) (-1)

Perceive Ė +8d (40 Points): This is like a standard Perceive power that works on dark energy. Refiliwe can detect metahumans, objects and creatures that contain dark energy anywhere within 7,272 miles. However, to use his power he has to be relaxed and have his eyes closed. When he uses it, he glows with a bright green halo, and any metahuman upon whom he focuses his attention instantly knows it.

Useful (+2), Obvious (-1), Range Boost (+4)

Intĕrfĕrĕ +5HD (110 Points): Refiliwe can not only strip out and change powers that don't affect others, he can disrupt the energy of powers that do. This is strictly a defensive ability, but as defenses go it's pretty good. It works out to 16,000 yards and it's an Interference power, so it gobbles dice out of sets regardless of timing. With its extra Defends levels, it provides 9x10 Gobble Dice.

Defends+4 (+6), Interference (+3), Range Boost (+2) If/Then (Only on dark energy powers) (-1)

+12 Base Will (36 Points): Hey, he's a true believer.

Sipho Masango ("SEEfo MahSANGo"), Mover of the World

Sipho was a laborer, a loader of trucks and carrier of burdens, until the day he caught a bullet during a gunfight between the South African police and the ANC's militant wing. He's not sure which side fired on him, but he is sure which side has his loyalty. But his injury was incompetently treated and complications from the gunshot kept him from working and forced him into begging. Fortunately for everyone involved, Å helped Sipho resolve his resentments and bitterness before empowering him, and with the energy of Ė coursing through him, Sipho chose to help his friends rather than destroy his enemies.

His medical problems persist until a day when he levitates a crowd of a thousand cheering Åites, intending to pass his powers on. He not only succeeds, he creates a healer who, eventually, becomes his wife.

Power Suite

Supermassive TK +10d (250 Points): It's like normal TK in broad terms, but in specific it's slower and much, much, much bigger. For Sipho, picking up an SUV is like picking up a single grain of sand with tweezers. It can be done, but it's harder than picking up a baseball bare handed. He can't just squash a person because an individual is too small for his power to manipulate. So he can only attack by moving around objects that are big enough for him to control. Like, say, the Eiffel Tower. It's the same thing with defense. He can't make a bullet-proof force field, but if he sees you point a gun at him he can yank thousands of tons of earth out of the ground between you and him. So he's not great on defense, and while his attacks do Width+3 Shock and Killing they're few, far between, and easier to dodge than bullets.

But Åism doesn't need Sipho as a weapon. He's far more useful for construction. Until his departure from Earth, he never uses his full power—never even comes close. No one but Jason Weeks (p. 195) and Nguyet Cam (p. 164) suspect that he has the power to pull the Earth apart or knock it out of the sun's ecliptic. Even Å thinks the title he gives Sipho is just an honorific.

Attacks+3 (+5), Slow (-2), Go Last (-1), If/Then (Only attacks indirectly) (-1)

Defends (+2), If/Then (Only defends indirectly) (-1)

Useful (+2), Slow (-2), Go Last (-1), If/Then (Only works on the unresisting) (-1), Willpower Bid (-1), No Physics (+2), Mass Boost (+24)

Njabulo Malema ("NABoolow MOLLeemuh"), Seeker of the Dead

Njabulo became a soldier to avenge his older brother, became close comrades with his fellows in the ANC militia and lost some of them. Then he became more determined, as he had fallen friends to avenge. His grim fierceness got more and more intense, leading him to greater risks and, inevitably, more lost buddies. Initially passionate and energetic, Njabulo became more silent, withdrawn and focused as the cycle repeated.

It was Å who derailed him from this tightening spiral. Instead of dealing death, Njabulo began

I'd been in South Africa less than a day when a voice in my head awakened me.

"Forgive the intrusion," it said, "But if you are here to truly understand Å and the works of his followers, now is the time. Circumstances are coming to fruition."

I had never been spoken to telepathically before. I was alone in my hotel room, but there was a powerful sense of intimacy. If you haven't experienced a mind-touch, it's not like listening to normal speech, or not always. This man (and somehow the thoughts were undeniably masculine) might not have even known English, and I certainly wasn't receiving his thoughts in the linear form of sentences. Rather, it was a matter of experiencing knowledge directly. If I put it in the form of words, it is because I put it in the form of words. At that moment, it was not words but simply understanding, perhaps filed as a sentence by my consciousness, as the most familiar and convenient way to receive and store the information he passed me. It was less like hearing than remembering.

"Who are you?" I asked and a face appeared in my thoughts, a kind and tired black man of middle age. If he was flattering himself in this mental portrait, I wouldn't have guessed it. He looked ordinary.

"What... what are you going to tell me? Or... show me?"

"A police officer is coming for me," and I knew that while he was afraid, he was not alarmed. He knew his fear

was irrational, and he was fighting it very hard. I don't know if he meant to show me the fear, or if he was trying to conceal it, or if he just accepted that it couldn't be concealed.

I had the sense of a building, large and old and dusty and then I was in the policeman's mind. I experienced what he saw and what he heard, but all vaguely, like in a dream. Far more vivid were the feelings, hate and contempt of a depth I'd never experienced myself, in my life. I thank God I never had.

"Come out Mchinu," he called. "If you can, if you're not stuck in a fit. If you make me come after you..." He finished, not with a word, but with a surge of resentment that he couldn't frame in words.

"I am here, Liam."

"You don't get to use my first name!"

"Officer Blignaut, then."

"Disrespectful nigger."

I felt it as the policeman drew a pistol, felt the weight and the oiliness of the metal. He began opening doors and there was an apprehension, a concern that this might be a trap, blending oddly with his utter disregard for the idea that Mchinu might have any courage, might take that risk. Pulsing throughout and getting stronger was an excitement, a dark hunting thrill.

"I could take you to Å, officer Blignaut."

A thrill of triumph. "You went Judas even quicker than I expected, Mchinu."

"You misunderstand me. If you wish it, I can take you out of this harrowing self you inhabit. You have chosen a prison of a life, and Å has the key."

"Oh, I've heard about it. All about you religious weirdies and your 'other selves,' but I think I'll stick with reality, thank you."

"Your identity is only as real as you make it."

"Then I'll have mine very real indeed." All throughout this exchange, I co-experienced the policeman climbing steps and pushing doors open. I was aware that Mchinu's voice was getting closer, and Mchinu himself was feeling less fear and a vast, rising sorrow.

"I can feel what's within you, Liam..."

"Don't call me that!"

"...You're like a well of poison. Why do you stay in it? You can choose to be free of it. You can escape all that hatred, suspicion and weariness."

"Then we'll all hold hands and sing songs, black and white together?" I felt a headache coming on in my body, spurred by the bitter cynicism in him.

"You're approaching the end of your trail, Liam Blignaut. You can still step aside, choose a different path, and live."

"Are you threatening me? I'm an officer of the law! I'm a white man!"

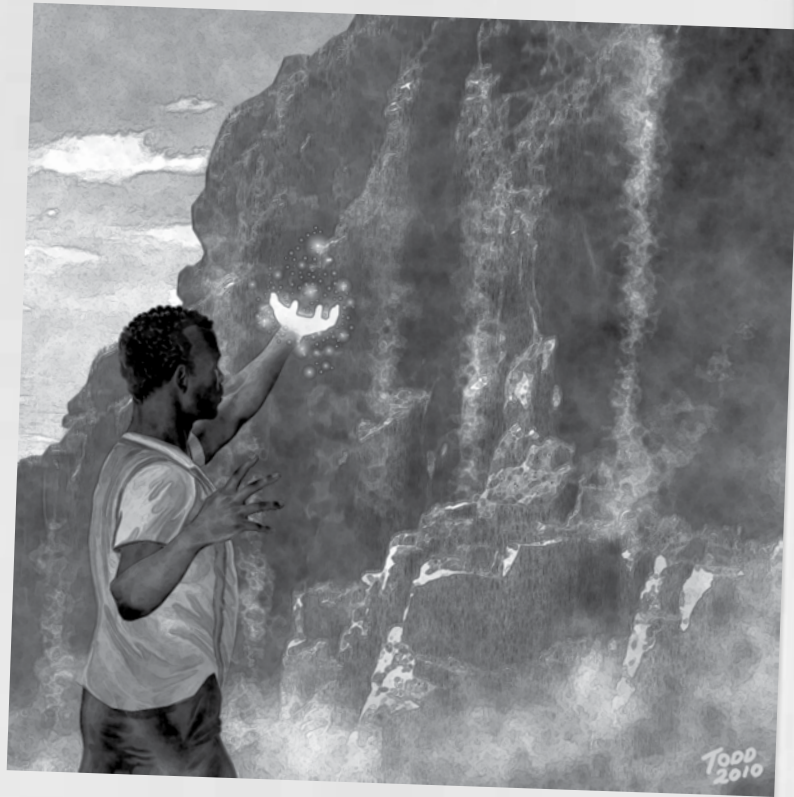
"Put down your gun. Calm your feelings. You can travel into wisdom, into universal life, into a wider experience..."

"Shut up, you babbling fool!"

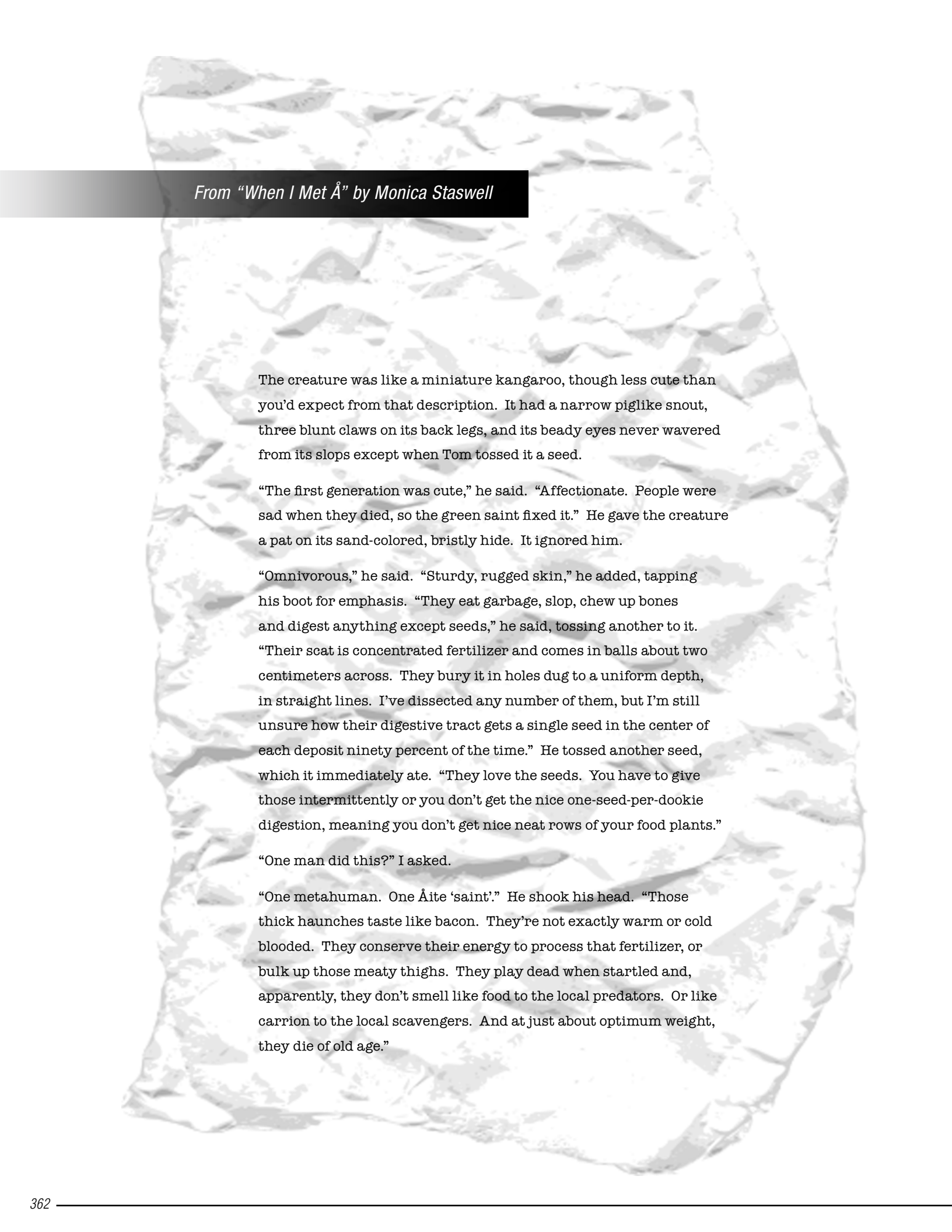
Blignaut knew he was at the last door, the last hiding place, and he knew as well that he was going to kick the door and open fire. He knew Mchinu would be unarmed and defenseless and he hated the black man all the more for it.

"This is the end of your path," Mchinu said, but I didn't hear it through Blignaut's ears, I only knew Mchinu was speaking and that I was back in my hotel room. A moment later, I was once more alone within my mind.

I read in the evening edition of the paper that a policeman named Liam Blignaut had been found dead. The next day, rumors were flying that he'd killed himself, that his skin had been turned black, or that he'd been found without a mark on him.



From *"When I Met Å"* by Monica Staswell



From "When I Met Å" by Monica Staswell

The creature was like a miniature kangaroo, though less cute than you'd expect from that description. It had a narrow piglike snout, three blunt claws on its back legs, and its beady eyes never wavered from its slops except when Tom tossed it a seed.

"The first generation was cute," he said. "Affectionate. People were sad when they died, so the green saint fixed it." He gave the creature a pat on its sand-colored, bristly hide. It ignored him.

"Omnivorous," he said. "Sturdy, rugged skin," he added, tapping his boot for emphasis. "They eat garbage, slop, chew up bones and digest anything except seeds," he said, tossing another to it. "Their scat is concentrated fertilizer and comes in balls about two centimeters across. They bury it in holes dug to a uniform depth, in straight lines. I've dissected any number of them, but I'm still unsure how their digestive tract gets a single seed in the center of each deposit ninety percent of the time." He tossed another seed, which it immediately ate. "They love the seeds. You have to give those intermittently or you don't get the nice one-seed-per-dookie digestion, meaning you don't get nice neat rows of your food plants."

"One man did this?" I asked.

"One metahuman. One Åite 'saint'." He shook his head. "Those thick haunches taste like bacon. They're not exactly warm or cold blooded. They conserve their energy to process that fertilizer, or bulk up those meaty thighs. They play dead when startled and, apparently, they don't smell like food to the local predators. Or like carrion to the local scavengers. And at just about optimum weight, they die of old age."

dealing with it. Å gave him the power to harvest and redistribute residual dark energy from metahuman corpses, and with Refiliwe Kenana to find them for him, Njabulo soon internalizes enough Ė to rival the levels of the Progenitor herself. But unlike Amanda (p. 159), who can sculpt her power as she wishes, Njabulo's powers are exclusively generous. Thus, while he's a quiet member of the Council, he's one that all the others want as an ally.

Power Suite

Drain Dead Metahuman +2HD (4 Points):

Every time he uses this on a dead metahuman, he receives 20 "units" of Ė. He can continue draining a corpse until it is completely empty. Dead metahumans contain a number of units of Ė equal to the points used to buy their powers. Thus, when he drains dry the dead body of Monument (p. 183), he receives 450 units because Monument was Tier Two. He can use this power once per round.

At no point does Njabulo ever find a limit to how many units of dark energy he can hold. In discussions with Jason Weeks (p. 195), Weeks opined that "The math indicates no upward limit on how much 'Ė' any individual can host. You just don't leak it out as badly as the rest of us."

Useful (+2), Reduced Capacities (-1)

Recharge Metahuman Willpower +2HD

(4 Points): If a metahuman's Willpower is lower than his Base Will, Njabulo can give him one or two Willpower points per round. Every Willpower point he gives out costs Njabulo one Willpower point, along with ten units of Ė.

Useful (+2), If/Then (Must spend Ė) (-1)

Enhance Powers +8d (96 Points): By spending Ė, Njabulo can add Extras and Flaws to powers. The cost of using this power is a number of Ė units equal to the amount of Willpower it would cost someone using Cosmic Power to add those Extras. He can add Flaws to powers in order to reduce this Ė cost, but with a very important restriction. The total Extras must always cost at least one point more than the total Flaw reduction. He always has to spend Ė to use this and can't only bestow Flaws.

Example: Refiliwe has 10d in "Perceive Ė." Njabulo wants to give Refiliwe an extra +4 Range Boost on that. +4 points for the Extra, times ten dice, means 40Ė. But because he's conservative with his resources, Njabulo also adds "Exhausted," a -3 Flaw. Times ten dice, that saves 30 points and now it only costs him 10Ė. But Refiliwe can only use the boosted power once per scene.

Example: A skinhead prick with 10d in Harm attacks Njabulo when he's separated from his friends. Since he's got no armor, Njabulo decides to add Penetration 10 to the Harm power. That's +10 points per die, for 100Ė. But it lets Njabulo add up to nine points of Flaws to the Harm power, and he chooses Base Will Cost (-4), Mental Strain (-2), Loopy (-1), No Physical Change (-1) and If/Then (Only with eyes closed) (-1). Now the modification costs Njabulo 10Ė. The skinhead can't use his power until he figures out it only works when he shuts his eyes. If he does figure that out and fires at Njabulo, the skinhead loses a point of Base Will, takes a point of Shock to the head and needs to roll to regain his composure afterwards. Meanwhile, Njabulo, if he gets hit, can make a Stability roll to ignore the damage he has made illusory.

The power enhancement (or sabotage) is emphatically not permanent. In fact, it lasts for one roll only. In the case of a Flaw that prevents the metahuman from using his power (like the "Only with eyes closed" limit, above), the alteration wears off after an hour. Finally, powers altered in this fashion always produce a brilliant crimson glow.

Njabulo must bid a point of Willpower to use this. He has a range of 512 yards.

Attacks (+2) Variable Effects (+4), If/Then (Only for Variable Effects) (-1), Augments (+4), If/Then (Costs Ė) (-1), Willpower Bid (-1), If/Then (Only works one time) (-1), Obvious (-1), Reduced Range (-1)

Defends (+2) Variable Effects (+4), If/Then (Only for Variable Effects) (-1), Augments (+2), If/Then (Costs Ė) (-1), Willpower Bid (-1), If/Then (Only works one time) (-1), Obvious (-1), Reduced Range (-1)

Useful (+2) Variable Effects (+4), If/Then (Only for Variable Effects) (-1), Augments (+4), If/Then (Costs Ė) (-1), Willpower Bid (-1), If/Then (Only works one time) (-1), Obvious (-1), Reduced Range (-1)

Before the Beginning

Time, space and matter all started at the Big Bang. Traditional physics cannot look beyond that ultimate beginning because it concerns itself only with the four fundamental forces of the universe—gravity, electromagnetism, and the strong and weak nuclear forces. But the unifying principle that Einstein sought in vain precedes and overmasters those four forces, just as it predates space, time and matter. That force of unity, the reigning energy, is \tilde{E} . This is why the holders of \tilde{E} can command electricity, create light, or form matter according to their will.

\tilde{E} , unlike its coarser descendants, has an innate affinity for consciousness, because it was fused with consciousness before time began. That consciousness was the Originator, our mother and goddess. But alone in a timeless now, the Originator's consciousness was doomed to an existential crisis of cosmic proportions. It therefore set itself upon a path that it knew would lead to spiritual orgasm, creation, and its ultimate death.

Let Be Fruitful and Multiply

The Originator created a companion for itself, the second consciousness and first \tilde{A} , the \tilde{A} -Prime. In \tilde{A} -Prime's instantiation, time began, causality was necessary, and space began to unfurl from the zero point of the Originator's womb. \tilde{A} -Prime and the Originator were together for only the thinnest sliver of pre-time or un-time as the universe blossomed forth, but their fulfillment was utter, consisting of the unity of all matter and energy. But such energy could not be contained and, were she to hold it back, the Originator would spur a stasis far more complete than what she had experienced before the dawn of time. She therefore destroyed herself in an outpouring of crowned energy, the \tilde{E} organizing the nascent reality into forms we understand, organized along principles that make life possible and encourage developing consciousness.

There is no way to determine the extent of the \tilde{E} that was unspooled into the universe. Only when \tilde{E} degenerates into the four fundamental forces can it be measured by anything, except possibly itself. (Using \tilde{E} to measure \tilde{E} is a matter to which the church must devote much prayer and study.) The "dark matter" and "dark energy" predicted by superstring theory are nothing but \tilde{E} , undetectable by our sub-infinite sciences.

The Dawning Åge

In time, as was fore-planned by the martyred Originator, matter organized itself through energy into a self-replicating life pattern. The odds of life's uniqueness on Earth are negligible: Our universe is stuffed with life alien to our knowing. Perhaps Earth is the first planet blessed with an accidental \tilde{E} collision, or perhaps it has happened on a million other worlds. Perhaps the \tilde{E} that has become entangled with humanity is only a slight fraction of the mind-loving energy in the universe, or perhaps it is every iota of the reigning power that remains from the Big Bang.

Ultimately, it matters little whether we have a monopoly on this resource or hold only a fraction of it. We have what we have to steward, and we must use it with wisdom, grace and compassion, not only for us, but for the universe. 1968 is our Year Zero, for with humanity's first trembling grasp on universal power we leave our infancy as mere animals and became cosmic entities, obligated to operate on a galactic scale.

The \tilde{E} we have is vast, but limited. It cannot be contained in one, nor in eleven, nor in a hundred and one. But it can be wasted and neglected, or hoarded and abused. The right action of all who hear with an open mind and clean heart is to spread \tilde{E} as widely as possible among the conscious of Earth. Let the multitudes partake in the sacrament of the first power! Let all know \tilde{E} and be free!

The Return of Å

The story of the current incarnation of Å begins with Winston Koetke, a youth suffering under the yoke of apartheid until the blessings of Ĕ came upon him through the mercy and generosity of Howard March. Let us refer to that first Winston by the variable A.

Through the power of Howard March, A was exposed to a second universe, an alternate of the type predicted by Hugh Everett's relative state formulation, though temporary. In that second universe, A's consciousness was fused with a parallel self, also named Winston Koetke, who is referred to by the variable å. Both A and å were driven to understand what was happening to them, not only personally, but spiritually and cosmically. Infused through the overflow of Howard March's Ĕ, the two alternates were gifted with far more than the fulfillment of any physical curiosity. They fused into one personality that was, in turn, fit to host the knowledge of Å-Prime. This new entity is Å, walker between worlds, sum of black and white, man of spirit and matter, host to the knowledge of the ultimate beginnings.

Though Å is the first of mankind to host this insight, he need not be the last. Winston Koetke was blessed, but not unique. Anyone with a sufficient personal cache of Ĕ could attain communion with the Å-principle, provided the true will to knowledge was present. Amanda Sykes, as the first of humanity to wield the crowned power, could come to know Å if she undertook the quest. But until she does she, and her child and husband, and the other 'metahumans' whose struggles mar the face of the globe, are merely fortunate children whose toys would, in the hands of adults, be tools of tremendous power.

In The End

There is a finite amount of Ĕ in the universe. It can be gathered, used, shaped and redistributed.

In its current form, the cosmos has limited structural destiny. Entropy places a final limit on the expansion, contraction, and organization of space, time and matter. Without the organizing power of consciousness, all the energy is doomed to run down into stagnation. The heat death of the universe is also the end of all consciousness there is, was, or ever could be.

But there is an alternative. As the Eschaton Equation shows, the total Ĕ of the universe is, despite the losses of Newtonian matter and energy, sufficient to become the seed of a new space, a different time, and an infant cosmos.

The conditions for cosmic renewal will not and cannot occur for billions of years, but when the time is right, it is the responsibility of all who are Ĕ-touched to gather their power under the guidance of the Å principle. Only with the sum total of the universe's dark matter and energy can space time be collected into a stable singularity and unfolded through a second martyrdom into a new infinity.

Å is the knowledge. Ĕ is the power. By holding them, we are duty bound to use them. This world, all worlds, and all worlds that can be are at stake.

Amplify Power +1d+1WD (60 Points): Did I say his fellows on the Council of Wisdom like having Njabulo around because he can make their powers more versatile? He can also just jack them. For a unit of Ė, he can add 1d to their pool. For four units, he can add a Wiggle Die. These augmentations are for one roll only. When he uses this ability, red streams of energy flow from him to the person using the power and then writhe around the locus of the other metahuman's power.

Attacks (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Costs Ė) (-1), Obvious (-1)

Defends (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Costs Ė) (-1), Obvious (-1)

Useful (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Costs Ė) (-1), Obvious (-1)

Create Mark +2HD (8 Points): "Marks," as described on page 27, are people who receive only trace amounts of dark energy. Their infusion isn't enough to bestow powers, but it is enough to amplify their personalities (effectively, by giving them Willpower and Base Will if they didn't already have them). By spending ten units of Ė, Njabulo can permanently transform an ordinary person into a mark. This is, by far, his preferred use for Ė. He considers it his holy purpose in life. The investment of power is accompanied by a heatless red blaze that can be seen for miles around.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Obvious (-1), Touch Only (-2), If/Then (Costs Ė) (-1)

+10 Base Will (30 Points): Njabulo is on a mission from the incarnate power of the Universe, which spoke with him directly to save him from a destructive and miserable path.

Mchinu Modisane ("MICKinyew MOEdihsayn"), Holder of History

Mchinu was tremendously useful to the ANC because he was a notorious coward. He always jumped when the police drove by, flinched from any threat, babbled apologies when bullied and provided a safe house for dozens of fugitives. Even though his fear was absolutely genuine, he made it work for him: If anyone in authority

ever questioned him, he broke down into tears and hysterics so quickly that, even if he'd wanted to betray anyone, his testimony wouldn't be comprehensible. Often he sent himself into actual epileptic seizures.

Despite his fear, Mchinu had to do something. He'd seen too much of value destroyed by the apartheid regime. He remembers so many happy children turned into scowling adults, so many works of art callously ruined, so many loves torn apart by suspicion and manipulation. He knew he could never fight, but he could preserve.

When he met Å, he was given all the power he'd wanted. Through works of beauty he could save and capture, not only a life, but a soul.

Power Suite

Create Copy of a Personality +2HD (12 Points): With a touch, Mchinu can absorb a person's identity—their opinions, emotions and beliefs—and store them in a ceremonial costume. (He crafts the costumes himself.) The individual does not in any way lose his personality, of course. Each outfit can only hold one persona.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), If/Then (Transfer to costume) (-1), Touch Only (-2)

Create Copy of Memories +2HD (12 Points): When he copies someone's self, their recollections come along with it.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), If/Then (Transfer to costume) (-1), Attached (Create Copy of a Personality) (-2)

Create Copy of Skills +2HD (12 Points): Personality and learning aren't complete without practical knowledge.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), If/Then (Transfer to costume) (-1), Attached (Create Copy of a Personality) (-2)

Bestow Use of Copied Pools +10WD (120 Points): Someone who puts on one of Mchinu's costumes can use the Skills of the person copied into that focus. If someone has 10WD in Perception, wearing their costume lets you use those 10WD. But if a costume copies someone who had (say) a respectable but not inhuman +4d in Athletics, you would not get +10WD in Athletics from wearing the costume, nor would you get +4WD or even add four dice to your own

.....
"Do not be deceived or seduced. This ideology is as dangerous as it is simplistic. Granted, the mathematics in the book are correctly structured, but what of it? If you're willing to blindly accept false foundations, I can use math to ineluctably prove that 2+2 equals 'fish'."

—Bich Thi Ngyuen, addressing a covert task force to oppose Åism in the Soviet Union.
.....

"We call it the Comb of the World," my host said, smiling shyly. I just stared at it.

It looked like a building, or some epic modern sculpture. It was easily a mile long, made of gray steel. It looked something like a ruler, I suppose, but instead of marks for millimeters and fractions of inches it had gaps between blades. The blades were about shoulder-breadth apart and dozens of farmers were checking them, making sure they hadn't missed one during yesterday's sharpening ceremony. Then, as one, they stopped and lifted their heads. So did the man at my side. Wordlessly, they began hurrying towards their homes.

"What is it?" I asked.

"You did not hear the voice?" His voice was kind... pitying. "One day you will. Come. We must get inside. He might not see us from the helicopter."

"Who?"

"The Mover of the World."

From inside, I peered out the window and began hearing a chopper approach. "What's happening?" I asked, and then I saw the great steel frame lift into the sky, floating up like a balloon and steadying itself before plunging into the soil. I watched it sweep through the fields, without tractor or animal to propel it. It moved briskly, like a train leaving a station and gathering speed. The sound... imagine a spade digging into the earth, but continuous, and multiplied a thousandfold. The earth itself seemed to sigh as it was plowed.

"This farm is a thousand acres," my friend told me. "It is plowed in an hour or less. He will do our whole district in a week."

From "When I Met Å" by Monica Staswell

The man they called the Blue Saint had narrow, suspicious eyes, a carefully trimmed mustache, and the too-precise dress of a career soldier. I didn't immediately take to him and I think it was mutual.

"Thank you for making time to see me," I said in Portuguese.

"You prefer English, I suspect," he replied in that tongue.

"Your accent is impeccable," I said.

"As is your rote compliment." I blinked. "Well, come in. I'm afraid my time is in great demand, so I won't be able to give you the lavish treatment you received from Mchinu."

"I never even met him," I say.

"Not in the flesh, but with him the flesh is the least of it, no?" He sat at a desk, rifled through a stack of papers and began rapidly writing on them. His eyes never wavered from mine as he annotated his documents. "The western reporter. Well, I can see your use to our cause, certainly. Oh, don't be disingenuous," he said, seeing surprise in my expression. "Surely you're as aware of your value as I am. Do you think every woman who approaches our organization is shown from saint to saint and given such lavish blessings?"

"I... I'm sure I don't..."

"You've met Å," he said. "They didn't tell me, but it was obvious from your schedule, as I'm sure they knew it would be. What did he show you of yourself? Father issues, presumably."

"Is it so obvious?" I whispered.

"No, I just played the odds. And having known his touch, you're intoxicated by the loss of that burden. Yes?"

"Weren't you?"

"Oh yes. Don't let my manner lead you to think I don't believe in him or his cause. Before Å came into my life, I was an angry, bitter husk of a man."

"Not the enlightened, content fount of illumination you are now?"

His nostrils flared. "He takes one burden, always our heaviest. But it's only one, and there are always more awaiting our backs. He has asked me to bless you and I will, but please disabuse yourself of the sentimental notion that our African beliefs, at once so quaint and so profound, are here for your benefit." He took my arm, courteously but firmly, and led me out to the sofa outside his office again.

"Forgive my brusqueness, I beg you," he said, voice bored. Then he gripped my hands and flooded my mind with the memories of another life. A different name, different face, different childhood home. It was all too much, the life of a woman named Joellen Burkes from South Carolina whose parents died when she was thirty-one and whose first kiss was Morten Friedericks when she was thirteen. They were my memories, but completely distinct from the life and recollections of Monica Staswell. It was foreign, different, an utterly alien perspective, and at the same time my own, and at the same time as that distant enough that I would never confuse Monica's life with Joellen's.

When I recovered enough to speak, he was gone.

Athletics Skill. You would get as many dice as you needed, of whatever type, to match the person associated with the garments. You replace your Skill (not your Skill pool) with their Skill, if theirs is better. You cannot use this to exceed their Skill. Also, note that the costumes are elaborate and rather bulky.

Attacks (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only to match Skill of the copied person) (-1), Focus (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Delicate (-1), Attached (Create Copy of a Personality) (-2)

Defends (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only to match Skill of the copied person) (-1), Focus (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Delicate (-1), Attached (Create Copy of a Personality) (-2)

Useful (+2), Augments (+4), If/Then (Only to match Skill of the copied person) (-1), Focus (-1), Unwieldy (-1), Delicate (-1), Attached (Create Copy of a Personality) (-2)

Telepathy +10d (80 Points): This is standard Telepathy, though without the memory erasure. (That's just not Mchinu. He's a rememberer.)

Attacks (+2), Non Physical (+2)

Defends (+2)

Useful (+2)

Empathy +1d+2HD (5 Points): He understands. Really, he does.

Hyperskill (+1)

+3 Base Will (9 Points): Those bullies might have a tougher time with him, these days.

Thabo "Garfield" Moloi ("TAHbo MoeLOY"), Master of Life

Thabo sold vegetables and fruit and got through his life by being utterly forgettable. He never stood up to be counted and no one thought to ask him about politics. They just asked him how fresh the gem squash was. But Å saw something different in Thabo, and though the fervent ANC revolutionaries were suspicious of "Garfield" at first, those who came to believe in the Doctrine of Solar Destiny quickly realize how essential he is to their ambitions.

The first demonstration of Thabo's power was transforming the rats of his native Carletonville into rat-like creatures that aren't aggressive

towards human beings and which exude a disinfectant musk that smells pleasantly of the flowering shrub *Coleonema pulchrum*. He then modified the common invasive arboreal pest Bugweed into a slower-spreading, slower-growing edible version later nicknamed "Breadweed" which, as a bonus, releases a false pollen that, when it gets on Bugweed, tricks the Bugweed into creating sterile seeds. But those creations are soon overshadowed by his medicines and his crafting of animals and plants for a wholly self-sufficient world-ship—the Årk.

Power Suite

Biogeteering +9d+1WD (156 Points): Thabo can take animals or plants and, by directly transforming them, create new species. This is not just a matter of changing a ten-pound cat so that it looks like (say) a ten-pound giraffe. If he changed another cat, or a dog, or anything else into a tiny giraffe of the opposite gender, those two micro-giraffes could mate and produce mini-giraffe babies. It's easier to make new plants out of old plants, but he could turn an animal into a plant if he wanted.



This terrifying bio-Frankensteiner has some profound limits, so people needn't worry about him glaring at them from across the bar and turning them into slime molds. He could turn them into slime molds, but it would take hours and hours in a lab.

As it happens, Thabo has zero interest in turning people into anything—he considers the entire idea morally repugnant and spiritually unwholesome. But he is eager to sculpt other species to serve man.

Mechanically, Biogeteering works just like Gadgeteering, only without the Willpower investment and with some mandatory Extras and Flaws that its plant and animal Foci must take.

Attacks (+2), Delayed Effect (-1), Endless (+3), If/Then (Variable Effects require a lab and either animals or plants) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effects are only for new life forms) (-1), Variable Effects (+4), If/Then (All Foci must have the Extra Manufacturable) (-1), If/Then (All Foci must have the Flaw Environment-Bound) (-1)

Defends (+2), Delayed Effect (-1), Endless (+3), If/Then (Variable Effects require a lab and either animals or plants) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effects are only for new life forms) (-1), Variable Effects (+4), If/Then (All Foci must have the Extra Manufacturable) (-1), If/Then (All Foci must have the Flaw Environment-Bound) (-1)

Useful (+2), Delayed Effect (-1), Endless (+3), If/Then (Variable Effects require a lab and either animals or plants) (-1), If/Then (Variable Effects are only for new life forms) (-1), Variable Effects (+4), If/Then (All Foci must have the Extra Manufacturable) (-1), If/Then (All Foci must have the Flaw Environment-Bound) (-1)

First Aid +2 (2 Points): It's really only a tangential effect of his deep understanding of biology.

Hyperskill (+1)

Medicine +6 (6 Points): As with First Aid, but far more applicable, especially to medicating patients.

Hyperskill (+1)

Knowledge (Life Sciences) +5HD (10 Points): He knows what he needs to, whether by intuition, perfect recall or some kind of clairvoyance.

Hyperskill (+1)

Knowledge (Macrobiology/Climatology) +5HD (10 Points)

Hyperskill (+1)

+22 Base Will (66 Points): Hey, he's not the "Modestly Skilled Craftsman of Life."

Kenosi Dlamini ("KENohsee LahMEEnee"), Giver of Other Selves

Kenosi is described in the western press as "Åism's Saint Paul" for his military background and unapologetic fervor. (The comparison is one Bich Thi Nguyen finds particularly distasteful, incidentally.) Kenosi was a Marxist revolutionary-by-deed in Mozambique, plotting to overthrow Portuguese rule in his homeland. An educated man with a rebel's disdain for intellectualized resistance, Kenosi fought as a foot soldier in Cabo Delgado during FRELIMO's revolution. By the time Å came to Mozambique in 1979, Kenosi was an interior security officer seeking RENAMO counter-revolutionaries and Rhodesian spies.

Though vocally an enthusiastic Communist, Kenosi was nursing doubts and frustrations when Å found him. When Å took his hands and looked into his eyes, Kenosi found himself filled with a passion and hope he hadn't known for years, a hope that fled when he killed his first soldier in 1964. Å promised a better way, not only to protect his fledgling nation against RENAMO, but to support the ANC and the cause of freedom throughout Africa.

Despite his personal loyalty to Å, Kenosi frequently clashes with other members of the Wisdom Council. Drawing on his experiences as a soldier and a spy hunter, he often argues for direct, 'realpolitik' applications of dark energy power, even at the cost of long-term plans for global Ę distribution. Given his genius and his spiritual role, it can be hard to argue against him. After the Åssassination in 1995, Kenosi becomes even more bitter and cynical than he was before his 1979 spiritual awakening.

"You have been waiting," said the crimson saint, the Liberator of Ė.

"No!" I said, then corrected myself. "Well, yes, but... I mean, your time's important too. If anything, more, more important than mine. I guess what I mean is, you didn't keep me waiting, certainly, I..." I trailed off, wondering why this man threw me so.

When I met Å, he was awe-inspiring, certainly, but there was also a comfort to it, a welcome. Like coming to a gorgeous beach in Hawaii in the summer, it's remarkable but it's also warm and inviting. The Liberator wasn't standoffish, like the Giver of Other Selves, but neither did he go out of his way to make me feel special or welcome or, indeed, anything at all. He was as indifferent as a mountain.

"I was in Laos," he said.

"Oh."

"Do you remember Tuong? From the Vietnam war?"

"The Monument," I whispered.

"He disappeared into the Laotian wilderness. For years afterwards there were stories about a giant, maddened, rampaging and destroying any who came within his reach, drinking their bodies in to maintain his impossible height and strength."

"You found him?"

"I found his corpse." This statement was as indifferent as all his other words. "He was lying face down upon a hill, arms cushioning his head. As if he had gone to sleep."

"How were you sure he wasn't?"

"No, he was dead. I know. Had his consciousness persisted, I could not have harvested his Ė." As he spoke, red light began to play upon his features, red sparks arcing the gap between his fingers. "He was a powerful carrier. Now I pass part of that to you."

"Me?" On one level, I'd expected this, but I'd suppressed that expectation, unwilling to seem greedy for it or presumptuous. Now that it was upon me, it was as astonishing as it ever could have been. "I, this is, I'm not..."

"The council has seen no devious intent in your heart. Your soul has known the healing of Å's touch, and your mind has expanded with the gift of another self. Å believes you can spread our holy purpose to America. But even if you do not, you can hold a measure of Ė. You are as deserving as any other."

With a crash of red glory, it was done.

Am I a metahuman now? I'm not sure of the answer. I can do nothing impossible. Indeed, I can't do any possible things that I couldn't before. But the power is there. It's a trace amount, but it sets off DETectors at airports, earning me looks that are frightened and envious and curious.

It's not only present for sensitive machinery, either. I know the difference, even though it doesn't feel different. Instead, I feel the same, but more so. I am more myself than I was before the blessing. My self, my core, the essential 'I' that went through the journey, that looked into the shocking vistas of Joellen Burkes' experiences, that faced its own deepest darkness at the touch of Å's hand and power... that which most truly is Monica Staswell became anchored by that power. More myself. Enlarged, expanded, and more true.

Bestow Other Self +3HD (42 Points): Like his precursor, the ‘saint’ Reddy March, Kenosi can show people alternate histories. Unlike March, there is no racial or gender restriction on the parallel universes Kenosi evokes. They are all close parallels—history very similar to what is commonly known in our world, but with only a few differences to provide a new point of view. Being given a second self is considered a high honor within the Å religion. Kenosi willingly gives this blessing at Å’s behest, and also of his own initiative. Others on the council may need to persuade him, depending on how he feels towards them at the moment.

No one with an Other Self has any trouble discerning the parallel memories from the genuine. It causes no mental friction, not even within those whose minds are already fragile. Indeed, some who have gone mad have benefitted from the imposition of sane Other Selves.

Note that the ‘Daze’ effect is a one-time side effect. It’s not permanent.

Useful (+2), Permanent (+4), Daze (+1)

Hyperbrains +5WD (80 Points): As mentioned, Kenosi is an educated man. He values his mind a great deal, whether he admits that or not.

Hyperstat (+4)

Dead Ringer +3HD (36 Points): This is just like the power described in Wild Talents with one If/Then Flaw. Kenosi can only adopt human forms.

Useful (+2), Duration (+2), If/Then (Variable Effect is only for choosing different appearances) (-1), Variable Effect (+4), If/Then (Human forms only) (-1)

Regeneration +8HD (80 Points): This is also like the power from Wild Talents, except it’s Attached to his Dead Ringer power. In other words, he must adopt a new appearance to heal 8 points of Shock and Killing on each location.

Useful (+2), Engulf (+2), Permanent (+4), Self Only (-1), Attached (Dead Ringer) (-2)

+4 Base Will (12 Points): Whether he’s running on hope, cynicism or plain viciousness, Kenosi runs hard.

A Tier Six Hyperbrain, Nalinashka Singh is born in Calcutta and exposed to dark energy at the tender age of thirteen. By 1970 he’s fixing boat motors and by the time he turns seventeen he’s running his own business repairing, tweaking and souping up car engines. But the brute Newtonian physics aren’t sufficiently challenging, and he spends his evenings (and a share of his profits) studying material science, optics and electronics.

In 1973, seventeen-year-old Nalinashka prototypes the superdiode (p. 322) and promptly sees his work stolen by a businessman named Hendrik Ten Broeck. Hendrik has far less brainpower but far more clout, influence, community standing, and cash. Sure, Hendrik throws him a pittance to shut him up, but Nalinashka never forgives and never forgets. He just leaves the country.

Relocating to Oxford, Nalinashka reinvents himself as Palash Karlekar. No longer a slum-born grease monkey, he presents himself as a spoiled and cosseted child of privilege. Between his brains, his self-taught forgery skills and his adroit manipulation of class expectations, he lands a research job at the University of Oxford, where he spends several lucrative years helping the rich and connected cheat their way through classes and tests. When he’s ready to move on, he engineers a minor scandal and agrees to leave. It’s just the sort of thing to make him look roguish and exciting without scaring investors. He takes his company, Pushcore (motto: “Innovate and Aggregate”) public and wins many clients with his precise and versatile custom machining.

Nalinashka starts Pushcore while he’s still at the University, and initially it’s a lab at the forefront of the ’70s revolution in materials like ZRI glass (p. 321), ferrofluids (p. 324) and SuPlast (p. 326). By the dawn of the ’80s, Pushcore UK is one of the main manufacturers of cell phone casings, while Pushcore’s Indonesian factory reverse-engineers Vietnamese carbon nanotubes as early as 1981. His gradually growing influence over the communication industry makes him wealthy beyond avarice. The market-fixing scandal of ’83 puts a dent in his reputation and his profits, but nothing ever affects “Palash’s” comfort or lifestyle.

Pushed by legal woes and pulled by their founder's undeniable skill at re-creating others' work, Pushcore follows Jason Weeks' Very Us Inc. into the field of superconducting materials. This leads to heavy investment in energy technologies such as ZRI glass solar plants and fission furnaces in the late '80s. Eventually, Pushcore's aerospace division gets spun off, the communications branch goes into bankruptcy and Pushcore Energy Technologies continues up to Jason Weeks' death in 1998. One year later, "Palash" liquidates vast reserves of property and stock in order to buy a controlling interest in Very Us Incorporated. Once he completes the merger of the two corporations, Pushcore becomes the third largest business entity in the world.

"Palash Karlekar"

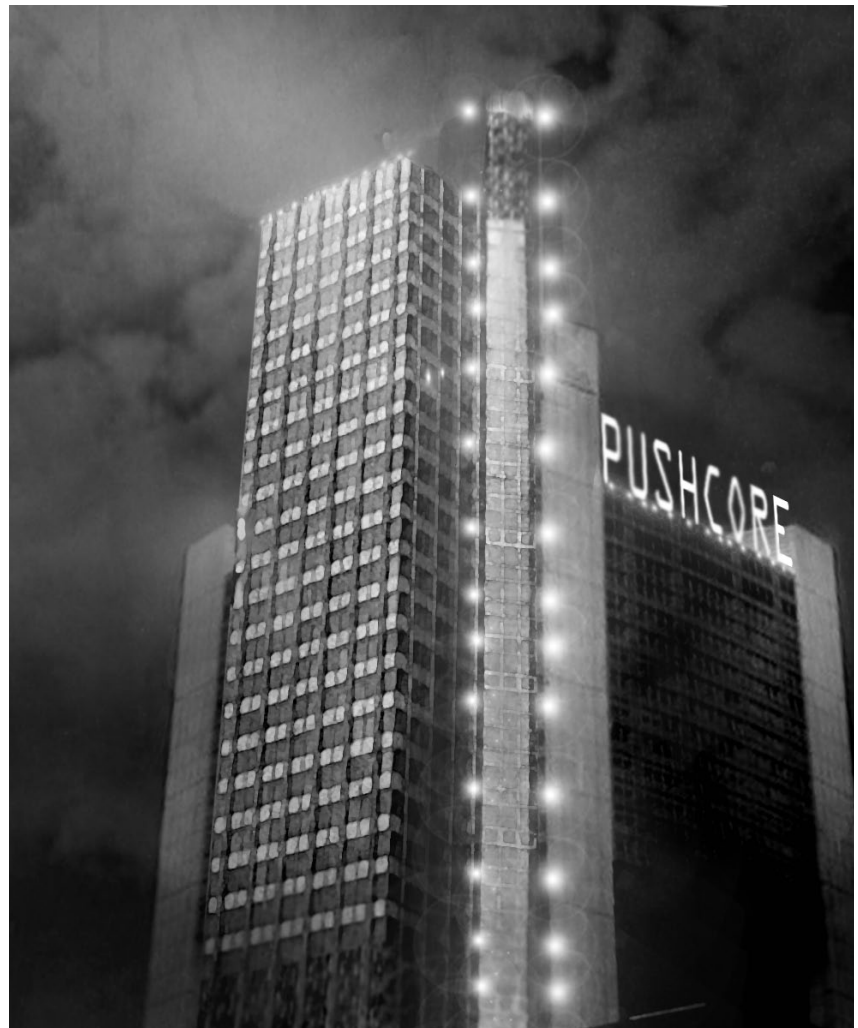
The "Palash Karlekar" known to the public is a lion of the business world—fearless and magnificent, if somewhat prone to devouring any company that might grow into a competitor. He avoids sex scandals and petty domestic gossip through the crackerjack deployment of a dedicated security detail, including one metahuman with the ability to make people think they're experiencing a month of agonizing torment crammed into a fragment of a second. (That guy usually gets paparazzi detail, and his powers are utterly unprovable in court.) He is an unapologetic capitalist, praising the free market in public and, in private, sometimes expressing his passionate opinion that 'poor people have no intrinsic value.'

The real Palash Karlekar is a lazy parasite who finds it vastly amusing that a hard working nerd would pay him a stipend for the use of his cachet and identity after the Karlekar fortune had been pissed away. But of course, once the ruse is firmly established, Karlekar is no longer needed. Letting his personal life mirror his business practices, Nalinashka has the real Palash murdered and vaporized in 1978. He always liked one-time outlays to preclude ongoing expenditures.

Similarly, his assassination of rival hyperbrain scientist Niles Barstowe during the chaos of 1984 is nothing personal, only business. When he bribes and blackmails a prize committee to award a prestigious honor to the man whose name

was on the superdiode patent, then has the man's plane hijacked so that Hendrik Ten Broeck can be extracted and placed in a dank, lightless cell in the basement of "Palash Karlekar's" glamorous private island mansion in the Mediterranean—that's personal. Ten Broeck vanishes in 1982 and spends six years in that oubliette, subsisting on gruel and water, losing his teeth to scurvy and feeling his skin ulcerate, until "Palash" seals over the prison with three feet of concrete and sells the island to a Russian oil oligarch. The Tier Eight clairvoyance blocker hired to live in the house and keep it unobserved goes with the sale: Nalinashka is employing a Tier Six privacy agent by that time.

"Palash" marries for the appearance of the thing, with an understanding that he doesn't really care what his wife does as long as she doesn't embarrass him or the company, or expect anything at all other than the luxury required for the pretense. His most passionate affair is with Nguyet Cam in 1989 but he manages to break it off after nine months. He's concerned that she might, in time, exert undue influence on his opinions.



The Church of the Emerald Virgin

The Church of the Emerald Virgin begins in Peru not long after Amanda Sykes leaves in 1970, after attempting to repair the effects of the Ancash earthquake. Initially, she isn't identified and many who benefit from her healing power attribute it to a miracle. Fitting her in with their religion, they identify her with Mary, the Virgin Mother.

After returning to the US, photos from Ancash are instrumental in identifying Amanda to her American neighbors. The ensuing media frenzy, coinciding with questions about My Lai, keep her mind off of Peru for some time. Meanwhile, the Peruvians embroider the stories of her visit (not that much is needed) and soon break off from mainstream Christianity.

Amanda's first inkling about the Church is when a Catholic priest sends her a letter and it manages to get past the screeners she hires to deal with the hundreds, sometimes thousands of letters she receives. The priest had met her in Peru, and after describing their encounter he asks if she was sent by God.

Amanda's response is cautious. She denies being the Virgin Mary and admits that, yes, she's a happily married Christian from Kansas. But she makes a vague comment that "God may have worked through me, just as He might work through any who do a kind deed."

That mild and qualified response is all the Church needs to feel their claims of her divine power are confirmed. When the Catholic Church sends priests to inspect the sites of her 'miracles' and says they were not beyond the bounds of science, many of the Virgin's followers leave the church and form their own. They respect Amanda's insistence that she is not a goddess but assure her that the power of the Blessed Virgin is working through her. They never doubt her, no matter how much she doubts herself and, when her life hits a particularly hard stretch in October 1977, she retreats to Peru to recover. She tries to deflect the adoration, but it's difficult to resist when everyone you meet tells you how wonderful you are. She heals many, constructs public projects and performs other 'works' that make her denials of divinity seem increasingly disingenuous. Most believe her actions, not her words.

This means that when megalomania and paranoia finally set in, she has a ready-made army of followers, believers, and voters.

Shavians

Shavians are initially created by Tina Shaw, a high-tier healer who initially believes her powers "cast the devils of illness" out of those she helps. While Tina sees the sicknesses as horrible monsters, her powers somehow forge personalities for her creations out of an amalgamation of herself and the person being healed, as altered by any number of subconscious factors. In short, Shavians are all very, very different. Some are kind, some are cruel, but most are just alien from humanity. They're intelligent, capable of logic, but they have no biological instincts—just the drives or beliefs or quirks that they absorb (possibly at random) from the thoughts of their maker and the minds of their sources.



Shavians are all ugly, most commonly being mis-joined piles of human features interspersed with the occasional tentacle, fang or insect feature. Prior to 1974, they're nearly impossible to kill with anything short of heavy-duty military weaponry, and even after the introduction of anti-Shavian devices (see page 322) they're at far greater liberty to break laws than fragile humans.

But while an individual Shavian can easily destroy an unarmed human (and even give an ordinary human with anti-Shavion weapons a good stiff fight), their numbers are small, their political power insignificant, and their organizational skills very, very weak. They are often highly individualist, since they have no biological drive for company. Many of them wind up in Atlantis, since it's the most accepting nation (and even there, letting them vote is controversial to the very day the island sinks) but, while they throw their support this way or that, it's rarely all that effective in politics. They're alien and creepy and that doesn't persuade people. When the Atlantean government fails, the Shavians become far more powerful in anarchy than they ever were in peacetime. This, of course, only provides fuel for the people who want to see them all destroyed.

That faction (open or private) gets a nasty shock when Jason Weeks (p. 195) announces that he's figured out how to let two Shavians combine their 'patterns' in order to produce a third. There's great resistance to the development of the so-called "brood chamber" but once it's built, the Shavians' numbers once more begin to creep upward. When the chamber's destroyed in 1996, many Shavians begin to believe that they cannot peacefully coexist with humanity.

The biggest shock comes in 1998, when all Shavians vanish during Amanda Sykes' coma, only to reappear when she recovers. (The following fall, Global Human University has seventeen different postgraduate presentations attempting to answer the question "Where did the information describing their shapes and identities go?") Once it's clear to them that their very existence depends on her wellbeing, they finally come to a unanimous, collective decision. When she leaves Earth, they go with her.



Metavictims Advocacy and Support

Formed in May of 1969, Metavictims Advocacy and Support starts out when the many victims of Jarvis West (p. 203) band together to agitate for legal redress. A public that's as terrified of unchecked power as it is entranced by the promise of miraculous metahumans swells their coffers in hopes of bringing dark energy under some kind of political control and (after failing to kill West by hiring James Closterman for half a million dollars in March of 1970), the group does focus in on legislation to control the use of metahuman abilities.

Ironically, it's not two months after they attempt to hire a meta-hitman that Metavictims Advocacy and Support celebrates its one-year anniversary with a schism. A vocal minority, unaware of the back-room deals and attempted murders-for-hire, splits off to engage in more violent rhetoric. They call themselves the Meta-Defense League.

In June of 1971, Advocacy and Support achieves its first great legislative victory with the passage of the Federal Cognitive Sovereignty Act, following it up in November of the same year with a broad

public campaign condemning Tina Shaw's ongoing creation of Shavians. While they're focussing their attentions on the well-meaning young girl, their bad-boy offshoot is taking action too. The Meta-Defense League funds Paige Rampling's (p. 236) quest to find her power-ancestor, Jarvis West. Paige never actually accepts money to kill West, but no one's surprised at all when she does. (Later investigation indicates, fairly convincingly, that the people in the League who paid for Paige had no idea that anyone in Advocacy and Support had ever tried anything similar.) Then, in May of 1972—at the anniversary of both groups' foundings—she goes and joins Metavictims Advocacy and Support. This takes the wind out of the Meta-Defense League's sails and prompts another skimming of the most radical elements to form another, even more violent splinter group. This one starts out focussed exclusively on Shavians (p. 374) and calls itself "Remember November" in reference to the Juniper massacre of 1971.

Where Metavictims Advocacy and Support becomes more and more of a political entity (and a powerful one—its support helps push through the Dark Entity Act of 1971), and the Meta-Defense League slowly retools itself through the late seventies as a protest and social movement, Remember November starts out as criminal,

terrorist organization from the ground up. Funded by Tracy Mayhew, a millionaire who lost a grandchild to Juniper, almost nothing is heard from them until 1974, when a group of sleeper agents in Atlantis assists a team of international mercenaries in a midnight assault on the Shaw household, murdering Tina Shaw and (temporarily) ending the flow of new Shavians. In February of 1974, Amy Sykes (p. 177) avenges Tina and kills Mayhew, dealing the entire organization a serious blow. It tries to rebound, but without new Shaw monsters to agitate the public, it's hard to get people incensed. A hard core broadens their scope and releases a biological attack on Atlantis in 1977, but the civilian injuries arising from it marginalizes them further, and Remember November ceases to be a meaningful force thereafter. A few people vandalize Åite (p. 358) churches with Remember November slogans, or attempt to murder Shavians in the organization's name, but by 1983's metapocalypse Remember November is effectively defunct. The GPhA blames them for mortaring the Shavian brood chamber in 1996, but (if the GPhA didn't do it themselves) any attackers would have had no direct connection to previous Remember November members and would simply have used the name without any pedigree.

As for Metavictims Advocacy and Support, the growing numbers of metahumans, and the violence associated with the anti-dark energy backlash, both combine to reduce their influence and funding. They're primarily a force in Washington DC and, consequently, a good 80% of their actual employees are killed by satellite strikes in 1983. But the same civic chaos that wipes out Advocacy and Support leaves the League as the dominant ideology for anti-dark energy attitudes. By 1983 they're openly murdering metahumans through the US and Europe, and encouraging anyone who listens to follow suit. Their numbers and prominence recede as civilization recovers, but by 1985 they complete their transformation into full-fledged terrorism by murdering Cynthia Carls in Mexico, releasing an earthquake that kills 2,000 people in the process. In 1999 they're still active, and the legacy of Jarvis West's victims is, ultimately, deadlier than even West himself ever was.



PROGENITOR

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Soon thousands of men and women around the world amazing powers. Some of them use their powers for their own personal gain or gratification. Others try to help those around them. Some change the very course of world events.

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Progenitor includes:

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PROGENITOR

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