

The Imperial Age



◆ ANARCHISM ◆

INTRODUCTION

Imagine an afternoon stroll in Trafalgar Square. Perhaps you were just coming from one of the gentlemen's clubs at Pall Mall. Thankful for a respite from the rain, you are using your umbrella as a walking stick and relying on your bowler to keep your head dry from a possible heavenly resurgence. A young boy, somewhat dishevelled, runs up to you and hands you a note. You took it out of politeness; you read it out of curiosity. The message is simple: Parliament cannot protect you. Join the Revolution.

You raise an eyebrow and look back towards the boy. He's already disappearing down an alley, leaving behind a few more alarmed strollers holding copies of his note. Seconds later, a coach explodes across the busy street. Trafalgar Square is thrown into chaos, with people and spooked horses fleeing in every direction, screaming excitedly. There are bodies laying around the burning remnants of the coach, some moving, some not.

Terrorism is alive and well in the Imperial Age and it has been given a name: Anarchism.



**Imperial
Age:
Anarchism**

by

**Walt
Ciechanowski**

ANARCHISM AND MODERN TERRORISM

Astute readers may notice many similarities between anarchism and modern terrorist organisations. They are both committed to a certain philosophy, see current forms of government as corrupt, use violent methods to sway popular opinion, and are organised in secret. Both groups also realize that they are a minority, and their efforts to get noticed often alienate them from possible supporters. In addition, anyone seen as supportive of either group is held in suspicion and/or harassed by the authorities.

While not identical, modern terrorism can be used to better understand the mindset of the Anarchist. It also illuminates the trouble many social reformers have in gaining support for their causes when one violent display from an Anarchist can erase their gains.

ANARCHISM DEFINED

As man seeks justice in equality, so society seeks order in anarchy. Anarchy -- the absence of a sovereign -- such is the form of government to which we are every day approximating.

--Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

The Anarchist, as the name implies, is an opponent of organised government. He believes that all governments are corrupt and oppressive and that the people should demand change. Unlike most other social reform movements, however, the Anarchist believes that this can only be achieved through a violent popular revolt. Once this revolt is successful, the Anarchist believes that the people will return to their natural state, a society based on voluntary cooperation.

The Anarchist believes that by exposing the weaknesses of the current government, he can spark a popular revolution. Toward that end, some Anarchists plant bombs in public places as a clear expression that the government cannot protect the people. Other Anarchists attempt assassinations on heads of state or other prominent ministers in the hopes that the government will collapse and a revolution will occur.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Anarchist's methods often serve to alienate him from the people he wishes to inspire. Blowing up a public monument labels him a terrorist, and, in the Imperial Age, anarchism and terrorism come to mean the same thing in the public's mind. Many anarchist newspapers are shut down and members harassed through guilt by association.

Anarchism is as old as government. So long as there has been authority in society, there have been those that rejected that authority. Traditionally, those that advocated the overthrow of a particular government have been labelled "anarchists." The term itself is propaganda, designed to draw the image of the opposition as dangerous, chaotic rebels that want to reduce society to barbarism. In most cases, however, "anarchists" merely wanted to replace what they viewed as a corrupt authority with something better.

Anarchism as it is practiced in the Imperial Age was shaped during the 19th century, drawing from many of the same influences as socialism and communism. All saw the sovereign and capitalism as corrupt and exploitative, and all wished to change society to something more egalitarian. Both the anarchist and communist movements look to English philosopher and author William Godwin (1756-1836) as their founder. William Godwin was an advocate of atheism and personal freedom. He believed that, eventually, a man that does what he feels is right will end up doing what was best for the community. Authority only hinders a man's reason. While he didn't advocate the total abolition of government, Godwin felt that men were best governed by small local governments. Property was to be held by those with the greatest need. His most influential work, ***An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*** (1793), in which he rejects conventional governments, is considered required reading amongst anarchists.

Godwin did not consider himself an anarchist or a communist. The first self-proclaimed anarchist was French philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865). He is best known for his statement that "Property is Theft!" in his work ***What is Property?*** (1840) although he was speaking specifically about labour exploitation. Proudhon was not a communist, for he opposed the creation of a centralised communist state. He also lamented the use of violence to achieve anarchist goals. Proudhon coined the term "mutualism" for his ideal society, one in which associations of workers would control production

and trade with each other for mutual benefit (i.e. voluntary cooperation).

It was anarchist philosopher Mikhail Bakunin that would give anarchism its violent edge. He was a proponent of the "Propaganda of the Deed," which promoted terrorist acts in order to foment a popular revolution. It was this philosophy that caused a break with the communists and inspired terrorists in the name of anarchism throughout the Imperial Age.

ANARCHISM VS. COMMUNISM

While there are some similarities between anarchism and communism, they differ in two major ways. First, the communist believes that the unequal state should be overthrown and replaced with a strong socialist state that ensures equality. The anarchist, on the other hand, distrusts all strong central governments, including a socialist one. The anarchist believes that the natural state of man is one of mutual cooperation and that any type of authority will repress that natural state. To an anarchist, a government, if necessary at all, should be a small local government, directly accountable to its people.

Second, the anarchist is more prone to violence than the communist (this concept may seem alien to a twenty-first century mind, as the twentieth century is filled with violent communist revolution, but such was not the case in the nineteenth century). While the communist believes that revolution can be best achieved by advocating social reforms within existing governments, the anarchist believes that a display of governmental ineffectiveness (usually through planted bombs and assassinations) will instigate the people to rise up and overthrow the government.

Still, there are a great deal of similarities between anarchists and communists, and in the early to mid nineteenth century the two groups associated with and supported each other. Many anarchists joined socialist groups, most notably the International Working Men's Association (or the First International). It was this organisation that would officially sunder the alliance between the anarchists and the communists. In addition to concerns over what a post-revolutionary government would look like, anarchists and communists also sparred over private property. While anarchists believed that a man could keep private property in the new order, communists wanted all property to be in the hands of the collective government. Two major factions emerged, one controlled by Karl Marx and one controlled by Mikhail Bakunin.

Bakunin was a Russian anarchist that rejected Marx's ideal of a centralised, egalitarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat). Bakunin advocated total liberty, without any governmental influence whatsoever. In essence, he extended the concept of mutualism to cover all aspects of society. He also organised his followers into the Social Democratic Alliance, creating a bloc within the First International. Bakunin's rejection of a worker's state did not sit well with Marx, and in 1872 Marx orchestrated Bakunin's expulsion from the First International. This action sundered the First International, with Marx moving the headquarters to New York while the



Bakuninists assumed leadership of the European movements. Marx's group was dissolved in Philadelphia in 1876, while the anarchist-run Congress dissolved in London in 1881. It was the failures of all of these organisations that would lead the anarchists to develop small-scale terrorist tactics.

ANARCHISM IN THE IMPERIAL AGE

[W]e must spread our principles, not with words but with deeds, for this is the most popular, most potent, and the most irresistible form of propaganda.

---Mikhail Bakunin

With a focus on individual liberty rather than the collective good, anarchists have a difficult time associating with disciplined, organised groups. Anarchists preferred loose affiliations and correspondence with like-minded individuals rather than a large political machine (which was the very thing they railed against). As such, anarchists in the Imperial Age generally worked individually.

The violent actions of these anarchists, known as the "Propaganda of the Deed," can only be described as terrorism. Anarchists planted bombs in public places and made assassination attempts on ruling figures. Some of these anarchists did so at the expense of precaution, hoping that their martyrdom would rally the people. It was the Anarchist's fervent hope that these actions would inspire the masses to rise up and overthrow the government; more often, it simply turned public opinion against them.

Successful assassinations included Russian Tsar Alexander II (1881), French President Sadi Carnot (1894), Spanish Prime Minister Antonio Canovas del Castillo (1897), Empress Consort of Austria Elisabeth of Bavaria (1898), and Italian King Umberto I (1900). There was an assassination attempt against the King of Spain and two attempts against the German Kaiser in 1878. Tsar Alexander actually survived several assassination attempts before the final, successful one.

In Germany, reaction was immediate. Bismarck's government passed the Anti-Socialist Law (1878), which used the anarchist assassination attempts to suppress his liberal opposition. Overnight, it was illegal to be a socialist in the German Empire until the law was repealed in 1890. The police were given broad powers to arrest and interrogate suspected socialists, and the law dealt trade unions a crippling blow. The oppressive nature of this law actually served to swell the membership of the Social Democratic Party and its rhetoric grew increasingly militant. Bismarck himself left the government in the same year the Anti-Socialist Law was repealed.

In Russia, the assassination of Tsar Alexander II was a setback for reform. The Tsar was a supporter of an elected parliament, or Duma, and had completed plans for it the day before he died. His son, the new Tsar Alexander III, tore up those plans and instituted anti-anarchist policies aimed at strengthening autocratic power. He forced his subjects to speak



Russian, accept the Russian Orthodox faith, and submit to autocratic rule. Elected local governments were replaced with appointed overseers. Jews were banned from rural areas, even in places where they'd previously been allowed to settle. Libraries were censored in order to curb academic thought. Like his father, Alexander III was also the victim of revolutionary terrorism in 1887, when the Imperial police uncovered a bomb plot. One of the conspirators that was arrested and hanged was Alexander Ulyanov, the older brother of Vladimir Lenin (this would cement Lenin's opposition to Imperial government and drive him towards Marxism). When Alexander III died in 1894, his son, Nicholas II, would continue his father's autocratic policies.

THE ANARCHISM UMBRELLA

Terrorism breeds fear, and fear often breeds generalisations and hostility. The tactics of the anarchist in the Imperial Age have made anarchism synonymous with terrorism. Thus other groups employing similar tactics, such as the Fenians (supporters of Irish independence) are dismissed as anarchists.

Due to their past associations and similar short-term goals, communists are often branded anarchists. To the mind of a middle class gentleman, there is little difference between a communist/socialist newspaper and an anarchist one. Communist sympathisers are routinely harassed in the aftermath of anarchist activities (the crackdown in the German Empire is one extreme example).

Anarchism is also a convenient charge for a political figure to throw at his opponents, especially liberal ones. Even mere threats of such a tarring are enough to keep vulnerable public figures from defending themselves or non-affiliated socialist supporters.

ANARCHISM PLOT HOOKS

Anarchism is alive and well in the Imperial Age and can be quite easily incorporated into any type of campaign.

ANARCHY IN THE PURIST SENSE

An anarchist plot need not be the focus of an adventure. It is precisely the seemingly random nature of anarchist attacks that frighten the general public, and the same thing can happen to the player characters. Perhaps they are in the middle of an investigation when a bomb goes off in a nearby hansom. Perhaps they are walking past Regency Park where a local politician is giving a speech, only to watch in horror as a member of the crowd starts taking shots at him.

Similarly, anarchist ties can be a red herring. Perhaps the most likely suspect in an assassination attempt has anarchist sympathies, but he is no killer himself. Perhaps a socialist player character is unwittingly connected to a communist-turned-anarchist.

NOT IN OUR NAME

A member of a local communist group approaches a detective player character. A former but prominent member of the communist party has gone rogue, taking anarchism to heart and pledging violent revolution. The communist leader wants this anarchy stopped before he causes any damage and sullies his former acquaintances names in the process.

A variation on this theme could be a noble asking the player characters to discreetly remove a sibling from his or her anarchist friends. As part of the deal, the player characters are to make certain that the sibling in question has clean hands, no matter what the true facts of the situation.

DEVIL'S ANARCHY

The local occult society is concerned over the last few anarchy attacks. The time and manner of these attacks suggest the beginnings of a dark ritual that could, if not stopped, unleash a powerful demon into the world. Are the anarchists working for the demons? Can the player characters predict their next move? A twist on this is to make the anarchists unwitting pawns. Perhaps they have learned about cultists (naturally tied to the government) trying to open a gate for a powerful demon. They have been using bombs to destroy ritual sites, unknowingly participating in the rituals themselves.

THE ANARCHIST ADVANCED CLASS

The anarchist advanced class is designed to help Anarchists (or any suitably-themed character) to carry out their plots. Such characters are rarely suitable for player characters unless the campaign takes place under a repressive regime or the Game Master doesn't mind a little chaos in the group. Unless the Game Master will let the anarchist do what he does best, however, the Anarchist has little utility as a player character advanced class.

It's worth noting that the Anarchist advanced class is suitable for a character of any philosophy that wishes to use terrorist-style tactics. A Fenian character is a prime example; so too are communists that are coming around to believe that more direct methods are necessary to effect a change in government. A government assassin could also use this class as is and be a potent killer. Finally, an investigator, Monster Hunter, or Scientific Detective may take a few levels in this advanced class to support his own agenda (a Monster Hunter might find these killing techniques useful against his prey, while a Scientific Detective may wish to better understand the criminal mind of the Anarchist). In all cases, the Oathbound requirement should be changed to a suitable philosophy (a government assassin, for example, might have "patriotism").

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Anarchist, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Demolitions 8 ranks or Hide 8 ranks

Feat: Oathbound (Anarchism)

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Anarchist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Craft (chemical) (Int), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Dex), Disguise (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (civics, streetwise) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (oratory) (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Def	Reputation
1	+0	+2	+2	+0	Unassuming, Explosive Knowledge/ Sneak Attack	+1	+0
2	+1	+3	+3	+0	Contact, Precise Touch	+1	+0
3	+2	+3	+3	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+0
4	+3	+4	+4	+1	Explosive Knowledge/Sneak Attack	+2	+0
5	+3	+4	+4	+1	Contact, Network	+3	+1
6	+4	+5	+5	+2	Bonus Feat, Precise Touch	+3	+1
7	+5	+5	+5	+2	Explosive Knowledge/Sneak Attack	+4	+1
8	+6	+6	+6	+2	Contact	+4	+1
9	+6	+6	+6	+3	Bonus Feat, Precise Touch	+5	+2
10	+7	+7	+7	+3	Explosive Knowledge/Sneak Attack For the Cause	+5	+2

CLASS FEATURES

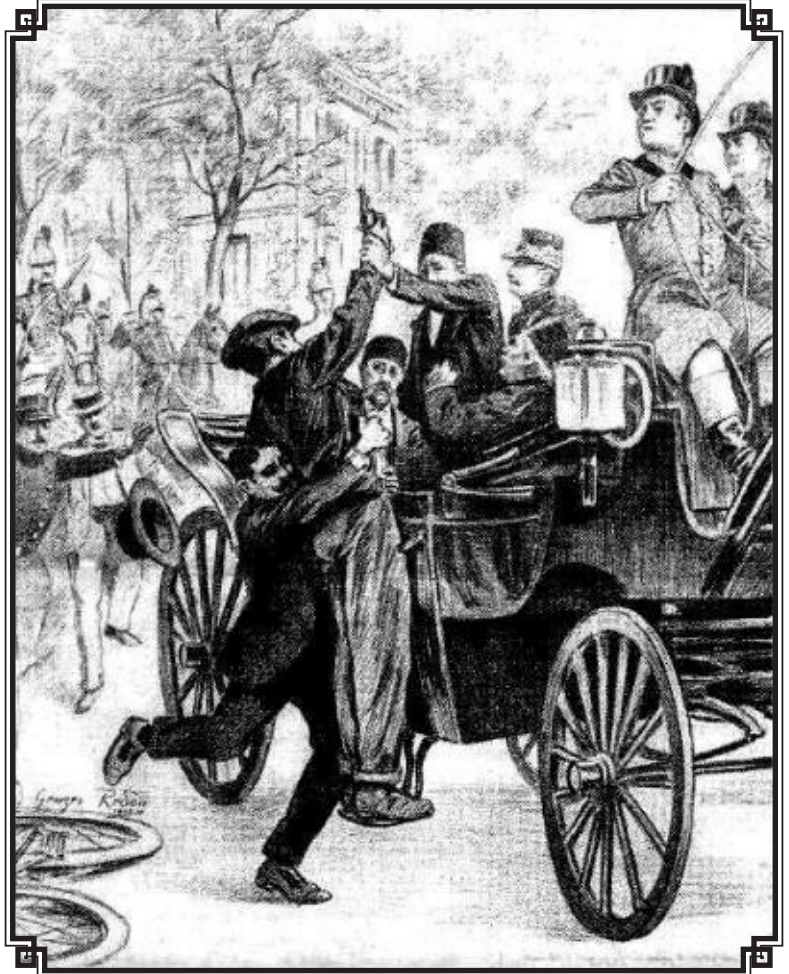
The following features pertain to the Anarchist advanced class.

Unassuming: The Anarchist quickly learns how to blend into crowds and avoid notice. At 1st level, the Anarchist gets a +1 to Bluff, Hide, and Move Silently checks. In addition, he adds his class level on any assessment attempts made via the Sense Motive skill.

Explosive Knowledge/Sneak Attack: Some Anarchists practice assassination while others learn how to plant explosives for maximum effect. Others do a little of both. Every time the Anarchist gains this class feature, he may choose to add +1d6 to either explosive knowledge or sneak attacks.

Explosive Knowledge: Through study and practice, an Anarchist learns how to place explosives for maximum effect. When the Anarchist uses his Demolition skill to place explosives, anyone caught in the blast radius will receive an extra 1d6 points of damage (per number of times Explosive Knowledge is taken). The Anarchist also receives a +1 on all Demolition checks each time he chooses this feature.

Sneak Attack: Any time the Anarchist's target would be denied her Dexterity bonus to Defense (whether she actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), the Anarchist's attack deals +1d6 points of damage. Should the Anarchist score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. It takes precision and penetration to hit a vital spot, so ranged attacks can only count as sneak attacks if the target is 30 feet away or less. With a sap or an unarmed strike, the Anarchist can make a sneak attack that deals nonlethal damage instead of normal damage. He cannot use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal nonlethal damage in a sneak attack, not even with the usual -4 penalty, because he must make optimal use of his weapon in order to execute the sneak attack. An Anarchist can only sneak attack living creatures with discernible anatomies. Additionally, any creature immune to critical hits is similarly immune to sneak attacks. Also, the Anarchist must also be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach a vital spot. The Anarchist cannot sneak attack while striking at a creature with concealment or by striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach. If the Anarchist gains sneak attack from another class or feat, the bonus dice from the various sneak attacks stack.



Contact: An Anarchist of 2nd level or higher has a small anarchist support network. Each time the Anarchist gains a contact the GM should develop a supporting character to represent the contact. The player can suggest the type of contact his or her character wants to gain, but the contact must be an ordinary character, not a heroic character. Typical contacts include noble sympathiser, anarchist newspaper editor/publisher, and union organizer.

A contact will not accompany an Anarchist on missions or risk his or her life. A contact can, however, provide information or render a service (make a specific skill check on the Anarchist's behalf).

At 2nd level, the Anarchist gains a low-level contact, at 5th level a mid-level contact, and at 8th level a high-level contact. The Anarchist may substitute two low-level contacts for a mid-level contact, or two mid-level contacts for a high-level contact (or any appropriate combination). Example: An Anarchist receives a high level contact at 9th level. Instead of taking the high-level contact, she opts to take two low-level contacts and a mid-level contact.

The Anarchist can't call on the same contact more than once in a week, and when he or she does call on a contact, compensation may be required. As both the Anarchist and his contact are likely ideologues, this compensation will

probably manifest in the form of reciprocal assistance. A newspaper contact, for example, may insist that the Anarchist distribute newspapers for her assistance. Compensation is at the discretion of the GM, but minor favours probably shouldn't require it.

Precise Touch: With a heightened level of skill and training in the art of demolitions, an Anarchist possesses a steadier hand while making precise movements and calibrations. Beginning at 2nd level, a Anarchist gains a +1 competence bonus on all Demolitions, Disable Device, and Knowledge (technology) skill checks. This bonus is also granted to a Anarchist's Reflex saving throw if he should fail to disarm any explosive, trap, etc. As an Anarchist gains experience in the field, he develops a higher level of skill with this ability. At 6th level, this bonus increases to +2 and to +3 when the Anarchist reaches 9th level.

Bonus Feat: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Mobster gets a bonus feat, which must be taken from the following list.

Alertness, Cautious, Dead Aim, Deceptive, Double Tap, Far Shot, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Run, Shot on the Run, Stealthy, Weapon Focus

Network: By 5th level, the Anarchist knows the location of many sympathisers in the area and may count on them when on the run from authorities. By spending an action point, the Anarchist can elude the authorities by hiding in one of these locations. All subsequent investigations by the authorities are assessed a +5 penalty to DCs.

The host of the house in the network is not considered a contact and sees the presence of the Anarchist as a nuisance. The host will want the Anarchist to move on as quickly as possible, often right after the immediate danger has passed. Anarchists that wish to stay longer will have to make a Diplomacy check. This check can be given a +2 circumstance bonus (if the Anarchist is being unfairly targeted) or a -2 circumstance bonus (if the Anarchist arrives just after an assassination attempt or a bomb blast). Note that the -2 penalty will apply even if the Anarchist was not involved (the host will be concerned with fall-out).

For the Cause: The Anarchist is willing to die for his cause, especially if he can make a statement while doing so. At 10th level, by spending two action points, the Anarchist can instantly appear in the spot where his explosive knowledge or sneak attack can be most effective, regardless of precautions or security measures (activating this class feature assumes that the Anarchist was able to bypass them). The Anarchist gains an automatic surprise action.

During the surprise round, the Anarchist will either set off a bomb (using explosive knowledge) or make an assassination attempt (using sneak attack). Immediately following the surprise attack, the Anarchist is considered flat-footed and goes last the following round. He has foregone all precautions in order to further his cause.

Note: While an Anarchist certainly can use this class feature as a suicide action by setting off a bomb on his person, it is not necessary. This class feature will enable him to appear at the best place to toss a bomb as well. This class feature cannot, however, be used for setting a bomb with any sort of time delay.



NEW FEATS

The following new feats are appropriate for Anarchist characters. Some of these may be found in *The Game Master's Guidebook to Victorian Adventure* from Adamant Entertainment and are reprinted for your convenience.

BULL'S EYE

Your attacks with ranged weapons are especially deadly.

Prerequisites: Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Benefit: When you threaten a critical hit with a ranged weapon, you may spend 1 action point to automatically confirm the critical.

IMPROVED DEAD AIM

Your skill with ranged weapons is unmatched

Prerequisites: Point Blank Shot, Far Shot, Dead Aim.

Benefit: The circumstance bonus on attack rolls granted by the Dead Aim feat increases from +2 to +3.

INFAMY

You have a particularly bad reputation (whether deserved or not).

Benefit: You get a +3 bonus on Charisma-based checks whenever the GM determines that your infamy would be a benefit. However, you suffer a -3 modifier on such checks whenever the GM determines that your infamy would work against you.

OATHBOUND

You swear undying allegiance to a person, group, organization, nation, empire, ethical philosophy, moral philosophy, or belief system. By doing so, you can better influence others who share your allegiance and more effectively oppose those who don't.

Prerequisites: At least one declared allegiance.

Benefit: Choose one of your allegiances. The allegiance you select becomes your primary allegiance and cannot be broken, except by you. The strength of your allegiance enables you to better assist other beings who have the same allegiance; if your aid another attempt succeeds, your ally gains a +3 circumstance bonus (instead of +2) on his skill check result or attack roll. Your dedication also grants you a +1 bonus on attack rolls made against creatures that do not have this allegiance.

Special: You cannot apply the benefits of this feat to multiple allegiances. If you break your oathbound allegiance, you forever lose the benefits of this feat but may take the feat again and apply the benefits to a new allegiance.

POKER FACE

You naturally hide your feelings, thoughts, and emotions well.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13.

Benefit: Anyone attempting to make a Sense Motive check against you gets a -2 circumstance penalty.

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