



DAY of DR NULL

by Ben Robbins

Art Robert Haskell

Comics Jem Lewis (www.stickopolis.net)

Diagrams Ben Robbins

a Lame Mage Production

www.lamemage.com

Copyright © Ben Robbins 2006,
All Rights Reserved

Playtesters:

New Century City—Gavin “Shadow” Cummins, Chris “Moon Man” Haddad, Robert “Stardust” Haskell, Jem “Eclipse” Lewis, Ching-Ping “Captain Danger” Lin, Seth “Guardian” Richardson, GM Ben Robbins.

Nexus—Mary “Storm Knight” Clegg, Rob “Kuma” Martinez, Nancy “Momentum” Willingham, Ron “Asphalt” Willingham, with special appearances by Katie “Destroyer of Worlds” Willingham, GM Bob Huss.

Strike Force—Stuart “Grator” Basden, Ron “Will-o-Wisp” Lundeen, Stephanie “Justiciar” Lundeen, Besheer “Shadow Snake” Mohamed, Joshua “Montage” O’Connor-Rose, Sacari “Aziza” Thomas-Mohamed, GM Jake Linford.

Knight Watch—Roger “Boo/Shadow” Barr, Ed “Rebound” Cain, Matt “Bad Influence” Charron, John “Copperfield” Mark, Chuck “Lightning Rod” Hack, GM Scott Smith.

Special thanks to Stephen Scholz and Ching-Ping Lin.

The following is Open Game Content in accordance with the Open Game License: a) character stat blocks except for character name, b) grey text blocks, c) rule references from other Open Game Content. All other material is Product Identity.

Mutants & Masterminds, M&M Superlink, the M&M Superlink logo, and Green Ronin are trademarks of Green Ronin Publishing and are used with permission. Hero points are product identity of Green Ronin Publishing and are used with permission.



Contents

Introduction	2
Who is Dr Null?	2
Picking a Tone (GM Craft)	2
Setting the Stage	2
Curses, Foiled Again!	3
Jail Break	3
Seismic Converter	3
Fist for a Day	4
Who is the Neutron Fist?	4
Fist for a Day, Part 1—Mind Swap	4
Enter the Heroes	4
Picking the Right Hero (GM Craft)	5
Action	5
Finale—The Threat	5
Aftermath	6
Fist for a Day, Part 2—Race Against Time	6
Hero-Fist’s Abilities	6
Enter the Heroes	7
Action	7
Stacking the Deck (GM Craft)	7
All Talk, No Action	8
Bystanders	8
Finale	8
Aftermath	8
Attack of the Atomic Supermen	9
The Civic Center	9
Revelations	9
Enter the Heroes	10
Villains Present	10
Action	10
Avoid the Map Trap (GM Craft)	10
War for the City	10
Send in the troops	12
Calling all heroes	12
Hold the line!	12
Protect the Innocent	12
Chasing Dr Null	12
Keeping It Moving (GM Craft)	13
What about the Neutron Fist?	13
Action Shticks	13
Falling Debris	13
Go Fetch	14
Finale—Stopping the Atomic Supermen	14
Command & Control	14
Melt Down	15
If the Heroes Lose	15
Aftermath	15
Characters	16
Neutron Fist	16
Origin of the Neutron Fist	17
Further Adventures with the Fist	17
Atomic Supermen	18
Subterranean Bore Carriers	19
Cyclotron	20
Dr Null	21
Origin of Dr Null	22
Appendices	23
Battle Tracker	23
GM’s Fast Reference Sheets	24
Player Handout Illustrations	26

Introduction

He’s waited. He’s schemed. And now, finally, his day has come...

In the first part of this adventure, **Fist for a Day**, the nefarious Dr Null tries to transfer his mind into the powerful body of the Neutron Fist, but a hero’s mind is swapped into the Fist’s body instead. The hero in the Fist’s body is the only one who knows about the next phase of Dr Null’s plans—he must make his way across town resisting police and even fellow superheroes who think the powerhouse supervillain is on a rampage through downtown.

In the second part, **Attack of the Atomic Supermen**, Dr Null’s master plan is revealed as he unleashes an army of synthetic super clones in the very heart of the city. It’s a no-holds barred battle royale as police, the National Guard, and just about every superhero wearing a cape fight to defend the city from total destruction.

Day of Dr Null can be played as a stand-alone adventure or it can be combined with **Dr Null: Battle on the Bay Bridge** and **Death of Dr Null** to make a complete story arc.

Dr Null: because no situation can’t be made worse with science...

Who is Dr Null?

In now famous Senate testimony, a respected prosecutor once branded Dr Null “the most dangerous man alive.” In a world that is home to superhumans capable of lifting mountains and melting tanks with beams from their eyes, it’s no small tribute, especially considering that Dr Null himself has no superhuman powers. His danger stems entirely from his scientific genius, a genius that has proven capable of devising inventions far in advance of modern science and schemes that threaten the very world.

Dr Null is also undeniably mad. His is a grand, all-encompassing madness, a madness that harbors deep bitterness towards the world and yearns for his genius to be recognized. See the **Origin of Dr Null** for more information about his background.

If you need to explain why the heroes have not heard of such a major villain before, you can presume that Dr Null has been out of sight for the past few years, optimistically believed dead or safely locked away as described in **Setting the Stage**. Or you can limit Dr Null’s past schemes to other cities or parts of the world, which is why the heroes have not dealt with him directly before.

Picking a Tone (GM Craft)

Dr Null can be played as a stereotypical mad scientist or a deadly serious enemy of mankind. He can be a crazed pulp villain or a disturbing reflection of man’s finest aspirations gone wrong. Pick the tone that works for your game. The adventure works either way, but deciding what tone you want will help you set a consistent mood while you are running the scenario.

Setting the Stage

It is important for the heroes to have some context for what is going on. In this scenario you want to make sure the heroes know something about Dr Null and the Neutron Fist and understand that they are major threats when they encounter them. You can do this

with foreshadowing or just by telling the heroes what they would have heard when they see the characters for the first time.

These background scenes set the stage for the action that follows, foreshadowing the return of Dr Null and the threat of the Atomic Supermen. These early clones wear ordinary clothes to keep a low profile and cannot project radiation (no Blast or Aura) but are otherwise as described later.

You can have the heroes learn about these events after the fact instead of intervening directly. They are starting points for investigation and roleplaying discussion.

Jail Break

If Dr Null is in prison he is broken free by plainclothes agents with superhuman strength and invulnerability (Atomic Supermen without radiation powers). Dr Null was being kept in a top secret high security facility. The assailants smashed through concrete walls with their bare hands and ignored bursts of automatic weapon fire from guards.

If the heroes captured Dr Null on the Bay Bridge, then the Jail Break is the perfect place to start. If you did not run **Dr Null: Battle on the Bay Bridge** you may elect to start the scenario with Dr Null in prison anyway so that his escape gives the heroes a warning of what is to come. A long stretch in prison can also explain why the heroes have not had to deal with Dr Null before.

Seismic Converter

A research lab is destroyed in the middle of the night. The lab looks as though a bulldozer was driven through it: heavy equipment bent in two, computers crushed and walls smashed

The perpetrator is an Atomic Superman in plainclothes (business suit). A hero in the vicinity could intercept the intruder, only to discover that the ordinary looking figure is endowed with super-strength and invulnerability. Its mission completed, the Atomic Superman defends itself but focuses on escaping. A collapsed ceiling (and GM's Fiat) could provide a convenient escape, leaving the hero with a mystery rather than a prolonged battle.

If the heroes arrive after the fact, a janitor reports seeing an ordinary looking man on the grounds who ignored demands to identify himself. Initial police investigation shows no motive for the attack, no signs of theft. Company authorities are cooperating but are equally perplexed—the lab was working on a low profile project that was soon to be cancelled because of its poor results.

The project, codenamed Halcyon, is actually a continuation of Dr Victor Marsden's original work on a Seismic Converter (see the **Origin of Dr Null**) but the team has been unable build a prototype that works. The designs were acquired in a merger so no one at this company is aware of the Dr Null connection.

This scene is an informative Red Herring. Investigation by the heroes or police could turn up the link to Dr Null and reveal his origin, but ultimately the attack on the lab does not shed light on Null's current plans. He destroyed the lab because he was bitter that others were "stealing" his work. The Seismic Converter will be become important later if you continue with **Death of Dr Null**.

You can also run the **Fury of the Fist** scenario from **Further Adventures with the Fist** as a separate short scenario to familiarize the heroes with the Neutron Fist before his first appearance in **Day of Dr Null**.

Curses, Foiled Again!

Despite his best laid mad plans, it is possible the heroes will capture or even kill Dr Null before the scenario runs its course. Here are a few ways to keep things going if that happens:

Duplicate Doctor—The Dr Null that the heroes captured or killed was really a decoy, a synthetic clone or an android duplicate intended to distract them while the real Dr Null was busy elsewhere.

Once In Motion It Cannot Be Stopped—Dr Null may be captured or dead but his plan lives on. Automated systems will carry out his programmed orders, oblivious to his absence.

Robot Rescue—Capturing Dr Null activates a contingency plan and awakens a buried horde of robotic minions. They home-in on his location and level any prison holding him. The simplest option is to have this attack occur off-screen, guaranteeing Dr Null's escape, or have the heroes show up in time to fight some of the stragglers still demolishing the prison after Dr Null has gone. Heroes might also be preoccupied with rounding up other criminals or supervillains who were freed inadvertently.

Use generic Colossal Robots from M&M Chapter 11, or use minions that have already made an appearance (such as Bugbots or automated Tripod Walkers from **Dr Null: Battle on the Bay Bridge**).

The Duplicate Doctor contingency has the least impact on the flow of the action—you can just proceed knowing that Dr Null is someplace else. The other options may change the flow of the game considerably, but not necessarily in a bad way. For example, the heroes capture Dr Null during the battle against the Atomic Supermen, but the clone army keeps fighting regardless (Once In Motion It Cannot Be Stopped). The heroes beat the synthetic armies and send Null to jail, thinking their job is done, but a few days later his robot minions level the prison and free him (Robot Rescue). Hot on his trail the heroes pursue him back to his hidden base and think they have him cornered, only to discover that they really grabbed an android decoy (Duplicate Doctor).

Avoid repeating any of these tricks or they may get old. Award Hero Points if you use these contingencies because the players did a good job against Dr Null.

Fist for a Day

The warehouse shadows can't hide the brilliant green light radiating from the newcomer's hands. "You said you had a way to cure me Null, make it so I could touch things like a normal man."

"Oh yes indeed, exactly that." At the flick of a switch a force field springs up, imprisoning the surprised Neutron Fist.

"A double-cross? You're not as smart as you think Null if you expect this to hold me for long."

"No, I don't believe it will. But I don't need very long."

The computer screens light up with spectrographic scans of the Fist's body. "Amazing. Your body has been super-saturated with almost limitless energy. It's wasted on you, but that's an injustice I intend to remedy."

"You wish to have a normal body again? Very well, you can have mine. A simple enough matter to transfer my consciousness into your body and vice-versa. With my immeasurable intellect in your omnipotent body, I will crush the world beneath my heel! You should thank me."

Dr Null has a peerless mind but a woefully powerless body, and while Dr Null normally puts himself on equal footing with his superhero-nemesi by conquering the world from the safety of his latest armored battlewagon or floating Destructo-Sphere, this time he wants to get his hands dirty. Well, not *his* hands.

The good doctor has contacted the fugitive Neutron Fist and promised that he has discovered a method to turn the Fist back into an ordinary man. The Neutron Fist has been lied to before by others who would exploit his powers, but his desperation for a cure is still stronger than his doubts.

Technically Dr Null is not lying. He does have the means to turn the Neutron Fist back into an ordinary person, just not the person he once was. Dr Null's real plan is to use his experimental mind transfer device to put his mind into the Neutron Fist's unstoppable body and vice versa. With the Fist's body he will have the power to lead his army of Atomic Supermen first hand as they conquer the world.

Or so Dr Null intends.

In the default version of this scenario a PC superhero accidentally swaps minds with the Neutron Fist instead of Dr Null. Trapped in a villain's body, the hero must race the clock to cross town and stop Dr Null's plan before it is unleashed on the city, all while resisting police and fellow superheroes who are convinced that the dangerous Neutron Fist is running loose in the heart of the city.

Who is the Neutron Fist?

The Neutron Fist is an unstoppable powerhouse, a once-ordinary hood named Gabe Hammond now cursed with hands permanently transformed into living energy. His punch can shatter tanks or pulverize granite, but Hammond can never fully stifle the power. Anything or anyone he touches is destroyed, making his power a curse that has ruined any chance he had for a normal life.

If Gabe Hammond had never gained superpowers he probably would have eventually given up the criminal life, gone straight and settled down somewhere. Or been a three-strike loser doing a long haul in the state penitentiary. Crime never paid for him, and he was never that good at it anyway, lacking the knack or real inclination to rise above being a low level hood. Now that everything he touch disintegrates, going back to a normal life just

isn't an option. Hammond knows that now he can never fit in, that society will never accept him no matter what he does.

The Fist is wanted more for the damage he has caused resisting arrest than for any of the crimes he committed intentionally, which are usually small-time heists unless he is teamed up with someone with grander schemes than Hammond can cook up. When you can't even carry your own loot, you have little choice except to trust other criminals.

Most law enforcement agencies list the Neutron Fist as a "maximum threat" criminal. His appearance rates a full mobilization of all local authorities, including military intervention where possible. A smarter tactic would be to back off and give the Fist an exit and wait to confront him in a less populated area, but most agencies do not relish the idea of just letting the Fist stroll around town.

In the end the Neutron Fist is a tragic figure, doomed to a life without so many of the things ordinary people take for granted. Hammond hides his real loneliness beneath a tough exterior. Heroes may be sympathetic to his plight, but there is no simple solution: years of being a fugitive and outcast, not to mention being manipulated and exploited by fellow criminals, have made him bitter and suspicious of any friendly overtures. It is a vicious cycle and for Gabe Hammond there is no escape.

Fist for a Day, Part 1 – Mind Swap

Enter the Heroes

Only one superhero should discover the warehouse where Dr Null and the Neutron Fist meet and arrive in time to interfere. This sets up the action for the next segment, **Race Against Time**. If necessary you can introduce a separate crisis off-screen to explain why other heroes are busy elsewhere (such as the scenes from **Setting the Stage**, a generic event like a fire or bank robbery, or an even more promising but ultimately fruitless lead on Dr Null if the heroes are already hunting him).

Following a lead—The hero could be investigating underworld rumors that hoods breaking into this warehouse the night before looking for an easy score were unexpectedly trounced and driven off by inhumanly strong guards (actually Atomic Supermen without radiation powers). It could be a tall tale, and the trail may be cold, but it could be worth investigating on a slow crime day. If the hero heard the events involving super-

strong agents in **Setting the Stage** she may suspect there is a connection between these incidents.

Patrol—The hero could be on patrol (or just passing by) and happen to spot a mysterious figure slipping into a warehouse. And was that a green glow emanating from under his trench coat? That's not normal. A quick check shows that the lock has not just been forced—the whole knob and some of the door around it has been vaporized.

This scene works best if the hero is unaware of just what he is getting into until it is too late. Most heroes who knew they were on the trail of either Dr Null or the Neutron Fist would call for reinforcements rather than go in solo.

Picking the Right Hero (GM Craft)

The success of this part of the scenario hinges on how the hero whose mind is transferred handles being the Neutron Fist. So how do you decide which of your heroes would make a good candidate?

A superhero who has weak or no powers is a more interesting choice than a hero with lots of powers or (worse still) powers that are tactically similar to the Fist's. A player with a "normal" hero who relies on her wits and a utility belt may enjoy the raw power of the Fist as a nice change of pace.

A character with bad diplomatic skills is a better choice than a deft negotiator, since that leaves more room for genre-appropriate misunderstanding between the heroes and the Hero-Fist.

The hero's personality will influence the tone of the scenario. An idealistic rookie hero may feel guilty about having to resist police and even fight off comrades, even while forced to do it for the greater good. A darker vigilante hero might not have the least qualm about using the Fist's powers to swat obstacles out of the way as an expedient means to an end, possibly leading to even more trouble.

Finally, some players will be more interested in this kind of challenge than others. You know your players and are in the best position to judge who will take this kind of roleplaying opportunity and run with it.

Action

The warehouse is a temporary lab Dr Null set up for his meeting with the Neutron Fist. It is brimming with a jumble of obscure devices, cabling, and looming computer screens. A number of boom arms extend down from the ceiling. One is the force field

projector that imprisons the Fist and others are projectors for the mind transfer machine.

The hero should arrive early enough to overhear the exchange between Dr Null and the Fist and recognize that Dr Null is about to gain an unstoppable body unless something is done. The Neutron Fist is momentarily trapped in the containment field so he will not affect the situation.

The results of this encounter are fairly scripted—the hero accidentally swaps minds with the Fist and learns enough of Dr Null's plan to know to race across town to try and stop him. Fortunately it is easy to GM's Fiat almost any action the hero takes to make this happen without stretching plausibility:

- If the hero attacks Dr Null, Null is knocked into a control panel which swivels the mind probe to point at the hero as the device goes off.
- If the hero attacks the mind transfer device intentionally it is damaged and releases a rampant energy discharge that engulfs the hero and causes the transfer. Any missed attack in the lab could accidentally strike the device and cause the same result.
- Even if the hero does nothing at all, the device could malfunction and explode, catching the (possibly still hidden) hero in the mind transfer beam instead of Dr Null. It would not be the first time one of the Doctor's new devices went kablooeey.

Don't let the scripted nature of this scene bother you—it is really just an introduction for the action in **Race Against Time**.

If you want to avoid spending too much game time with other players waiting for the solo hero, you could just narrate this scene instead. Start with the character waking up in the Fist's body, then do a short summary flashback: you were on patrol, followed a mysterious figure, heard Dr Null's speech, leapt to stop him when there was a flash of light. A narrated intro may also be preferable if you are not comfortable with a scene that appears free form but is really scripted.

Finale—The Threat

Regardless of how the procedure went, Dr Null's mind transfer machine burns out and is now a smoking ruins. Dr Null may have failed to get a powerful new body but his examination of the Neutron Fist has given him the last clue he needed to fine-tune his Atomic Supermen and give them greater power, information he intends to exploit.

If you do not want to have a PC superhero temporarily become the Fist there are more traditional ways to run this scenario:

Innocent Man—An innocent bystander or NPC hero interferes at the warehouse and gets mind swapped into the Fist's body instead. This good samaritan overheard Dr Null's plan and is rushing to the Civic Center to stop it, but of course the heroes do not know this. Skip the **Mind Swap** scene and run the **Race Against Time** as written.

The Fist is the Fist—The mind transfer failed, but Dr Null escaped before the Fist could get his hands on him. Now the Fist is on his way to the Civic Center hoping to meet up with Null and get some payback. He is not looking for trouble but will flatten anyone getting in his way.

Dr Null in Fist's body—Success! Dr Null's mind is in the Fist's body. In his exuberance he accidentally destroys the controls of his transportation with his disintegrating touch and is forced to hurry to the Civic Center on foot to get there in time for his own invasion. Null will revel in his new power, slapping around any heroes who try to stop him. In the meantime the Fist will be in Null's body back at the warehouse. The heroes might well arrive there first and apprehend the oddly behaving Dr Null.

Both the Fist (now in the hero's body) and the hero (now in the Fist's body inside the containment force field) are temporarily disoriented by the mind swap, leaving Dr Null with an opportunity to make his escape, but not before delivering a parting shot:

"You may have stopped me from taking this body, but my examination has already shown me everything I needed to know. Look!"

One of the looming computer screens flickers and displays a recognizable schematic of downtown. Three glowing vectors are moving in from opposite sides of the screen closing in on a pulsing circle that marks the Civic Center, a large park in the middle of the city. Digital timers follow each of the moving lines, their counters synchronized and ticking downward.

Whatever the mysterious markers represent will reach the Civic Center in just fifteen minutes!

"Even now the noose is tightening, the clock ticking down to destiny! The whole city will pay for your interference and there is nothing you can do to stop it in time!"

With that Dr Null dashes out of the room. Moments later the ground trembles briefly then settles. Pursuing Null is a dead end—he has already fled in his subterranean Cyclotron, parked in the basement.

Aftermath

If the Hero-Fist (the hero in the Fist's body) attacks the containment force field it will collapse. It is already weakened by damage to the systems in the room.

The Hero-Fist may try to get more information about Dr Null's plan out of the computer consoles, but touching a keypad disintegrates it so that is another dead end. The same goes for using a communicator, using a pay phone, etc. There is no easy way to get more information or call for help.

The craftiest player you ever met will conclude that the Neutron Fist's costume does not disintegrate when he touches it, so he will peel off a section and hold that between the keypad and his typing hand. Give that genius a Hero Point for ingenuity then break the bad news that the Fist's bodysuit does disintegrate but reforms (see the description of the Neutron Fist).

If the Neutron Fist (now in the hero's body) is conscious, he looks at "his" hands in amazement and then runs out of the warehouse before the force field collapses, shouting for joy. He is so relieved to be normal again that it has not sunk in that he is not in his own

body. He is likely to run around town, shaking the hands of total strangers and lifting a glass high at a random bar. Hammond is basically a normal guy, and right now he could not be happier. Onlookers may recognize the costume / body of the hero and wonder just what has gotten into him.

An alternative is to have the Neutron Fist in the hero's body knocked unconscious by the transfer. The downside is that the hero may be distracted by the presence of his own body and waste time trying to figure out if there is a way to switch back, move the body someplace safe or even try to carry it along (a difficult feat with a disintegrating touch—even a supposedly invulnerable body will suffer in the Fist's grip).

Fist for a Day, Part 2—Race Against Time

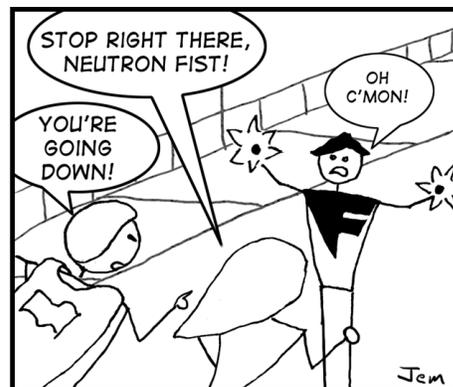
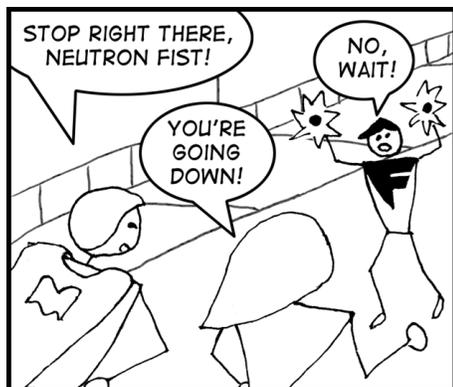
The hero trapped in the Neutron Fist's body (or Hero-Fist for short) knows that Dr Null is about to unleash some new menace on the city. The hero's got less than fifteen minutes to get to the Civic Center, a large park in the middle of downtown, to warn people or to find some help. Unfortunately most people are more likely to run to find some help of their own when they see the Neutron Fist coming. Even the hero's own superhero allies are likely to attack a rampaging supervillain on sight, forcing the mind swapped hero to run the gauntlet or try to persuade a disbelieving world that you cannot judge a book by its cover.

Hero-Fist's Abilities

The hero in the Fist's body has all the physical abilities of the Neutron Fist combined with his own mental abilities. If the hero has mental powers that could prove too useful you can consider them temporarily nullified by the mind swap.

Use the hero's Int, Wis and Cha, all skills based on those ability scores, and the hero's Will save. Everything else is as it is shown on the Neutron Fist's character sheet (powers, attack and defense, etc.). Use your judgment to decide whether Feats the hero had should be usable by the Hero-Fist. Feats that reflect physical training may be unusable in the unfamiliar new body.

Just as the hero does not know the real capabilities of this new body, the player should not know the Neutron Fist's stats or be able to easily control his powers. The Hero-Fist literally does not know his own strength. Likewise the player does not know how tough the Fist's body is, making it hard to opt to just weather attacks. If the Hero-Fist is knocked unconscious who will warn anyone about Dr Null's plan?



Enter the Heroes

When the Fist is spotted on the city streets police will issue an All Points Bulletin and alerts will be sent to other authorities as well. If the heroes have any means of being contacted they will be called. Any police radio the heroes intercept will be filled with panicked voices that make it sound like the Fist is on a rampage even if he has not done anything yet. Heroes just wandering the rooftops or going about their business in secret identity will be drawn to the rising sound of sirens.

The Neutron Fist is a well-known supervillain, so the heroes should immediately recognize his name and know that his presence on the city streets spells big trouble. If you need an anecdote to give the heroes some idea who they are dealing with, assume the **Fury of the Fist** scenario from **Further Adventures with the Fist** already happened (without the heroes) and describe the Fist leveling a prison single-handedly.

Heroes should arrive just as the Neutron Fist is doing something incriminating, like lumbering towards the line of police that are blocking his path and firing, desperately radioing for backup. Of course the Hero-Fist has no intention of harming them, but it won't look like that to anyone else. Let the Hero-Fist play his part, then pick a moment that seems right for the other heroes to arrive.

If your heroes arrive separately (even a round or two apart) consider having the most aggressive hero or the one the Hero-Fist likes the least arrive first. That makes talk even less likely.

Action

The general phases of the action are a) Hero-Fist tries to cross town and is accosted by police, b) other superheroes arrive and fight the Fist, c) misunderstanding is revealed and all heroes proceed to the Civic Center. There are no major NPC enemies in this scene just the player characters, so the pacing will largely

Stacking the Deck (GM Craft)

Fights based on misunderstandings between characters who should be allies is a classic staple of the superhero genre, probably more than other genres because superhero combat is basically non-lethal—you can knock someone up and down the block, eventually recognize your mistake then help them up and dust them off and all is well. In this scenario you want to encourage your players to take advantage of that shtick and have fun with it.

Players who were present during the **Mind Swap** scene will know that the so-called Neutron Fist is really being controlled by a superhero. You are not trying to trick the players. Tell them that the mistaken identity fight is the point of the encounter. There is a difference between what the players and their characters know, and in this case the players have the opportunity to play up that difference and beat each other up for a while. You can even encourage them to compete to see how long they can avoid having their characters figure out what is going on.

Even if the heroes intend to play along they may wind up unintentionally defusing the action and just talking it out prematurely, spoiling the fun. By making sure the conditions are right you can make it easier for the players to play along. Here are some things you can emphasize to stack the deck in favor of conflict, not reconciliation:

Time Is Short—The Hero-Fist can't afford to stand around and explain himself—even if he runs all the way to the Civic Center it's going to be close. It would be wiser to keep a low profile by sticking to backstreets, sneaking through sewers, etc. but there simply isn't time. If the Hero-Fist lets himself be knocked out or captured who knows how long it will be before he recovers or anyone listens to him.

Look Ma, No Hands—Anything the Neutron Fist's hands touch is probably destroyed. That means no driving, no phone calls, etc. Anyone asked to help (cab drivers, etc.) will probably be too terrified of the notorious Neutron Fist to do so. Walking is the only obvious mode of transport and there is no way to call for help.

First Responders—The police who first cross paths with the Neutron Fist will be too scared to even consider negotiating. Even if the Fist surrenders peacefully they will be too panicked to listen to a word he says until he is locked behind very very thick walls. The Hero-Fist may try to surrender anyway, but it should quickly become clear it is going nowhere fast and the clock is ticking. If the Fist does anything other than surrender, even just trying to walk past them, they will open fire, so the first thing arriving heroes will see is the police apparently defending themselves. You could also have a known NPC superhero arrive before the PC superheroes and have that hero attack rather than negotiate, forcing the Hero-Fist to fight back. If the PC heroes arrive to a fight already underway they are more likely to join the fight rather than negotiate.

Clouded Mind—The mind swap has temporarily clouded the Hero-Fist's mind, making it difficult or impossible to use mind reading powers, telepathy, etc. on him. The idea is not to nerf a valid power, but to prevent a power from taking the fun out of the scene. Heroes with mental powers who want to go along with the scene may have no way to ignore the obvious solution of just reading the Fist's mind unless you nullify the power. If mind reading helps the scene, let it work. If it doesn't, block it.

If you really think your heroes will not be interested in roleplaying this misunderstanding, try this option:

What Did He Say? (optional)—The mind swap has temporarily impaired the Hero-Fist's ability to communicate. Anything the Hero-Fist tries to say or write comes out as a confused mess—he can still think clearly, just not express himself. Heroes listening to the gibberish might think the Neutron Fist has gone insane, posing an even greater threat to the city. The language problem could wear off when it's dramatically appropriate, or the heroes might find a means to cure the Hero-Fist's ability to speak and write.

be in their hands. You can spice things up by throwing in innocent bystanders or aggressive police as needed.

The Hero-Fist is likely to head for the Civic Center, but there are other tactics that could be tried as well:

Hall of Justice—The Hero-Fist might also get the bright idea to go someplace else for help, like the superheroes' headquarters. The results are likely to be the same as soon as the Fist is seen on the streets.

Follow the Leader—Unable to convince the police or heroes that he is a really a good guy, the Hero-Fist instead tries to lead them to where the real trouble is. The Hero-Fist flees towards the Civic Center as best he can, but is unlikely to be able to outrun most superheroes.

All Talk, No Action

Is the scene losing steam? Are the heroes talking instead of fighting and it's getting boring? Have the mind transfer wear off. The Neutron Fist is suddenly himself again. His brief hope of being normal has evaporated and he is very very angry. He wants to get his hands on Dr Null and he will level anything or anyone in his way. The Fist probably does not know about the Civic Center but bold heroes may inform him that he can find Null there.

The superhero who was just the Fist is now back in his own body somewhere in the city, hopefully racing to the scene to join the other heroes or possibly going straight to the Civic Center.

Bystanders

police (M&M Chapter 11)

civilians (M&M Chapter 11)

Finale

The action stops when the heroes recognize that the Neutron Fist is not who they expected and discussion ensues. If the heroes are going along with the comic book genre and intentionally fighting over a misunderstanding, what lets them switch back? The players might have a hard time seeing a reason to suddenly talk when they have been intentionally misconstruing the situation.

Deeds Not Words—The most dramatically appropriate way for the Hero-Fist's true character to be revealed is by heroic action. If the fight has gone on for a while and you need an ending, give the Hero-Fist an opportunity to do something heroic. The Hero-Fist is being battered from all sides, but sees a wall about to collapse on a nearby paramedic and rushes to shield her. Make sure only the Hero-Fist sees the problem in time to act.

That's what I've been trying to tell you—The fight could also be ended by the distant sound of chaos erupting at the Civic Center. Everyone cocks an ear and in the lull the Hero-Fist might get to explain himself.

Aftermath

The heroes will probably proceed straight to the Civic Center. Whether they arrive to a peaceful day in the park or a war zone depends on how long the action went.



Attack of the Atomic Supermen

It is a beautiful afternoon in the park. The sun is shining and most of the lunchtime crowd has lazily drifted back to work, leaving a lucky few to sprawl in the grass, throw frisbees to excitable dogs, or just lounge on a park bench and pretend to read the newspaper.

Heads turn as a low rumble echoes across the park. It could be an unseen plane or a truck passing nearby, but instead of fading away the sound steadily grows until the ground starts to tremble, trees shuddering and water churning in the pond. People flee in terror as dirt sprays into the air and the spinning iron teeth of a massive circular drill erupt out of the ground. The machine rises until it towers over the park like a monstrous metal monument. In the distance a second machine emerges, and then a third, spread across the park in a triangle two hundred yards apart.

The spinning teeth crowning the drilling machines have barely begun to slow when boarding ramps drop down and a horde of uniformed super-soldiers surge out of the dark interior, scores and scores of them charging out of the park and fanning out into the surrounding downtown streets.

Bystanders look on in amazement as a single leap carries one of the super-men half a city block, smashing a crater in the asphalt where he lands. Nearby a truck unwittingly barrels down on a super-soldier rushing across the street bordering the park before the figure turns and demolishes the front end of the truck with a single punch. Another rips a tree up by its roots and hurls it towards a fleeing clump of pedestrians.

Dr Null's attack on the city has begun!

Bitter at a society that has scorned him, Dr Null has created a race of Atomic Supermen to be his unquestioning soldiers. With this unstoppable army he intends to crush first the city and then the world.

The Atomic Supermen are synthetic clones endowed with inhuman strength, and thanks to the latest data collected from the Neutron Fist, deadly radiation. In addition to being brainwashed with absolute loyalty to Dr Null the Atomic Supermen have a microchip implanted in their brains to keep them in constant communication with Dr Null's computers, enabling them to fight with an unnatural coordination and unity.

Dr Null's army is packed into three Subterranean Bore Carriers, each tunneling towards downtown from a different direction. Their destination is the Civic Center, a municipal park in the very heart of the city and the perfect beachhead for their attack. The three massive transports erupt out of the ground, towering over the once tranquil park, and then drop landing ramps so Dr Null's invasion force can storm out.

The war for the city has begun.

The Civic Center

The Civic Center is a large urban park in the middle of downtown, providing a recreational green space for city dwellers and a pleasant relief from the hustle and bustle of the big city. The park is a rectangle several city blocks on a side, with ample grassy fields, pathways winding through shady forest patches, and trickling streams flowing into a small lake. There is a baseball diamond, a soccer field, and a cluster of pavilions and park buildings around a central fountain where paths entering from different sides of the Civic Center all meet.

You can replace the Civic Center with a similar area in the city of your choice. The action starts in the Civic Center, but rapidly expands into the city beyond.

Revelations

Key plot revelations are outlined here so you can highlight them during play. They are listed in the order they will probably occur.

An important revelation should be a critical point in the game, changing players' perceptions of the situation and possibly their response.

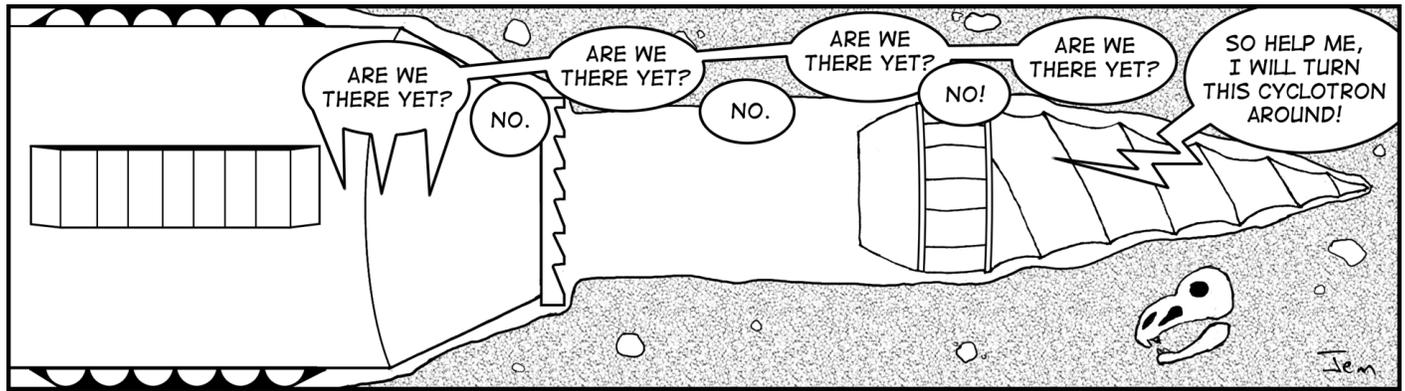
1) **Atomic Supermen are radioactive** (optional revelation)—Only applicable if heroes heard about Dr Null's Supermen when they were just strong and invulnerable. Make the revelation a dramatic moment—all the Supermen stand still, and then all their eyes start to glow green. Because no situation can't be made worse with science.

2) **Atomic Supermen look alike**—Their blandly similar features should tip off the heroes that the Atomic Supermen are clones or genetically engineered creations, not individuals. Not a big surprise, but it does sets the stage for later revelations.

3) **Atomic Supermen fight with uncanny teamwork**—Using team tactics in close combat is not unusual, but when Supermen hundreds of yards apart stop what they are doing, turn, and then simultaneously blast a single target, the heroes should wonder whether the clones have some communication link or central control. Players may dismiss this "telepathic link" out of hand as a side effect of them being clones.

4) **Atomic Supermen are destroyed when they are knocked unconscious**—Demonstrates that the Atomic Supermen are not actually super-powered human clones, but a synthetic chemical imitation of a human life. This removes any moral quandaries against destroying the Supermen to protect the city.

5) **Bore Carriers control Atomic Supermen** (optional revelation)—It is up to the heroes to figure this out. If the heroes do not discover this on their own you can opt to have Army signal corps radiomen or a helpful scientist pick up strange interference and give the heroes a hint. Heroes can then try to interfere with the signal to break up the attack.



6) **Atomic Supermen melt down** (optional plot device)—A flaw in the Atomic Supermen's radiation powers causes them to stop freeze up and shut down, ending the menace entirely.

Enter the Heroes

If you are continuing from **Fist for a Day** the heroes are probably already racing to the Civic Center. If the heroes were reasonably enthusiastic about getting here quickly they should arrive before the carriers surface. They will probably search the park for clues of Dr Null's plan (finding nothing) and hopefully warn civilians to evacuate the area. Award Hero Points for thinking to evacuate the civilians even if they do not know what is about to happen.

It is more dramatic and fun to have the heroes witness the titanic carriers erupting out of the ground. It lets them be surprised by events as they happen just like all the innocent bystanders. It puts the heroes in the moment, making them participants not observers.

If you need to introduce heroes who were not in **Fist for a Day** they could be in the area in their secret identity (perhaps taking a well needed lunch break in the park while worrying how they will finish the overdue Henderson Report) and need to slip off and change into their tights when the invasion starts beneath their very nose.

If the heroes are substantially delayed or get caught up interrogating the mind swapped Neutron Fist, their debates might be interrupted by a faint tremor and then the distant sound of chaos at the Civic Center. They are too late, the attack has already begun!

Villains Present

several hundred Atomic Supermen

three stationary Subterranean Bore Carriers

Cyclotron piloted by Dr Null (late arrival)

Neutron Fist (initially mind swapped)

Action

Each Bore Carrier holds about a hundred Atomic Supermen, but you can increase this number if you want to increase the threat. Each group will immediately move out in opposite directions, a three pronged attack rampaging through downtown. Thirty

or so will remain behind in the Civic Center to protect the Bore Carriers.

The Bore Carriers surface in sight of each other but fairly far apart—each is about two hundred yards from the others, making it harder for heroes to engage all the Atomic Supermen as they arrive. Even if the heroes attack the Atomic Supermen when they first arrive, they are unlikely to prevent them from expanding into the city. If attacked some clones will battle the heroes while the majority continue with their mission, rapidly spreading out with superhuman leaps.

Avoid the Map Trap (GM Craft)

You might be tempted to just put three hundred counters down on the table and let the heroes slug it out. Don't. It's the obvious solution, but it won't make the game very superheroic. Instead break the conflict into smaller action scenes that the heroes can tackle before racing to the next hotspot. The battle is spread across the city with at least three different fronts and those fronts are potentially divided across different streets as the Atomic Supermen advance outward.

The **Battle Tracker** is your bird's eye view of the battle. The heroes may be knee-deep in the action and have a hard time keeping track of the conflict as a whole but you should not. You can use it to note how the defenders are arrayed, what landmarks are near each battle, and how much damage the attackers are taking.

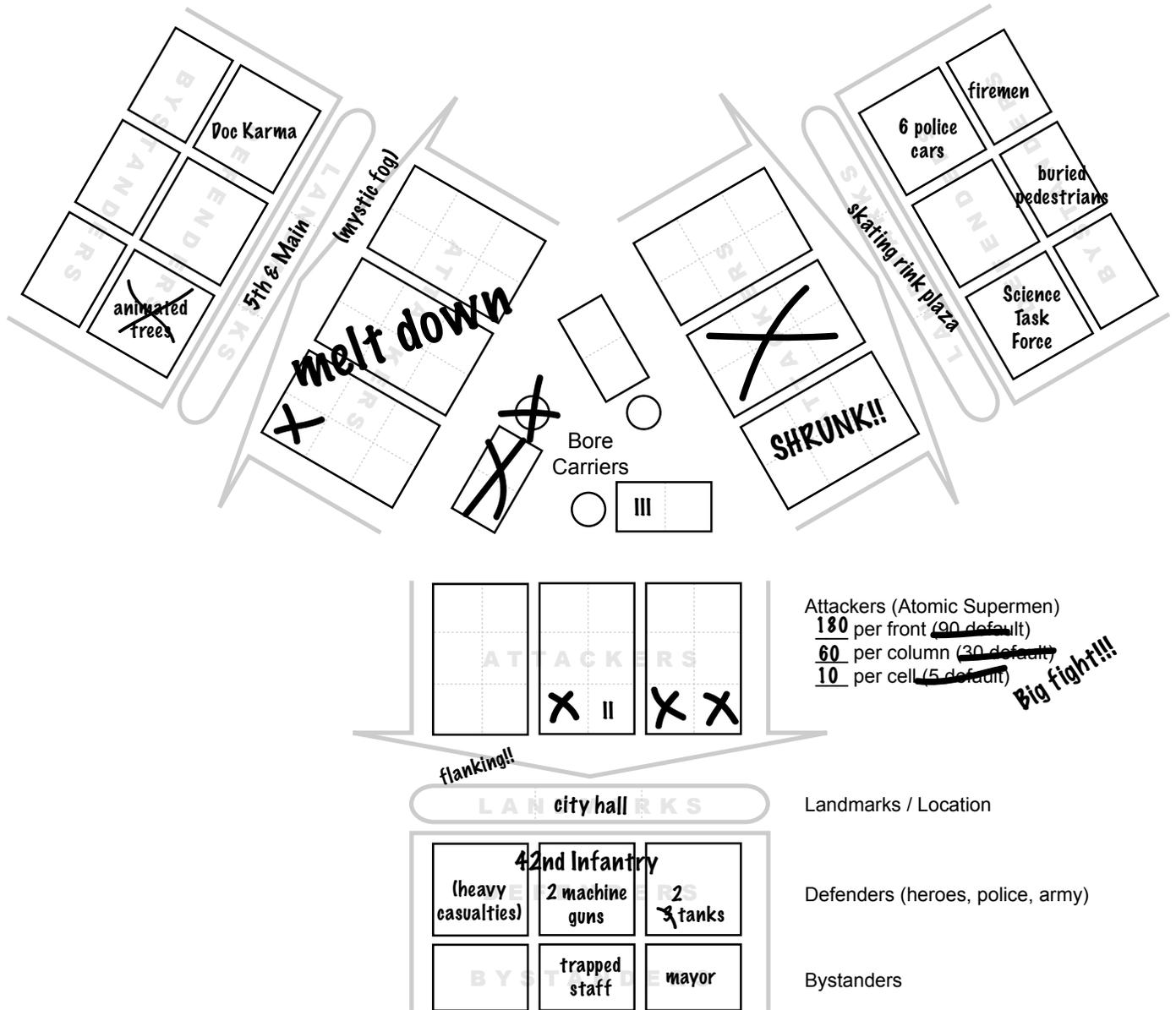
War for the City

This battle can be a straight forward free-for-all in the middle of downtown or it can be an epic battle to defend the city from total destruction. Since the Atomic Supermen split up and attack in three different directions the heroes may be hard pressed to control all three fronts at once. You can call in the police, the National Guard, and every NPC superhero in the city and still have plenty left over for the PC superheroes.

If you want to force the heroes to think their way out, you can increase the number of Atomic Supermen in each Bore Carrier to make winning by brute force virtually impossible (see **Finale—Stopping the Atomic Supermen**). You can also add more Atomic Supermen to balance out powerful NPC superheroes you want to have show up to help the defense.

Battle Tracker-Example

Day of Dr Null, Attack of the Atomic Supermen



The **Battle Tracker** is an abstract schematic of the **Attack of the Atomic Supermen**. You can jot notes on it to keep track of what is going on all the fronts of the fighting. There is no right or wrong way to use the Battle Tracker—the best approach is whatever makes the most sense to you. A demo Battle Tracker that has been marked up is included as an example, but you might use yours quite differently.

For characters that will move from around a lot like the PC heroes, use chips or other small markers to note where they are. You could write on the Battle Tracker but you will have to keep erasing.

Fill in the blanks under Attackers to show how many Atomic Supermen each unit represents. By default there are 90 Supermen per front, 30 Supermen in each column, and each column is divided into six cells of 5 Supermen each. Except for the three fronts, these divisions do not represent actual formations or units. It's just an easy way to keep track of the attackers.

Circles represent Bore Carriers in the Civic Center. The boxes next to each one are the Atomic Supermen left behind to protect them (same cell size as above). They are close enough to all fight together if one Carrier is threatened.

Send in the troops

Normally the military is too ponderous to respond effectively to supervillain threats, but against a sustained assault like the Atomic Supermen the Army will eventually join the fray. The military may already be partially mobilized because they were alerted about the Neutron Fist in **Fist for a Day**, reducing their normal response time.

Even though they may not be as powerful as a single hero, the sight of tanks rolling down Fifth Avenue can have a powerful dramatic effect. It shows that the stakes are high, that this is not your average supervillain battle—the entire city is at risk.

The military will mostly serve to slow down the Atomic Supermen or possibly fight them to a stand-still, not repulse them. Standard infantry weapons cannot harm Dr Null's creations, but that will not stop the soldiers from fighting doggedly until tanks and heavy machine guns can be brought to bear.

soldiers (M&M Chapter 11, most are armed with assault rifles and grenades which cannot affect Atomic Supermen, a few squads man heavy machine guns (8 damage autofire) or carry anti-tank rockets (10 damage explosion))

tanks (M&M Chapter 7)

Legally-minded GMs will note that while the governor can call in the National Guard, in the United States the Army cannot be called in without a declaration of martial law.

Calling all heroes

An epic battle deserves an epic cast. The threat of the Atomic Supermen is widespread enough that you can have other caped crusaders join in the battle without upstaging or even directly assisting the heroes in combat. Street vigilantes fighting side-by-side with high-flying super patriots because the city needs them! Even classic superheroes from the past could be drawn out of retirement for one last battle.

The presence of NPC superheroes could be kept strictly in the background, as they fight their own battles to contain the menace, or you could take the opposite approach and let the PCs split up to join forces with different NPC superhero teams. For a real change of pace, mix PC heroes with NPCs and let the players whose main characters aren't in each scene run their favorite NPC superheroes.

If you do include NPC superheroes make sure it is still the PCs who decide the battle. Even if the NPC heroes are more powerful and crush more Atomic Supermen, it should be the PCs who figure things out and truly decide the conflict. It is okay to overwhelm the PCs, but not to overshadow them.

Hold the line!

The heroes could concentrate on just one group of the Atomic Supermen while NPC forces (police, military, or superheroes) confront the others, or the heroes could jump from hotspot to hotspot, helping the defenders push back the invaders where ever they start to break through. Jumping from spot to spot helps you break the action into a series of smaller encounters instead of one titanic knock-down-drag-out fight. Unless they can be two

places at once, heroes may be faced with tough decisions of who to help and who to let fend for themselves.

Protect the Innocent

A fighter defeats the enemy, but a hero defends the innocent. Do not let the heroes get so caught up in the battle that they forget what they are fighting to protect. Describe specific threats to people to give the heroes concrete opportunities to intervene.

- A businessman trapped in a doorway cowers as the Atomic Supermen approach, futilely trying to shield himself with his briefcase.
- A stray radiation beam melts the front tires of a taxi racing away from the fighting. The driver wrenches at the wheel desperately but the car slews towards the sidewalk and a knot of fleeing civilians.
- Two police officers crouch behind their patrol car and fire at an Atomic Supermen approaching them. Bullets bounce off the inhuman soldier as he strides forward and simply lifts the car over his head and prepares to bring it crashing down again on the scrambling officers.

Rescuing one or two people at a time might seem like small potatoes when the entire city is in danger, but these distinct vignettes will give the heroes a lasting sense that they did some good, and give them a personal connection with the people they are helping. One person's sincere thanks can be worth more than the vague sense that the whole city appreciates you. **Dr Null: Battle on the Bay Bridge** has more information about keeping the focus on the people the heroes are trying to protect.

Chasing Dr Null

"You thought you had stopped me? Who needs one Neutron Fist when I can create hundreds of Atomic Supermen, all absolute in their loyalty to me!"

"Examining the Neutron Fist showed me exactly what I needed to know to fine tune my creations. My new Atomic Supermen are unstoppable. You, on the other hand, are not."

"Oh you may defeat a handful with your desperate heroics, but can you be everywhere at once? No, I didn't think so. But I will enjoy watching you try."

Dr Null is a late arrival to the battle, doubtless delayed after his plans to transfer his mind into the Neutron Fist were unexpectedly foiled. He watches the conflict from the bridge of his Cyclotron, carving a path of destruction as he zigs and zags across the battlefield to catch the good bits. He is mostly here to observe and gloat, leaving the fighting to his clone army, but he cannot resist snapping a barrage of lightning at any hero who challenges him.

The Cyclotron should first appear on the battlefield after the heroes have had a chance to mix it up a bit with the Atomic Supermen. They may spot the crackling electrical field as he zips by several blocks away.

Heroes will almost certainly try to tackle Null, hoping that doing so will stop the attacks. The Cyclotron presents a moving target, burrowing into the ground if pressed only to pop up later on some other front of the battle. Anyone posing too much of a threat to

Keeping It Moving (GM Craft)

Some heroes will balk at tackling this many opponents, preferring to sit back and find the “silver bullet” that will solve the problem. That’s a good way to finish the scene, but at the start make sure the heroes see that there are many people who need their help **now**. They can’t afford to just sit around and plan, they need to get in there and act.

A good action scene paints with a broad brush, but then zooms in and focuses on select specifics. Details make the scene feel real to the players. Landmarks, place names, and even military unit designations lend reality to the situation, not to mention keeping one fight from being just the same as the next. Saying “good job, you eliminated 20 Atomic Supermen from group B, but another section of group B is nearby” is not as good as:

A police officer looks up from his radio and shouts “They need help over by the Opera House! The 32nd out of Fort Myers is getting hammered, their tanks are out of commission and we’ve got people trapped in the subway under the fighting. Get a move on heroes!”

If you scribble those details on the Battle Tracker as you go, you can easily refer to them again later and not get mixed up. Here are some other tips for keeping things moving:

- Because the heroes are likely to fixate on Dr Null, you can use the Cyclotron to move the action. As Dr Null buzzes down city streets, carving up asphalt as he goes, the heroes are likely to stay in close pursuit. Use that to draw them to new hotspots where the fighting is thick and civilians need their help. While the heroes are busy Null may skitter away, forcing the heroes to hunt him down again on the battlefield after they solve the problems in front of them.
- Splitting up the heroes often makes sense logically but can slow down play. If you want to discourage splitting up present the heroes with one major trouble area at a time (such as the Opera House example given above).
- Summarize side battles so you can focus on interesting scenes. A simple rule of thumb is to assume the heroes take two bruises to defeat five Atomic Supermen, spread equally between the heroes in the fight.
- Keep the action dynamic and do not get bogged down trying to account for every single Atomic Supermen. If the heroes seem to have defeated most of the clones in one battle, wrap it up and draw them into the next hot spot.

Null will find themselves on the receiving end of synchronized attacks by the nearest dozen Atomic Supermen determined to protect their creator.

Dr Null may flee the field entirely if his Cyclotron is damaged or the heroes harass him too persistently. He is confident his Atomic Supermen will carry the day so he intends to return later after they have flattened the opposition. The clones carry out their attack whether Dr Null is present or not.

What about the Neutron Fist?

If you are continuing from **Fist for a Day**, one of the heroes may still be trapped inside the Neutron Fist’s body. Dr Null intended the transfer to be permanent, but flaws in his design could cause them to change back to normal whenever it is the most entertaining for the adventure. The hero in the Neutron Fist’s body could be on the verge of using his raw power to neatly smash the Bore Carriers when suddenly there is very disoriented Fist there instead.

When the Neutron Fist does return to his own body, he will be very very mad at Dr Null and the world in general, not just because of Null’s betrayal but because his brief hope of being normal again has been yanked out from under him.

The Neutron Fist might chase Null’s Cyclotron around the battlefield but he is unlikely to come to grips with it—the Cyclotron is quick and Null is far too aware of the Fist’s power to make himself an easy target. That won’t stop the Fist from trying, swatting aside heroes, tanks or Atomic Supermen alike if they get in his way.

Clever heroes will look for a way to exploit the power of the Neutron Fist, tricking or persuading him to fight on their side. It’s

a dangerous game, since the Fist has already been fooled once today and is in a very bad mood.

The hero who was in the Fist’s body will of course awaken wherever the Fist was. If you opted to have the Fist struck unconscious by the mind transfer, the hero could still be back at the warehouse. The hero could even remain unconscious and then awaken later a prisoner of Dr Null, captured after Null doubled back to the warehouse to clean up loose ends.

Action Shticks

Falling Debris

Buildings are the common backdrop for city battles, so most attacks that miss their target will hit a building sooner or later, potentially showering the street below with falling debris. Depending on their abilities heroes can try to evacuate bystanders from the area or shield them from the debris.

The damage inflicted is determined by the damage to the building and its composition. A glancing blast that knocks loose a spray of bricks or broken glass is light debris, while a collapsing facade of a substantial building would be heavy debris. Massive debris should be saved for when an entire building falls over into the street. As a rule of thumb, the damage of the attack that knocks the debris loose should be at least as great as the damage the falling debris will cause. Victims also run the risk of being pinned under the falling rock and girders.

Pick size of Debris with damage that is equal to or less than damage of attack that hit building, adjusted upwards if building was already damaged or is fragile.

Light Debris—damage 6 area explosion

Heavy Debris—damage 10 area explosion, linked Snare 6

Massive Debris—damage 14 area explosion, linked Snare 10

Debris hits one round after it starts falling (increase if desired). Make a single Reflex save versus the area damage and Snare. You can also opt to have a dust cloud (Obscure) fill the same area that the debris hit for several rounds thereafter.

Initiative Variant: Instead of having debris hit in one round, have heroes roll Initiative versus the falling debris (Init - 4) to be able to take an action before it hits. Hero Points can be used to re-roll and act faster. Civilians might not perceive the threat or be able to move fast enough to save themselves.

Go Fetch

Super-strong opponents can hurl large objects into the air—where they come down, no one knows. Someone might have just missed their intended target, or they may lob things into the distance just to make the heroes sweat. Either way the heroes better do something before the projectile comes down again on top of some unsuspecting bystander. Particularly mean-spirited villains will lob objects one after the other, sending the heroes scurrying back and forth trying to intercept each one before it hits but always one step behind, an evil game of ‘go fetch.’ Cars, cargo containers, train cars, etc. are all excellent candidates. Extra credit for dangerous objects like gasoline tanker trunks. An alternative solution for heroes is to blast the objects to destroy or deflect them before they hit (the Skeet variant).

DC 15 power check for Flight or Speed to reach the object before it hits (+0 on the roll if the hero has no movement powers). Teleport succeeds automatically if in range. Normally it is full round move to reach the object, followed by an attack or grab next round. Success by 10 or more means the hero reached the object with a move action and can still act this round. Heroes can Extra Effort Surge to increase their check by +5 even after the roll.

Str check +2 versus thrower’s Str check to catch hurled object (bonus because catcher can match speeds, brace themselves, etc. to absorb the momentum)

To destroy object in flight damage to object must disable it (Toughness save failed by 10 or more) or make a power level check versus throwers Str +2 to deflect it.

You can also use appropriate Action Shticks from *Dr Null: Battle on the Bay Bridge* (Trapped Commuters, Danger: Flammable, Quick Dry Cement) and *Zodiac Ring* (Burning Down the House, train shticks if you want to include an elevated rail).

Action Shticks are classic challenges or situations that go with a particular environment. They are dramatic moments or events that fit the setting regardless of the specific plot of the scene. Another way to look at a shtick is a mini-encounter within the main encounter, a smaller challenge for the heroes to overcome before they tackle the main challenge.

Action Shticks should be interactive, giving the heroes a chance to make choices. They are situations, not just combat maneuvers. A good Action Shtick should reinforce the genre and let the heroes really act like heroes from a comic book. All shticks are optional and can be inserted in the scene as you see fit.

Because the Action Shticks listed here are intentionally typical, you can use them in other scenes set in a similar environment. Even if the heroes don’t have to deal collapsing building in this scene you can use the same Action Shtick to spice up some other encounter.

Finale—Stopping the Atomic Supermen

If you want to give the heroes a chance to win with brains not brawn you can include any of the “fatal flaws” below. A weakness in Dr Null’s designs may let the heroes turn the tables and save the day or just give them the edge they need to make the fight easier. If there are no scientists among the superheroes, they might call on the aid of a kindly NPC. The scientist may create a device, but make sure it is the PC heroes who have to risk their hides to use the thing.

Any situation where the heroes use science to solve a problem is a blend of rules and dramatic plot device so do not get too hung up on details. Rules are included to show how the heroes or their lab-coated allies could invent devices to save the day, but these are only examples not the only possible solutions. It is pseudo-science, so if it sounds good go with it and let them make a roll. The players may come up any number of creative ways to exploit a flaw once they know it is a possibility.

A failed roll does not have to mean there is no hope, it might just mean the players have to go to greater lengths to make the plan work. The jury-rigged atomic dampener fails to work from a distance, but if the heroes could just fly it into the very middle of the mob of radioactive Supermen and trigger it...

Command & Control

The Bore Carriers act as command and control centers, processing communications between the Atomic Supermen and coordinating their attack plans. How much of an effect destroying the Carriers or blocking the signal has on the Atomic Supermen depends on how simple of a solution you want for the scenario:

No Teamwork (trivial)—Breaks up communication between the Atomic Supermen preventing teamwork and coordinated attacks, but they continue fighting according to their original plan. It may be easier now, but the Atomic Supermen must still be defeated in combat.

Going Solo (minor)—Atomic Supermen act independently instead of as a group. They still follow the standing order to attack, but they advance in random directions, fail to assist each other, and some may even double-back on their original path.

Out of Control (major)—Atomic Supermen are disoriented and act randomly. They may attack each other or random targets around them, wander aimlessly, or simply stand still awaiting orders. They can still cause considerable damage, but their erratic behavior makes them easier to defeat. They may eventually destroy each other if left alone.

Confuse power with no save. Treat “Attack the user of the Confuse power” as attack other Atomic Supermen and replace “Flee” with move in a random direction. Since a Confused character automatically attacks its attacker, once Atomic Supermen start fighting each other they are likely to continue until one side is destroyed.

Shut Down (total solution)—Without instructions from the central processors the Atomic Supermen stand inert awaiting orders. They will not retaliate even if they are attacked—the chip in their brain overrides any normal animal intelligence or self-preservation. Before long they will start to shut down entirely, freezing in place and then dying just as though they had been rendered unconscious.

Each Carrier controls the Supermen that emerged from it, so destroying a single Carrier will only affect one-third of the clones.

You can choose one result for the brute force approach of destroying the Carrier or blocking the signal, but use the next better result if the heroes do something more creative like scrambling or tampering with the command signal instead of just blocking it (for example, destroying the signal causes Going Solo but careful tampering can cause Out of Control).

Sample Solution: Knowledge-Technology DC 25 to identify the signal. A device to block the signal costs 15 pp, while a device to tamper with the signal costs 20 pp. They can be made with Inventor, Gadgets or even a technological Device switched to an Alternate Power.

The hull of a Carrier is extremely thick and damage resistant, but getting inside and attacking from within can circumvent most of those defenses. Once you get past the Atomic Supermen guarding the door...

Melt Down

If you do not relish the idea of the heroes chasing down every last Atomic Superman, you can include a fatal flaw in Dr Null’s designs. The last minute metabolic changes Dr Null introduced in the synthetic clones to give them the ability to emit radiation are not as stable as he thought. In the middle of the action the Atomic Supermen will malfunction. Their radiation fields will suddenly fade and they will become sluggish and then freeze in place as their chemical systems shut down entirely.

Slowed for two rounds, then completely inert.

Or you could have the melt down occur only if the flaw is detected and exploited by the heroes. Scientific heroes could examine an Atomic Superman and devise an atomic dampener field (or some such thing), or intentionally introduce a flawed instruction in the command signal from the Bore Carriers that sabotages the clones’ metabolisms.

Sample Solution: Knowledge-Life Sciences or Knowledge-Physical Sciences DC 25 to identify existence of flaw after close examination of an Atomic Superman. A device to activate the flaw costs 25 pp and can be made with Inventor, Gadgets or even a technological Device switched to an Alternate Power.

If the melt down occurs by itself (without the heroes causing it) make sure you only pull it out when it is dramatically satisfying. Be careful that you are not robbing the heroes of victory by providing a Deus Ex Machina. If the heroes are putting up a valiant defense of City Hall and are on the verge of being overwhelmed but refuse to surrender, the unexpected melt down is probably okay. The heroes have already committed to acting heroically and refused to back down, so they have already done “their part.” In the end it is just a matter of judgment. Sometimes it is more interesting to just have the heroes lose than to bail them out at the last minute.

If the Heroes Lose

If the heroes suffer an early defeat, award Hero Points for the Setback and let the fight roll over them as they lie buried under a collapsed building, a smashed car or just sprawled on the street. They recover normally and then can get back in the battle.

If the heroes are defeated late in the battle or the scene seems to have already played itself out, consider having Dr Null capture them all and take them back to his secret base (detailed in *Death of Dr Null*). Whether the Atomic Supermen are still a threat to the city depends on how much damage the heroes did before they went down. The heroes may have disrupted the attack of the Atomic Supermen even if they did not finish them off. If the Atomic Supermen are still going strong, the Melt Down option could ruin Dr Null’s plans and force him to retreat. Good for the city, but bad for the imprisoned heroes who are bound to become the objects of Dr Null’s frustration.

Aftermath

The aftermath of the battle could see whole sections of the city in ruins and a stunned populace emerging from the rubble, or triumphant and unified citizens cheering its heroes as they fly overhead to put the flag back atop City Hall. The heroes could be saluted for their deeds or crucified in the court of public opinion for letting things get so far out of hand.

Death of Dr Null continues where this adventure leaves off with the hunt for Dr Null’s secret base. You can run it immediately after this scenario (literally picking up in the wake of the battle) or later as desired. If Dr Null is captured or even killed in this scenario, do not despair—it would not be the first time the world thought it had seen the last of Dr Null.

Neutron Fist

The Neutron Fist is an unstoppable powerhouse, a once-ordinary hood named Gabe Hammond now cursed with hands permanently transformed into living energy. His punch can shatter tanks or pulverize granite, but Hammond can never fully stifle the power. Anything or anyone he touches is destroyed, making his power a curse that has ruined any chance he had for a normal life (see **Who is the Neutron Fist?** for more details).

Quotes

"Get out of my way, stay there—doesn't make much difference to me. It's gonna turn out the same either way."

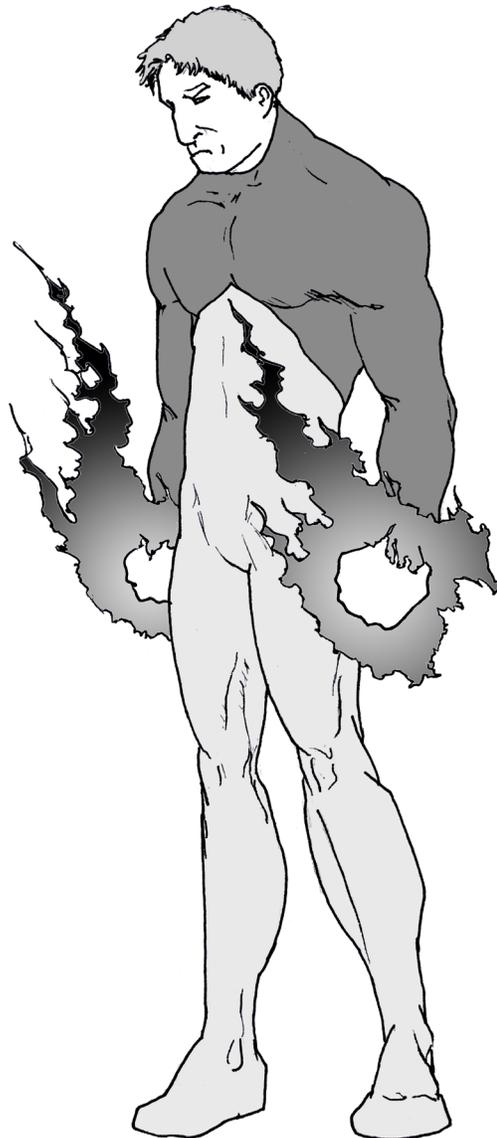
"Pretty good punch. Now let's see how you like mine."

"Yeah, sure, maybe I'll go legit. Get a good job, find a nice girl, settle down. White picket fence, right? Right. What kind of chump do you think I am?"

Silent Sound Effects

When the Fist's punch hits you an emerald flash lights up your body from within, your skeleton a dark shadow in the green glow. Pulsing afterimages flood your vision as the energy surges through every inch of your body.

The Neutron Fist's bodysuit is dark green on the bottom and glossy black on the shoulders and upper arms, meeting in a chevron across his chest. This suit looks unremarkable but it is a remnant of an early association with a criminal scientist. Like most materials it cannot resist his disintegrating touch, but the molecules of the suit are programmed to reconstruct damaged sections, patching holes created by the Fist's touch in minutes with particles gathered from the air. He frequently wears a trench coat (pocked with singed holes) over his bodysuit when he is trying to keep a low profile. If it wasn't for his bodysuit the Fist would have a hard time keeping any kind of clothing.



Neutron Fist

villain / PL 13

STR	DEX	CON	POWERS	FEATS
26/+8	10/--	42/+16	Strike 12 mighty, affects insubstantial (half), incurable linked Dazzle 8 (sight), alt save Fort, range touch [23 pp array] (alt) Corrosion 13 area explosion (-1 per 100 feet), prog 3, affects insubstantial (half), tiring, full round action Corrosion 8 aura, permanent, limited hands only Protection 4 Immunity 9 (own powers, radiation damage, disease, poison, starvation & thirst) Regeneration 8 (disabled 1 hour, staggered 5 minutes, ability damage 5 minutes) Enhanced Strength 12 Enhanced Constitution 28	all-out attack improved critical (strike) power attack second chance (mind control)
INT	WIS	CHA		
10/--	14/+2	10/--		
ATTACK	+6 punch 20, crit 19-20 & Dazzle 8 touch Corrosion 8		<i>(Strike and Corrosion touch aura do not stack—use Strike if the Fist punches or Corrosion if he merely touches something)</i>	SKILLS
DEF	16 (13 flat)			intimidate 14 (+14) knowledge-streetwise 6 (+6) notice 4 (+6) sense motive 8 (+10) stealth 4 (+4)
TOUGH	+20			DRAWBACKS
FORT	REF	WILL		Disintegrating touch Full power Power flaw (Strike and Corrosion do not stack)
INIT	GRAP	SIZE		
+0	+14	Med		

abilities 12 + skills 9 + feats 4 + powers 100 + combat 24 + saves 12 + drawbacks -5 = 156 pp

Tactics

The Neutron Fist is pretty straight forward—hit anyone who gets in his way. He uses All-out Attack when he is not worried about getting hit in return (which is most of the time) and Power Attack against really tough opponents or inanimate targets like buildings. Necessity has spurred him to come up with more innovative tactics, like punching the foundation of a building so that it topples towards a flyer who thinks she's safely out of reach. He's no rocket scientist, but opponents who presume Hammond is just a dumb bruiser may be in for a surprise.

If the Fist concentrates and slams his hands together he can send out devastating waves of disintegrating energy powerful enough to level whole sections of a city. This explosion is only used as a last resort or if the Fist is very angry. It is also an ace-in-the-hole against opponents who think they are out of reach.

Few police forces have any chance of capturing the Fist, but he knows that once he's been spotted it's just a matter of time before the whole Army, Air Force, and every superhero in the state comes after him. It's not like they're just going to let him walk away. The Fist has gotten good at smashing his way into the sewers and disappearing from sight. He hates trudging through the sewers, and every time he does it it just deepens his grudge against the world.

For playability the Neutron Fist's Strike and Corrosion touch do not stack. Only apply one or the other. When the Neutron Fist punches apply his Strike but not his Corrosion touch. If the Fist is grappled or just touches something apply his Corrosion.

Origin of the Neutron Fist

Gabe Hammond was a little fish in the criminal pond, and a not very successful one either. Hammond had some muscle if not much luck, so it only seemed fair that it should do him some good. To pay a debt of his own Hammond agreed to lean on a deadbeat named Klein who was behind on his payments.

He surprised his mark leaving a seedy hotel room with a bundle clutched under his arm. Hammond was new to the collection business but he expected to issue some gruff ultimatums and crack his knuckles menacingly, this being merely a first warning. The terrified Klein went for a gun before Hammond even got a word out, and in moments they were wrestling for the weapon. Klein was distracted by the thud of his bundle hitting the floor and Hammond used the opening to drive a few solid hits into his ribs, ending the fight.

Still perplexed about how a simple job could go so wrong, Hammond decided to take a look at the parcel Klein had been so jumpy about protecting. Inside the wrap was some kind of gadget, a black sphere about the size of a bowling ball etched with patterns like a circuit board, markings and widgets of all sorts that Hammond could not make heads or tails of. The fall seemed to have cracked one of the panels, or maybe it had already been that way, who knew? Hammond was turning the orb over in his hands trying to make sense of the thing, and was just starting to wonder where Klein had stolen it from and how much it might be worth when an emerald spark sputtered from the damaged sphere. Hammond jumped and held the ball at arms length, holding his breath and waiting for the other shoe to drop. Nothing happened. He breathed a sigh of relief, feeling a little foolish, and

then the thing exploded with green light. The last thing Hammond saw was the shadow of the bones in his hands against a dazzling emerald glow.

He woke up in the hospital, seemingly none the worse for wear. Klein on the other hand was dead and the police had questions that Hammond could not answer. It started to look like he would get saddled with Klein's murder just for simplicity's sake. He already had a lengthy if unimpressive rap sheet and was the only suspect the police had. So a week later when his hands started to glow with an emerald light and the prison bars melted in his hands, Hammond did not think twice before making his escape.

Hammond intended to lay low, stay out of sight, but the power in his hands just continued to grow, and it was only days before his slightest touch became a hazard to anyone around him. Hammond had a power he could not control. He tried in his own ways to find out where Klein had gotten the device, hoping that would lead him to someone who understood what had happened to him, but every lead was a dead end. Hammond started to realize that his life was never going to be normal again. He was the Neutron Fist whether he liked it or not.

Further Adventures with the Fist

Fury of the Fist

Louis Krasnyc aka the Eel, a small-time supercriminal burglar named for his frictionless bodysuit and unreliable character, is apprehended during a botched diamond heist and awaits trial. Krasnyc once teamed up with the Neutron Fist in a short-lived brains/brawn partnership that ended when the Eel took the loot and left the Fist in the lurch. The Neutron Fist does not forgive and he does not forget. He's been wanting to get his hands on the Eel for some time. When he hears that Krasnyc is in custody, he does not hesitate to go get the little fink. The fact that the Eel is surrounded by police does not mean much to the Fist. It's a reverse jail break, with the Fist breaking in to annihilate the Eel not spring him. Krasnyc is a powerless and cowardly normal without his high tech tools, so if someone does not help him he is in serious trouble.

The Fist's first appearance is an unexpected attack on a police wagon transporting prisoners. The Fist thinks Krasnyc is aboard but his information is wrong. Heroes get involved after the fact or skirmish with the Fist and then have to figure out why the powerful Neutron Fist would attack a prison van and then disappear again. Detective work and little luck might lead them to Krasnyc, just as the Fist starts smashing his way into the prison. The heroes have to stop the Fist, protect Krasnyc, and possibly chase down other convicts liberated by the one man wrecking crew.

Pure Energy

Only the Neutron Fist's hands were transformed into living energy, but some of that power suffuses the rest of his body granting him superhuman endurance and resilience. Over time the transformation could start to spread until Hammond's entire body turns into living energy. It could happen by itself, the inevitable next step of the original accident, or it could be triggered by rogue scientists examining the Fist to unlock the source of his power. Threatened with a complete loss of his humanity does the Fist go on a terrible rampage or does he seek out the heroes in a desperate plea for help? If the heroes can't help him it may turn out to be one shortly before the other.

Atomic Supermen

Dr Null's Atomic Supermen are synthetic clones. They appear completely human, but a cellular examination will reveal that their tissue is made up of unusual chemical compounds, sustained by radioactive reactions within their body. If they are rendered unconscious, a flaw in their design will cause them to cease functioning, freezing like a statue and then smoking and slowly dissolving into base chemicals.

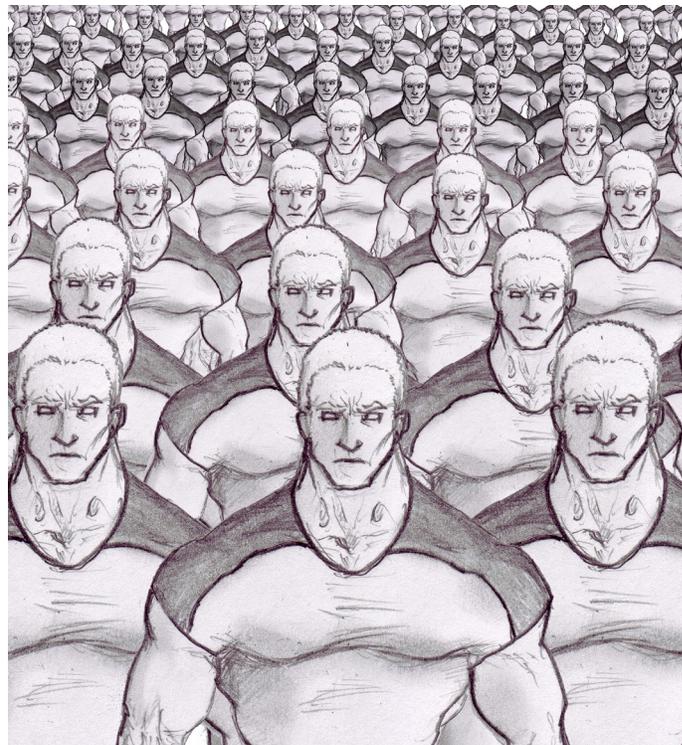
Dr Null's original models have incredible strength and resilience because of their artificial chemical make-up, but with the data he gathers from examining the Neutron Fist he instructs the life support systems on the carriers to make a last minute adjustment to their metabolic systems, enabling them to emit the radiation from inside their bodies. They can unleash this energy as an enveloping field or as concentrated eye beams.

The Atomic Supermen are vat grown to adulthood and are brainwashed with complete loyalty to Dr Null. Dr Null has also implanted a small control chip in their brains to communicate with each clone and coordinate their actions. The result is that the Supermen act with unnerving unity, responding to changing conditions with synchronized precision without ever needing to speak among themselves.

Tactics

When coordinated by the command centers in the Subterranean Bore Carriers, the Atomic Supermen fight with uncanny teamwork. These maneuvers can make the Atomic Supermen a greater threat to your heroes but be careful not to slow the fight down too much calculating bonuses. Use normal attacks most of the time and save the special teamwork for when it is needed.

High Beams—Multiple Atomic Supermen across the battlefield spontaneously Combine Attack and use their eyebeams to burn a superhero out of the sky. Versus a high defense/low toughness opponent they spend a full round Aiming (glowing eyes charging up) and use Aggressive Stance before unleashing a concerted attack. Versus a low defense/high toughness target use Power Attack.



Triple Team—Three Atomic Supermen attack a superhero in melee. Two use Aid to give the third an attack bonus (+8 if both succeed). That Superman punches with full Power Attack (+8 attack, +12 damage plus Aura). Against a high defense opponent skip Power Attack and use Aggressive Stance (+14 attack, +8 damage plus Aura, -4 defense).

Pin and Burn—Use the Triple Team, but the Atomic Superman grapples and pins instead. As soon as the target is immobilized other Atomic Supermen use a High Beam with full Power Attack, counting on the pin to make the hero an easy target (no dodge bonus, -4 defense). Since the Atomic Supermen are themselves immune to radiation there is no risk of the grappler being injured.

Atomic Supermen

minion / PL 6

STR	DEX	CON	POWERS	FEATS
26/+8	14/+2	30/+10	Strike 6 aura (radiation field) [12 pp array] (alt) Blast 6 (radiation eye beams)	attack specialization (eye beams) fearless
INT	WIS	CHA	Impervious Toughness 8	power attack
8/-1	10/--	8/-1	Super-Strength 6 (heavy load 24 tons)	teamwork 2 (+4 Aid)
ATTACK	+4 punch 8 & aura 6 +6 blast 6		Immunity 5 (radiation damage)	SKILLS
DEF	12 (11 flat) aura 6		Leaping 3 (180 ft running jump, 45 ft vertical)	concentration 4 (+4) intimidate 8 (+7) notice 4 (+4)
TOUGH	+10 (8 impervious)			DRAWBACKS
FORT	REF	WILL		Destroyed if rendered unconscious
+10	+5	+6		
INIT	GRAP	SIZE		
+2	+18	Med		

abilities 36 + skills 4 + feats 5 + powers 41 + combat 12 + saves 9 + drawbacks -2 = 105 pp

The Atomic Supermen are treated as minions to keep the fight running quickly and simplify bookkeeping even though they are considerably more powerful than the average minion. To reflect this, you can opt to have them only be stunned on a failed Toughness save, or knocked unconscious if they fail by 5 or more.

If you want to make the Atomic Supermen even stronger you can use the PL 8 version, but this will make it much more difficult for the heroes to win through brute force.

Atomic Supermen (stronger version)

minion / PL 8

STR	DEX	CON	POWERS	FEATS
30/+10	14/+2	34/+12	Strike 8 aura (radiation field) [16 pp array] (alt) Blast 6 (radiation eye beams)	attack specialization (eye beams) fearless
INT	WIS	CHA	Impervious Toughness 8 Super-Strength 6 (heavy load 50 tons) Immunity 5 (radiation damage) Leaping 3 (200 ft running jump, 50 ft vertical)	power attack teamwork 2 (+4 Aid)
8/-1	10/--	8/-1		
ATTACK	+6 punch 10 & aura 8 +8 blast 8			SKILLS
DEF	14 (12 flat) aura 8			concentration 6 (+6) intimidate 10 (+9) notice 4 (+4)
TOUGH	+12 (8 impervious)			DRAWBACKS
FORT	REF	WILL		Destroyed if rendered unconscious
+12	+5	+6		
INIT	GRAP	SIZE		
+2	+22	Med		

abilities 44 + skills 5 + feats 5 + powers 45 + combat 20 + saves 9 + drawbacks -2 = 126 pp

Subterranean Bore Carriers

The Subterranean Bore Carriers are massive, tapered metal cylinders, 100 feet across and 150 feet long, though only half that length is visible as the carriers sit jutting out of the ground. The flat nose is circled with grinding teeth that break down and shift earth to the sides of the vehicle, where arrays of crawler treads pull the juggernaut along. These knobbed treads cover most of the hull, but between them long landing ramps drop down to disgorge the army carried inside.

The interior of a Carrier is a mostly taken up by a single cavernous chamber with slanting walls matching the exterior hull. Studding

the walls from floor to ceiling are the incubation pods for Dr Null's Atomic Supermen. The clones are grown in place, implanted with their chip by automated systems and programmed through the ship's systems, until they are ready to emerge and do Dr Null's bidding.

The Carriers can be driven manually but they are usually set on a programmed course or piloted by remote control. The Carriers are designed strictly for burrowing. On the surface they remain immobile, looking more like buildings than vehicles.

Subterranean Bore Carriers

vehicle / PL 6

STR	SIZE	MOVE	POWERS	FEATURES
70/+30	Colossal	10 mph	Impervious Toughness 10 Communication 7 radio, area (200 miles), selective, subtle Burrowing 6 (50 mph soil, 10 mph solid rock)	remote control
ATTACK	none			
DEF	2			
TOUGH	+20 (10 impervious)			

abilities 4 + features 1 + powers 32 + size 4 + saves 7 + drawbacks 0 = 48 pp / 10 eq

Cyclotron

Dr Null oversees the battle from the bridge of his Cyclotron, a highly maneuverable tunneling machine. The entire vehicle is a single slender drill, capable of operating equally well above or below ground. Underground it rips through dirt and rock at incredible speeds. On the surface it balances on its tip and spins like an enormous deadly top.

The command bridge is in the center of the drill but rests on a magnetic cushion instead of being directly connected, permitting it to remain stationary no matter how fast the rest of the vehicle rotates. Gaps in the drill give the bridge a view of the outside world, not unlike looking through the spinning blades of a fan.

The Cyclotron is surrounded by a crackling field of electricity, a powerful charge generated by the vehicle's rotation. The field makes attacking the vehicle perilous and also provides some additional physical protection. Dr Null can also project portions of the charge as crackling bolts of lightning, strafing his enemies with high voltage blasts.

Silent Sound Effects

Movement—*The Cyclotron zigzags erratically around the battlefield, its drill tip gouging a trench through concrete or parked cars alike as it runs across them.*

Aura—*A sizzling veil of electricity surrounds the Cyclotron as it spins, filling the air with smell of ozone.*

Blast—*Crackling fingers of lightning reach out from the Cyclotron's field and rake the battlefield.*

Tactics

Dr Null can use an autofire lightning barrage to fry a single target to a crisp, the autofire multiple target option to hit adjacent opponents, or split attack to fire weaker blasts at multiple opponents farther apart. Dr Null can also just drive the Cyclotron right over someone, doing a melee attack using the vehicle's strength damage plus the electrical aura.

The Cyclotron presents a moving target as reflected in its high dodge bonus. Dr Null wants to gloat over the conquests of his minions not get bogged down fighting. He may skirmish with the heroes but then zip to some other part of the battlefield so he does not miss any of the action, taking the Cyclotron underground if necessary to escape unwanted attention.



Cyclotron

vehicle / PL 12

STR	SIZE	MOVE	POWERS	FEATURES
40/+15	Gargan	100 mph	Stun 12 aura (electrified field) Blast 12 autofire, split attack 2, accurate (lightning strikes) Spinning 10 (no toughness bonus) Shield 13 (dodge bonus) Force Field 4 impervious Impervious Toughness 8 Sensory Shield 4 Immunity 9 (life support) Burrowing 8 (250 mph soil, 50 mph solid rock) (alt) Speed 4 (100 mph) (alt) Swimming 5 (50 mph) Super-Senses (blindsight radar, x-ray, infravision, radio)	alarm navigation system remote control
ATTACK	+12 blast 12 autofire +6 ram 15 & aura 12			
DEF	19 (6 flat) aura Stun 12			
TOUGH	+15 (12 impervious)			
<small>(combat stats and PL as piloted by Dr Null)</small>				

abilities 0 + features 3 + powers 151 + size 3 + saves 0 + drawbacks 0 = 157 pp / 32 eq

Dr Null

In now famous Senate testimony, a respected prosecutor once branded Dr Null “the most dangerous man alive.” In a world that is home to superhumans capable of lifting mountains and melting tanks with beams from their eyes, it’s no small tribute, especially considering that Dr Null himself has no superhuman powers. His danger stems entirely from his scientific genius, a genius that has proven capable of devising inventions far in advance of modern science and schemes that threaten the very world.

Dr Null is also undeniably mad. His is a grand, all-encompassing madness, a madness that harbors deep bitterness towards the world and yearns for his genius to be recognized.

Null wears a white double-breasted lab smock buttoned up one side and dark pants. He wears a black skull cap with a widow’s peak concealing his hair. His face is narrow and sunken, his eyes dark and menacing, and his nose twisted.

Dr Null does not typically carry personal weapons or devices to engage in direct combat, preferring to ride in some mechanized war-machine that serves as both personal defense and mobile command center. These vehicles are invariably armed with an array of his latest fiendish weapons, allowing him to smash any opposition he encounters, and a powerful public address system so his ranting can be heard far and wide. If his vehicle is breached, Dr Null’s



only recourse is to rant about his inevitable return before flipping the switch on his latest Doomsday Device. Dr Null doesn’t go anywhere without a Doomsday Device.

Dr Null

villain / PL 15

STR	DEX	CON	POWERS	FEATS
6/-2	12/+1	12/+1	none	distract (intimidate) equipment 40 (vehicles & headquarters) fascinate (intimidate)
INT	WIS	CHA		improved init 3 inventor master plan minions 15 fanatical
48/+19	26/+8	16/+3		SKILLS
ATTACK	+10			bluff 6 (+9) computers 10 (+29) concentration 4 (+12) craft-chemical 10 (+29) craft-electronic 15 (+34) craft-mechanical 15 (+34) craft-structural 8 (+27) disable device 4 (+23) drive 4 (+5)
DEF	16 (13 flat)			intimidate 8 (+11) knowledge-earth sci 5 (+24) knowledge-life sci 10 (+29) knowledge-physical sci 15 (+34) knowledge-technology 20 (+39) medicine 4 (+12) notice 2 (+10) pilot 4 (+5) sense motive 4 (+12)
TOUGH	+1			
FORT	REF	WILL		
+4	+8	+16		
INIT	GRAP	SIZE		
+13	+8	Med		

abilities 60 + skills 37 + feats 77 + powers 0 + combat 32 + saves 18 + drawbacks 0 = 224 pp

Origin of Dr Null

Dr Null was Dr Victor Marsden, a brilliant if somewhat arrogant research scientist. He had little tolerance for his perceived lessers, the short-sighted fools the world seemed to stock in such abundance, and while such an attitude endeared him to no one it is the kind of attitude expected to accompany genius so it was largely tolerated. After his initial successes, inventions of various sorts, there was no doubt that a bright future awaited Marsden. In time and with unrelenting work he could become one of the scientific greats of the world. As is often the case, fate intervened.

Marsden was working on his first real breakthrough project, a device that would use harmonic frequencies to absorb widespread seismic forces from the Earth's crust and then convert that force into harnessed electricity. This Seismic Converter not only provided free clean energy, it reduced the risk and magnitude of earthquakes by reducing tectonic pressure.

Marsden and his team worked around the clock to complete the device, but a malfunction in the lab's power grid caused a surge that back-flowed into the Seismic Converter. Instead of absorbing kinetic energy and outputting electricity, the surge pumped energy into the device and caused the Seismic Converter to broadcast dangerous harmonic waves. The resulting earthquake woke people in their beds all across the county.

In the lab it was total chaos, the quake rocking the building to its very foundations. Even as his staff tried to drag Marsden away he berated them for incompetence and refused to leave, determined to bring his creation back under control and prove that his design was sound.

Whether Marsden finally succeeded or the damage cut power to the Converter, no one is sure. Rescue teams found him in the rubble, unconscious from a head injury. At the hospital he lapsed into a coma. It was impossible to tell when he would recover, his doctor's announced. It could be weeks, it could be months.

In fact Marsden did not wake up for three years.

When he awoke he was alert and communicative, his mental faculties apparently unharmed but without any recollection of who he was. He remembered the accident, but nothing before that point. His doctors hoped that with time and exposure to the facts of his old life his memory would gradually return. They tried to teach Marsden details of his past life but it was just meaningless trivia to him. A picture of his mother did not strike any more of a

chord in him than the Periodic Table of the Elements. It seemed to have nothing to do with *him*.

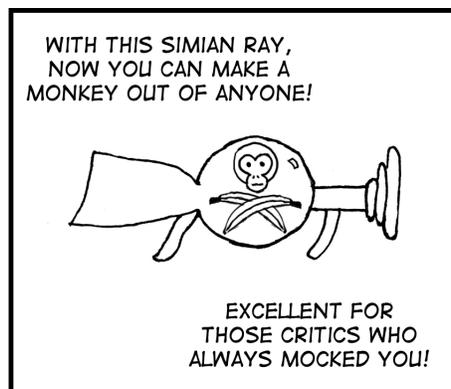
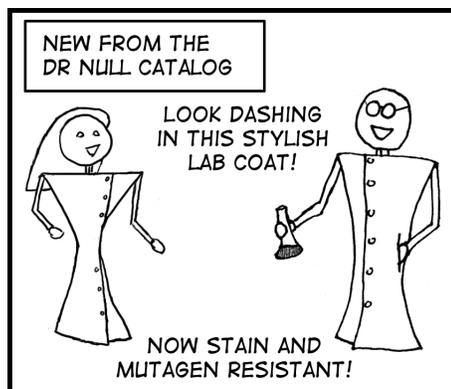
It quickly became clear that while personal memories were a blank, his technical knowledge, intelligence and logic had not suffered. If anything Marsden was even sharper than before, quicker to leap to scientific conclusions that would take others days to plod through, quicker see new approaches. Medical scans showed unusually high activity in his brain, interpreted at the time as signs of his recovery from the coma. Much later after Dr Null emerged as a national threat the medical data was carefully re-examined. Marsden's expanded intellect seemed to be the result of extensive branching and remapping in his neural pathways, an inexplicable side effect of his brain's healing process.

Marsden had been arrogant and uncompassionate before the accident, but his new lack of identity robbed him of any real human connection or sympathy to those around him. His psychologists hoped that this was a short term reaction to his trauma and that he would adjust with time. In fact quite the opposite seemed to be happen: Marsden became more megalomaniacal as he adjusted to his amnesia and became more certain of himself. It became increasingly clear that after his coma Marsden saw those around him as little more than gnats, irritating and inferior creatures. Attempts at therapy just revealed a rising paranoia—they were all against him because he was better than they were. They were jealous of his genius and wanted to smother it.

After a final abortive attempt by his doctors to fit him back in his previous life, Victor Marsden dropped out of sight, simply disappeared. In a sense he never did return, never even survived the accident at the lab. Victor Marsden was gone. In his mind he had tried to give the world the fruits of his genius and in return he lost himself. He was left with no identity. He was no one, nothing, a null, and he held the world responsible. When he appeared again months later, he was only Dr Null, and he intended to make the world pay.

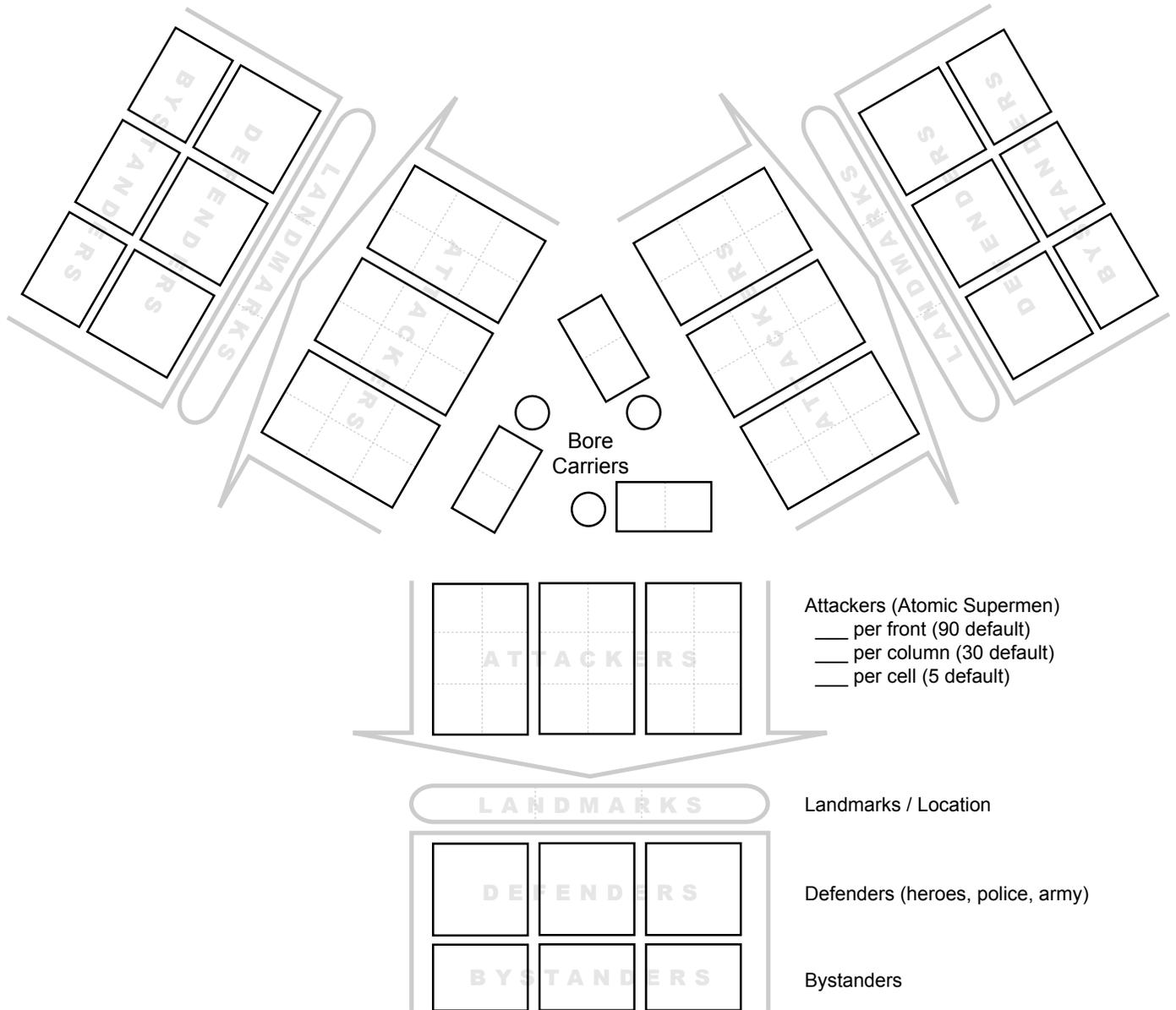
Criminal psychologists have theorized that his desire for public recognition of his grand schemes stems from his sense of lost identity. Others say that's a load of psycho-babble. Marsden went crazy when he got hit on the head and he's been a menace to society ever since. It's as simple as that.

Most people don't care one bit about that why Dr Null does what he does, they want to know who's going to stop the Destructo-Sphere floating down Fifth Avenue erasing the skyline. They want to know who's going to stop Dr Null.



Battle Tracker

Day of Dr Null, Attack of the Atomic Supermen



The **Battle Tracker** is an abstract schematic of the **Attack of the Atomic Supermen**. You can jot notes on it to keep track of what is going on all the fronts of the fighting. There is no right or wrong way to use the Battle Tracker—the best approach is whatever makes the most sense to you. A demo Battle Tracker that has been marked up is included as an example, but you might use yours quite differently.

For characters that will move from around a lot like the PC heroes, use chips or other small markers to note where they are. You could write on the Battle Tracker but you will have to keep erasing.

Fill in the blanks under Attackers to show how many Atomic Supermen each unit represents. By default there are 90 Supermen per front, 30 Supermen in each column, and each column is divided into six cells of 5 Supermen each. Except for the three fronts, these divisions do not represent actual formations or units. It's just an easy way to keep track of the attackers.

Circles represent Bore Carriers in the Civic Center. The boxes next to each one are the Atomic Supermen left behind to protect them (same cell size as above). They are close enough to all fight together if one Carrier is threatened.

Neutron Fist

villain / PL 13

STR	DEX	CON	POWERS	FEATS
26/+8	10/--	42/+16	Strike 12 mighty, affects insubstantial (half), incurable linked Dazzle 8 (sight), alt save Fort, range touch [23 pp array] (alt) Corrosion 13 area explosion (-1 per 100 feet), prog 3, affects insubstantial (half), tiring, full round action Corrosion 8 aura, permanent, limited hands only Protection 4 Immunity 9 (own powers, radiation damage, disease, poison, starvation & thirst) Regeneration 8 (disabled 1 hour, staggered 5 minutes, ability damage 5 minutes) Enhanced Strength 12 Enhanced Constitution 28	all-out attack improved critical (strike) power attack second chance (mind control)
INT	WIS	CHA		SKILLS
10/--	14/+2	10/--		intimidate 14 (+14) knowledge-streetwise 6 (+6) notice 4 (+6) sense motive 8 (+10) stealth 4 (+4)
ATTACK	+6 punch 20, crit 19-20 & Dazzle 8 touch Corrosion 8		(<i>Strike and Corrosion touch aura do not stack—use Strike if the Fist punches or Corrosion if he merely touches something</i>)	DRAWBACKS
DEF	16 (13 flat)			Disintigrating touch Full power Power flaw (Strike and Corrosion do not stack)
TOUGH	+20			
FORT	REF	WILL		
+16	+4	+10		
INIT	GRAP	SIZE		
+0	+14	Med		

abilities 12 + skills 9 + feats 4 + powers 100 + combat 24 + saves 12 + drawbacks -5 = 156 pp

Neutron Fist Silent Sound Effects

When the Fist's punch hits you an emerald flash lights up your body from within, your skeleton a dark shadow in the green glow. Pulsing afterimages flood your vision as the energy surges through every inch of your body.

Dr Null

villain / PL 15

STR	DEX	CON	POWERS	FEATS
6/-2	12/+1	12/+1	none	distract (intimidate) equipment 40 (vehicles & headquarters) fascinate (intimidate)
INT	WIS	CHA		improved init 3 inventor master plan minions 15 fanatical
48/+19	26/+8	16/+3		
ATTACK	+10			SKILLS
DEF	16 (13 flat)			bluff 6 (+9) computers 10 (+29) concentration 4 (+12) craft-chemical 10 (+29) craft-electronic 15 (+34) craft-mechanical 15 (+34) craft-structural 8 (+27) disable device 4 (+23) drive 4 (+5)
TOUGH	+1			intimidate 8 (+11) knowledge-earth sci 5 (+24) knowledge-life sci 10 (+29) knowledge-physical sci 15 (+34) knowledge-technology 20 (+39) medicine 4 (+12) notice 2 (+10) pilot 4 (+5) sense motive 4 (+12)
FORT	REF	WILL		
+4	+8	+16		
INIT	GRAP	SIZE		
+13	+8	Med		

abilities 60 + skills 37 + feats 77 + powers 0 + combat 32 + saves 18 + drawbacks 0 = 224 pp

Atomic Supermen

minion / PL 6

STR	DEX	CON	POWERS	FEATS
26/+8	14/+2	30/+10	Strike 6 aura (radiation field) [12 pp array] (alt) Blast 6 (radiation eye beams) Impervious Toughness 8 Super-Strength 6 (heavy load 24 tons) Immunity 5 (radiation damage) Leaping 3 (180 ft running jump, 45 ft vertical)	attack specialization (eye beams) fearless power attack teamwork 2 (+4 Aid)
INT	WIS	CHA		
8/-1	10/--	8/-1		
ATTACK	+4 punch 8 & aura 6 +6 blast 6			SKILLS
DEF	12 (11 flat) aura 6			concentration 4 (+4) intimidate 8 (+7) notice 4 (+4)
TOUGH	+10 (8 impervious)			DRAWBACKS
FORT	REF	WILL		Destroyed if rendered unconscious
+10	+5	+6		
INIT	GRAP	SIZE		
+2	+18	Med		

abilities 36 + skills 4 + feats 5 + powers 41 + combat 12 + saves 9 + drawbacks -2 = 105 pp

Game at a Glance

REVELATIONS

- 1) Supermen are radioactive (optional revelation)
- 2) Supermen look alike
- 3) Supermen fight with uncanny teamwork
- 4) Supermen destroyed when knocked unconscious
- 5) Bore Carriers control Atomic Supermen (optional)
- 6) Supermen melt down (optional)

ACTION

- 1) War for the City
 - Send in the troops
 - Calling all heroes
 - Hold the line!
 - Protect the Innocent
- 2) Chasing Dr Null
- 3) Finale
 - Command & Control (optional)
 - Meltdown (optional)

ACTION SHTICKS

- Falling Debris
- Go Fetch

Protect the Innocent

- *A businessman trapped in a doorway cowers as the Atomic Supermen approach, futilely trying to shield himself with his briefcase.*
- *A stray radiation beam melts the front tires of a taxi racing away from the fighting. The driver wrenches at the wheel desperately but the car slews towards the sidewalk and a knot of fleeing civilians.*
- *Two police officers crouch behind their patrol car and fire at an Atomic Supermen approaching them. Bullets bounce off the inhuman soldier as he strides forward and simply lifts the car over his head and prepares to bring it crashing down again on the scrambling officers.*

Atomic Superman Tactics

- High Beams**—Multiple Atomic Supermen across the battlefield spontaneously Combine Attack and use their eyebeams to burn a superhero out of the sky. Versus a high defense/low toughness opponent they spend a full round Aiming (glowing eyes charging up) and use Aggressive Stance before unleashing a concerted attack. Versus a low defense/high toughness target use Power Attack.
- Triple Team**—Three Atomic Supermen attack a superhero in melee. Two use Aid to give the third an attack bonus (+8 if both succeed). That Superman punches with full Power Attack (+8 attack, +12 damage plus Aura). Against a high defense opponent skip Power Attack and use Aggressive Stance (+14 attack, +8 damage plus Aura, -4 defense).
- Pin and Burn**—Use the Triple Team, but the Atomic Superman grapples and pins instead. As soon as the target is immobilized other Atomic Supermen use a High Beam with full Power Attack, counting on the pin to make the hero an easy target (no dodge bonus, -4 defense). Since the Atomic Supermen are themselves immune to radiation there is no risk of the grappler being injured.

Cyclotron Silent Sound Effects

- Movement**—*The Cyclotron zigzags erratically around the battlefield, its drill tip gouging a trench through concrete or parked cars alike as it runs across them.*
- Aura**—*A sizzling veil of electricity surrounds the Cyclotron as it spins, filling the air with smell of ozone.*
- Blast**—*Crackling fingers of lightning reach out from the Cyclotron's field and rake the battlefield.*

Cyclotron

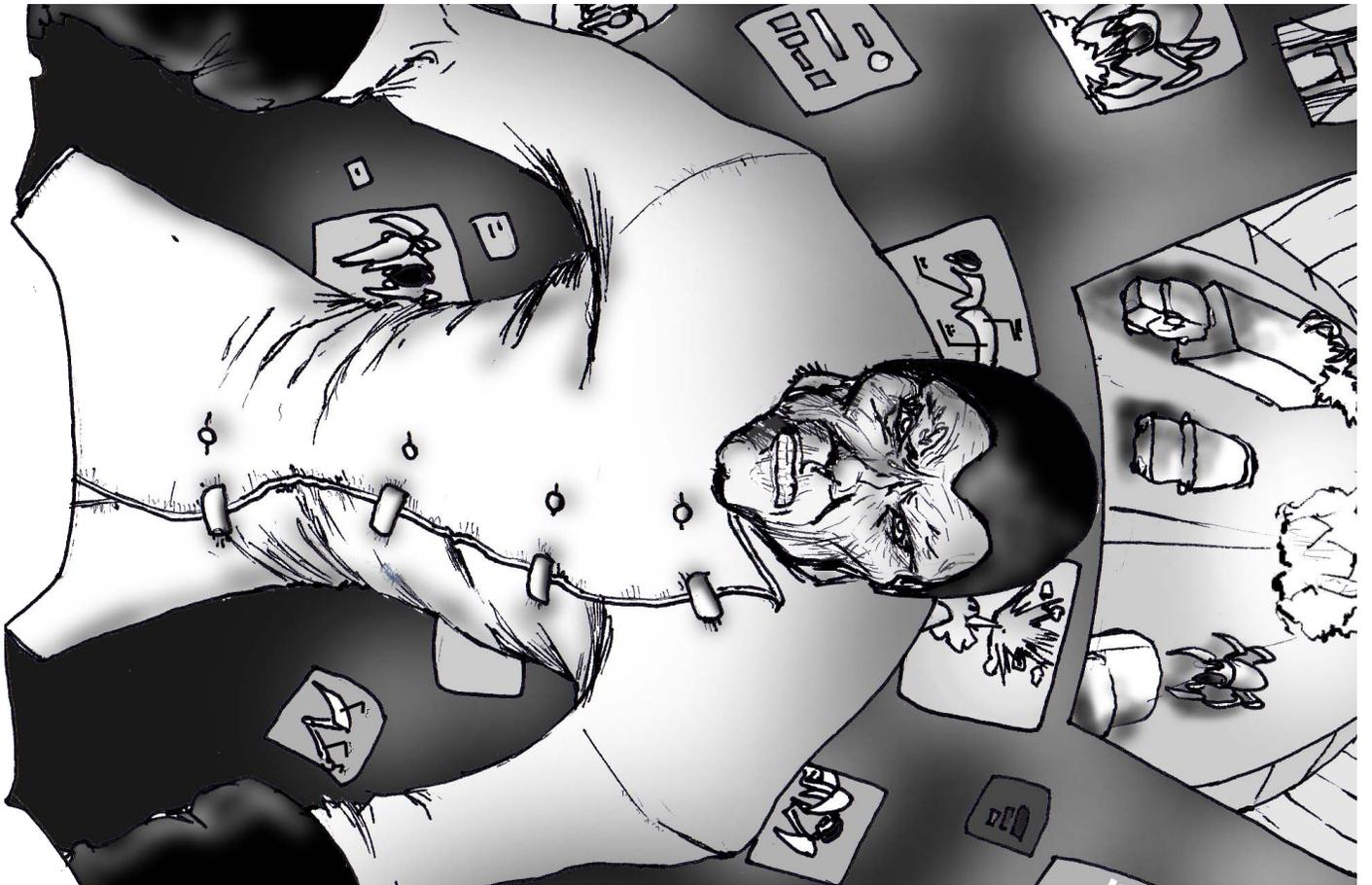
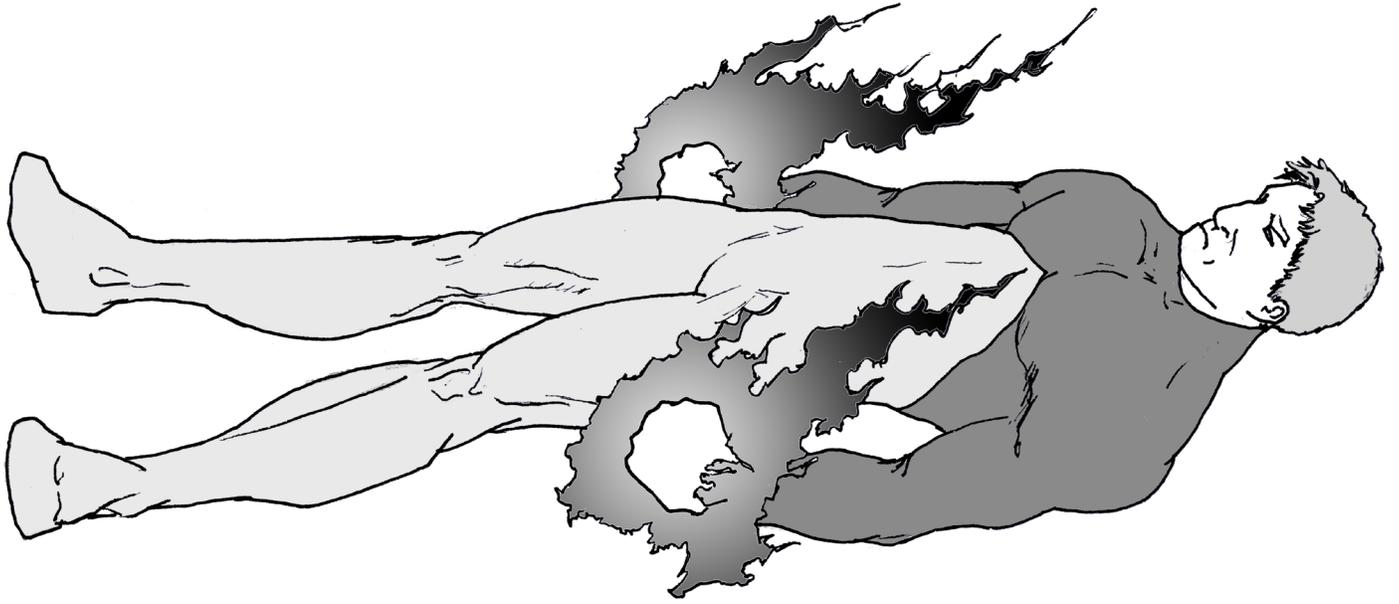
vehicle / PL 12

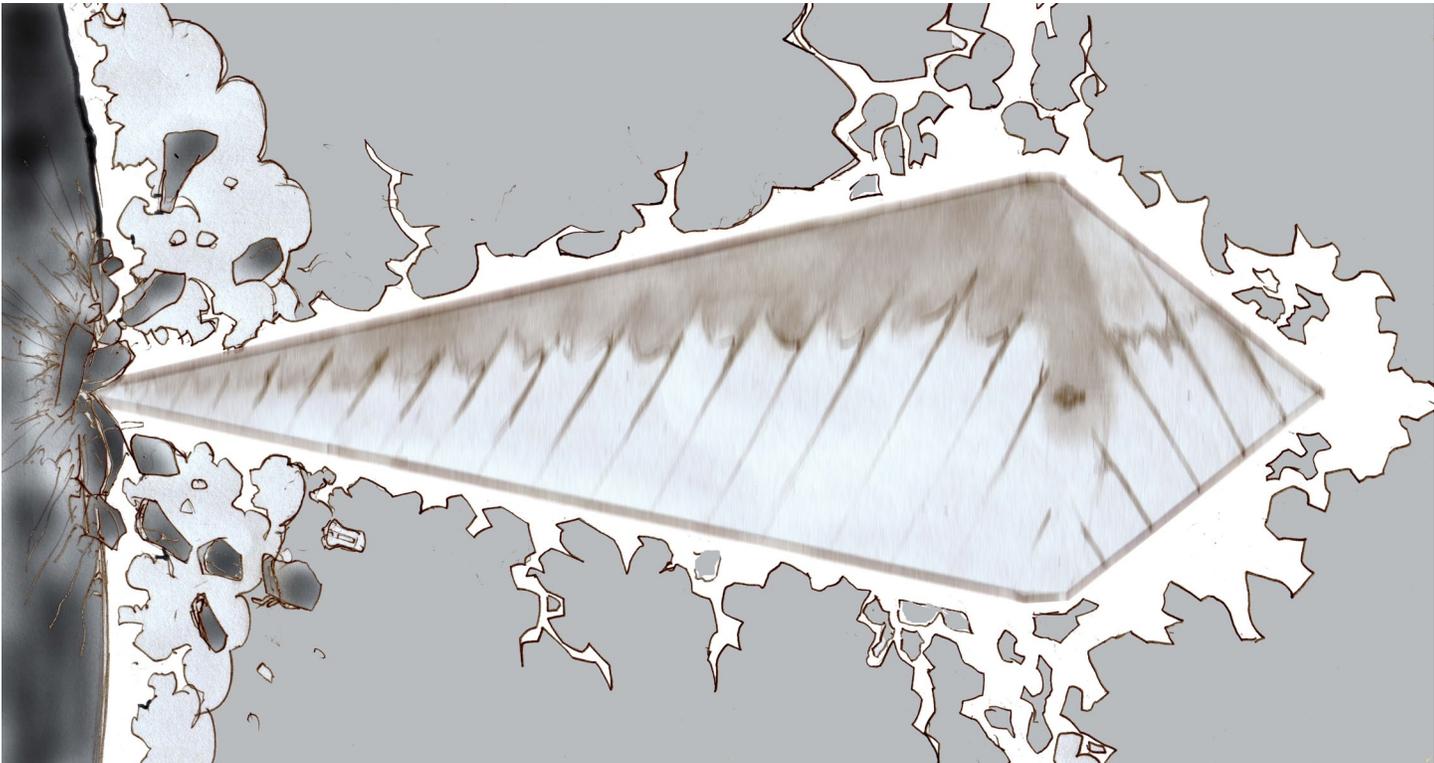
STR	SIZE	MOVE	POWERS	FEATURES
40/+15	Gargan	100 mph	Stun 12 aura (electrified field) Blast 12 autofire, split attack 2, accurate (lightning strikes) Spinning 10 (no toughness bonus) Shield 13 (dodge bonus) Force Field 4 impervious Impervious Toughness 8 Sensory Shield 4 Immunity 9 (life support) Burrowing 8 (250 mph soil, 50 mph solid rock) (alt) Speed 4 (100 mph) (alt) Swimming 5 (50 mph) Super-Senses (blindsight radar, x-ray, infravision, radio)	alarm navigation system remote control
ATTACK	+12 blast 12 autofire +6 ram 15 & aura 12			
DEF	19 (6 flat) aura Stun 12			
TOUGH	+15 (12 impervious)			

(combat stats and PL as piloted by Dr Null)

abilities 0 + features 3 + powers 151 + size 3 + saves 0 + drawbacks 0 = 157 pp / 32 eq

Player Handout Illustrations





OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10 Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12 Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13 Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14 Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15 COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0 Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document, Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc., Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Modern System Reference Document, Copyright 2002-2004, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Bill Slavicsek, Jeff Grubb, Rich Redman, Charles Ryan, Eric Cagle, David Noonan, Stan!, Christopher Perkins, Rodney Thompson, and JD Wiker, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, Peter Adkison, Bruce R. Cordell, John Tynes, Andy Collins, and JD Wiker.

Mutants & Masterminds, Copyright 2002, Green Ronin Publishing; Author Steve Kenson.

Silver Age Sentinels d20, Copyright 2002, Guardians of Orders, Inc.; Authors Stephen Kenson, Mark C. Mackinnon, Jeff Mackintosh, Jesse Scoble.

Mutants & Masterminds, Second Edition, Copyright 2005, Green Ronin Publishing; Author Steve Kenson.

Day of Dr Null, Copyright 2006, Lame Mage Productions; Author Ben Robbins.