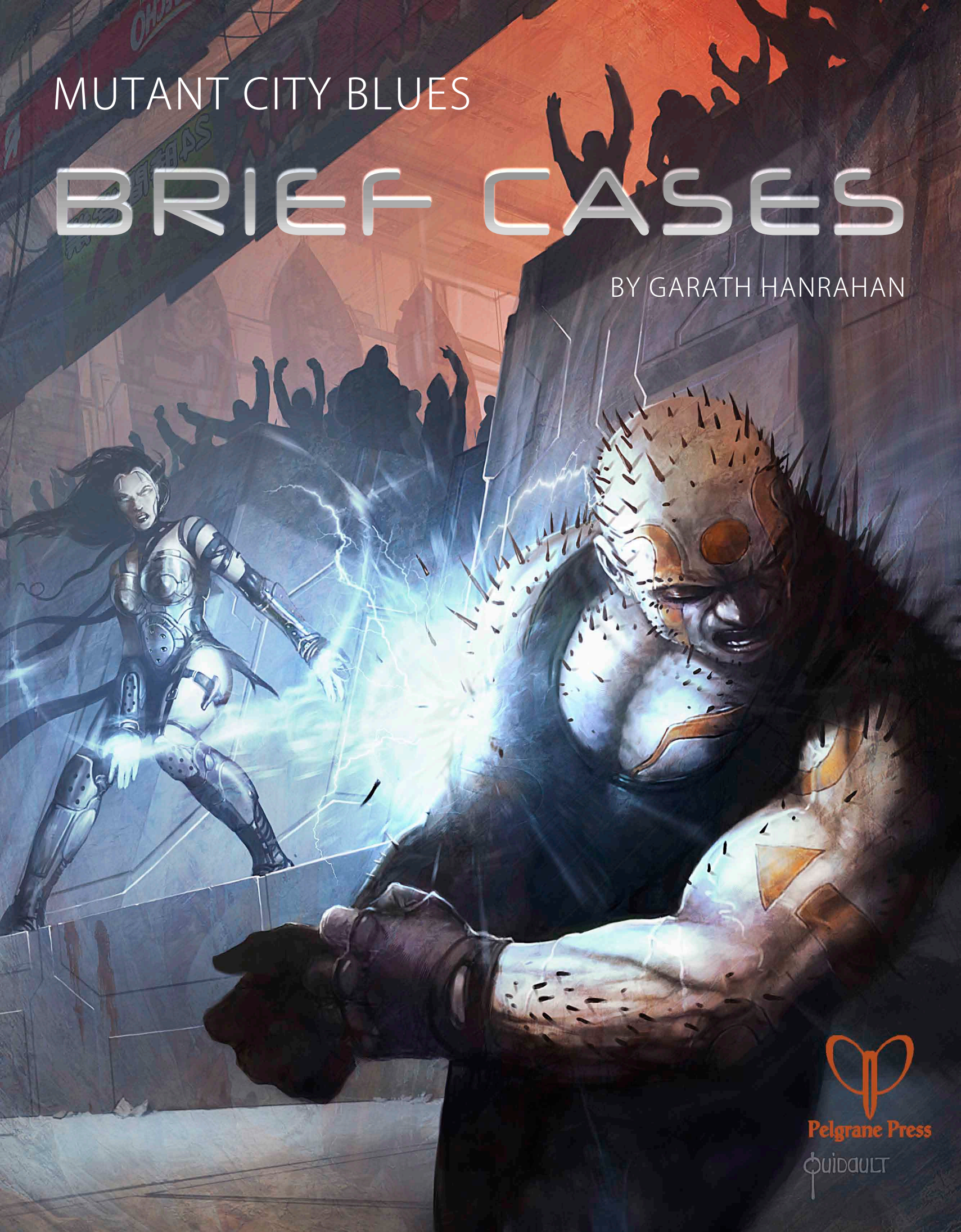


MUTANT CITY BLUES

BRIEF CASES

BY GARATH HANRAHAN



Pelgrane Press

QUIDAU LT

MUTANT CITY BLUES

BRIEF CASES

BY GARATH HANRAHAN

CONTENTS

BY GARATH HANRAHAN

INTRODUCTION

BACKSTORY	4
THE CRIME	4
THE INVESTIGATION	4
THE TWIST	4

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

THE CULPRIT	5
SCENES	5
Something Rotten	5
Freddy's Gone	5
Explosives & Related Materials	5
The Workshop	5
Explosive Materials	6
In The Stacks	6
Local Witnesses	7
Chandyo's Deli	7
Just Ordinary Folks	7
Interviewing Toby Muldew	7
The Hotel Suite	8
Dawson Returns	9
Interviewing Cynthia Thurber	9
Interviewing Adria Dawson	9
Trail of the Bomber	10
Minutes Earlier...	10
Murder Scene	10
The Body	10
Searching the Apartment	10
Meet The Press	11
Handing the Press	11
Confronting Muldew	11
Mutant Riot!	11
After the Fight	12
The Busboy's Tale	12
One Mutant	13
Stopping Dawson	13
Case Closed	13

BLASTBACK

BACKSTORY	14
THE CRIME	14
THE INVESTIGATION	14
THE CULPRIT	14
THE TWIST	14
SCENES	14
The Danger Room	14
The Accident Scene	15
Interviewing Hutkins	16
The Machinist	16
Duke Collins	17
That Old Gang of Mine	18
Marsha Collins	18
Henry York	18

The Knifeman	18
Dr. Rowan	19
Firetrap	19
Searching Through The Debris	19
The Collins's	19
Alan Collins	20
Duke Collins	20
Searching the Apartment	20
Arresting Duke	20
The Tournament	21
Getting In	22
Blastback	22
Endgame	22
Aftermath	22
BACKSTORY	24
THE CRIME	24
THE INVESTIGATION	24
THE TWIST	24

THE KIDS AREN'T ALRIGHT

THE CULPRIT	25
MUTANT HIGH	25
SCENES	25
The Man Who Fell	25
The Victim	25
Examining the Victim	25
Officers Lewis & Mara	26
Mutant High	26
Inquiries in the School	26
Tyrone Waye & Coach O'Brien	27
The Bown Twins	27
Adrian Daniels	27
An Anonymous Tip-Off	28
At the Park	28
The Flying Girl	28
Gossip Cops	29
Car Crash	29
Chasing Toni	29
Jay's Car	30
The Other Girl	30
Finding Farrah	31
The Goob	31
Endgame	32
Inside the Warehouse	32
It Turns Out I'm A Supervillain	32
The Other Girl	32
Aftermath	32

CREDITS

AUTHOR: GARETH HANRAHAN

EDITOR: SIMON ROGERS

PUBLISHER: BETH LEWIS

ARTWORK: PASCAL QUIDAULT

ART DIRECTOR: BETH LEWIS

LAYOUT: RODERICK ROBERTSON

PLAYTESTERS: JOHN M. KAHANE,
KATHY BAUER, STEVE BAUER, NICK
ROBERTS, TOM ROBINSON, JOANNE
CLARKE, ANGELA MARSH

INTRODUCTION

Nothing can be taken at face value in Mutant City. That kid loitering on a street corner might be a mutant time bomb. That crime of passion could have been a mob hit using Possession or Emotion Control on some innocent girl to force her to murder her boyfriend. That man walking past you on the street could be a serial killer, a shapeshifting murderer who wears a different face for every victim. You can't even trust your own colleagues – the cops distrust mutants just as much as the next guy, and it's all too easy to pin the rap on some super-powered freak.

The three mysteries in *Brief Cases* are all designed to be played in one or two sessions. In each, the officers of the Heightened Crimes Investigation Unit are faced with a crime that seems simple at the outset, but which soon spirals into something much more confusing and dangerous. Inhuman powers – unwanted, untrusted and uncontrolled – mixed with all-too-human emotions are at the core of each mystery, but getting to that solution requires careful investigation and deduction.

The three cases in this book are:

Shoulder to Shoulder revolves around anti-mutant prejudice and tests the loyalties of the characters. A chance discovery of a bomb-making workshop reveals a threat to an anti-mutant rally. Pursuing the case diligently means helping those who despise mutants. This case calls for excellent forensic skills, and is especially suited to a mix of heightened and normal characters.

Blastback: A murder at a mutant-only gym brings the characters into the shadowy world of mutant fighting and a clash with organised crime. To solve this crime, the characters need to unravel the history of the Danger Room and its staff and stop a young man from throwing his life away. This scenario focuses on investigation for the most part, but the final scene calls for powerful combat-ready mutants or a lot of police backup.

The Kids Aren't Alright begins when a lawyer falls out of the sky. The investigation leads to a local high school – one of the kids must be an unidentified mutant. Tracing the connection between the initial victim and the perpetrator requires interviewing the students; good interpersonal skills and a detailed knowledge of the **Quade Diagram** are needed to crack this case.

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

The squad are sworn to protect the people – even people who decry and despise mutants. When an anti-mutant activist is targeted by terrorists, can the squad overcome their personal feelings on the matter and stop the bomber?

BACKSTORY

Adria Dawson is an unlikely rallying point for those who hate and fear mutants. She started out as a television chef, a sort of mild-mannered aunt substitute who baked cookies on afternoon chat shows. Ten years ago, her career took a sharp right turn. When the first mutants manifested, Adria made comments about the dangers posed by superpowers, and likened some mutant powers to *'handing grenades to criminals'*. Her comments resonated with people who feared the mutants, but who were hesitant to speak out too openly or violently – *'it's not that I'm racist, but you just can't trust some people'*. Adria became the pleasant, motherly face of passive prejudice.

She is now the leader of a popular anti-mutant movement that advocates registration of all powers, not just those covered by Article 18 (see *Mutant City Blues*, page 124), segregation of mutants in schools, requiring all mutants with mind-affecting powers like Sexual Chemistry or Emotion Control to wear badges showing their abilities, and other restrictions on mutants. She would never advocate internment camps or mass segregation, and she is always careful to present herself as a kindly mom who's just worried about the small percentage of mutants who abuse their powers. Her speeches are filled with code words and dog whistles that anti-mutant activists recognize, but she has managed to keep her reputation as the nice, approachable, moderate side of the anti-mutant issue.

She has thousands of followers across the country, and is a regular speaker at rallies, conferences and meetings when she's not a TV pundit.

Dawson is due to speak at a fundraiser for the Families First organisation. Ostensibly, Families First fosters traditional values, natural family planning and charitable good works, but it's also opposed to mutant integration.

THE CRIME

Uniformed officers pursuing a suspect found a bomb-making workshop and evidence pointing at a planned attack on Dawson's conference. They contacted the HCU and handed over the investigation into the potential threat to the PCs. The bomber is **Freddy Perro**, an ex-safecracker who's down on his luck. He believes he's involved in an insurance scam, not a terrorist attack.

THE INVESTIGATION

An examination of the workshop in **Explosives & Related Materials** reveals signs pointing to a planned attack on Dawson, as well as clues about the identity of the bomber. **Just Ordinary Folks** covers the characters' dealings with Dawson, her handlers, and the hotel staff. **Trail of the Bomber** follows their investigation into the bomber; they track him to his run-down apartment and find he's been murdered by an acid-secreting mutant. Meanwhile, the news about a threat to Dawson's conference has been leaked, so the characters have to **meet the press** and control the media.

The only place the leak could have come from was inside Dawson's circle, so the characters return to the hotel. Questioning her aides yields little progress, but the characters find a vital clue in **The Busboy's Story**.

THE TWIST

Adria Dawson is a mutant. Her cluster of powers, including Analytic Taste and Secrete Acid, are strongly correlated with depression. When she discovered that she too was developing mutant powers, her depression

triggered. She tried to resign from public life, but her aides **Toby Muldew** and **Cynthia Thurber** convinced her to stay on, and have been secretly medicating her.

THE CULPRIT

Dawson hired Perro to build the bomb; she intends to kill herself, martyring herself for the cause and hiding her mutant nature forever. The characters have to either take her down or talk her down.

SCENES

SOMETHING ROTTEN

SCENE TYPE: INTRO

The players play ordinary beat cops in this brief teaser scene. There's no investigation, so Investigative Abilities are irrelevant – assume each character has a Health of 8, 20 points to divide between other General Abilities, and a cliché cop name (probably something Irish or Polish). Two of the characters are in pursuit of **Kenny Eaton**, a 17-year-old thief who just robbed a convenience store and is fleeing on foot; the other officers are in the area and can be contacted by radio.

The mugger sprints down side streets and clammers over walls with the PCs in hot pursuit. Run this as a series of Athletics contests. Kenny's Athletics pool is whatever you need to get him to the roof of the workshop; if one PC fails, the others can take over by heading the thief off at the end of an alleyway, pursuing in a vehicle, spotting the thief sprinting down the street and so on.

As the cops close in, the thief scales a fence and starts running along the roofs of a row of small sheds and outbuildings. He's nearly at a drainpipe at the far end of the row when one of the roofs collapses beneath him (or, ideally, beneath him and the cop in hot pursuit). The rotten wood gives away under the weight, dropping the mugger into the shed below. There's no escape for him now – but he's inadvertently led the police to something much more important.

The shed is crammed with electronics parts, papers, circuit diagrams, tools... and a small bundle of saran-wrapped bricks of plastic explosive. It's a bomb-maker's workshop.

Fade out there, as soon as the characters break into the shed and realize they've stumbled across a bomb.

FREDDY'S GONE

For the last four days, Freddy Perro has followed the same routine; he heads down to the lock-up he rents under an assumed name, buying a sandwich at a local deli on the way. He then works on the bomb for his client. Today, he got as far as the sandwich part when he saw lots of flashing blue lights and cop cars. Assuming – correctly – that his workshop had been found, he panicked and fled back to his apartment, where he contacted his client. The results of that phone call are discovered in *Trail of the Bomber* (page10).

EXPLOSIVES & RELATED MATERIALS

SCENE TYPE: CORE

By the time the PCs arrive at the scene, there are three other squad cars and a bomb disposal van present, along with a forensics team. The bomb squad have finished their initial investigation and are clearing away their gear. Chatting to the squad leader, the notoriously chilled-out and laconic **Tanner**, with **Cop Talk** gets the scoop on the situation. Uniformed cops found a shed with bomb-making equipment and plastic explosives, and they called in the bomb disposal unit. The bomb squad found no active devices, so they turned the matter over to forensics, and forensics found some documents that point to mutant-related crime, so they've turfed it over to HCIU.

THE WORKSHOP

The row of six sheds are used as temporary storage by local residents; there's a sign on one shed giving a contact number for anyone who wants to hire one. Three of the sheds are empty; the other two rented sheds contain, respectively, water-damaged personal effects like papers, clothes books, an old TV set and a soaked mattress, and a pair of vicious dogs. (A character with the **Command Mammal** power can calm the dogs and use them to track Freddy Perro by scent, giving the characters another way to find the bomber).

Calling the contact number gets **Rudi Esfahani** out of bed; he's the building manager of a neighboring tenement. He's uncooperative and refuses to talk until his lawyer shows up. The characters can use **Intimidation** to get him to talk immediately, **Reassurance** to promise that he'll not be held responsible for anything his tenants kept in storage, or just wait until the lawyer shows up and talk to them formally with **Interrogation**. Esfahani reveals the core clues as soon as the characters start questioning him; anything else needs a spend.

- **(Pipe Clue)** The shed was rented by 'Joe Hill'. He paid cash and Esfahani didn't ask any questions. If the players don't pick up on it themselves, **Trivia** reminds them that Joe Hill is the name of a famous labor activist and is probably a pseudonym. This Joe Hill was a Caucasian male, somewhere in his late fifties.
- He's rented sheds off Esfahani on and off before; he's rented the current shed for a month. Esfahani saw him yesterday around lunchtime.
- He doesn't know what Hill was keeping in the shed, but he admits that the last time Hill rented a shed, he used it to keep stolen coils of copper wire.
- Hill always wore gloves, even in the summer.
- **(Core Clue)** He suggests that the characters talk to **Mrs. Chandyo**, in the deli down the street. She knows everyone.

EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS

Examining the bomb-making gear with **Explosive Materials** lets the character make some good guesses about their intended purpose. The components here are for making a small timed device. If all the bricks of plastic explosive were employed in the bomb, the resulting blast would be enough to blow up a car or devastate a medium-sized room. It looks more like the work of a safecracker than a terrorist, but that's a lot of explosive. Worryingly, there are at least three bricks missing, suggesting the bomb-maker has already built one or more devices.

(Core Clue) An **Explosives Materials** spend coupled with **Research** lets the character trace the batch of C4 explosive used; it was stolen from an army base last year, and has been associated with several break-ins and bank jobs across the country. The characters can try following the source of the explosives to identify the buyer – see the *Following the Plastic* sidebar.

A one-point **Explosive Materials** spend turns up an oddity about the bomb design; it's got no timing mechanism, but is instead detonated by pressing a switch connected by a wire. In the half-built bombs here, the wire is a meter long.

Searching with **Fingerprinting** comes up with a complete blank; the bomber must have used gloves when working, and there's a cloth for wiping down surfaces

on the workbench. **Forensic Psychology** lets the investigator guess that the bomber knows criminal procedures.

Evidence Collection on the workbench turns up a vial of heart medication.



FOLLOWING THE PLASTIC

SCENE TYPE: ALTERNATE

Lead-In: The characters research the plastic explosives found in the shed.

Streetwise or Research: Nick Vlahos is in custody awaiting trial for arms dealing. He'd probably know about the sale of plastic explosive. Cutting a deal with Nick requires **Negotiation**, but in exchange for a reduction of his sentence, he gives the characters Freddy Perro's name (**Core Clue**). Freddy's a safecracker and explosives expert; he's got access to that sort of explosive.

IN THE STACKS

There's a mess of documents and papers on the floor of the workshop. Most are just old newspapers and second-hand books, but searching with **Evidence Collection** turns up a set of floorplans for the ballroom of the **Hayfield Hotel**, a large hotel and conference centre in the city centre. The floorplans include the seating arrangement for an event, but the event's name has been erased with white-out before being photocopied.

There are concentric circles drawn around the podium; they're estimates of blast radii. The smallest possible blast only takes out the speaker and those immediately adjacent; the biggest blast could kill half the people in the room.

In a wastebin are several sandwich wrappers from a local deli, Chandyo's Deli. There is also a leaflet, advertising an upcoming fundraising dinner and speech on behalf of **Families First**, a conservative charity group. The speaker is **Adria Dawson**. While the leaflet just talks about the importance of family values in these troubled times, **Textual Analysis** picks up several codewords like 'normal development', 'ordinary people' and 'honest labor' that have become associated with anti-mutant beliefs. The dinner is taking place in the Hayfield Hotel. Finding the leaflet is a **Core Clue**, and suggests that the Dawson fundraising speech is the bomber's target. Following up the Dawson lead brings the characters to *Just Ordinary Folks*.

LOCAL WITNESSES

Most locals are unwilling to talk to the police, but **Streetwise** or **Reassurance** gets people to point the characters at the deli down the street. Mrs. Chandyo's the person to talk to.

There are still uniformed officers standing guard around the lot containing the sheds. If questioned with **Cop Talk**, he idly mentions seeing this old guy come out of the deli up the street, clutch his chest, and then turn around and leave like he'd seen a ghost. The young officer didn't think much of it at the time; this happened before the characters got there.

CHANDYO'S DELI

The deli is small, dimly lit and smells of cured meats and spices (the food's excellent, by the way). Characters with **Electronic Surveillance** notice the blinking red light of a security camera watching the door; the deli has been robbed twice in the last six months. The owner is an ancient Pakistani woman, Mrs. Chandyo. She's an inveterate gossip; the problem isn't getting her talking, it's filtering out the useful information from the flood of verbiage. **Flattery** and an informal attitude is the best way to get her talking; coming on too strong with **Cop Talk** makes her flustered and nervous. **Bullshit Detector** confirms she's telling the complete truth at every turn. She knows the characters are cops; she complains about crime in the neighborhood and mentions her new security camera if the players haven't spotted it already.

Her information network works faster than the police; she already knows the PCs are here to ask her about Joe Hill. He's such a nice fellow, very quiet. He's come in every day for the last week; he's retired but he works part-time repairing watches down in his shed. Why, the characters only missed him by a few minutes – he was in earlier, but he wasn't feeling well. His heart, the poor thing, it isn't strong, and he nearly collapsed right there by the deli counter (if the PCs don't drag her back onto topic, she goes off on a long tangent about another customer, Bob, who loved the pork rolls she makes and he had a heart attack and his insurance wouldn't pay out and....). She offered to call Hill a cab, but he insisted he was all right and walked home. She doesn't know where he lives, but thinks it's somewhere closer to the docks.

Checking the security camera footage with **Electronic Surveillance** gets the characters a shot of 'Joe Hill' entering, buying a sandwich, then spotting the cop cars outside his shed. He falls against the window, then staggers out and walks hastily away from the scene.

He had gloves in his pocket, but his fingers were bare when he leaned against the window.

If the PCs examine the place where Hill nearly collapsed, they note several very clear fingerprints on the front window of the deli. **Fingerprinting** lifts a lovely **Core Clue** of a print; the characters can run it through the database to come up with Freddy Perro's name, putting the characters on the *Trail of the Bomber* (page 10).

JUST ORDINARY FOLKS

SCENE TYPE: CORE

Lead-In: The documents found in Perro's Shed

The Hayfield Hotel was once the best hotel in the city, but its glamour has faded and it's now struggling to survive. A one-point **Art History** or **Architecture** spend lets a character remember an article about how Galen Birch's hotel firm tried to buy it, but the current owners are holding out. If Birch gets his hands on the hotel, he'll gut it and make it part of his chain, destroying what's left of the Hayfield's charm. (For more on Galen Birch, see *Mutant City Blues*, page 142.) The ugly 70s-built conference centre clashes with the rest of the hotel. Outside the hotel, the characters see a small knot of protestors, holding up placards accusing Dawson of trampling on civil rights. The biggest poster shows an iconic photo of Dawson from her cookery show days, but they've photoshopped a gas oven from Auschwitz into the picture.

The hotel manager, portly **John Goodwin**, takes the characters to his office when they arrive. He cooperates fully with the investigation, and is extremely concerned to hear about any threats to his hotel. A one-point **Bullshit Detector** spend confirms that he has no foreknowledge about any incidents, letting the characters tentatively rule out an insurance scam.

Adria Dawson and her entourage arrived three days ago, and have taken over the top floor of the Hayfield. The characters will want to speak to Ms. Dawson's chief assistants, **Toby Muldew** and **Cynthia Thurber**. Muldew handles the press and logistics, and Thurber is Dawson's personal assistant. As it turns out, Thurber and Dawson are out right now, but they're on the way back to the hotel (they're off murdering Frank Perro).

INTERVIEWING TOBY MULDEW

Muldew's in his late twenties; he's tall, telegenic and has a degree in communication. He's also a secret racist who's convinced that mutants are dangerous

monsters who need to be stopped. He blames mutants for everything that's wrong with the world, but he's smooth enough to hide his racism beneath a winning smile and a seemingly reasonable attitude.

Muldeu knows about the plan to bomb the fundraiser, but he does not know it is actually a real attack. He thinks that Thurber's faking it to whip up anti-mutant sentiment, like the scam that led to the ### Park Riots (see *Mutant City Blues*, page 134). His main aim here is to stall the PCs and deflect attention away from Dawson. If the characters are too aggressive when questioning him (or Dawson or Thurber), then he spreads rumours to the press about liberal pro-mutant police oppression.

He knows about Thurber's depression, but not that she's a mutant. (He subconsciously suspects it, but he's good at double-thinking problems like that away.)

TOBY MULDEW

Athletics 4, Health 8, Scuffling 5, Sense Trouble 6, Stability 9, Preparedness 10

- **Bullshit Detector** doesn't work on Muldeu; he's much too practiced to give anything away in an interview.
- Dawson and Thurber are out shopping; they'll be back soon.
- All the preparations for the fundraiser are going perfectly; Adria's thrilled to be able to raise money for Families First, which is an excellent cause.
- He suggests that violent pro-mutant groups like the Genetic Action Front may be responsible for the bomb. He isn't aware of any threats that have been made.
- If the characters ask to see Dawson's hotel room, Toby stalls; pushing him with a one-point **Law** spend or an Interpersonal Ability convinces him to relent. Alternatively, the characters can get the hotel manager to open up the hotel room. **Forensic Psychology** suggests Muldeu is trying to keep the characters out of Dawson's suite of rooms.

THE HOTEL SUITE

(Ideally, have Dawson show up while the characters are searching the suite, to heighten tension). The rooms are the best in the hotel, and there's a security

guard outside the door at all times. Dawson shares this suite with Muldeu and Thurber.

A search of the room reveals the following:

- There are various papers and notes around the room. Notably, there's a floorplan for the fundraising dinner, similar to the one found in the bomb-maker's workshop, but there's no way to prove that the bomber obtained a photocopy of this particular copy of the document.
- They've been living out of this suite for a few days; there are plates and silverware, as well as innumerable used coffee cups around the room.
- There's also a pile of printouts of different drafts of Dawson's speech. From the amount of red ink and marginal notes, the team are having a lot of trouble agreeing on a message. **Textual Analysis** notices a lot of references to Dawson's 'legacy' and memory, as if the speech is drawing a line under Dawson's career. Parts read almost like an obituary.
- **(Pipe Clue)** Hidden in Thurber's room is an unmarked bottle of pills and a small bag of white granules. Analyzing the pills with **Chemistry** identifies them as powerful prescription-only anti-depressants, although these are probably black-market knockoffs. The white powder is a trickier prospect; it's some sort of freeze-dried fruit. A one-point **Chemistry** or **Natural History** spend identifies it as *synsepalum dulcificum*, better known as 'miracle fruit' – it temporarily alters the functioning of the taste buds, causing sour foods to taste sweet.

If the players ask, or if they later learn that Dawson probably has **Analytic Taste**, then a character with **Anamorphology** remembers that miracle fruit is able to scramble the analysis powers of some mutants. Dawson thinks she's getting by on a few anti-depressant pills a week, but Thurber's are secretly grinding up pills together with miracle fruit and dosing her coffee.

If the characters don't ask to search the hotel suite, give them the opportunity to do so when talking to Dawson or her entourage.

DAWSON RETURNS

Adria Dawson returns from 'shopping' (actually, killing Perro – see *Trail of the Bomber*, page 10); Thurber tries to run interference by talking to the police first and giving Dawson time to collect herself. Dawson is on the verge of a breakdown due to the stress of murdering Perro; as soon as possible, either Thurber or Muldew slips Dawson an anti-depressant tablet.

INTERVIEWING CYNTHIA THURBER

Cynthia is Adria Dawson's oldest friend. She was the assistant producer on Dawson's cookery show, and has remained her aide and advisor ever since. She's fiercely protective of her friend. Cynthia shares Dawson's distrust of mutants, but is less adept at concealing it. When pressured, she slips and uses nasty slurs like 'chromer' or 'lixer'.

Thurber is obviously distracted, almost shell-shocked. The best approach is to use **Interrogation**, which scares her into answering a few questions.

CYNTHIA THURBER

Athletics 3, Health 6, Stability 7

- She and Dawson were out shopping (**Bullshit Detector** says this is a lie. Actually, they were out trying to acquire a bomb. If the PCs call her on this, she changes her story and says that they were out getting anti-depressants.)
- She doesn't know any Freddy Perro. (**Bullshit Detector** doesn't trigger automatically; a one-point spend tells the PC she's nervous, but that flat denial could be covering anything.)
- If the PCs suggest that there's a threat to the fundraiser, she immediately starts talking about violent mutant groups and spewing hate speech.

INTERVIEWING ADRIA DAWSON

If the PCs get to talk to Dawson immediately after she comes back from the 'shopping trip', she's obviously (**Forensic Psychology**) shocked and terrified, and on the verge of tears. If she has a chance to compose herself and take a few pills, she's zoned-out, but has enough media experience to cover that up and act relatively normal. **Flattery** is the best ability to use on her, as it relaxes her and gets her talking. She claims illness and ends the interview as soon as she can otherwise.



RESEARCHING DAWSON

SCENE TYPE: ALTERNATE

Since Dawson's such a public figure, the characters might check records. The information gained in this scene isn't vital to the investigation, but throws extra light on the motivation of the culprits. Research or Trivia spends get the following facts, one fact per point spend. Alternatively, characters can use Cop Talk to get some warm body back in the station to do it.

- Dawson's rhetoric has changed in the last few months. Sometimes, she's more strident than ever, arguing that mutants are taking over society and pointing out mutant crimes and threats to 'ordinary people'. At other times, she sounds almost defeated. She's also cancelled multiple public engagements.
- There are rumors on gossip blogs of substance abuse in Dawson's inner circle, with some claiming that she's in counselling or rehab.
- Other rumors point to her being something of a prima donna, especially when it comes to dining. A one-point Trivia spend digs up a YouTube video of a screaming public argument between Dawson and the chef in a restaurant in New York. Her team put it down to 'exhaustion', but it further damaged her reputation as the nice face of the anti-mutant movement.
- She's not a mutant hater, but she believes that the mutant phenomenon is a danger to society as it currently exists. Humans were never meant to have such powers, and until we learn how to deal with them properly, ordinary people need to take steps to protect themselves.
- She was out shopping (**Bullshit Detector** is blocked by her media experience).
- She's not depressed. If the PCs confront her with proof or Thurber's testimony, she

ADRIA DAWSON

Athletics 8, Health 10, Scuffling 4, Stability 2

Mutant Powers: Analytic Taste 2, Secrete Acid 16
[Optionally, add Suppress Explosion 8]

admits that she has had some problems with depression in the past, but has learned to cope. She does occasionally need a stress pill; she's under an immense amount of pressure.

- Even if there is a threat to the fundraiser, she wants to go ahead. Her fundraisers and speeches have been targeted before by mutants. She wants to be remembered as someone who made a stand, not someone who was cowed by evil people corrupted by unnatural powers.
- **Influence Detection** suggests that Dawson is not behaving normally, and that she could be a victim of a power like **Induce Mental Disorder**.

TRAIL OF THE BOMBER

SCENE TYPE: CORE

Lead-In: Freddy Perro's identity

If the characters check police records with **Research**, they find plenty of information about Perro. He's been convicted of bank robbery and aiding and abetting criminal activity several times, and spent fifteen years behind bars. He's an expert safe-cracker and is trained in using explosives. Since he was paroled four years ago, he hasn't crossed the police radar.

His address is on record. It's a small apartment down by the docks.

MINUTES EARLIER...

Before the characters arrived here, Adria Dawson and Cynthia Thurber came to Perro's apartment in response to a phone call from the worried bomb-maker. Dawson panicked and used her mutant **Acid Secretion** power to murder Perro. They then grabbed the bomb and fled. They show up back at the hotel on page 9.

MURDER SCENE

The first thing the characters notice is the smell. The narrow stairwell outside the apartment is filled with an eye-watering, acrid stench, mixing awkwardly with the smell of coffee. Touching the handle of the unloc-

ked door inflicts one point of damage if the character does not use protection; the handle is coated in acid. A **Sense Trouble** test (difficulty 3) lets the character notice sticky globules of a clear secretion on the underside of the handle.

Inside is a horrific scene. Perro's body lies on the floor; his ribcage has been melted and many of his internal organs liquefied. There are acidic handprints on his face. The rest of the grubby apartment has clearly been recently and hastily ransacked.

THE BODY

Forensic Anthropology confirms that Perro was killed within the last three hours, and that the cause of death was a mutant acid secretion (**Core Clue**). As per the normal restrictions on forensics (page 122 of *Mutant City Blues*), analysis of the acid provides no clues about the mutant who created it. However, there is a reddish rash around the acid wounds, probably skin irritation from the acid spray (this is a **Pipe Clue** that pays off in *The Busboy's Tale*).

A one-point **Forensic Anthropology** or **Evidence Collection** spend lets the character reconstruct the sequence of events; the victim was sitting on the couch next to the killer. The killer reached out and touched the victim's face, surprising him with an acidic touch. Perro fell back in shock, and then the killer turned on the acid faucet and melted through his shirt, skin and ribs.

The body is slumped on a tatty and partially acid-scarred couch. A one-point **Anamorphology** spend suggests that this indicates the acid-secreter is unpracticed at using his power – a mutant with more control would not have soaked the surrounding area.

SEARCHING THE APARTMENT

Evidence Collection notes the presence of three coffee mugs on the floor. One cup contains whiskey.

Another cup (Thurber's) is empty, and a character with **Fingerprinting** notices a red smear on the rim. The cups have all been wiped hastily clean of prints; the red smear is lipstick residue from Thurber's cup.

The last cup is untouched (Dawson's **Analytic Taste** power means she's super-sensitive to poor food, including Perro's instant coffee-flavored grit.)

Taking swabs of the worktops in the kitchen and analyzing the residue with **Chemistry** or **Explosive Devices** turns up traces of plastic explosive. The concentration is high enough to suggest that there was a bomb here.



MEET THE PRESS

SCENE TYPE: ANTAGONIST ACTION

This scene can be run any time after the PCs first talk to Toby Muldew. In the unlikely event that the PCs stick with Muldew so closely he can't contact the press, then a buddy of his uses the police presence as proof that something's going on.

Wherever the PCs are, they learn (through radio news, TV, reporters hanging around the lobby of the Hayfield, or via a phone call from Lt. Bevan (pg. 148 of *Mutant City Blues*) that the press are running with a story that the police are investigating a bomb threat to fundraiser. While 'inquiries are ongoing', the assumption is that dangerous fringe mutant groups like the GEF are behind the threat. A statement released by Muldew on Dawson's behalf states that she will go ahead with

the fundraiser and urges 'ordinary people' to stand up to 'bullying and terror tactics'. Talk shows and rolling news channels are already speculating about ways a mutant terrorist could sneak a bomb into the conference centre.

HANDING THE PRESS

The characters are mobbed by the press if they show up at the Hayfield Hotel after the story breaks. They'll also be hounded at the precinct and phoned by contacts in the media looking for quotes. The safest response is 'no comment'; spending two **Negotiation** points lets the characters come up with a suitably reassuring message that doesn't fan the tension further. If they do nothing, then the public outrage turns against the mutant community, and there are reports of violent incidents. The biggest of these takes place outside the Hayfield Hotel – see *Mutant Riot!*, below.

CONFRONTING MULDEW

The leak about the investigation must have come from within Dawson's group, so the characters may wish to complain to Muldew.

He denies leaking the news to the press, but now that it's out, he's going to take advantage of it as best he can. Most of the tickets to the fundraiser have sold, and media interest in Dawson's speech is higher than ever. A one-point **Bullshit Detector** spend shows he's covering up his worry with bravado.

MUTANT RIOT!

SCENE TYPE: ACTION/CORE

This scene takes place at some point after the news about the bomb threat breaks. Crowds gather outside the hotel. Half the crowd are Dawson supporters; some are going to the fundraiser and showed up early, and the rest came to show solidarity in the face of 'mutant threats'. The other half of the crowd consists of mutants and mutant sympathizers. A small protest was already underway before the story blew up, but now there are dozens denouncing Families First and the anti-mutant cause.

The two sections of the crowd both grow increasingly belligerent. They start off hurling insults at each other. Shouts of 'lixer', 'spazmo' and 'fascist' fill the air. Uni-

formed police show up to calm the situation, but there are only a few officers there when violence breaks out. If the player characters are not already on the scene, they're called in for backup.

The biggest threat in the riot is a trio of mutants. **Shumba Jones** conceals his **Prehensile Hair** dreadlocks beneath a Rastafarian cap most of the time, but when the violence starts, he tries to keep the protestors apart by entangling the most belligerent in his entangling locks. Unfortunately, he just adds to the panic and confusion. Shumba can be talked down with Reassurance; he's not fighting, he's just trying to help.

Phil Grady is a CNM (see page 136 of *Mutant City Blues*) member and a thug, who uses his political affiliation as an excuse to let fly with his powers and scare the norms. He's got **Strength** and **Limb Extension**, so when the fighting starts, he elongates his limbs so he stands five metres tall and starts flinging the little people around. Phil's been in trouble with the law before; he won't fight a police officer directly, but might take an elongated swing if he thinks he can get away with it.

Sarah Lane's sister **Susy** is an easily visible Category-B mutant, with greenish scales covering her entire body. Sarah's own **Lightning power** is only visible when she uses it to blast the Families First Thug who threw a rock at Susy. Sarah stands over her bleeding sister, shooting bolts of electricity at anyone who comes too close. Of the three mutants, Sarah's the most likely to use lethal attacks.

If your players are itching for a fight, then there's also a few mutant-bashers who are here to break chrome heads.

AFTER THE FIGHT

Dawson makes a public statement, decrying the violence but refusing to condemn the anti-mutant protestors. She uses the incident to illustrate how dangerous mutants can be, even in cases where 'not all of them intended to cause harm'. She may also criticize the HCU for 'favoring mutants over the ordinary citizens they are sworn to protect' if the characters have a reputation for being pro-mutant.

Cleaning up the streets, dealing with the arrests and coordinating medical treatment for those injured in the riot can be left to uniformed officers. The aftermath of the riot is a good time to run *The Busboy's Tale* – a character can run into Gary as he watches the riot from the pavement, still wearing his hotel uniform.

SHUMBA JONES

Athletics 6, Health 8, Scuffling 4, Stability 8

Mutant Powers: Prehensile Hair 12

PHIL GRADY

Athletics 8, Health 12, Scuffling 10, Stability 6

Mutant Powers: Strength 14, Limb Extension 8, Regeneration 4

SARAH LANE

Athletics 6, Health 5, Scuffling 4, Stability 4

Mutant Powers: Lighting 18

THE BUSBOY'S TALE

SCENE TYPE: CORE

Lead-In: Varies. The characters can encounter the busboy as they question the hotel staff, or after the riot.

Gary Hutt is a busboy and kitchen assistant in the Hayfield Restaurant. Well, was – when the characters meet him, he's just after collecting his belongings from the hotel after being fired the night before. He's taken his dismissal with comparative equanimity, as he knows he deserves it. He'll philosophically bitch to almost anyone, but he's hesitant to talk to the cops. **Reassurance** or mentioning Dawson's reputation as a prima donna gets him talking.

As he talks to the characters, he rubs his neck repeatedly. His skin is red and raw there; it's an allergic reaction to Dawson's acid secretion.

Last night, Hutt was working in the kitchens when Dawson and Thurber ordered room service. The pair ordered half the menu, all the expensive stuff, the best wine, a real blow-out. Hutt helped load the trolley. At one point, he was left alone in the room, and he took the opportunity to rub his crotch over the desserts.

(Why? His cousin Leo. Cute kid. Wants to be an astronaut when he grows up. Can disintegrate anything he looks at. Family First activists forced his parents to pull him out of school, away from all his friends.)

No-one saw Hutt sabotage the food, no-one should have noticed – but then, half an hour later, he's cleaning up with the rest of the staff when the mana-

ger comes in with Dawson. Dawson walks around the room, sniffing, and she stops next to him. She touches his collar, then licks her finger. 'This one' she says, 'he did it.' He doesn't know how she knew, but hey, at least she got to taste his crotch.

Anamorphology: (Core Clue) Dawson's behaviour suggests the use of the **Analytic Taste** mutant power. If the players don't pick up on it for themselves, remind them that **Analytic Taste** is correlated with **Secrete Acid**. A quick check of the **Quade Diagram** also flags the close proximity of **Depression**, which ties in the anti-depressants from the hotel suite.

Checking Hutt's uniform collar with **Chemistry** in the lab, or an Investigative Power (**Microvision, Olfactory Centre, Touch**) detects the presence of a tiny amount of acidic scarring in the fabric.

ONE MUTANT

SCENE TYPE: CLIMACTIC CONFRONTATION

At this point, the group should have worked out that Adria Dawson is a mutant, and most likely responsible for the death of Freddy Perro. When they check the hotel suite, they find she's gone (to retrieve the bomb she stole from Perro), but Cynthia Thurber is there. If the characters confront her with proof that Dawson is a mutant, Thurber breaks down. Dawson didn't want to be one of them, she hates herself – she doesn't want to live like that. No-one should have to live like that. Thurber and Dawson came up with a plan to let Dawson 'purify' herself and protect her legacy. No-one else was meant to be hurt.

If pressed with **Intimidation**, she admits that Dawson has the bomb and is on the way to the conference centre.

STOPPING DAWSON

Delegates are already filtering into the conference centre when Dawson arrives. She's greeted by Family First members and brought to the head table. Dawson's carrying a large handbag that contains the bomb.

The best approach is to sneak up on Dawson, either using **Infiltration** or a subtle power to get into position and secure the explosive device. Alternatively, the characters can talk her down; if they use **Negotiation** to convince her that handing herself in is the best way to preserve her reputation, she gives up and goes with them. If they push her, then she may detonate the bomb if the PCs are too threatening.

Dawson's never demonstrated **Suppress Explosion**, but it's a good bet that she possesses the power – if the PCs keep her close to the Family First staff, then they can force Dawson to suppress her own bomb rather than hurt innocents. Dawson's self-hating and suicidal, but she doesn't want to hurt anyone else.

If the bomb does go off, treat it as a Class 2 bomb, but anyone holding the bomb takes 2 dice + 6 damage.

CASE CLOSED

Dawson's arrest (or death) concludes the case. If Dawson is killed, either by her own bomb or by the HCIU, then she becomes a martyr for the anti-mutant cause to rally around. If the characters prove that Dawson was a mutant, her supporters are deeply shaken; many are driven further into paranoia, and come to believe that mutants are everywhere and trying to deceive them. If they cover up Dawson's mutant state, then the HCIU is criticized as being overly pro-mutant.

Thurber is willing to testify, but emphasizes that all Dawson wanted to do is commit suicide. Muldew fights any indictment; he had no knowledge of the bomb plot, although he was aware of Dawson's depression. He blames the elaborate suicide plot on Dawson's deviant mutant thoughts.

Dawson refuses counselling for her depression and her mutant state; she is eventually committed to a psychiatric institution. Conspiracy theories that she was framed as a mutant abound.

BLASTBACK

An accident at a mutant-only gym brings the characters into the shadowy world of mutant prize-fighting.

BACKSTORY

Back before the Ghost Flu, the **Danger Room** was a run-down boxing club and sports centre. The owner, **Lou Hutkins**, was one of the first to provide facilities tailored to the needs of mutants – running tracks that could cope with speedsters, weight machines for people who can lift half a ton, firing ranges for people who can shoot fire from their eyes. Hutkins also started an underground fighting tournament for mutants, he called it. After a few early problems and accidents, he came up with a way to run the fights safely. He uses the gym to spot mutant talent and then recruits them for the games.

Ten years down the line, the Russian mafia are running the tournaments, using Hutkins as a front man.

THE CRIME

Randall Hofstadter possessed the **Blade Immunity** power, but he still died of a stab wound. The knife machine used for training is a spinning armature of knives that keeps stabbing, giving the victim a workout. It's dangerous, but the operator can turn off the blades at any time... unless the machine was sabotaged.

THE INVESTIGATION

The investigation begins at the **Danger Room** where the characters meet several suspects – and victims. Investigating Hutkins leads to **That Old Gang Of Mine**, where the characters learn the history of the gym, while following up on the victim is covered in **The Knifeman** and **The Workshop**. Meanwhile, there's a second victim of the same killer, when **Dr. Rowan** is killed. Clues on both victims point towards **The Tournament**.

THE CULPRIT

The killings had nothing to do with the tournament – at least, not directly. The killer is taking revenge for a decade-old crime. The truth is that the saboteur is **Duke Collins**, whose wife died in one of the first tournaments. He's waited all these years for revenge until his son **Alan** was old enough to cope if his father was arrested or killed.

THE TWIST

Alan was also waiting until he came of age before he entered the tournament. Now, the mafia intend to kill him in a fixed fight to make up for the loss of their star, Hofstadter.

SCENES

THE DANGER ROOM

SCENE TYPE: INTRO

HCIU is alerted by an ambulance crew that there is a suspicious death at a downtown gym. Anyone with **Trivia** or **Anamorphology** has heard of the Danger Room – it's one of the oldest gyms that caters primarily to the mutant community. It's in a run-down neighborhood, but a one-point **Architecture** spend notes that the gym itself seems to be doing well – it's taken over most of the surrounding block, and while it still looks grubby, the building has been recently renovated. **Photography** notes the presence of a surprisingly good security system, including CCTV cameras, swipe-cards at the door, and heavy shutters over all ground-floor entrances.

The lobby of the gym speaks to the place's heritage – the walls are covered in memorabilia, like photos of former boxers and gym members. The walls and ceiling are stained with old cigarette smoke, and the place smells of sweat. The manager, **Lou Hutkins**, is a

greasy guy in his mid-forties. He's dressed in a stained t-shirt and sweat pants, but the characters spot an expensive wrist-watch and a new-model mobile phone. He may think of himself as a working-class joe, but he's got money. Flop-sweat rolls down his forehead; he's obviously worried.

Hutkins shows the characters along a warren of corridors to the accident scene. This gym is a maze; it's obviously been expanded multiple times over the last decade, worming its way into adjacent buildings. In some rooms, the characters see mutants testing their powers in different ways. Hutkins points out the facilities – machines for the super-strong, the fireproofed rooms with the hardened targets for blasters, barriers made of different materials for ghosts (Phase mutants). They cater for all sorts here.

As they approach the accident scene, Hutkins pauses and explains that the machine in question is a bit strange. What some mutants need to stretch their powers is lethal to other people. The blade room is... well, it skirts the edge of the law. Only mutants with the **Blade Immunity** power can use it, and you've got to sign a disclaimer and provide proof you've got that power. Obviously, something horrible went wrong, but Hutkins swears that they took every precaution.

- **Anamorphology:** The machine pushes the user's powers by stabbing them repeatedly. It's supposed to automatically shut down if its attacks aren't immediately deflected.
- **Bullshit Detector:** He's not obviously lying, but he's really nervous and scared.
- **Law (Core Clue):** Machines like the one Hutkins describes are legal, but only barely. Arguments and court cases are ongoing. If you are employing a machine that's potentially lethal, you have to have a trained medic or Healer on call. If the characters point this out, then Hutkins says that the gym has a full-time doctor, **Eric Rowan**. Eric didn't make it to the accident in time to save the victim; he's gone home in shock. Following up on this clue leads to *Dr. Rowan*.

THE ACCIDENT SCENE

SCENE TYPE: INVESTIGATION

Inside the room, the medical technicians stand around the body as they try to work out how to disentangle it from the murder weapon. The victim is a bare-chested young man with lots of tattoos. He's impaled in the middle of a bizarre machine that looks like an automated iron maiden. There are dozens of blades and spikes on articulated arms. The ground is awash with blood.

- **Cop Talk** lets the characters get details out of the EMTs. The victim's name was Randolph Hofstadter (Core Clue). Investigating Hofstadter leads onto *The Knife Man*, 18.
- **Forensic Anthropology** (or checking gym records with **Bureaucracy**) confirms Hofstadter had Blade Immunity. It looks like the sheer number of stab wounds overcame his defenses.
- A one-point Forensic Anthropology spend confirms the presence of dozens of keratin deposits and subcutaneous bruises on the body, suggesting that Hofstadter was 'harmlessly' stabbed multiple times before he grew exhausted and couldn't keep the knives out.
- Examining the machine with **Mechanic** finds clear evidence of sabotage (**Core Clue**). There's a control plate in the floor of the machine – pushing it instantly turns off the stabbing mechanism. However, the wires linked to the control plate have been cut. The same is true of the emergency stop button. If asked, Hutkins says that the machine was built by a local contractor named **Skip Adams**. He's *The Machinist*.
- **Fingerprinting** finds a nice print on the control plate (**Pipe Clue**). This print does not match any criminal records. It belongs to Duke Collins (see *The Collins's*), and while it isn't conclusive proof he sabotaged the machine, the characters can leverage it to get a confession out of the killer.
- A one-point **Mechanic** spend notes that there's a backup emergency stop function, and that's been sabotaged too. It's not visible on a cursory examination, you need to either know what you're looking for or closely examine the machine's working. Either way, the saboteur knew what he was doing.

INTERVIEWING HUTKINS

SCENE TYPE: CORE

When the investigators interrogate Hutkins, he brings them into his office. It's crammed with trophies and photos, as well as a big-screen TV and a very well-stocked drink cabinet. The TV is wired into the gym's closed-circuit cameras; from his office, Hutkins can watch his customers exercising and sparring.

The character with the highest **Anamorphology** or **History** notices a pair of photos on the desk. One shows a striking young woman demonstrating the **Water Blast** mutation; she's managed to send a wrecked car flying through the air with the force of her power. This is the late **Marsha Collins**. Another photo is a group shot, showing the same young woman with a smiling man (**Duke Collins**), a younger Hutkins, and two other men (flint-eyed **Henry York** and **Skip Adams**, wearing his toolbelt). Judging from the clothes and hairstyles, the photo was taken ten years ago, which means that the woman must have been one of the first mutants. Asking Hutkins about these photos leads to *That Old Gang Of Mine* (page 18).

Forensic Psychology suggests that Hutkins is extremely worried and scared, but it's not directed at the police.

Questioning Hutkins gets the following information.

- He's owned the Danger Room for fifteen years. It started out as the Southside Boxing Club, but he switched it to catering for mutants when he realized that heightened individuals needed somewhere that could cope with their unique demands.
- The gym is very safe. They haven't had an accident in years, not since that fire nine years ago. After that, he hired *Dr. Rowan* as a medic for the gym.
- He knew Randolph Hofstadter well; it's terrible that he died so tragically.
- He has no idea that the knife machine was sabotaged; **Bullshit Detector** confirms that Hutkins is surprised to learn that it was murder, not an accident.
- You need a key to switch the knife machine on, and that key is only given to people permitted to use the machine, but the room itself isn't locked. Anyone could have sabotaged the machine. The knife machine is used only infrequently; the sabotage could have been done weeks ago.

- There are security cameras throughout the gym. Hutkins is hesitant about handing over the video database, but agrees to do so. See the *Video Evidence* sidebar.

Checking the gym's books with **Forensic Accounting** suggests that Hutkins must be massively in debt; between the money spent on all that custom equipment, and the expansions of the gym, he's poured millions to the gym and it can't be that profitable.

THE MACHINIST

SCENE TYPE: CORE

Lead-In: Knowing who built the knife machine

Skip Adams' workshop is only a short walk from the Danger Room. The workshop is an unholy mess of motorcycle parts, tools, broken toasters, spare bits and pieces and scrap metal. The air smells of grease and solder. Skip's having coffee with his friend **Duke Collins** when the characters arrive. Duke excuses himself and lurks in the back room when the characters interview Skip; he's eavesdropping to determine how much the cops know about Hofstadter's death.

Skip knows about the incident at the gym – Duke just came by to tell him about it. He's appalled, and has no idea how the knife machine could have broken like that. He built it himself, and it was as safe as a machine designed to stab you in the chest repeatedly could be. Questioning Skip (either bringing him in to help with enquires and leading on him with **Interrogation**, or **Reassuring** him that it was sabotage and therefore not his fault) get the following:

- He's known Hutkins for years. He used to be a member of the old boxing club, back in the day, but now the gym's full of mutants. He's got nothing against the heightened, but it's not the same. Asking him about the early days of the gym with leads into *That Old Gang Of Mine* (page 18).
- He makes specialized equipment for the gym. Hutkins pays him very well for his services.
- Skip vaguely knew Hofstadter; he didn't like him much. Hofstadter was arrogant, and looked down on non-mutants.
- The knife machine was designed to be fool-proof. Sabotaging it involved not only disabling the obvious wires, but also the emergency stop button – and the emergency stop cuts both the electrical and hydraulic



VIDEO EVIDENCE

SCENE TYPE: ALTERNATE

Trawling through hours of video footage is painfully dull. The following clues can be found with **Photography**.

- The saboteur does show up on camera. The sabotage took place yesterday. The saboteur entered through a side door reserved for staff and made his way through the building to the knife machine. He obviously knew what he was doing and where he was going, and he's careful to hide his face from the cameras at all times. He's dressed in a hooded rain-jacket and jeans, and keeps his hands inside his pockets whenever possible. Still, it's possible to tell that the saboteur was a Caucasian male in his forties. This does not lead directly to Duke Collins, but is a **Pipe Clue** that can be used later.

These clues require **Photography** spends.

- There's an odd incident captured on one of the external cameras that happened shortly after the sabotage. A man roughly matching the saboteur, minus the jacket, walks out of the alley next to the gym. He meets a young man and the pair appear to argue. The face of the potential saboteur is obscured, but the characters get a clear picture of the teenager. He can be identified as **Alan Duke** – see *The Collins's*, page 19.
- That same young man shows up in several other sections of security camera footage, demonstrating potent **Wind Control**. In one section, he knocks two sparring partners to the floor with accurate wind blasts; in another, he pushes against a custom Wind Control testing machine that looks like a cross between a treadmill and a wind tunnel. The young man hits a maximum wind speed of 92 mph.
- Looking through unrelated footage, the characters notice a pattern. Hutkins deletes most of the old camera footage to save space on his server, but he keeps footage of mutants with combat powers. Anyone with a blast ability or a similar power like **Quills**, **Natural Weapons**, **Venom**, **Fangs** and other dangerous mutations who attends the gym gets recorded by Hutkins.

systems. Whoever did it was familiar with the machine. A one-point **Interrogation** spend forces Skip to admit that the list of such people is very short, and consists of Skip himself, his friend Duke, Duke's son Alan Collins, Dr. Rowan, and Lou Hutkins.

DUKE COLLINS

SCENE TYPE: INVESTIGATION

Lead-In: Adams mentions that Duke knew enough to sabotage the machine

The characters may question Duke Collins at this time too; otherwise, they'll run into him at his home in *The Collins's*. He's rehearsed his answers, so **Bullshit Detector** doesn't immediately give him away. A one-point **Bullshit Detector** spend does suggest his responses are oddly glib and practiced.

- Like Skip, Duke was one of the old crowd at the boxing club before it became the Dan-

ger Room. He'd prefer not to discuss *That Old Gang Of Mine* (below), but if the characters press him, he describes the circumstances of his wife's death.

- He still goes to the gym sometimes with his son, **Alan**. Alan's a mutant too, with the **Wind Control** power. He's just got a scholarship to ### University, to work with their engineering department, and he's moving out soon. Duke's pride in his son is obvious.
- If the characters question him more, see *That Old Gang of Mine* (page 18) and *The Collins's* (page 19) for details.

THAT OLD GANG OF MINE

SCENE TYPE: CORE

Lead-In: Inquiring about the history of the Danger Room

There are several ways for the characters to find out the following information, either through interviewing those involved, checking old newspaper records (with **Research**) or asking around with **Streetwise**. In cases where the truth is hidden, the actual events are noted in brackets.

- Ten years ago, Hutkins, Skip Adams, Henry York and Duke Collins were the inner circle at the boxing club. When the ghost flu hit, Collins's wife Marsha developed a mutant power, as did Henry York. Marsha had Water Blast; York had Fire Control.
- Hutkins had the idea of catering for mutants at the club. It rapidly turned into a gym for mutants. (Hutkins also set up the fighting arena. Initially, it was just York vs. Collins, fire vs. water, but he rapidly attracted more mutants).
- Around the same time, Dr. Rowan showed up. (He was a researcher studying the mutant phenomenon; he used the tournaments as research material.)
- Marsha Collins died nine years ago in a fire at the gym. (She was killed when York lost control of his fire powers). She was survived by her eleven-year-old son Alan and her husband Duke. This is a **Core Clue** leading to *The Collins's*.

MARSHA COLLINS

Research digs up the files relating to this death. Collins was caught in a 'gas leak' in a building adjoining the gym. That was nine years ago, back before forensic anamorphology was fully developed. Looking at the photographs of the body and the scene of the accident with a one-point **Anamorphology** spend suggests that the flames were under the command of a Fire Controller at the time, judging by the burn marks.

HENRY YORK

The fourth man at the boxing club cut off all ties with his friends after Marsha's death and left Mutant City eight years ago. He's ended up living in Australia. If the players do go to the effort of tracking him down, he admits under **Interrogation** that Marsha's death was an accident; they were experimenting with pushing

their powers, sparring with them, and he screwed up. Everyone who knew – Hutkins, Duke, York, and Skip – agreed that it was just an accident, that it wasn't really York's fault, and that they should lie to the cops.

THE KNIFEMAN

SCENE TYPE: CORE

Lead-In: Identifying the victim

The late Randall Hofstadter was unemployed and had no known means of support, but he lives in a nice, brand-new apartment in uptown. When the characters arrive, they find a naked woman asleep in Randall's bed (if they knock first, then Krista refuses to open the door to anyone but Randall. She will let the characters in if they identify themselves as cops.) She is **Krista**, a prostitute hired by Randall. He booked her last night, telling her to be waiting for him when he got back from the gym. It's a regular arrangement of theirs.

- She doesn't know much about Randall, other than what he likes in bed and that he pays up. He's into the kinky stuff – he makes her stab him with his knife collection.
- **1-point Interrogation spend:** A friend of hers introduced Randall to her. She won't give the friend's name, but he's got connections to the *bratva*, the Russian mafia. If Randall was involved with that crowd, then she's not surprised he's dead. They are violent people.
- Randall had booked her for the following night, too, and told her to bring a few friends. He does that every few weeks, to celebrate.

Krista leaves as soon as the characters permit her to go.

Searching the apartment turns up other clues:

- **Forensic Accounting:** There's a discarded bank statement in a waste bin. Looking at Randall's accounts, he was getting a lot of money in cash every few weeks.
- **Chemistry (Core Clue):** There's a bag of prescription painkillers in the bathroom, along with vitamins and steroids, all of which were prescribed by a Doctor Eric Rowan.

DR. ROWAN

SCENE TYPE: CORE/ANTAGONIST ACTION

Lead-In: Rowan is the doctor at the gym, and was prescribing drugs to the victim

Back when the ghost flu first struck, Eric Rowan quit his job as a medical researcher in favor of investigating this new phenomenon. He uses the gym as a research facility, studying mutant abilities. He came up with the original idea for mutant fighting as a way to stress-test powers; Hutkins ran with the concept and turned it into an underground sport.

Rowan's a thin, short-sighted man; he blinks and looks away when he talks, and dresses like a university lecturer from the 70s. A one-point **Anamorphology** or **Research** spend turns up some essays written by Rowan about the mutant phenomenon over the past ten years, many of which have unpleasant racial undertones. Reading between the lines with **Textual Analysis**, Rowan appears to think that mutants are sub-human, that they are genetic deviants who represent a threat to the healthy future of the human species. He hasn't been published in a respectable journal or website in years; most of his recent output consists of cranky criticisms of the Quade institute.

This scene can play out in one of two ways. If the characters go to Rowan's home immediately after the opening scene, then they get there just as he opens the front door. Otherwise, they may be called to the aftermath.

FIRETRAP

Duke Collins broke into Rowan's home and opened all the gas taps after rigging booby traps on the doors. The whole house is now a death trap. Moments after Rowan enters the house, it explodes. Any characters caught in the explosion suffer one die+2 damage (avoided with an **Athletics** test, Difficulty 6). Rowan is killed unless the characters manage to use a suitable protective or healing power to rescue him.



IF ROWAN LIVES

Should the characters save Rowan from the firetrap, they can get information from him directly instead of going through the forensic evidence. If the characters put pressure on him by leveraging the discovery of the mutant tissue samples in his lab, then he cracks and tells them about the tournament.

SEARCHING THROUGH THE DEBRIS

The characters can't search the house until it's been made safe by the fire department. Using of powers like **Fire Control** or **Deplete Oxygen** can help with this. The damage is mainly confined to the kitchen and hallway; notably, the basement is largely unaffected.

Explosive Devices: The blast was caused by a gas leak coupled with an improvised incendiary device.

Down in the basement is a surprisingly well-equipped laboratory. There are freezers full of tissue samples, rows of chemicals, two desktop computers and a huge wall chart covered in post-it notes and scribbles.

Anamorphology: The wall chart appears to be a variation on the **Quade Diagram**. There's nothing especially revolutionary in Rowan's research. He's focussed on combat-related mutations.

Forensic Anthropology or **Chemistry:** The tissue samples and drugs suggest that Rowan was experimenting with organ grafting and power transfer experiments. Specifically, he was trying to increase S-Cell production in existing mutants by grafting tissues from other mutants sharing the same or related powers.

Data Retrieval (Core Clue): Rowan's email is password-protected and inaccessible (unless a character has **Technopathy**), but there's a document that was sent to the printer that's still sitting in the print queue. It's an email from Hutkins, sent last night.

- It reminds Rowan to make sure that Hofstadter is 'ready', and that 'the Russians need it to look good.'
- Also in the email is a map, pointing to a disused factory outside the city. This map leads to *The Tournament* (page 21).

THE COLLINS'S

SCENE TYPE: CORE

Lead-In: The suspicious history of the Collins's

Duke Collins and his son Alan live in a small apartment close to the Danger Room. Duke drives a taxi and works part-time with Skip when not coaching kids at the boxing club. Alan recently graduated from high school and is starting university in a few weeks; he recently got a letter confirming his scholarship, which was the trigger for his father's long-delayed revenge.

The messy apartment is cluttered and unkempt; there are clothes and coffee mugs everywhere. There are suitcases and sports bags lying around, half-packed with Alan's belongings. There is also, incongruously,

bits of a hang glider, which Alan is trying to use with his **Wind Control** powers in order to fly.

When the characters arrive, Alan is home alone packing his bags for college; his father arrives midway through the scene unless the characters picked up Duke at Skip's workshop.

ALAN COLLINS

Alan's an intense, well-built young man with his mother's striking features. He divides his time between studying and working out at the gym, which has been a fixture of his life for many years. He knows about the tournaments run by Hutkins, but has no idea that his mother's death was the result of one of the first such mutant fights. His father forbade Alan from ever fighting in the area, despite his powerful **Wind Control** abilities. So far, Alan's obeyed – but the next tournament is his last chance to fight before he moves away.

If the characters ask about the video footage from the gym, then Alan admits that he saw his father there. The old man goes to the Danger Room a lot, even though he's not a mutant.

Alan leaves the flat after his father arrives. The characters will run into him next at The Tournament.

ALAN COLLINS

Athletics 9, Health 12, Scuffling 6, Sense Trouble 4, Stability 8

Mutant Powers: Wind Control 25

DUKE COLLINS

Duke's murdered two people and arranged for the death of a third, but he never wanted to go down this path. He loved the camaraderie of the gym, he loved his life, he loved having a beer and watching the world go by with his friends. The ghost flu changed all that. He had his heart torn out ten years ago, when his wife died. He blamed Hutkins and Rowan for her death, but he couldn't do anything to express his anger – his young son came first. Duke swallowed his anger and desire for revenge, and it festered for ten years. Now Alan has grown into a young man with a bright future, and Duke is ready to take his long-delayed vengeance upon his wife's killers.

Collins doesn't care about being caught. Hofstadter's death, he believes, sealed Hutkins' fate. The mafia will take their pound of flesh out of Hutkins even if Collins's crimes are discovered. Collins won't confess to his crimes, but also won't deny them when questioned.

DUKE COLLINS

Athletics 6, Health 8, Mechanic 8, Scuffling 8, Preparedness 10

- If asked about the gym, then Collins describes the events of *The Old Gang of Mine* to the characters. He emphasizes the involvement of Dr. Rowan, who suggested that the mutants spar to develop their powers under stress.
- **Olfactory Centre** picks up the smell of gas on Collins's clothing. **Chemistry** can do the same thing with a lot more work.
- If presented with evidence that he was at the gym, such as CCTV camera footage or the fingerprint from the knife machine, then Collins nods slowly, takes a long sip of his coffee, and suggests that the police probably want to take him down to the station. See Arresting Duke, below.

SEARCHING THE APARTMENT

Even a casual search of Collins's apartment turns up more evidence against him. **Explosive Devices** finds components for an incendiary device matching the one used to kill Rowan, as well as plans for the blade machine that killed Hofstadter. The search will also find Alan's acceptance letter to a prestigious college, complete with the offer of a scholarship.

ARRESTING DUKE

Collins doesn't resist arrest, nor does he ask for a lawyer. He just sits there, stony-faced. He intends to wait until the mafia punish Hutkins, at which time he will confess everything. He will answer questions in a non-committal fashion, growing animated only when talking about his late wife and his son.

His one request is that the police keep his son out of this whole matter. He will explain everything at the right moment. **Forensic Psychology** suggests that he's waiting for something, and that he feels no remorse for the attacks on Randall Hofstadter and Dr. Rowan.

Don't have Collins break immediately, but don't let the game get bogged down in a frustrating interrogation that goes nowhere. Instead, suggest the players follow up on other leads, review forensic evidence, or let the players come up with a way to break Collins's resistance. Good methods of attack involve spending **Reassurance** and playing on his anger and guilt over his wife's murder, convincing him to talk about why he

hates Hutkins and Rowan, or spending **Intimidation** and hinting at dire consequences for Alan if he doesn't co-operate.

If the characters do come up with a line of attack that works on Collins, then he confesses and explains that he waited until his son was old enough to take care of himself before exacting revenge on the people he blames for killing his wife. He describes *The Tournament* to the characters and gives them its location. He then asks to call his son.

If the players don't break Collins, then after a few hours, Collins asks for permission to telephone his son. If the characters refuse, Duke grows progressively more worried as the evening ticks on, until he agrees to confess in exchange for a promise that the characters will find and protect Alan. If they allow him to make the call, there is no answer. He tries again and again to no avail. He then cracks and confesses.

THE TOURNAMENT

SCENE TYPE: ACTION

Lead-In: Collins's Confession and the email from Rowan's lab

There are dozens of cars parked outside the factory, and there are more than sixty people inside the factory, which has been converted to a makeshift arena. The fighting takes place on the ground floor; the audience watch from walkways overhead. The fighters are all mutants. Thousands of dollars change hands as the audience bet on their favorite fighters,



ARREST EVERYONE!

The endgame of this scenario works best if Alan Collins is in danger. If your players are the sort who drag every NPC off for questioning, then it might be best to have Alan leave before Duke arrives, or have the characters meet Duke somewhere other than their apartment, or have Alan slip away from the cops using his Wind Control powers.

Alternatively, break the players of this habit by having their lieutenant chew them out for clogging up all the interview rooms with unnecessary witnesses. The characters should only bring people in for questioning if they can justify it.

and the fights are recorded and the videos sold on the black market.

Streetwise spots a six men exiting a pair of expensive black cars; the character recognizes them as suspected Russian mafia members, with connections to gambling, human trafficking and other organized crime. The two notable mafioso are **Timosha Kovalev** and **Peter Ledshen**. Kovalev handles the money; Ledshen is a powerful mutant enforcer with **Possession**.

The characters also spot Alan Collins entering the building.

The mafia's original intent was for Randall Hofstadter to fight and lose against another combatant, but their star athlete is dead now. They need a replacement who can sell a fixed defeat, and they expect Hutkins to provide such a patsy. The only thing that will convince the crowd that the defeat was legitimate is if the patsy dies in the fight.



GETTING IN

If the characters come here on their own, then the best approach is to go in undercover using **Impersonate**; information about the tournament passes by word of mouth, so all the characters need to do is to claim they're friends out Lou Hutkins to get past the armed bouncers.

If the characters know that there's an underground fighting ring here, then a heavy spend of **Cop Talk** and trading in favors can get them some added support in the form of an armed response unit and a van full of uniformed police. If the characters go in hard, then there likely will be casualties (on both sides, as the mutant combatants and the Russian mafiosos will fight back).

Inside, the building is crowded and noisy. The crowd jostle for a good view of the arena. There's blood in the air, and the crowd are drunk, high and rowdy. The mafia enforcers keep the audience in line – they don't want any trouble, they just want the money.

There's no sign of Alan Collins.

BLASTBACK

When the characters arrive, they hear Lou Hutkin's voice reverberating through the building. He's announcing the first fight – a blaster duel between two mutants. Concussion blasts ring out through the building, and one mutant falls. The crowd cheers as the loser is dragged off.

Another mutant enters the area, a hulking muscle-bound brute with **Earth Control** and **Magnetism**. He roars, and the building shakes.

Hutkins announces the next fight. *'Gentlemen! Our main event tonight was to have been a fight between Randall "Knifeman" Hofstadter and the Hammer, but there's been a change of plan! Tonight, I present... the Whirlwind!'*

Alex Collins is thrust into the arena. He's obviously terrified, but there's nothing he can do other than fight. He spins up a windstorm around his body to protect him from the hail of metal objects hurled at him by the Hammer. As the fight continues, it's obvious that Alex is outclassed. His Wind Control abilities are powerful, but he's not a trained fighter.

Unless the characters get him out of there, he'll die the same way his mother did.



DUKE COLLINS

If Duke Collins hasn't been arrested, he arrives moments after the fight starts and begs the characters to rescue his son. He'll confess everything if they get Alex out of there.

ENDGAME

The events of this final scene depend on the characters' goals.

If they just try to rescue Alan, then they need to stop the Hammer from killing him, and deal with the angry crowd and the bouncers. The bouncers are the real threat; the crowd will panic and disperse as soon as the player characters draw firearms or start using mutant powers.

The Russians attempt to flee as soon as they realize the police have found the tournament. If they try to arrest the Russians, then add the Russians' bodyguards into the fight. Even if the characters do manage to secure Kovalev and Ledshen, at this stage they can only charge them with involvement in unlicensed gambling and street fighting. (As an optional follow-up investigation, the characters can set their sights on bringing Kovalev and Ledshen down.)

The safest approaches are just grabbing Alan and fleeing, or convincing Hutkins to stop the fight and taking both him and Alan into custody.

AFTERMATH

If Alan is rescued, then Duke Collins confesses to the murder of Randall Hofstadter and Eric Rowan. If Alan died in the arena, then Collins commits suicide while in police custody.

If the characters rescued Alan, but didn't arrest Hutkins or the Russians, then Lou Hutkins' body is found in the abandoned factory the next morning. Grotesquely, the autopsy reveals he pulled his own intestines out, courtesy of Ledshen's **Possession** power. If Hutkins survived, he switches sides and gives evidence against the mafia. He doesn't know much, but his information could lead to further investigations targeting mutant-related organized crime.

Skip Adams takes over the Danger Room. Over the next year, it's renamed as the Collins Memorial Sports Centre.

TIMOSHA KOVALEV

Athletics 10, Health 10, Infiltration 8, Scuffling 8, Shooting 10, Stability 12

Weapons: Handgun +1

PETER LEDSHEN

Athletics 8, Health 8, Infiltration 4, Scuffling 6, Shooting 10, Stability 8

Mutant Powers: Possession 16, Command Insects 8

Weapons: Handgun +1

MAFIA GOONS

Athletics 6, Health 4, Scuffling 8, Shooting 8, Stability 6

Weapons: Handgun +1

THE HAMMER

Athletics 12, Health 14, Scuffling 12, Stability 6

Mutant Powers: Earth Control 14, Magnetism 20

RIOTING CROWD MEMBER

Athletics 4, Health 3, Scuffling 3

Weapons: Fists +0 or Improvised Clubs +1

THE KIDS AREN'T ALRIGHT

An attack in a Mutant City high school suggests that there's at least one unidentified mutant among the students. As the characters investigate, they find a mutant dorphing ring.

BACKSTORY

Toni was the first to develop her powers; she started flying when she was eight. Everyone thought that was cool, but they were just kids then.

Farrah got her powers when she was fourteen, but she didn't tell anyone. By then, the school had made everyone go through Mutant Education classes and they knew the dangers. She was an Endorphin Controller, a bingo, a love monkey. She felt soiled. The only one she told was Toni; they were both mutants, they could trust each other even if she sometimes made Farrah dorph her.

They thought they could handle it, keep it secret, but they didn't know about **Lucas**. He was a mutant too; his power was Cognition. Suddenly, he was the smartest kid in school, and smart enough to work out what Farrah could do. He said that they could all make a lot of money out of Farrah's abilities, and that he was clever enough to arrange it all. He'd find the customers, Toni would fly them to waste ground near the school, and Farrah would do her stuff. The customers would never know who the kids were, it would all be totally anonymous and safe.



DORPHING

Using Endorphin Control to give another person a jolt of pure pleasure is technically legal, but the practice is frowned upon by most of society and is now an illicit, underground affair. Farrah's underage, which makes the whole thing even more of a legal quagmire. See *Mutant City Blues*, page 127 for more details.

Lucas never told them what he was planning. He's a goob, obsessed by superheroes. He's used the money they earned from Farrah's dorphing to build a secret headquarters. He wants Toni to become the vigilante hero he dreams of being... even if that means pushing her to murder.

THE CRIME

It worked, for a while, but one of the johns got pushy. Jay was a rich kid, the son of a big-shot city lawyer; he wanted more and more from Farrah. Last night, he tried to grab her and force her to give him the biggest dorph rush she could. Toni stepped in, wrestled Jay off with her super strength, and tried to fly off with him. Unfortunately, she dropped him right in the middle of the school car park... from 200 meters up.

Jay's in a coma now.

THE INVESTIGATION

After checking out **The Man Who Fell**, the characters head to **Mutant High** to check out the scene of the crime. They rapidly identify **The Flying Girl** as a suspect; her known associates are Lucas Smith, a.k.a. **The Goob**, and Farrah Cosgrove, **The Other Girl**.

While the characters are investigating, an **Anonymous Tip-Off** fingers a notorious criminal, Vince Hepler, as the culprit. This tip-off, though, turns out to be an attempt at misleading the investigation. The characters learn that two uniformed police were attacked by a mysterious assailant, and the police's own security systems were compromised.

THE TWIST

As they take Toni Shaw down to the precinct for further questioning, she's rescued by a remote-controlled car that smashes into the PCs' vehicle. With their main lead gone, the characters return to the school to follow other leads

THE CULPRIT

There's a third mutant, Lucas, who's trying to protect himself and Farrah. He's a powerful technopath who uses his powers to sabotage the investigation. In the final confrontation, the characters trace the 'Machine Master' to his lair.

MUTANT HIGH

'Mutant High' obviously isn't the name of the high school; either replace it with the name of an existing high school in your take on Mutant City, or else call it the Southwestern High School. It's a typical high school, with a student population of 1,622. It's best known for having an excellent science department, partially due to the close proximity of the Quade Institute and the university.

SCENES

THE MAN WHO FELL

SCENE TYPE: INTRO

The characters are called to investigate a bizarre accident – or attempted murder. Sometime around 10 pm last night, a man fell out of the sky and landed in the middle of a car park attached to Mutant High. He smashed into a parked car; the car alarm eventually attracted the attention of a passing police vehicle, and the officers found the severely injured victim and called an ambulance. There are no buildings overlooking the car park that he could have jumped off, and no-one heard a helicopter. At a guess, a flying mutant was involved.

THE VICTIM

He has been identified as **Jay Cornet** (24), a legal intern working at a downtown law firm. A character with **Law** recognizes the Cornet name; **Don Cornet** is a high-flying lawyer who specialises in big criminal cases. He's defended organised criminals and celebrities in the past; he even got one rapist acquitted by arguing he was possessed. Jay died before the ambulance got him to hospital, but they had a Healing mutant standing by who resurrected him and healed his massive internal injuries and broken limbs. Unfortunately, he's slipped into a coma and they haven't managed to revive him. It's unclear if he will ever wake up.

The elder Cornet has no idea what his son was doing at Mutant High; the last time he saw Jay was yesterday at the office.

Jay's clothing and belongings were removed and bagged. Searching them turns up some key clues:

- **Evidence Collection or Driving (Core Clue):** His car keys are in his pocket, but his car wasn't found at the car park, nor is it in the parking garage attached to his apartment building. Putting out a message to look for the missing Porsche leads to *Jay's Car*, page 30. His mobile phone is also missing.
- **Evidence Collection (Core Clue):** He was also holding part of a hooded sweatshirt. It looks like he clutched onto this garment in an attempt to save himself from falling. **Streetwise** identifies the color and material as matching a school-issued sweatshirt given to athletes at Mutant High. This points the characters towards the school.
- **Forensic Accounting:** His wallet wasn't taken, but it's empty of cash. There's a printed receipt folded into one compartment; he withdrew two thousand dollars at an ATM near his apartment at 9.22 pm last night.

EXAMINING THE VICTIM

Forensic Anthropology notes bruise marks under the victim's armpits, as well as along his forearms and his jaw, that are consistent with being carried after a struggle. A one-point **Forensic Anthropology** spend lets the character confirm that these bruises (as well as a fractured jaw and a nasty break to the ulna) are consistent with a struggle with a very strong individual, and happened *before* he fell from a height.

A one-point **Forensic Anthropology** spend finds traces of blood underneath his fingernails from where he clawed Toni, causing her to drop him. Running tests on the dried blood flakes with a one-point **Anamorphology** spend turns up traces of S-Cells, confirming the blood comes from a mutant. The sample is too small and degraded to get much else, but the injuries and broken bones suggest a super-strong mutant, and Strength is strongly correlated with Flight.

Jay's showing signs of REM, suggesting he's dreaming. Using **Observe Dreams** (or spending a point of **Bureaucracy** and **Cop Talk** to get a sandman into the hospital) gives the characters flashes of Jay's disjointed dreams. There's a memory of flying, and then a flash of a pale young girl with brown hair. The dreamer is drawn extremely strongly to that girl; she's associated with intense pleasure and bliss, but not in a sexual

way (although there are disturbing undertones of lust and a desire to possess her). The images are of **Farrah Cosgrove**.

OFFICERS LEWIS & MARA

These two beat cops found the victim last night. Joe Lewis (41) is a tired street cop who feels out of his depth on mutant cases; his partner Lisa Mara (27) is angling for a promotion and is eager to impress the player characters. If questioned with **Cop Talk**, they tell the characters that no-one saw any flying mutants last night, but the school's got its athletic grounds and other open areas on two sides, so it's possible to fly for quite a distance without being spotted.

If the players didn't pick up on the sweatshirt clue pointing them towards Mutant High, Lewis can point out that they've seen kids wearing similar shirts. The pair was on patrol near the school again today; they can be called in for backup.

MUTANT HIGH

SCENE TYPE: CORE

Lead-In: The Sweatshirt Fragment

The school principal is **Jayne Sacant** (55); she's coldly efficient, and her primary concern is to keep the parents from panicking the school board. There are already rumors flooding the school about the body in the car park, and she wants to get the police investigation over with as quickly as possible.

Checking the school record with **Bureaucracy** shows that of a student body of 1,622 and around 200 staff, there are nine known to have mutant powers. Those marked with an * are of special interest to the investigation, and are covered in individual sections. There are six students:

- **Tia Hee (14):** A quiet, studious girl. Declared Power: Light Control. She's also recently developed Invisibility.
- **Amy Fagin (14):** Category-B mutant; she's got vibrant green hair and a green tint to her skin. Recently, she's started to grow tiny wart-like tendrils on the soles of her feet, which researchers at the Quade Institute have likened to 'roots'. She's been in and out of hospital for testing in the last three months.
- **Clinton Dartez (15):** Rebellious, moody, an infamous troublemaker. He was recently suspended for bringing his pet scorpions

to school. Declared Power: Command Insects, Blood Spray. He carries a large plastic bottle of orange drink with him at all times for 'medical reasons.' Sometimes it's full of orange juice, sometimes it's full of bugs.

- **Tyrone Waye* (15):** He's intent on becoming a professional wrestler; his super-strength bars him from the school's wrestling team, but the coach is working with Waye after school hours to train him. Declared Powers: Strength, Regeneration.
- **Toni Shaw* (16):** She's an average student, but socially very popular. She's a cheerleader on the track team. Declared Power: Flight. Secretly, she's also got Strength. Interrogating Toni is covered in *The Flying Girl* (page 28); searching for rumours about her is covered in *Gossip Cops* (page 29). Identifying Toni is the **Core Clue** for this scene; a one-point **Reassurance** or **Interrogation** spend lets the characters pick up the interesting gossip that Toni's had a lot more cash to spend recently.
- **Max Bown* (17):** a.k.a. 'Frosty'. He's used his powers to create short-lived sculptures of surprising beauty, and has become a hot commodity in the art world. Declared Powers: Reduce Temperature, Ice Blast, Wind Control.

Two staff members are also open mutants (there is no legal requirement for teachers or staff to declare their mutant nature, but after a scandal involving a closeted mutant with Induce Mental Disorder, hiding your mutant powers can cause huge problems later in a teacher's career).

- **Adrian Daniels (29)*, Maths Teacher:** Declared Power: Absorption.
- **Paul O'Brien (46)*, Sports Coach:** Declared Power: Deplete Oxygen

INQUIRIES IN THE SCHOOL

Asking around the school (using **Streetwise** or interviewing students with **Interrogation**) turns up lots of rumors and gossip, little of which is useful. No-one knows who the man in the car park was, although there are stories that it was a teacher, the father or boyfriend of a student, or a government health inspector murdered by Mrs. Sacant. Sorting through these

rumours, the characters can add some more suspects to the list.

- **Farrah Cosgrove** threw up when she heard about the guy in the car park. She's gone home with a sick note. If the characters check Cosgrove's home, she's missing. See *The Other Girl* (page 30).
- Asking about mutants? **Lucas Smith** is the biggest goob in school – he knows everyone with powers. If the characters investigate, they find Lucas never came to school this morning. See *The Goob* (page 31).
- Everyone knows that **Dave Bown (16)*** is a mutant, just like his older brother Max. Most people say that Dave's got Concussion Beam and Energy Dispersal, although one girl swears he used Sexual Chemistry on her.

TYRONE WAYE & COACH O'BRIEN

Someone with super-strength was responsible for the attack on Jay Cornet, and Tyrone's the only student known to have that power. The characters meet Tyrone during one of his training sessions with Coach O'Brien; the young mutant is bench-pressing 600 kg weights when the characters arrive.

O'Brien strenuously defends his star athlete; Tyrone's a good kid and would never get into trouble. **Bullshit Detector** suggests O'Brien's over-compensating; running Tyrone's name through police records with **Bureaucracy** show that he was once cautioned for using his Strength to smash a car belonging to Max Bown after an argument over a third student, Lucy Fairfax.

- Tyrone has an alibi for the estimated time of Cornet's fall; he was studying at home.
- He owns a sweatshirt like the one found on Jay; in fact, he's wearing it right now.
- With a **Flattery** spend and a chat about other students, Tyrone mentions Lucas Smith; he's always hanging around drooling after Toni Shaw.

THE BOWN TWINS

Max Bown is a precocious teen, more used to dealing with adults in the art world than his peers. He has an alibi for last night – he was working in his studio, and his parents can vouch for him. His brother Dave possesses no mutant abilities, but desperately wants to

share in the adulation and prestige that Max's gifts have brought him. Dave therefore hints that he's got powers, until the PCs call his bluff with a one-point **Bullshit Detector** spend.

Engaging Max in conversation with a one-point **Art History** spend gets the PCs a clue; Lucas Smith once asked Max for a list of his bohemian contacts. (Smith was trawling for more clients for Farrah.) See *The Goob*, page 31, if the characters follow up on Lucas Smith.

ADRIAN DANIELS

Daniels is very hesitant about talking to the police, and his nervousness manifests as defensiveness and sarcasm. He has no idea who the powered kids in school are, other than those who flaunt their abilities like Max Bown, Toni and Tyrone. He snaps that he never uses his power – he'd prefer to keep his job and instead of being a perverted power-snatcher. A one-point **Bullshit Detector** spend sees through this statement – Daniels doesn't have full control over his powers, and sometimes inadvertently absorbs abilities from those around him. If the PCs push him, he may accidentally copy one of their powers.

Knowing that Daniels may accidentally absorb powers lets the characters spend a point of **Interrogation** to get him to recount an odd incident from his Math class. He was taking up essay homework when he felt his power trigger. He's not entirely sure what ability he borrowed, or who he stole it from, but he felt his hands burning and everyone else seemed... like embers he could blow on to make them flare up. (He borrowed Farrah's Endorphin Control power).

Toni, Farrah, Lucas, Tyrone and Clinton Dartez are all in his Math class.



THE LANDING ZONE

SCENE TYPE: ALTERNATE

The crash site in the car park is ringed with police tape and covered with a tarpaulin. A character with Spatial Awareness (or a two-point Evidence Collection spend and a lot of painstaking calculations) can work out the height and direction from which Jay fell, and use this to estimate the route the flyer took. It seems that Jay was flying from a section of waste ground near the school towards the park on the far side. Searching the park (or asking uniform to do so) leads into *Jay's Car*.

AN ANONYMOUS TIP-OFF

SCENE TYPE: ANTAGONIST ACTION

The ideal lead-in for this scene is that the characters put out an ABP on Jay's car, and it is spotted by officers Lewis & Mara. Alternatively, the pair can be patrolling near the school on unrelated business, and spot the car.

They contact the player characters, informing them that they've found the car in a small park near the school – and then the radio goes dead.

While the characters are en route to the park, one of the characters gets a phone call. If answered, an obviously electronic voice says that the characters are on the wrong trail, and that they should be looking for **Vince Hepler**. The caller signs off as 'a friend'. If the characters check out Vince Hepler, see the sidebar.

Checking the phone number using a one-point **Data Retrieval** spend discovers that it's Jay Cornet's phone.

AT THE PARK

When the player characters arrive, they find Officers Lewis and Mara lying unconscious on the ground. They both have wide idiot grins on their faces. Their patrol car is nearby, with the doors open.

The pair can easily be revived with a **Medic** check at Difficulty 4. They spotted a car matching the description of Jay Cornet's Porsche under some trees. When they went to investigate, they found a dark-haired young woman lying unconscious nearby. (It was Farrah Cosgrove, but neither of the cops got a good look at her face and cannot identify her.) They went to render assistance... and they both blacked out. **Bullshit Detector** shows they're both deeply embarrassed, and pushing them with **Cop Talk** makes them admit that they both blacked out from pleasure. A one-point **Anamorphology** or **Streetwise** spend suggests that they got hit with a massive jolt of Endorphin Control.

Checking the patrol car, **Data Retrieval** notes that the built-in mobile data terminal has been tampered with; a one-point **Data Retrieval** spend lets the character recreate the recent search. Someone ran a trace to cross-reference 'Cornet' with 'Flying Mutant'; the only match was Vince Hepler. (It was Lucas, using his Technokinesis to unlock the car and his Technopathy to hack into the police computer and run the search.)

Cornet's car is gone. **Evidence Collection** finds tire tracks leading back out onto the street. The car shows up again in *Car Crash* (page 29).



VINCE HEPLER

SCENE TYPE: RED HERRING

Hepler was a defendant in one of the first criminal trials involving mutant powers; he got nine years for armed robbery, after using his Flight and Heat Blast to hijack a bank truck from above. Don Cornet was the defense counsel for one of Hepler's cronies, and managed to get his client off on a technicality by dumping all the blame onto Hepler. Since then, Hepler has carried a grudge.

According to police records accessed by Lucas, Hepler was released six months ago.

Lucas drags Hepler's name across the investigator's trail in the hopes of putting them off. A one-point **Research** spend finds that Hepler's currently living in Vermont; a one-point **Flattery** spend gets the same information out of Don Cornet, and a one-point **Forensic Psychology** spend suggests that indirect revenge on Don Cornet by attacking Jay really isn't consistent with Hepler's past behavior, or the prison psychologist's reports (he found Mutant Jesus, a.k.a. the Eighth-Day Church, while in prison and has renounced violence).

THE FLYING GIRL

SCENE TYPE: CORE

Lead-In: Identifying Toni as the only Flyer in the school

You can run this scene at any point after the characters identify Toni as a suspect, but it's best run after (or better yet, concurrently with) *A Tip-Off*.

Toni is an athletic teenager; she's pretty and energetic under usual circumstances, but today she's withdrawn and shell-shocked. She rarely uses her flying ability in public, although everyone knows she's a mutant. Her parents are middle-class suburbanites who think the world of their only daughter.

Toni's goals when being interviewed by the police are to protect herself and Farrah. She is addicted to Farrah's endorphin jolts, and this addiction gives her enough misguided courage to lie to the cops about dropping Jay. She's not a practiced liar, though, so the investigators can break through with the right questions. Getting her talking requires **Reassurance** or **Interrogation**.

TONI SHAW

Athletics 9, Filch 5, Health 12, Scuffling 8, Sense Trouble 5, Stability 7

Mutant Powers: Flight 15, Strength 15

- She's a Flyer. She denies having Strength, but if the characters point out with **Anamorphology** or **Intimidation** that a PIC test can confirm whether or not she has that power, she changes her story and admits she's also super-strong.
- Her alibi for the night before is that she was studying with Farrah Cosgrove. **Bullshit Detector** suggests it's a carefully rehearsed story; a one-point **Forensic Psychology** or **Influence Detection** spend notes that Toni's demeanor changes slightly when she mentions Farrah, suggesting an emotional tie between the two.
- She has a sweatshirt like the one torn by Jay, but it... got stolen. **Bullshit Detector** is hardly necessary here, as her attempt to cover up the truth is blatantly obvious.

Once it's clear to her that she's failed to fool the cops, Toni stammers that she wants a lawyer. Point out to the character with the highest **Law** that they should take her down to the precinct and suspend further questioning until she's had her rights read and a lawyer is present.

En route to the station, run *Car Crash*.

If the PCs *don't* bring Toni in for further questioning, then she flees the school as soon as she can and takes refuge at Lucas' hideout. Suggest to the character with the highest **Forensic Psychology** that her friends might know where she has gone, which leads onto *The Other Girl* and *The Goob*.

GOSSIP COPS

Asking about Toni at the school with **Negotiation** or **Interrogation** turns up some added gossip about her.

- She's popular with the jock crowd, but she's also friends with Farrah Cosgrove, who's an absolute loser. This is a **Core Clue**, which leads to *The Other Girl*.
- Everyone knows that Lucas Smith is obsessed with Toni, but he follows all the mutants around. He's such a goob. See *The Goob* (page 31).

- She's always got plenty of money. She told her parents that she'd earned it as a flying courier.

CAR CRASH

SCENE TYPE: ANTAGONIST ACTION

Lead-In: The characters have arrested Toni and are bringing her home in a car. It's possible that the characters might hand this job over to uniformed officers, or find some other way of bringing Toni home, in which case you'll need to adjust the scene as needed – either the PCs hear about the car attack second-hand, or else Lucas uses some other technological method of rescuing Toni, like seizing control of a helicopter to intercept a flyer.

If the characters suspect Toni of possessing Strength, they can use special heavy-duty handcuffs to restrain her with a successful Difficulty 6 **Preparedness** check; if the check fails, they've only got regular restraints which Toni can break with ease.

Call for **Sense Trouble** (Difficulty 5) as the characters are driving towards the precinct. Those who succeed spot something odd – one of the cars in a parallel lane has no driver. As soon as the character spots this, the driverless car accelerates to ram the police car off the road. A **Driving** roll (Difficulty 5) is needed to avoid a collision. If the character failed the Sense Trouble test, then the Driving difficulty is increased to 8.

If the cars collide, then everyone in the police vehicle takes 1d6+1 points of damage. Toni takes advantage of the confusion; if possible, she breaks out of her restraints, punches through the roof of the car, and flies off. She heads to Lucas' hideout if she escapes.

If Lucas misses with his first remote-controlled ramming attempt, then he tries again while interfering with the cop's own car. He seizes control of the police vehicle's steering, does a handbrake turn, and drives it towards the driverless vehicle for a vicious head-on collision. Successive Difficulty 6 **Driving** rolls are needed until the vehicles crash or the PCs bail out (or Lucas runs out of **Technokinesis** points).

CHASING TONI

If Toni escapes, then characters with a suitable power like **Flight** or **Speed**, they can pursue the girl to the industrial zone for *Endgame* (page 32). Otherwise, they just see her rocket into the air and fly off in the direction of Mutant High.

If they manage to keep Toni in custody, then she breaks down completely as the adrenaline shock from Lucas'



ambush washes away the last of the Farrah-induced endorphins. She admits everything – how Lucas arranged for dorpher customers, how Jay attacked Farrah, how she tried to drag Jay off Farrah, but ended up dropping him, and how Lucas has a ‘secret headquarters’.

JAY’S CAR

The car used in the attack was Jay Cornet’s Porsche. There is nothing unusual about the car, so **Anamorphology** confirms that the attacker must have used Technokinesis to control the vehicle. Searching it with **Evidence Collection** turns up Jay’s mobile phone under the passenger seat. Notably, the last dialled number matches that of the anonymous tip-off.

THE OTHER GIRL

SCENE TYPE: CORE

Lead-In: Investigations into the school or Toni Shaw point to a link to Farrah Cosgrove

Farrah’s a quiet, plain, dark-haired girl; she’s forgettable and easily overlooked. Her parents are divorced,

and she lives with her mother, who’s suffering from lung cancer. Her insurance doesn’t cover a sufficiently powerful mutant Healer. Farrah sometimes secretly uses Endorphin Control to relieve her mother’s pain, and puts her share of the money raised from dorphing towards the medical bills. (If your Mutant City is in a country with universal public health care, then Farrah’s mother is at the bottom of a very long waiting list for mutant healing.)

Farrah never managed to break out of her shell, and she alienated her original coterie of close friends when she came out to them as a mutant – one of them accused her of using her powers to control him, and the group ostracized Farrah. She turned to Toni for support, and Toni befriended her in exchange for the occasional jolt. Farrah’s already shaky sense of self-worth was hammered by her mutant powers, which left her easy prey for Lucas Smith’s dorphing scene.

Last night, when Jay Cornet attacked her, Farrah left the scene, trusting that Toni would get rid of Cornet. Lucas had promised her that if anything did go wrong, there would be no way for the customer to trace Far-

rah. She came to school this morning, only to discover that Toni hadn't got rid of the problem, and that the customer had ended up splattered all over the car park. Farrah fled the school and has taken refuge in Lucas' secret headquarters.

Asking around the school with **Interrogation** or **Reassurance** confirms that Farrah's closest friends are Toni Shaw and Lucas Smith (*The Goob*).

FINDING FARRAH

Digging Farrah's home address out of the school with **Bureaucracy** lets the characters speak to Farrah's mother, **Sandy**. She's pale and hollow-eyed. At the sight of a police badge, she assumes the worst and guesses that Farrah has been hurt or killed; **Reassurance** is necessary to continue the interview. During the interview, Sandy retrieves a hidden packet of cigarettes from a high shelf and brings the characters out onto the balcony of their high-rise apartment to smoke. She explains that Farrah doesn't like her smoking in the apartment. The characters learn the following.

- Sandy has no idea that her daughter is a mutant. **Bullshit Detector** confirms that she's telling the truth.
- Farrah's been hanging around with a new set of friends lately. She's met a pretty girl, Toni Shaw, but there was also this weird kid called Luke or Lucas or something. Farrah brought him back to the flat once to fix the microwave. If the players haven't figured it out yet, then a one-point **Anamorphology** spend ties that together with the remote-controlled car earlier to suggest a Technokinetic mutant.
- She doesn't know where Farrah is. Prompting her with **Streetwise** or **Reassurance** to think where Farrah might go when she's upset reminds Sandy of an incident several months ago, when she told Farrah of the cancer diagnosis. Farrah ran off; she called Sandy hours later, and Sandy picked her up at a derelict industrial zone near the school. This is a **Core Clue** leading to the secret headquarters (see *Endgame*, page 32).

FARRAH COSGROVE

Athletics 5, Health 8, Scuffling 3, Stability 6

Mutant Powers: Endorphin Control (other) 20, Endorphin Control (self) 10

Searching Farrah's room discovers some moderately artistic black-and-white photos of urban decay. **Architecture** confirms they're shots of the same industrial zone near the school. A one-point **Evidence Collection** spend turns up a gym bag hidden under Farrah's bed that contains more than \$5,000 in cash.

THE GOOB

SCENE TYPE: ALTERNATE

Lucas Smith dreamed of being a super-hero, ever since he was a kid. When the first mutants showed up ten years ago, he threw himself off the garden shed and tried to fly, he started fires and tried to control them with his mind, and ran into walls trying to phase through solid objects, all to no avail. Mutant powers had passed him by. Toni Shaw became a figure of obsession for him – she was the first open mutant in the school, and he's coveted her for years. She dismissed him as a creepy stalker, which is a perfectly accurate assessment.

A year ago, Lucas got his wish. His mutant powers developed, giving him control over machines and bursts of super-cognition. One of these super-powered insights allowed him to work out that Toni's new friend Farrah was also a mutant, and he spied on them until he found out that Farrah was an Endorphin Controller. It all clicked into place. He was going to be the hero he'd always dreamed of being, and Toni would be the superheroine by his side.

He came up with a scheme to make money off Farrah's dorphing, but that's just stage one. He's building a fortress, a secret headquarters, and from his lair the Machine Master and the Girl of Steel will fight crime and save the day. (He still hasn't figured out a way to convince Toni to wear the costume he's designed for her, but that's a minor detail.) This current crisis has pushed Lucas into incipient Megalomania.

Everyone knows Lucas the Goob, especially the mutants in school. He has few friends; his school record is oddly uninformative, but his mathematics results have gone from mostly Cs to a string of As in the last year.

A search of his locker does turn up a clue – a sheaf of credit card receipts, mixed in with sketches for costumes for himself and Toni, and plans for his secret fortress. Searching through them with **Forensic Accounting** shows they mostly involve the purchase of industrial machinery like forklifts; the items were delivered to a derelict factory in an industrial area near the school. This is a **Core Clue** for the characters to get to the *Endgame*.

LUCAS SMITH, THE MACHINE MASTER

Athletics 6, Health 10, Scuffling 6, Stability 6

Mutant Powers: Cognition 10, Technokinesis 16, Technopathy 10

ENDGAME

SCENE TYPE: CLIMATIC CONFRONTATION

Lead-In: Any of the clues leading to the industrial zone

The industrial park looks like a post-apocalyptic nightmare, a testament to the collapse of local light industry in the western world. There are rows of abandoned warehouses and factories. About a quarter of the zone is still in active use; the rest is a wilderness of wrecked buildings and crumbling concrete. Vagrants and gangs have taken over some of the buildings; the cops call it the Bad Patch.

A search of the zone brings the characters to one warehouse that looks more intact than the rest. This is Lucas' secret headquarters, his fortress of solitude. Lucas and Farrah are inside; if Toni escaped police custody, she's here too.

INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

It's a warren of crates and junk barricades. Lucas and Farrah (and possibly Toni) are hiding on a walkway overhead, where Lucas has set up his 'control centre' – a cobbled-together set of handy gadgets. He's got a police radio scanner, webcams covering the inside and outside of the fortress, and night-vision goggles. There are also two forklifts and an overhead crane that he can use **Technokinesis** to control.

If a fight breaks out, Lucas attacks with the forklifts and the crane simultaneously, splitting his **Technokinesis** among the three attacks. Targets can use **Athletics** to dodge; if an attack hits, it does 1d6+4 damage.

IT TURNS OUT I'M A SUPER-VILLAIN

Trying to talk Lucas down is futile – to refresh his **Technokinesis** power after rescuing Toni, he's driven himself deeper into Megalomania. He's now convinced that only the Machine Master can save the city, and that the cops are the 'fascist pawns of big business'. A **Forensic Psychology** spend coupled with **Anamorphology** points out the proximity of Cognition to Megalomania on the **Quade Diagram**.

If Toni's here, then she fights back until either Lucas is brought down or the characters use a 1-point **Intimidate** spend to convince her to stand down (3-points if they threatened her during the earlier interview). Her tactic is to grab heavy crates and pieces of equipment, and drop them on the characters. She will also make a flying spear tackle on anyone who tries climbing up to Lucas' control centre. Her main goal in the fight is to protect Farrah.

THE OTHER GIRL

Farrah is confused and scared – if the characters can talk her down using **Negotiation** spends (a 3-point spend, or a 1-point mentioning her mother's plight), then she zaps Lucas with an **Endorphin Control** jolt just like she hit Lewis and Mara. Lucas blacks out after one round.

AFTERMATH

All three are guilty of dorphing-related crimes; Farrah will confess to repeated Administrations of a Restricted Intoxicant. Toni can be charged with assault or even attempted murder of Jay Cornet, depending on how strongly the characters make their case; if they don't throw the book at her, Don Cornet takes it as a deliberate snub by the HCIU and promises to make them pay. Tying Lucas to the dorphing charges is tricky – both Farrah and Toni will testify, but there's no definite proof other than his phone number showing up on Cornet's phone. Of course, charges of assault on a police officer are much more serious and incontestable.

Farrah begs for clemency from the characters; if she's arrested, she fears the shock might kill her mother.

In the wake of the case, there's a noticeable uptick in the number of attacks on mutants in Mutant High. Mutants are ostracized and feared by their classmates; four months later, promising mutant artist Max Bown commits suicide.

The Quade Diagram

06

06

05

05

04

04

03

03

02

02

01

01

00

00

A

B

C

D

E

F

A

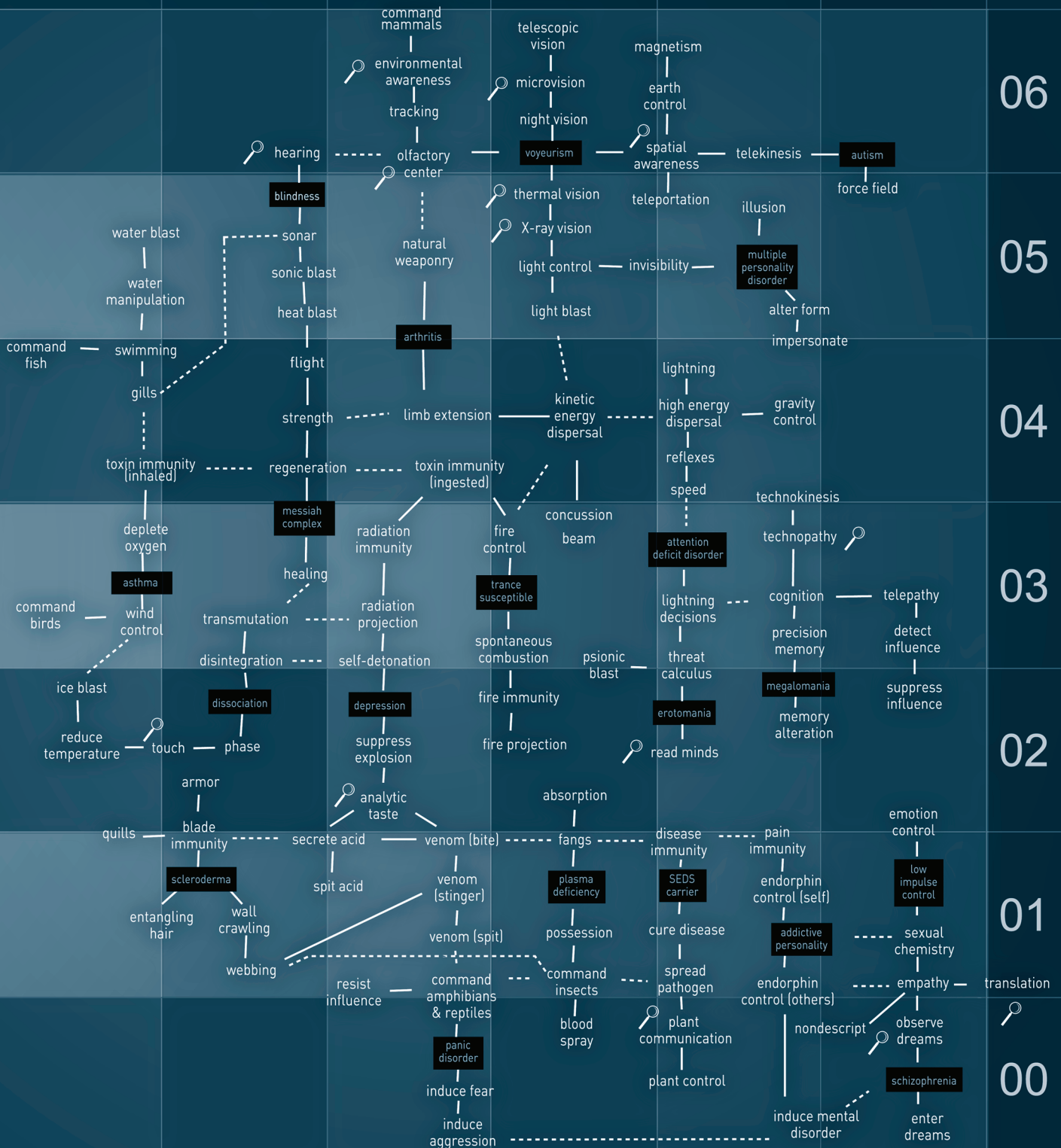
B

C

D

E

F



healing

general power

asthma

defect

correlated power

hearing

investigative power

connected power