

HUNTERS

BY SIMON BURLEY

A SCENARIO FOR SQUADRON UK

Hunters

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by

Simon Burley



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Introduction

Hunters is a typical scenario for Squadron UK and demonstrates the kind of adventure the average Referee should be able to design for themselves. It is not designed as an introductory adventure and should not be run as the players' first experience of the game. Their first scenario should be a simple knock-down-drag-out against a basic villain as outlined in chapter 11 of the rules.

Hopefully, they will have had another couple of gaming sessions where they have encountered and trounced villains - possibly the example villains given in chapter 14 of the rules - and have some familiarity with their characters and the rules before they approach this particular adventure.

One of the main criticisms of the original version of Squadron UK was that the Heroes were *too* Super-powered. The game system is designed to favour the good guys and gives them a number of advantages. However, this can lead to adventures appearing too easy and not offering sufficient challenge. One solution to this is to start the Heroes off with fewer powers - as discussed in the section in Campaigns in chapter 13 of the rulebook.

Another solution, however, is to design tougher adventures.

Some Referees find this difficult. This Scenario is a demonstration of how to design such an adventure.

Hunters starts with a difficult encounter with a tough opponent - a sophisticated hunting robot - which the Heroes will probably win. However, this robot is just one of a pack and the climactic encounter against a horde of mega-tough robots is one the Heroes almost certainly won't be able to win by strength of arms alone.....

Preparation

Make sure you read this adventure thoroughly before starting play. Read the details of the non-player-characters - double check you understand their powers and look up any rules you may need to revise.

(The rules on **Magic** and **Grappling** come to mind.)

Try to imagine how your players' Heroes are likely to perform. You should not need to make any adjustments to take into account particular powers or combinations of powers. Heroes with some kind of Heightened Sense are likely to have an interesting time - for example - but this simply means that some of their protagonists' more sneaky tactics will not work.

The story will proceed in a more straightforward - but not necessarily less enjoyable - way.

It is important NOT to circumvent a Hero's powers just because it may make a scenario run to a specific agenda. What's the point in having superpowers if you don't get to use them? Let the Hero see through the bad guys' deceptions and let the player feel good about how useful their character is.

Suggestions are given for toughening or weakening the scenario if you feel this is necessary.

Make sure you have enough figures or tokens for all the characters in the adventure. Photocopy the illustrations from the Villains' character sheets to use as tokens if necessary. You will also need something to represent an armoured security van and a couple of other vehicles.

Two maps are provided as sites for battles. Feel free to photocopy and/or enlarge these if you need to. Have an appropriate playing surface or some squared paper to sketch maps on if the adventure does drift off the maps provided.

If you have prepared this scenario sufficiently far in advance then drop some hints into an earlier scenario which will lead the Heroes into this one.

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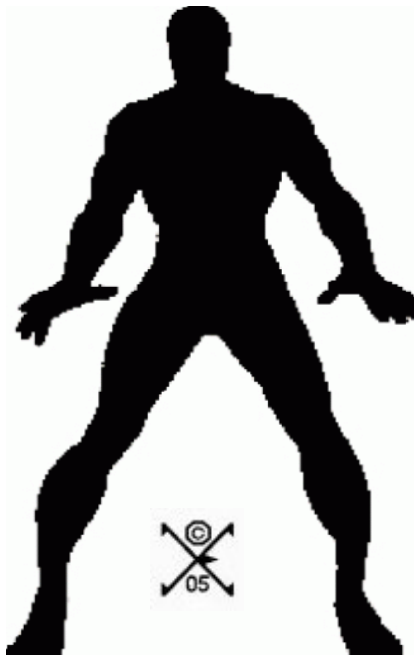
Cast List

The Heroes



This scenario is designed for a group of 2 to 4 Heroes based upon 8 power rolls each who have had at least one previous adventure but who have yet to be upgraded through training.

Density



Joel Turnpike is a typical low-grade Villain.

Stealing the work of his brilliant employer - Dr. Lazarus Jonathon - he carries devices capable of controlling gravity within a given area. With typical lack of imagination, he intends to use these devices to make himself rich.

Density is an example of a "throwaway" villain. He was generated using the same system as the Heroes and is based upon 6 powers. All the details about his cohorts and background come from the rationale inspired by the powers rolled. He is an example of how the game system can be used to promote additional ideas for introduction into a Scenario.

Density's Goons



These are typical of their type, ill-educated hirelings following a low-grade villain on the promise of a nice goon-suit and the chance to make a bit of money. These goons, however come with a twist - courtesy of Density's stolen anti-gravity devices. Anyone hit by one of their specially adapted bullets is subject to the effects of a random gravity field.

Victims can become featherlight and go floating off into the sky or be flattened to the earth as their own weight skyrockets.

Dr Lazarus Jonathon



A genius in the field of null-gravity physics, Dr Jonathon dreams of developing devices to reduce the stress on patients' bodies during surgery. His work is not yet ready for publication - though he does use it to mitigate the effects of arthritis in his own joints. He is unaware that his assistant - Joel Turnpike - has stolen and copied a number of his prototypes.

Pathfyndre

A ghost-agent from a parallel Earth. He has tracked the evil genius, Hansel Darkharte, to this plane only to find himself trapped and hunted by the very criminal he was pursuing. Like all of his caste, Pathfyndre has been merged with an artificial creature known as a "drabe". (It lives in his sinal cavity giving him the distinctive nasal twang of his kind.)

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The drabe gives him highly developed abilities which appear - to those of more limited technology - to be magic.



A member of a caste who have been denied access to drabes, Darkharte has developed an Engineering Genius on a high-technology alternate Earth which has turned it's back on such large-scale mechanics. Darkharte has opened a rift to this less advanced version of his home-world. He plans to use this dimension as a base from which launch assaults on those who have wronged him. He has no particular animus against our world and will strive not to interfere with its natural development unless he is forced to.

Zealots

Though Pathfyndre is possessed of some impressive abilities he is nowhere near as tough as he would like to appear. He will try to influence the Heroes to act in his interests through misinformation, misdirection and outright lies.

Hansel Darkharte



Gigantic vulpine hunter-tracker devices created by Hansel Darkharte to conquer Earth.

Once released to pursue a target they will not stop until they have harried it to the ground.

Their light refractive camouflage coating makes them highly effective in their work, despite their great bulk.

At the beginning of the Scenario Darkharte has sent a Zealot to track Pathfyndre. He suspects - correctly - that Pathfyndre will attempt to steal some Malagite (see below) and has instructed the robot to track that substance's distinctive energy trail and wait for Pathfyndre to make an appearance.

B.I.S.C.U.I.T.

The **British International Security Council and United Intelligence Taskforce** is a cross-services Unit devoted to preserving the integrity of Queen and Country against threats from within and without. They mean well and have good intentions but have been accused of being too right-wing in their attitude. The truth is that the Council is tied up in endless reams of bureaucratic red-tape and resources are often not deployed to their best effect.

This scenario is a case in point. The details of the Malagite shipment and its route were left in a briefcase on a busy station. Handed in to a National Newspaper, it was returned to BISCUIT but, somehow, copies were made.

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A case of flu going around the BISCUIT offices and the fact that agents have been deployed to other, more pressing, duties (guarding MPs, for example) has meant a skeleton guard has been placed on the delivery (and one of those has the sniffles).

Malagite

Not really a character. This extremely rare - and probably otherworldly - substance acts as a catalyst to all energy releasing reactions. A 12 volt battery in the presence of Malagite would, for a microsecond, become powerful enough to drive a starship.

Pathfyndre is seeking the Malagite in the hope of powering an inter-dimensional jump home to report on Darkharte's activities.

Density expects to use it to boost the effectiveness of the devices he has stolen from his employer. (It WILL do this, but the massive momentary increase in gravity field would instantly reduce him to a smear of jelly.)

Prologues

There are a number of ways you could introduce the Heroes to this Scenario:-

i) They are wandering down the street when they see a group of purple-suited goons assaulting an armoured security van. (Try to avoid this one.)

ii) If they have made good contacts with the authorities in an earlier scenario - or have an appropriate Advantageous Background - they may be accompanying the Malagite to help guard it (or because they own it or are researching it).

iii) A stool-pigeon encountered in an earlier scenario may have let them know details of the attack.

iv) Good contacts within the Underworld could have given details of Density's hiring of goons for this job. A Detective-type Hero could even have infiltrated the goons and be present in a purple suit.

v) A Hero with the ability to detect energy fields could have tracked the route of the Zealot towards this battle - though they will not know exactly what it is. Such a Hero will also be aware of the Malagite. In fact its presence will temporarily "scramble" the Hero's sense making it impossible to detect the Zealot's exact location.

If the Heroes are set-up and operate as a team then they can all be introduced by a single one of the lead-ins above. If, however, they operate as individuals, it is a LOT more fun to introduce them by different means - one could be guarding the van whilst another has infiltrated the gang attacking it, for example.

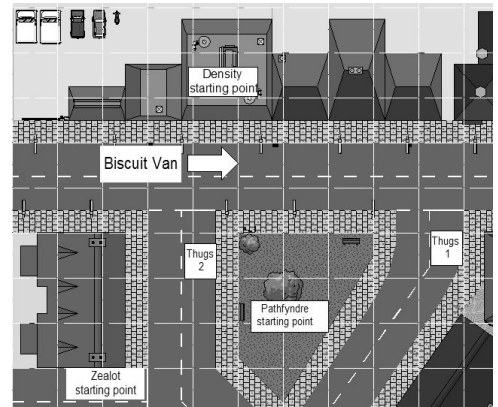
Chapter 1: "Weighty Considerations"

Summary: This is a four-way battle. Density will be trying to grab the Malagite, whilst Pathfyndre seeks to take it for himself.

A Zealot will appear and attempt to capture Pathfyndre.

The Heroes will, presumably, attempt to stop all of this and bring some order to proceedings.

Detail: This battle takes place on **Map 1**.

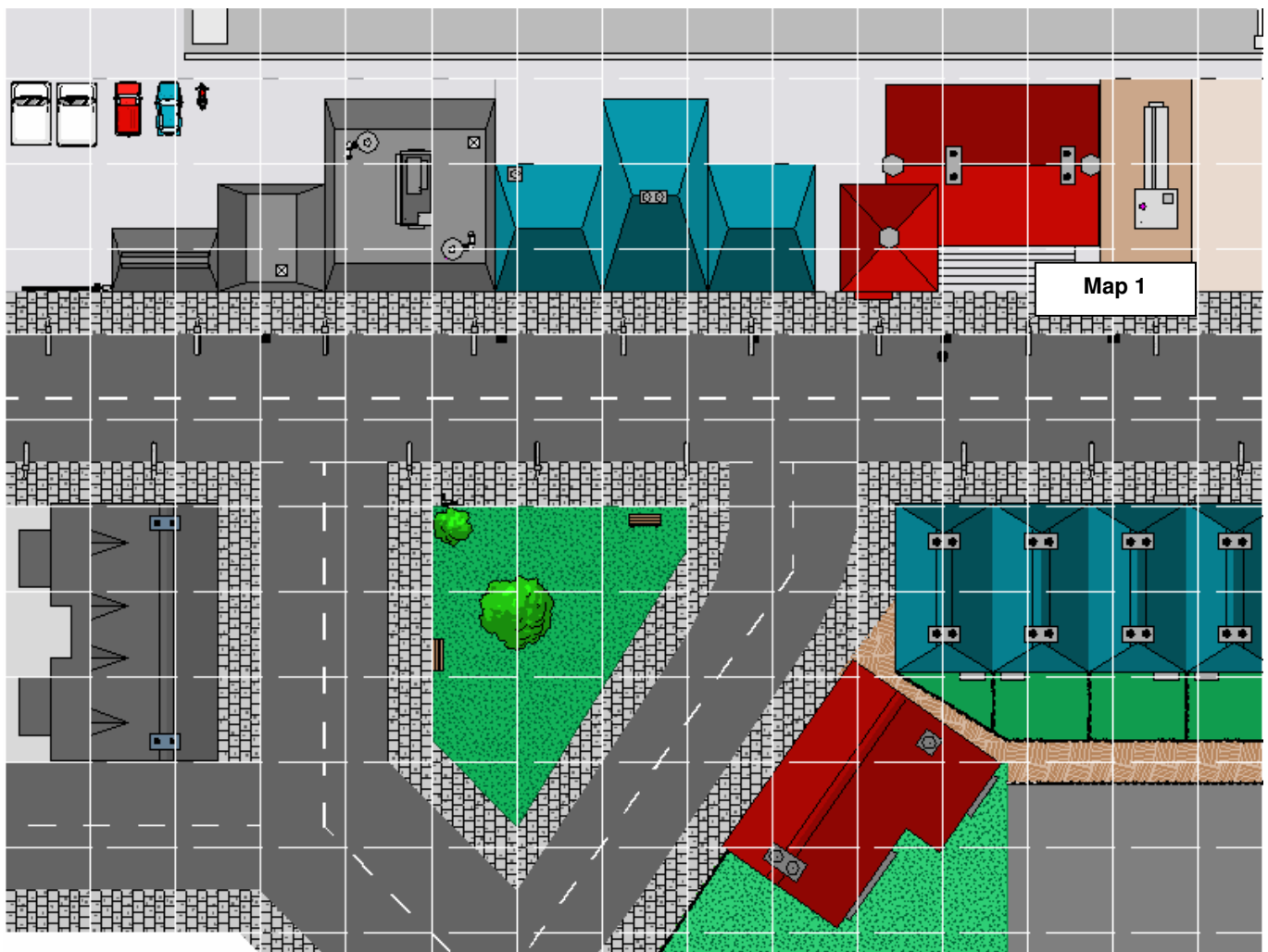


Density is waiting on the flat-roofed building at the top of the map.

Pathfyndre is waiting in the tree on the green.

A car/lorry (whatever you have available) full of goons waits in each of the two roads coming off the main street which runs across the top. There should be two goons for each Hero in the scenario plus an additional four. (One Hero would face 6 goons, four Heroes would face 12.)

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The Zealot is using its chameleon ability to lie in wait on the path to the side of the pub, by the gardens behind the houses on the bottom left of the map.

Round 0: The Van carrying the Malagite, four BISCUIT agents (two in the front two in the rear) and, possibly, some Heroes - drives across the main road at the top of the map from left to right (in the left-hand lane of course). As it crosses the middle of the map, the two vehicles full of goons pull out from the side-streets in front of and behind it. The Van is forced to halt. Goons flood out of their vehicles.

Initiative can now be rolled.

Round 1: Shots are exchanged between the Goons and the agents in the front of the Van. Two drop on each side - one dead, one wounded. (Heroes in an appropriate position may roll percentage dice against double their Detective Points. If they succeed they will notice the dead BISCUIT agent floating out of his seat and bouncing off the roof of his cab.)

Goons at the back of the Van move to plant an explosive on the back door of the van.

Density floats down from the roof to support his troops. Heroes in position roll against three times their Detective Points to spot his decent - otherwise he attacks by surprise, with an appropriate bon-mot.

Pathfyndre leaves the cover of the tree and, under the cloak of magical invisibility, moves towards the battle.

Round 2: The Goons at the back of the van explode their device. This will blast open the back of the van and does 6d6 HTK and HTC to anyone nearby.

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Because of the energy component reduce any damage dividers by 1 apiece.

The blast can be dodged as a WC:2 attack taking an action.

Density and any spare goons will engage the Heroes.

Round 3: BISCUIT Agents in the back of the Van exchange shots with Goons. Two drop on each side - one dead, one wounded. One of the BISCUIT agents falls to the ground with a sickening crunch, bones splitting under his increased mass.

If, for any reasons, the back of the van has not been blown open, Density will "go heavy" and bash it open with his mace. The exchange of shots will then take place in Round 4.

Subsequent rounds: Density and his goons will attempt to get the Malagite out of the back of the van. Density will then "go light" and float away with it. The goons will then flee in their vehicles.

Pathfyndre will attempt to interfere and grab the Malagite for himself. As soon as Pathfyndre acts the Zealot will use its chameleon ability to move towards the battle and attempt to snare him.

Initiative: Density, Goons, Pathfyndre and Zealot all act as Villains.

Pathfyndre acts first followed by Density, Zealot and the Goons who act last.

Special Note on Malagite: The fist-sized sample of Malagite is being transported in a locked lead box. It is in no-one's interest to open it during the battle. Should be foolish enough to do so a range of effects could occur:

i) Anyone touching the Malagite will take 3d6 HTK and HTC per frame as first their hand, then their arm then their chest etc. ages and withers.

ii) An Energy Attack, or similar, fired near the Malagite will have its effectiveness doubled but a back-blast equivalent to the original attack will affect the user.

iii) Guns fired near it will explode.

iv) A vehicle started near it will launch forwards at a massive velocity, ploughing through anyone in its way.

v) If the Malagite gets anywhere near the Zealot it will immediately set off its self-destruct mechanism.

Feel free to add effects of your own. How the Malagite is returned safely to its box is anyone's guess.

The Climax: The battle will probably end when the Zealot is defeated and activates its self-destruct mechanism.

If the Heroes, through cunning or some unique combination of their abilities come up with a clever way to take out the Zealot, allow them to succeed and congratulate them. Darkharte will have monitored this battle and will adapt the rest of his pack to ensure that this take-out will not succeed a second time.

If he is not coup-de-graced, Density will seek to use the confusion this causes to escape - even if he has to leave the Malagite behind. Any goons still standing will try to flee.

If possible, Pathfyndre will make a suitably impressive exit - an hallucination of a cleft opening up in the ground, him sinking into it (he actually turns invisible) and the cleft closing over him.

He will return later. He has come up with an alternative plan that no longer requires the Malagite. The Heroes are his target now.

One of the wounded BISCUIT Agents will beg the Heroes to secure the Malagite and to keep the press and public away whilst he awaits backup.

Aftermath: As the dust settles a crowd will begin to form. The Heroes can keep them away - if they state they are attempting to do so - by rolling percentage dice under four times their Public Status.

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Next to arrive will be the press. They will only back off with a roll under twice the Heroes' Public Status. Alternatively the Heroes could opt to give them a story. BISCUIT would rather it was cover story - such as a currency shipment attacked by a minor Villain - rather than anything amounting to the truth.

If some of the Heroes keep Public and Press occupied, the others will have a short time to question any captured Goons. These are not helpful, having been hired through known gangland pubs and telephone calls. However, if Density got away, one goon - with appropriate persuasion or promise of a deal - will remember hearing the Villain mutter "Lazarus, old boy, you're a genius" whilst he was watching them practice with their new weapons.

After a short while the police, and more BISCUIT agents will arrive to secure the scene.

Now is the time to give ratings:

Public Status

Backing: 4 if they co-operate with BISCUIT and the Police. 5 if they really suck up to the BISCUIT agents and/or give a good cover story.

Heroism: Saving the two surviving BISCUIT agents, protecting even the Goons from the affects of explosion, how bravely they

tackle the Zealot should all be considered.

Identification: Unlikely to be affected.

Public Relations: 4 if they talk to the Press. If more than 1 character talks to the Press have them roll percentage dice against three times existing Public Status. The one who makes the roll by the most (or fails it by the least) will become the centre-point of the story and get a Public Relations score of 5.

Practice: Nominally this is a practice rating of 5 (fighting a villain) but the presence of Pathfyndre and the Zealot raise it to 6.

Detective Points

Methods: Characters had the opportunity to question Goons and the BISCUIT Agents. They could also go rummaging around in the van and collect samples of the Goons' weapons, bits of Zealot etc. There is also a chance to boost methods in the following chapter.

Publicity: In return for a Hero's co-operation and a GOOD story, the reporters might be willing to cover their participation in a circumspect way which would still give them a high Public Status without giving away too much. In this case, one Hero could get a high publicity score as well. Otherwise calculate this from Public Status as usual.

Approachability:

Characters with low approachability could boost it by giving a contact number to Goons, Press or BISCUIT. If they held back the crowd this could also boost this score.

Power

Use:

Heightened senses and the like used to track the Zealot would score 5. Rate other uses as usual.

Contacts: Getting the Goons, Press and/or Police on board will give a boost of +1 each to contacts, provided this does not take the score above 5. BISCUIT will add +1 for a casual contact or +2 for serious sucking up but this will not take contacts above 6 or 7 respectively.

Personal Status

Conscience: Heroes should not be penalised by the deaths of the biscuit agents. They may suffer a negative modifier if they were responsible for any Malagite-related accidents. Heroes with a low conscience could have it boosted if they save people or property from the explosions or Malagite.

Expression: Heroes had the chance to get into a punning duel with Density. This is worth +1 to expression as is generally loud, clear and positive participation. -1 (or more) to anyone who was quiet or held back.

Success

Rate:

Regardless of what happened with Pathfyndre, the Zealot or

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Density - this battle is a success if the Malagite is saved and a failure if it is lost or destroyed.

Public Response: In this scenario rated directly from Public Status.

Security: Problems with the Zealot and/or Pathfyndre could undermine a Heroes' confidence by as much as -2 to security. A hero with a low Security who survives the battle with the Zealot gets a +1. If they contributed to the battle +2. If they whipped it single handed +3, so long as Security does not go above 7.

Chapter 1a: "Crushing disappointment"

Summary: The Heroes may need to track down Density.

It was never the intention that Density be anything more than a throwaway villain who would be thwarted and captured in the first battle. However, it was found during play-testing that Heroes' do have a tendency to forget to finish him off or coup-de-grace him once the Zealot appears. These notes are included in case this happens in your game. However, it is not essential that he escape and the scenario can continue successfully if he is caught during chapter 1. Don't work TOO hard to keep him free.

Detail: If Density escaped during chapter 1 then you have a sub-plot. Presumably the Heroes will wish to track him down and attempt to capture him.

The first clue is the comment overheard by the Goon (outlined above).

The second is that any reasonable enquiries (Internet searches, asking Scientists, newspaper archives) will reveal only half a dozen people in the whole world who are working in the field of gravity manipulation, only a couple of whom are British and only one of which works in the local area. Both of these clues point to Lazarus Jonathon.

However and wherever the Heroes track down Dr Jonathon, they will find an old man helped by his personal assistant - Joel Turnpike. He will be very protective of the older man and seek to dissuade the Heroes from disturbing him. For example, if the Heroes go straight to the University where he works it is Turnpike who will come out of the lab to meet them and enquire after their business. He will only introduce them to Dr Jonathon after exhaustive questioning.

A good technique here is to appear to make up Joel Turnpike's name on the spot, as if he were an unimportant character.

Another is to play him as a typical laboratory nerd - totally different from the arrogant, confident and bombastic villain they are looking for.

Heroes will note that Dr Jonathon is far too old and frail to be the person they'd encountered. However, if they roll percentage dice under three times their detective points, they will notice that he uses technology similar to that of Density to move around despite his arthritis.

An interview with Dr Lazarus should be frustrating. He accepts that he is a genius and could certainly do what that "Density" fellow appeared to do. However, he isn't aware of anyone else in the world who could do it. If he is shown a sample of a bullet from a Goon's gun, he will recognise the design as being (crudely) similar to devices of his own but he did not make them and is at a loss to explain their existence. This would appear to be a dead-end.

If the Heroes have got this far, at least one of them should certainly be given a Methods score of 4.

A Hero who tracked down Dr Jonathon and remembered to bring a sample of the Goons' bullets should given a rating of 5.

Meanwhile, Joel Turnpike will have planted a device on the Heroes' vehicle.

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After they leave they will become subject to a **Mass Variation (other)** attack. They will notice that they feel heavy and tired. At this stage they are down to two frames per round and have a +10 damage bonus.

Quickly ask each player what their Hero is doing. If they do not exit the vehicle or find and deactivate the device immediately - ie. by using their 2 frames - they move to the next stage. At this point they are unable to move, can only use mentally controlled powers and may pass out. Their mass will continue to build round until the heroes pass out and are crushed to jelly. (Re-read the Mass Variation (other) power).

If their vehicle is flying, it will crash and be destroyed.

By quick responses and/or clever uses of their powers most groups of Heroes should be able to escape this trap. If, however, they fail to do so then this is a good time to have Pathfyndre appear to save the day. (See below.)

By now the Heroes' should have realised that Joel Turnpike is the villain or, at the very least, that Dr Jonathon's lab deserves another visit.

However the final battle takes place, Density will probably have prepared the area so that the Heroes will be under the influence of a high-gravity field.

They only have 2 Frames apiece (though they will have a +10 damage modifier).

He may also have Dr Jonathon suspended from the ceiling ready to smear him on the floor.

You may feel like giving some ratings after this battle - including any upgraded Methods scores. Remember the Practice rating will be one lower than the previous adventure

Chapter 2: "Wrestling with Shadows"

Summary: Pathfyndre makes himself known to the Heroes and offers them a deal.

Detail: Whether the Heroes need to go after Density or not, the key to completing this story is Pathfyndre. It is important to understand Pathfyndre's motivations.

When Hansel Darkharte was banished to this alternative version of Earth - a sub-Earth (to Pathfyndre and his caste all alternative Earths are sub-Earths compared to their original True-Earth) - for the illegal use of gross (large-scale) technologies, Pathfyndre's caste dispatched him to track the (to them) villain and check that he was incapable of doing any further harm. Imagine his shock upon finding the sub-Earth chosen was on filled with exactly the technologies Darkharte needed to prosper.

Worse, his spying was detected by Darkharte and, in an abortive battle, his ability to warp back to his own Earth was destroyed.

Fleeing for his life, and pursued by a Zealot, Pathfyndre sought an element that could boost his own powers to such an extent that he could warp home unaided, and warn his caste about Darkharte. Though he failed in this, he has now seen the Heroes in action and formed a new plan. He intends to use them to destroy Darkharte and his evil creations. He can then return home with his mission accomplished, a Hero.

Pathfyndre will do and say anything to get the Heroes to attack Darkharte's base and destroy it, preferably killing him in the process. If they do not destroy Darkharte, Pathfyndre is willing to do it himself.

He will appear to the Heroes at an appropriate time (possibly to save them from Density's wiles - see above) and tell them just enough of the truth to pique their interest. He will use his hallucinations ability to try and appear more powerful than he really is and will exaggerate the threat Darkharte offers to this Earth whilst downplaying the strength of his defences. "He may have another one of those robot hunters around." Pathfyndre will warn - in the full knowledge that he has far more than that.

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All he needs the Heroes to do is to distract Darkharte and take all the flak from the lab's defences whilst he sneaks in and sets up an unstoppable reaction. This will simultaneously destroy Darkharte, all his evil creations and the sub-Earth creatures who have become aware of him (ie. the Heroes) whilst powering Pathfyndre's triumphant warp home.

Morality: some Referees may choose to muddy the morality in this scenario. At one end Pathfyndre could be a Hero, serving his people as best he can, and Hansel Darkharte could be an out and out villain. At the other extreme, Pathfyndre could be the evil agent of a repressive state and Darkharte could be an Heroic freedom fighter, striving to bring the benefits of the drabe to all his people and trying his best not to interfere with the peoples of this world. You decide where you want the truth to lie.

A typical option is to have Pathfyndre as a single-minded and ruthless servant of his people - with the law on his side but not, necessarily, justice. In this case Hansel Darkharte might claim to be - and believe himself to be - a saviour of his people but, in reality, all he wants is a drabe for himself and he would be happy to be accepted into Pathfyndre's caste. He is self-serving and might try not to interfere with events of this plane, but will do so without a second thought if this will further his ambitions.

Counterparts: Because Pathfyndre and Darkharte come from a parallel Earth, a Referee can choose to add even more confusion into the mix by having one of both of them as the otherworld counterpart of someone from this Earth. They could be a famous celebrity or politician, Joel Turnpike or Lazarus Jonathon or - even - one of the Heroes.

"I'm you - you as you would have been faced with my choices...."

Of course, Pathfyndre can use his hallucination ability to appear to be someone's counterpart even if he isn't.

"How do you know how to trust me? If you can't trust yourself, who can you trust?"

He'll be sure to put some sort of mask on before he runs out of magic points!

Chapter 3: "The Hunter hunted"

Summary: The Heroes attack Darkharte's laboratory only to find it defended by a whole pack of Zealots.

Detail: The area surrounding Darkharte's secret laboratory is shown on **Map 2** (see next page).

1) The laboratory is on greenbelt land which was once used as a farm, a few miles outside town.

2) A sign at the fork of the road invites people to feast at a "King Henry" steakhouse.

3) The Car Park for the steakhouse may be full of diner's cars or nearly empty depending upon the time of day.

4) This farmhouse has been converted into a "King Henry" one of a chain of pseudo-classic steakhouses popping up all over the country.

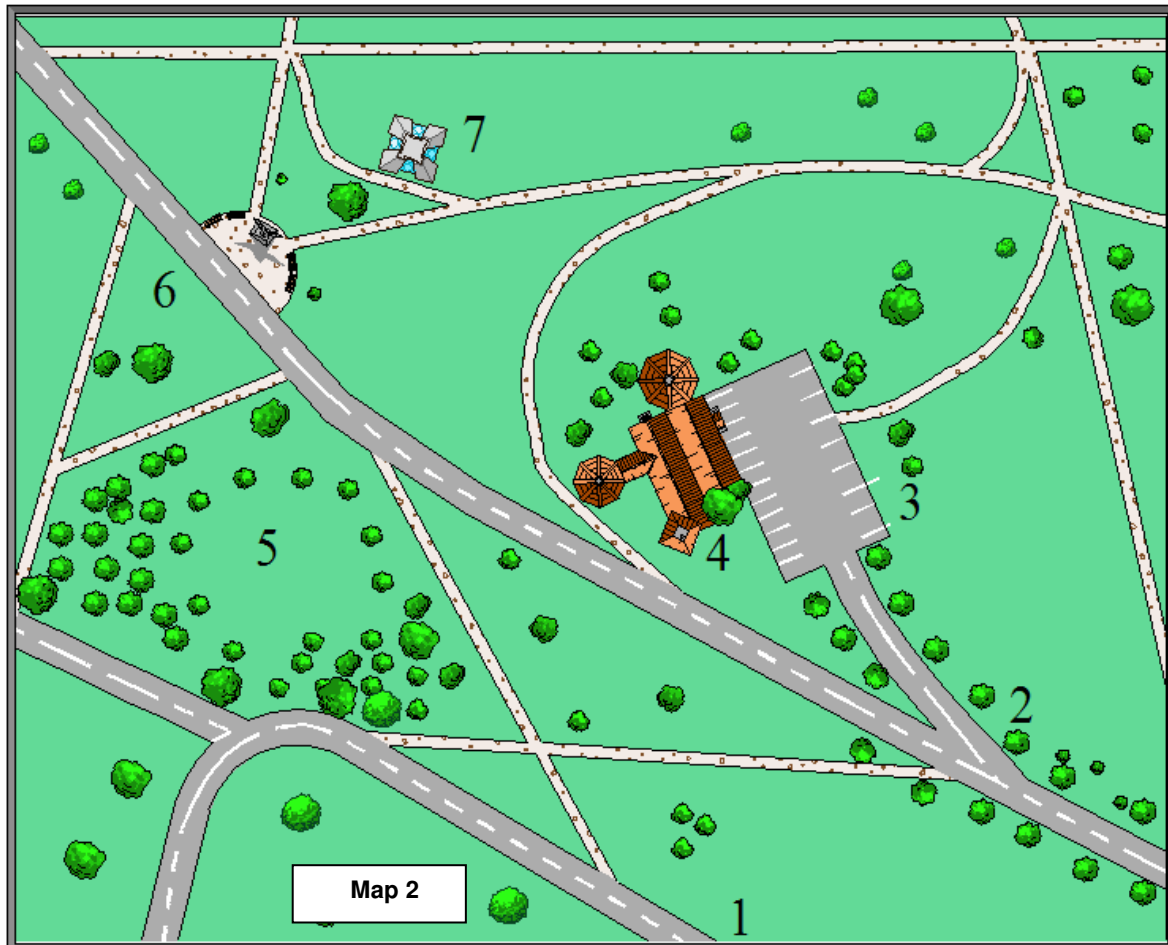
5) A copse in a small wood of trees on a low hill gives a perfect vantage point from which to watch the comings and goings in the local area.

6) A couple of rusty milk churns and an abandoned wagon indicate the intended use of this lay-by. It used to be a loading point for milk from the nearby dairy-house.

7) Darkharte's laboratory is built within the shell of an old dairy-house, previously used for milking the farmer's herd of cows.

Approaching the laboratory and, even, gaining access is no problem. Hansel Darkharte is no fool and does have devices scanning the local area. He is aware of anyone approaching. However, he is arrogant. There is nothing on this Earth which can stop him or his creations. It took a number of the Heroes working together to take out even one of his Zealots.

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Anyone who is foolish enough to gain entry to his laboratory is in for a nasty shock.

When the Heroes do decide to enter the Laboratory (**Map 3**), Pathfyndre will hold back. Darkharte will allow the Heroes to penetrate a couple of rooms before ordering his Zealots to attack.

The rooms don't need individual descriptions, they are all full of machines with flashing lights making humming and whistling noises. Even a Brilliant Scientist won't be able to work out the purpose of each machine straight away because of the difference in technological styles.

Try to make sure the Heroes have moved away from the main entrance before moving in with the Zealots. They should approach from in front and behind and should seek to shut the Heroes off from the door. There should be at least one Zealot for each Hero. If you feel the need (but you shouldn't) you can send in more.

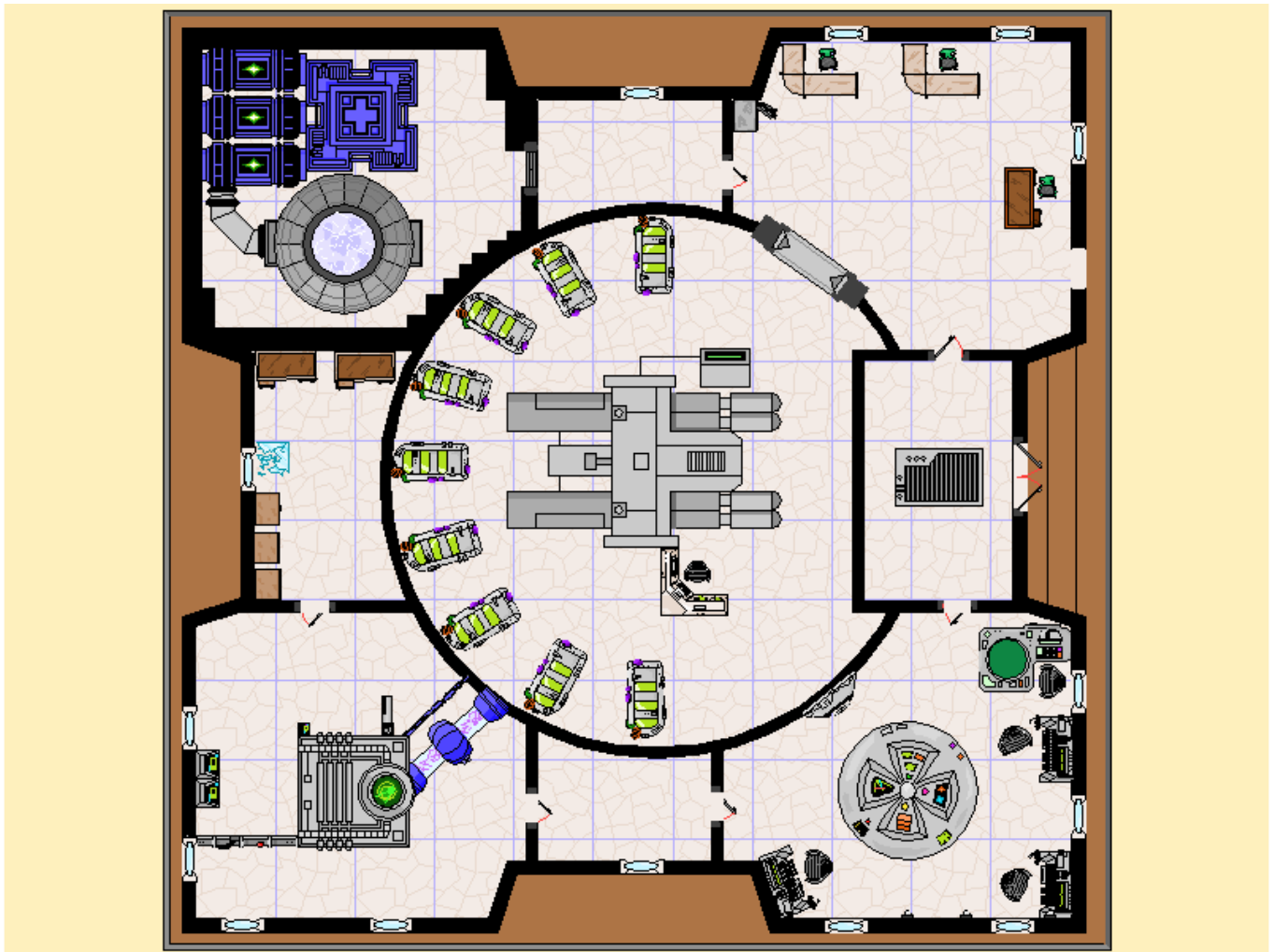
As you can see from **Map 3** there are "pods" for up to 9 Zealots but the heroes destroyed one in chapter 1 so that leaves a maximum of 8 to call upon. However, some are probably still under construction leaving the one Zealot per Hero ratio.

Darkharte will hold back. He is expecting Pathfyndre to sneak in and is hoping to trap him himself. In this he is correct.

This battle should prove difficult (to say the least) for the average group of Heroes. If they try to win it by force of arms alone, they will probably take a real pasting and they'll deserve it. In order to win this battle, they need to get clever. You (and they) have a number of options:-

a) The Heroes may use a clever combination of their powers to take out the Zealots. However, remember that if they try a trick which they have already used in chapter 1, Darkharte will have redesigned his Zealots to

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circumnavigate or be immune to it.

b) A Hero studying the flashing lights on machines may notice (with an appropriate Detective Points roll if they are not a Brilliant Scientist) a panel with nine dials, of which only a few are active - exactly the same number as there are Zealots. Smashing this machine will stop the robots in their tracks.

c) If Pathfyndre or one of the Heroes reaches the reactor (choose whichever room you feel looks most appropriate) they can initiate a chain reaction causing the lab to self-destruct (see "BOOM" below.)

d) Defeating Darkharte will stop the Zealots in their tracks. (He will have to be found or reveal himself by attacking Pathfyndre.)

e) A Computer wiz-kid or Brilliant Scientist who "patches into" the Lab's sentience-system (more or less a computer system) may cause a self-destruct (as above), switch off the Zealots or cause one or more of them to attack their pack-mates.

f) If anyone has been stupid enough to bring a sample of Malagite into the Lab, releasing it will immediately cause a cascade reaction amongst the lab's

systems. (see "BOOM" below.)

g) Defeating one Zealot will initiate its own self-destruct which may damage a nearby Zealot or (even) cause it to self-destruct. (If there is a domino effect where the Zealots trigger each others' systems then you may need to go to "BOOM" below.)

h) One or more of the Heroes might run away in the hope of coming back with a better plan or reinforcements.

i) The Heroes might come up with a clever strategy of their own.

None of these options is the "correct" one - but the

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players should never know this, The Referee should judge how close the Heroes are to going under when deciding which, if any, of these strategies works.

Typically, the Heroes will fight the Zealots for a short while before realising that they are likely to lose. At this point they will hopefully start looking around for other ways of winning - probably selecting one of the options above. Whichever one they pick, it should fail. They will then need to come up with another approach and this one, whichever it is, will succeed.

For example, if the Heroes try to blow up the reactor they will find safeguards which shut it down.

If they then attack Darkharte, they will find that he has all the controls for the Zealots on him.

On the other hand, if they attack and defeat Darkharte first, they will find that the Zealots keep fighting on due to their built-in programming and they may have to blow up the reactor (which - in this case - wouldn't have any safeguards) to win.

"BOOM"

There are many things which might cause a catastrophic explosion - some of which are outlined above.

Throughout the Scenario, keep a secret track of the Heroes HTK and HTC totals. If the total of the HTK, HTC and VIGOUR scores of any Hero falls below 70 they are in danger of dying should the lab explode - unless they have very High Damage Dividers or can dodge out of the blast. In this case you should:

- a) try to avoid having the lab blow up
- b) adjust the damage the blast does
- c) change its effect upon damage dividers or
- d) wait until the vulnerable Hero is in a position to leap away from the blast.
- e) Allow a nearby Hero to "shield" their vulnerable colleague.

Use whichever one is most appropriate.

Normally, the blast of the exploding lab will do 10d6 HTK and 10d6 HTC to everyone and everything inside with -3 to all damage dividers. It can be dodged as a WC:5 attack taking an action.

(You can roll the dice or simply announce 35 HTC and 35 HTK damage.)

This explosion will create a massive cloud of dust and smoke which will take several minutes to disperse.

The explosion will destroy the Zealots (cruel Referees may have the damaged Zealots explode intermittently after the main blast - just when everyone thinks it's safe).

Pathfyndre and Darkharte (and one or more damaged Zealots?) will disappear in the blast. Whether destroyed, escaped or warped back to their own world is unclear.

Captured

If the heroes lose the battle with the Zealots, the Referee has two options:

- a) Darkharte may choose to use the Heroes to test his Zealots.

In this case he will scan each Hero for their unique energy signature and release them, one at a time, to be pursued by a Zealot programmed to track and destroy them.

Hopefully the first Hero released will be able to elude or defeat his/her tracker and return to free their friends. (Choose your player carefully....)

- b) Darkharte may experiment upon one of the the captured Heroes.

He will implant an artificial drabe - of his own design - into their sinuses. This will have a random effect.

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Roll a d6:

Roll	Effect
1	No effect
2	The drabe is rejected. It melts and plops out of the nasal passages.
3	Excruciating pain. 2d6 HTC per round until the drabe is removed or destroyed or until the host is dead.
4	The drabe "turns off" one of the Hero's powers (rolled at random).
5	The drabe gives the Hero a new ability (roll on the Superpower generation table until you get one that suits.)
6	Two of the effects above or something REALLY weird happens.

Hopefully one of the Heroes will luck into something which will allow them to escape and turn the tide of battle.

Remember, as long as they have a drabe implanted the Heroes will talk with a nasal twang. This could cause problems with their secret identities if they choose to keep it.

Aftermath

There are many possible outcomes of this scenario depending upon the actual motivations of both Pathfyndre and Hansel Darkharte and the extent to which the Heroes were successful in stopping and capturing each of them.

A typical outcome would be to arrest Darkharte and have him thrown into prison for his crimes on this world whilst packing Pathfyndre off to his own dimension with warning

to stay away from our world and never again to use it as a dumping ground for their criminals.

Of course, as outlined in "BOOM" above, one or both of the main protagonists could mysteriously disappear.....

The extent to which this story comes out and is reported in the press is up to the Heroes. Certainly a pitched battle and/or huge explosion near a busy Restaurant is going to be noticed and raise some questions.

Ratings

Public Status

Backing: will probably not change as a result of this scenario unless the Heroes are careless in the way they explain their action to authorities - which would result in some loss of backing.

Heroism: Anyone who runs away from the unwinnable battle should have their heroism slashed to 1 (or 2 at the most). There are plenty of opportunities for Heroes to gain Heroism by - for example - taking on two or three Zealots at once to allow their colleagues to infiltrate the lab's systems or shielding their more vulnerable team-mates during the explosion.

Identification: Unlikely to be affected.

Public

Relations: Depending upon how they report this story to the press each and every hero could get a Public Relations score of as high as 5. It is likely to be the top story for a couple of days.

Practice: This scenario should have a practice rating of 7. However, Heroes who play it down in the press will reduce it to 6 whilst those who talk it up may boost it to 8, 9 or 10 depending upon the extent of their exaggeration (lies). The higher they boost the Practice rating, however, the more public panic will be caused.

Detective Points

Methods: This will probably not change. A Hero with low Methods who, for example, checks the machines to find a correlation with the Zealots' actions might get a bonus.

Publicity: If Heroes claim to have saved the City/world then they will automatically have a publicity score of 1, regardless of their total Public Status. To keep this score high, the Hero needs to have accepted a Practice rating of 6 for the battle.

Approachability: Should not be affected.

Power Use: Powers used to determine a way to kill/deactivate the Zealots or to detect or capture Darkharte and Pathfyndre should get a bonus.

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Contacts: Unlikely to be affected. Darkharte and Pathfyndre aren't even from this world and so are no use as contacts.

Personal Status

Conscience: If any Heroes die, the rest will suffer a conscience minus. Otherwise this unlikely to be affected unless the Referee has posed them a moral dilemma (see "morality" above).

Expression: This should be judged on how the Heroes acted when their backs were against the wall. Moaning, complaining or worrying should have a negative effect on expression. Keeping a stiff upper lip or joking in the face of certain defeat is worth an expression of up to 5.

Success Rate: this battle is a success if the Heroes survived and stopped the threat of the Zealots. Even if everything around them was reduced to rubble and the villains escaped it can still be a success.

Public Response: See Publicity- above.

Security: Surviving this impossible battle is worth +2 to security. This rises to +3 if the Heroes managed to achieve any ancillary successes.

Future Issues

A) Where did Density get the money to build all the devices, buy the Goon-suits

and pay his Goons? Obviously he's sold one of Dr Jonathon's gravity manipulation devices to a third party. They are going to use it - sooner or later.

B) If Pathfyndre and/or Hansel Darkharte escaped they are bound to re-surface - sooner or later.

C) More incursions from the counter-Earth of the drabe could occur. They might criminals being exiled or further Ghost-agents seeking the fate of Pathfyndre.

D) Pathfyndre's world might face a terrible threat and he begs the Heroes to return with him to defeat it. Is this the truth or is it a trap?

E) If the Universe can spawn an Earth ruled by a drabe-infested caste, what other strange counter-Earths might there be out there? How can we travel to them and have visitors from them visited us?

F) Heroes who were implanted with a drabe may experience side-effects even if the drabe were removed. It could grow back. They may need to contact or - even - travel to that alternative Earth to seek a cure.

Villains:

Density - background:

Joel Turnpike is a nobody, a low-grade Science Undergraduate who, through luck and a lot of smarminess

has lucked into a position as the personal assistant to aging maverick scientist Professor Lazarus Jonathon.

He has stolen a number of the Professor's prototype gravity manipulation devices and adapted them for criminal purposes.



Density			
Alias: Joel Turnpike			
EGO	STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	VIGOUR
10	13(36)	8	9
HTK	Divider	Recover	Hospitalised
33	4	1d6/hr	3
HTC	Divider	Recover	Stag/Stun
31	3	1d6/rnd	6 / 3
Move	DC	Dodge	Damage
5m.	4	+0	+21
Frame	Strike	P.back	Energy
4	-	20(25)	-
Superpowers: Choose – Strength 2 (One grade of strength comes from implanted devices which vary their mass as he uses them, the other is from increased natural strength from constant use of the devices). Tough Skin (Implanted devices make his skin dense & superstrong) Mass Variation (Self) (from a device built into the Staff he carries) Cybernetics – Weapon (Gravity Staff) 2			
Equipment: Gravity Staff (works as a grade 2 Cybernetic Weapon an has Mass Variation – self Power) Aerosol Sprays – he uses these to move himself around when he is light and floating.			
Attack	Fist/ /Foot	Staff	
WC	2	2	
HTK	1d6-6	1d6+10	
HTC	2d6	2d6+16	
Mod.	+21	-	
Time	Frame	Action	
Notes	+10 when heavy	+10 when heavy	

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Density has a distressing tendency towards BAD puns: "I don't think you realise the Gravity of the situation", "He ain't Heavy, he's my brother" etc

Density's goons

DC: 10, 2 Frames per round.

Incapacitated by any strike with a damage modifier or

Energy – or by any two "normal" attacks.



Attack	Fist/ /Foot	Gun
WC	0	1
HTK	1d6-6	1d6
HTC	2d6	1d6
Mod.	-	-
Time	Frame	Action
Notes	See below	

If the goons Strike with their guns, their bullets will attach themselves to the target and have the following effects. Roll a d6:

Roll	Effect
1	Very light. Pushback Threshold 0. Begin to float away on the wind. Cannot attack physically.
2	Light. -10 pushback.. Ground-based movement and physical damage halved.
3	Quite Light. -5 pushback.
4	Quite Heavy. +5 Pushback
5	Heavy. +10 pushback. Reduced to two frames. +10 Damage.
6	Very Heavy. Suffers the effects of Mass Variation Other (qv.)

Characters immune to damage from bullets will take no damage from the attack but the bullet can still lodge in their clothing causing the above effects.

The effects can be circumvented by simply finding and removing the bullet.

Pathfyndre			
EGO	STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	VIGOUR
15	16	17	18
HTK	Divider	Recover	Hospitalised
63	-	1d6+1/hr	6
HTC	Divider	Recover	Stag./Stun
65	-	1d6+1/rnd	12 / 6
Move	DC	Dodge	Damage
8.5m.	6	+2	+1
Frame	Strike	P.back	Magic
4	+2	20	24
Superpowers: Magic 2: <u>Hallucinations</u> , Information, Hypnosis, Enhancement Field Manipulation: Magic Heightened Senses: Sense Magic Radar Sense Martial Arts (Oriental) 2 Magical Invisibility (special power gained through training. Costs 1 Magic point per action.) Dimension Warp (special power gained through training. Costs 50 Magic points to move between dimensions.)			
Equipment: First Aid kit (Herbs) Magic Belt (works like a torch) Coloured Dusts			
Attack	Fist/ /Foot (KO)	Fist/ /Foot (Kill)	
WC	3	3	
HTK	1d6	2d6+3	
HTC	2d6+6	1d6	
Mod.	+1	+1	
Time	Frame	Frame	
Notes	+2 strike	+2 strike	

Pathfyndre - background

A Ghost-Agent from a parallel Earth. All of his powers – except Martial Arts – work because he is merged with a **drabe** – an artificial creature living in his sinal cavity. This allows him to manipulate energy fields in ways so advanced it appears as magic in our world.



Note: Pathfyndre has insufficient power to jump between dimensions unaided. He needs a temporary boost in his magic points – from a magic device or coven – to empower it.

Hansel Darkharte			
EGO	STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	VIGOUR
18	5	8	14
HTK	Divider	Recover	Hospitalised
51	2	1d6/hr	5
HTC	Divider	Recover	Stag./Stun
49	-	1d6/rnd	9 / 4
Move	DC	Dodge	Damage
4.5m.	5	+4	-1
Frame	Strike	P.back	Magic
4	-	20	15
Superpowers: AB Brilliant Scientist (Mechanical) Cybernetics 1 (Cybernetic Controller – Zealots) Forcefield 2 (Personal Force Barrier – 15 HTK. General Force Barrier 10 HTK). Magic 1 (<u>Restraint</u> , Mystic Shield, Energy Strike) Precision 2 (On Energy Strike) Skills 1 (Surgeon, Tracking)			
Equipment:			
Armoured Lab-suit			
Artificial Drabe			
Cybernetic Controller – built into drabe			
Attack	Fist/ /Foot	Energy Strike	
WC	2	3	
HTK	1d6-6	1-5xd6	
HTC	2d6-1	1-5xd6	
Mod.		+5	
Time	Frame	Action	
Notes	+5 per Frame spent aiming. Ignores dividers. 2 points per d6.		

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Darkheart – background

A scientist from an alternative version of Earth. Banned from being given a “drabe” – an artificial implanted lifeform which gives his people great powers – Hansel Darkharte was forced to develop grosser technologies. These were outlawed and he was banished to our Earth.



Here he has developed giant robots called “Zealots” which he intends to use to conquer his own Earth. In addition he wears a grotesque metal helmet which has tendrils which pass into his nasal cavity. This is an artificial drabe and gives him magic-like powers to manipulate energies to create force fields and the like.

Zealot - background:

One of a pack of artificial hunters created by Hansel Darkheart – an exiled genius from another dimension.



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Zealot			
EGO	STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	VIGOUR
N/a	15(45)	6	15(26)
HTK	Divider	Recover	Damaged
92	4	N/a	9
Move	DC	Dodge	Damage
12m	4	+0	+30
Frame	Strike	P.back	Energy
4	-	30	15
Superpowers: Larger 2 Strength 1 Tough Skin 1 Claws Chameleon Ability Heightened Senses (Sense Energy Fields – Including “Magic”) Energy Attack 1 (Fire) – Area attack (ii) (5x2 cone) and (v) (4 x 3 cone) Whip – 10m. long. Hit indicates it has grappled an opponent. Target Grappled must roll D20+Str roll and beat d20+45 to escape. A blow of 20HTK or 20HTC (before damage dividers) will loosen the tongue. 20HTK (after dividers) will sever whip. 2 Frames after being hit, the target takes automatic damage from the grapple. If the Zealot uses its Energy Attack it will automatically hit a grappled target unless it rolls a critical miss which will release the target.) Self Destruct: When reduced to less than 0 HTK, Zealot explodes. 10d6 HTK/HTC, -2 dividers, Dodge as WC:3 attack, 1 Action. At 0 HTK the Zealot is dormant.			
Equipment: Whip (retracts into arm, see above) Razor Spiked Arms Transmitter – allows Hansel Darkheart to monitor what happens to the Zealot			
Attack	Claws	Flame	
WC	2	3	
HTK	2d6	0-6xd6	
HTC	1d6	0-6xd6	
Mod.	+30	-	
Time	Frame	Action	
Attack	Whip	Grapple	
WC	2	3	
HTK	-	2d6+3	
HTC	-	1d6	
Mod.	-	-	
Time	Action	Action	
Notes	D20+Str grab	Autohit following whip hit	



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