

IOTIAN AFFAIRS:

THE EFFECT OF THE MYSTERY MAN

Chances are that the players, even if they encounter the mystery man the very first week, will not fully appreciate his place in the scheme of things, or how he's upsetting the very situation the Federation is attempting to stabilize.

To all intents and purposes, it looks as if Iotia has somehow acquired its own very first superhero — just the thing a planetful of gangsters needs. But the caped crusader does not have even the opportunity to turn the crooks he catches in to the cops. There *are* no cops. The planet doesn't *need* any cops.

The simulation of Gangland Chicago all the Bosses are running is really more sophisticated than people playing Robbers without the Cops. All those gun-toting 'hoods' out there are like a combination policeman and block captain. They patrol their turf, catch uncontrolled 'criminals' and either recruit them or send them off to 'prison' to learn how to be a responsible thug. They make sure the garbage gets picked up, that the roads have their potholes fixed, and that kids get to school safely.

The Bosses, in spite of the way they fight (or used to fight; only the minor ganglords still indulge in what used to be a more popular pastime), actually have a pretty stable social organization. The form of government doesn't change, only the name of whoever holds the land. Since the visit of the *Enterprise*, the borders have gotten pretty much stable. The proportion of 'hits' (murders) to robberies and protection rackets has gone way down. Violent crime remains a way of life, and a popular one, but it isn't lethal, and it's actually kind of an exciting way to pay taxes to have some Tommy gun-carrying torpedoes showing up in the shop.

This 'mystery man', now, that's another matter. As anybody who attends the Ambassador's Reception that Friday following can determine, there is great suspicion among the mob bosses. Bela Oxmyx is pretty tight with these Feds, ain't he? What's he got going with them? What's the Feds' piece of the action, hey? This guy with the cape — he's one of *them*, ain't he?

The political situation around Bela Oxmyx and his Northside Coalition will deteriorate the longer the caped mystery man goes around unpunished and unstopped. It starts with 90% loyalty the first week the Feds and the mystery man arrive, and drops by 10% every week the mystery man continues to operate. Every week the GM rolls percentiles; if the result is equal to or less than the loyalty number, things stay calm if a little tense. If the die roll *exceeds* that number at any time, roll 1D10 and divide by two. This is the number of murder and/or kidnap attempts that will be made against Oxmyx, his hoods, the player-characters, or Ambassador Spencer, *each week from that time forward*. The attempts will continue, in any order the GM wishes, until the mystery man ceases to stir things up.

Loyalty will continue to drop past the time the shooting starts. If it reaches zero, faith in Oxmyx and the Feds has been permanently extinguished. A hit team will attempt to blow up his building, possibly with help from the inside, and the planet will go back to unending gang warfare.

Oxmyx himself has nothing to do with the mystery man, but he knows he can't convince anybody of that — unless he manages to catch him himself and put him out of business, publicly. Loudly. He'll be actively seeking the man with the aid of Blackie and his expert hit men. They have a 10% chance per week of tracking down the mystery man to his power station lair, where they'll stage an ambush if they can. Above everything else, Oxmyx wants to shield the Feds from any contact with this guy; they'll look like they're in cahoots, and that won't be good.

SEARCHING FOR THE MYSTERY MAN

Getting to the guy with the cape is not easy. He is all but impervious to weapons, and any time he makes a public appearance he

will be swimming in a sea of small-arms projectiles, potentially lethal to anyone coming near to him. The noise also makes it all but impossible to shout to him.

However, any tricorder scan made of the guy, or a precision scan of him made from orbit (only a 25% chance for that, too) will reveal a considerable expenditure of energy on his part — very sophisticated energy, in considerable quantities, apparently originating with him, not beamed from somewhere else. Any character or combination of characters with *Computer Operation* and either *Space Sciences: Astronautics* or *Electronics Technology* skill scores of 40 or better will be able to analyze the emissions of the mystery man and determine that he is apparently a humanoid being wearing some kind of super-powered suit, incorporating a powered exoskeleton, antigrav lifters, and some kind of forcefield, all apparently powered by conventional power cells built in. Getting that scan without revealing the non-Iotian origin of the scanners could be a little tricky, though.

Any attempt to follow the mystery man will require either spaceborne sensors, aircraft, or a very elaborate network of spotters on the ground. There are thousands of places for him to hide in the skyscrapers and disused buildings of the city, and only at evening, or when his power is considerably reduced, does he leave the city to fly to a small, disused power station not far from town. There he hooks into a disused powergrid and recharges, which can take from 1 to 3 hours. He is not helpless at such times, still being in the suit, but he can be presumed to be restricted by the power cables to staying in the same place. An alarm system in the building protects the wearer of the suit when he's sleeping, in case someone should try to break in.

IDENTITY AND PURPOSE OF THE MYSTERY MAN

Ten years ago the Federation yacht *Amadeus Mozart* made a forced crash landing on Iotia, crippled by a total failure of the navigation systems. The crash killed the owner, electronics manufacturer Hans de Voop, and his wife Kristina. Miraculously their son, seven-year-old Manfred de Voop, survived with only minor injuries.

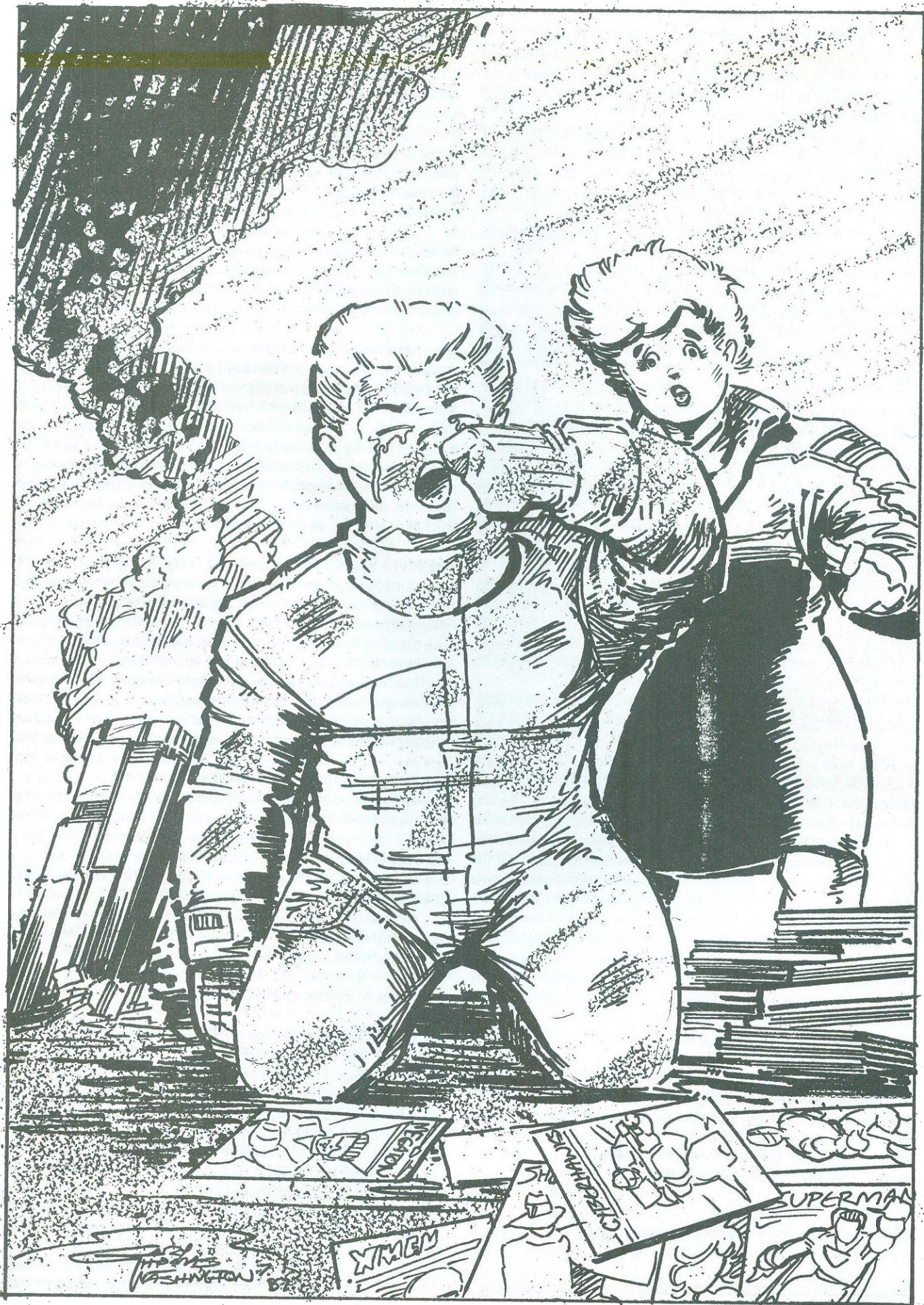
The *Mozart* had crashed high in the snow-covered pine hills of the north country, and it took a long time for the Iotian searchers to locate it even though they came from a nearby village. They found the wreckage of the starship, the bodies, and, to their astonishment, the lone survivor. He was sitting, crying, and reading his comics collection. He didn't know what else to do.

The Iotians didn't know what to do, either. They took the boy back home with him and kept his origin a secret. There were very many things in the wreck they didn't understand, so they kept that a secret, too. They asked the boy about them, but he knew scarcely more than they. He knew about the computer, though, and the villagers understood electricity, and they were fast learners.

Over and over Manfred de Voop asked to be taken home, or a ship be called to take him home. With the navigation systems destroyed, the natives had no idea where 'home' was. In a fit of pique the young de Voop swore that if he were Superman® he'd just up and fly himself back home. And he showed them the books and what he would be able to do.

A light dawned in the Iotians. With all the equipment they had in the crashed ship they could make a pretty fair stab at giving Manfred a shot at his wish. Unfortunately they could not equip him with warp drive, but they could give him a suit that could keep him alive at almost any extreme of heat or cold, shield him from any harm, material or not, and make him fantastically strong. In addition they could give him weapons — a phaser built into his belt for one, sonic stunners he could conceal in his wrists. And with the antigravs they found they could give him flight, right out of the atmosphere.

When he was little, Manfred was delighted with the way the Iotian villagers went about building him a super-suit. As he grew older, though, the thought came to him that he was stuck on a planet an unknown distance from home, in an unknown direction, and though



the village had heard of the Federation, the last time any ship had come to them had been almost a hundred years before. He grew discouraged, even despondent. He would have attempted to fix the radio but for the fear the natives had that he would be discovered and the ship taken away from him. His only hope was that someday the Federation would come back to Iotia and find him.

Then came the day when he heard another ship had come — and already left. He was so far from the capital city when it all happened that the news came days too late. Enraged, heartbroken, he met with his village elders and with them planned a daring escapade. Supposedly the 'Feds' had made a contact with the local gang bosses. What if he went to them, suit and all, and made himself and his wrecked ship known to them? Wouldn't they help him?

The elders didn't think so. The gangs would take his suit, find their little village, and plunder it. They would use what they found to make war on each other, and increase the suffering of the planet. This they couldn't allow. And they took the suit from him and locked it away.

Manfred argued, but to no avail. More than two years later he finally found a way to have his way: Suppose he kept his identity a secret— went to the city, and instead of revealing who he was and where he was from, he just did what he was supposed to be doing: fighting crime. He wouldn't be tricked by false offers of help that way, and he felt the suit could protect him from anything they'd be able to throw at him. And it would make such a mess of Iotia that the Federation would surely hear of him when they came back — whenever that was — and they'd know, from the reports, what had transpired, and what, and then who, was responsible.

The elders considered it, and decided that the opportunity to strike a blow against gangsterism made the risk worthwhile. Besides, Manfred was seventeen, almost man-sized, and he needed to at least try to reach his people.

The Federation does indeed record that a yacht starship named the *Amadeus Mozart* was lost ten years ago, but two sectors away from this one. No ships were ever lost without trace in the Sigma Iotia sector; the two that did crack up here were an explorer and a Klingon privateer, both recovered.

Manfred has no idea that another ship has come the same week he arrived. He fully expects to be years gathering notice before another Star Fleet ship shows up. He'll need proof beyond a uniform of identity, and he'll be extremely wary of traps. With his phaser and sonic stunners, he can easily deal with any threat, but he knows the suit is vulnerable to overwhelming force, so he can't relax his guard or trust any Iotian gang member or suspected gang member even the tiniest bit.

Manfred has regretted many things he has done and said to the Iotians in the last ten years, but he has a secret he is eternally proud he did *not* share with his benefactors all this time: Just two weeks before the crash, he finally got over his seven-year-old's desire to be The Incredible Hulk®.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Name: SPENCER, Robert Thomas

Rank/Title: Ambassador Plenipotentiary

Current Assignment: The planet Iotia

Position: Federation Ambassador

Race: Human

Age: 39

Sex: Male

Attributes:

STR—51	CHA—78
END—58	LUC—69
INT—63	PSI—04
DEX—62	

Combat Statistics:

To-Hit Numbers—Bare-Hand Damage: 1D10+5

Modern 43

AP:10

IITH 33

Significant Skills

Rating

Administration	78
Carousing	58
Communications System Operation	37
Computer Operation	44
Gaming	
Chess	64
Instruction	41
Language	
Klingon	22
Orion	31
Vulcan	12
Leadership	31
Marksmanship, Modern	34
Negotiation/Diplomacy	66
Security Procedures	05
Social Sciences,	
American History	32

Distinguishing Physical Characteristics:

Ambassador Spencer is a thin, intense man of medium height with prominent jaw lines and thin black hair. He gives the impression of being an intense, highly-strung administrator, which, of course, he is.

PERSONALITY:

Motivations/Desires/Goals:

Spencer is a former teacher of American history with particular emphasis on social disorders of the 20th Century. He is a capable administrator with a demonstrated competence in the often-tricky process of opening new worlds to Federation contact. On this particular mission he is particularly concerned with opening Iotia to normalizing relations with the Federation. Having been contaminated, Iotia cannot be returned to its pre-*Horizon* days. The most that can be hoped for is a smooth transition to a modern Federation trading world with the least impact on the local population.

Manner:

Spencer's intensity makes him a little hard to bear. He speaks forcefully and positively, often giving his listeners the impression that there is no room for negotiation. Oftentimes there isn't, but you can't tell from the way he says things. He does not give in; he 'modifies his stance'.

Special Knowledges/Powers:

Spencer knows the special orders the Captain of the vessel bearing him to Iotia was given. He agrees with them in principle, but he is strongly against any attempt to forcibly remove any technology the Iotians have acquired and put to use without harming their society. He is also not very keen on the idea of sneaking around behind the backs of their host, Bela Oxmyx, and his fellow gang bosses, no matter the advantages or freedoms it brings.

Name: OXMYX, Bela

Rank/Title: Gang Boss

Current Assignment: Planetary Administrator of Iotia

Position: Boss of the Northside Gang

Race: Iotian

Age: 54

Sex: Male

Attributes:

STR—64

END—68

INT—80

DEX—61

CHA—49

LUC—72

PSI—24

Combat Statistics:

To-Hit Numbers—

Pistol 52

SMG 54

HTH 50

Bare-Hand Damage: 1D10+5

AP: 10

Significant Skills:

Administration

Bribery

Carousing

Gaming,

Dice

Poker

Leadership

Marksmanship, Archaic,

SMG

Pistol

Negotiation/Diplomacy

Personal Combat, Unarmed

Streetwise

Rating:

62

86

44

59

38

76

47

57

34

40

83

Distinguishing Physical Characteristics:

Bela Oxmyx appears to be a tall, heavysset Human of middle years with salt-and-pepper hair combed back from his forehead and black heavy horn-rimmed glasses, with which he sometimes gestures. He is quick for his bulk, and his hands are usually in motion when he speaks.

PERSONALITY:

Motivations/Desires/Goals:

Oxmyx once wanted to take over all the gangs and be Boss of the entire planet. Thanks to Captain Kirk, he's done all that without spilling a drop of blood, all for 25% of the take that gets farmed back into the economy anyway in the form of education and public welfare projects. He hasn't a care in the world, aside from making sure that things don't get upset so that he loses out on his power and prestige. He'll come down like a ton of bricks on anybody who gets between him and that goal. He truly likes the Feds, wants to be their pal, but doesn't want to be seen as some kind of doormat, either.

Manner:

Oxmyx is nothing if not loud, brash and direct. He can be perfectly urbane if a little brusque, but if he wants your head you'd better unscrew it for him before he has one of his guys do it. Subtlety is not his style. He won't conceal his emotions, and he won't ever be gentle, good news or bad.

Special Knowledges/Powers:

None.

Name: KRAKO, Jojo

Rank/Title: Gang Boss

Current Assignment: Deputy Planetary Administrator of Iotia

Position: Gang Boss of the Southside Territory

Race: Iotian

Age: 52

Sex: Male

Attributes:

STR—42

END—44

INT—68

DEX—41

CHA—57

LUC—81

PSI—02

Combat Statistics:

To-Hit Numbers—

Pistol 21

SMG 31

HTH 41

Bare-Hand Damage: 1D10+1

AP: 8

Significant Skills

Administration

Bribery

Carousing

Forgery

Gaming

Poker

Leadership

Marksmanship, Archaic,

SMG

Pistol

Negotiation/Diplomacy

Personal Combat, Unarmed

Streetwise

Rating

43

23

29

61

51

32

20

10

54

41

30

Distinguishing Physical Characteristics:

Short, bald, ordinarily jolly, Krako is a rotund, short but stolid presence with black hair plastered neatly behind his ears. His movements are typically quick and imperious - a jabbing finger, a ponderous swing of belly, a dangerous outthrust of chin. In Oxmyx's presence, however, he's much more subdued, and the astute observer will notice some resentment towards his former enemy, now permanently his boss.

PERSONALITY:

Motivations/Desires/Goals:

Jojo Krako used to be Boss of the up-and-coming Southside Gang. Now, though he's Deputy Administrator for the entire planet, he's come down in status. His war with Bela Oxmyx and the Northsiders has been permanently put on hold, and he's been locked into the second-banana slot. His gang is losing its fighting edge, even though so many more of them are not dying in gun battles, and he hates the thought that Oxmyx has won the war without fighting the battle. He hates the way Oxmyx sucks up to those Feds worse. If he didn't have them, Krako knows Oxmyx would have to fight all over again. The idea has a kind of appeal to Krako. He'd love another crack at the Northsiders.

Manner:

Krako is a man of no middle speed or lukewarm temperament; blow hot, blow cold. He has a massive ego and a voice to match, and when he's not the jolly fat man, he's the angry fat man. He goes very quickly from one to the other. Not afraid of a fight, whatever the odds.

Special Knowledges/Powers:

Krako knows Oxmyx trusts him but doesn't know Krako doesn't trust him back. He's never found an opportunity for a decent betrayal, though.

Name: MONGO, Leelax

Rank/Title: Gang Boss

Current Assignment: Territorial Governor

Position: Boss of the Loop Territory

Race: Iotian

Age: 47

Sex: Male

Attributes

STR—65

END—80

INT—59

DEX—60

CHA—67

LUC—48

PSI—12

Combat Statistics

To-Hit Numbers—

SMG 60

Pistol 54

HTH 50

Bare-Hand Damage: 1D10+5

AP: 10

Significant Skills

Administration

Bribery

Carousing

Gaming,

Dice

Leadership

Marksmanship, Archaic,

Pistol

SMG

Negotiation/Diplomacy

Personal Combat, Unarmed

Streetwise

Rating

51

22

63

43

30

48

60

28

40

59

Distinguishing Physical Characteristics:

Tall, lanky, with a prominent nose, pale washed-out-looking hair and piercing eyes, Leelax Mongo is all sharp and strange angles, the worse when he looks sideways at you. His hands are always busy, fingering a gun, a knife, flipping a silver dollar into the air. He seems to be trembling nearly all the time, but in fact it's just his body staying in motion. Even when he's relaxed it makes other people nervy and jumpy. Has a prominent scar down one cheek along the bone.

PERSONALITY:

Motivations/Desires/Goals:

Mongo is, after Krako, the next largest gang boss on the planet. His Loop gang controls most of the downtown district, where pickings are rich but the competition is stiff and trigger-happy. He knows a lot of small fry, gangs that aren't large enough to do more than irritate him, that wouldn't stand a chance against the majors. Some of them owe him favors. Mongo doesn't really mind the present setup, since it helps keep gang violence down in his neck of the woods, but he doesn't feel right about the Feds, source of the Book or no. He would dearly love to make a strike against either one of the two biggies and come out ahead, but doesn't know how he could do this without getting killed back. If he can find a way to make them look bad, he'll go for it.

Manner:

Mongo looks and acts hyperkinetic, but he speaks slowly, with long pauses, and oftentimes just leaves sentences hanging with his mouth open, looking his audience in the eye as if to measure them before he finishes what he was saying. This bothers people, and the people it bothers the most are the people he likes to do it to the most. A not-very-nice person on a planet full of un-nice characters.

Special Knowledges/Powers:

None.

Typical Hood

STR—40+3D10

END—40+3D10

INT—20+3D10

DEX—40+3D10

CHA—20+3D10

LUC—30+3D10

PSI—1D10

Significant Skills

Marksmanship, Archaic,

SMG

Pistol

Personal Combat, Armed, Knife

Personal Combat, Unarmed

Streetwise

Rating

40+3D10

30+3D10

30+3D10

30+4D10

40+3D10

Name: de VOOP, Manfred

Rank/Title: Castaway/Superhero

Current Assignment: Cleaning up crime on Iotia

Position: Fugitive

Race: Human

Age: 17

Sex: Male

Attributes:

STR—59/300

END—73/300

INT—65

DEX—68/100

CHA—31

LUC—84

PSI—08

Combat Characteristics:

To-Hit Numbers—

Modern 39/65

HTH 45/66

Bare-Hand Damage: 1D10+2/6D10+7

AP: 10/14

Significant Skills:

Deflector Shield Technology

Electronics Technology

Environmental Suit Operation

Life Support Systems Technology

Mechanical Engineering

Negotiation/Diplomacy

Personal Combat, Unarmed

Physical Sciences

Gravitics

Planetary Survival

Warm Temperate

Space Sciences

Astronautics

Superhero Suit Operation

Superhero Suit Technology

Trivia

Comic Books

Rating

18

34

32

28

32

20

22

26

24

15

20

10

31

Distinguishing Physical Characteristics:

Manfred de Voop is a tall, well-proportioned but not overly-developed young Human male with short, close-cropped blonde hair, piercing blue eyes, and an almost comical seriousness about him. He is tanned and fit, obviously the product of an outdoor life, and his hands are used to long but fine work.

Brief Personal History:

The only son of Hans and Kristina de Voop, Manfred de Voop was born on New Paris to a life of wealth and comfort, since his father was the founder of a respected if small electronics manufacturing concern. He was suddenly orphaned on a family vacation when the

navigational systems on his parents' yacht, the *Amadeus Mozart*, utterly failed, and the ship crashed on Iotia. Natives found the child and raised him; he grew up with the memory that he came from the stars and would have to someday return to them. His schooling was half Iotian, half what he could learn from the ship's salvaged computer tapes. His education is heavily technical, for he devoted the better part of his studies to learning how to rebuild as much of the technology as he could to help him return home.

PERSONALITY:

Motivations/Desires/Goals:

Manfred de Voop is first and last determined. Even as a child he was a more rounded individual than the pallid and colorless Iotians, and he grew up more alone than almost any other Human child. His childhood urge to become a figure from a fantasy has given him one way to make his presence known to Iotia and, with luck, to the Federation as well. He wants nothing so much as to return home, with as much of the ship and, of course, the remains of his parents as he can. He is anxious about what has happened to the family business in his absence, and desperately homesick.

Manner:

Manfred could properly be called abrupt. He never learned much of the social graces, and never even had a local girlfriend. All his time and energy have gone into finding a way out of his predicament, and he has devoted neither time nor effort to anything else. He can be unintentionally rude, as well as exceptionally brooding even for an adolescent. These effects may or may not last past the time he actually leaves Iotia.

Special Knowledges/Powers:

Manfred has had built for himself a marvelously powerful super-suit that looks a great deal like the costumes worn by the caped crimefighters of his old comic-book collection, and built with the help of the natives who rescued him and his parents' starship. In essence it is an immensely strong and compact exoskeleton capable of hoisting perhaps three to five metric tons in a dead lift through the use of fibrous synthetic muscles, which give a pronounced bulging appearance to the suit. Surrounding this shell is a powerful environmental retaining field that not only provides a breathable atmosphere for the wearer but protects him, in conjunction with the suit's own physical strength, against up to 100 points of physical or energy damage per combat turn.

When Manfred wears the suit, his effective MAX OP END goes

up to 300, though his real END and MAX OP END remain the same. Essentially, the suit acts as another being who takes all the damage that Manfred would ordinarily take. The suit's protective shield acts much as a starship's shields do; it can regenerate up to 100 points of damage per combat turn on its own, effectively nullifying any amount of damage received below that amount. If the suit's MAX OP END is ever reduced to a value between 100 and 51, this regeneration capacity is *halved* to 50 points restored a combat turn. If the suit's MAX OP END falls to 50 points or less, the suit loses *all* power to regenerate. Any damage received on a subsequent turn will reduce what MAX OP END remains without regeneration until it reaches zero. Any damage received by the suit after that point reaches Manfred at full strength.

Furthermore, once the MAX OP END falls below 51 the suit loses the power of flight; if the MAX OP END falls below 41 it loses its strength; and if the MAX OP END ever falls below 21 it loses all built-in weaponry.

The suit may not restore itself once its MAX OP END has been reduced below 100. It will take one hour of repair time to restore every five points of damage (rounded *up*) it has received below that number. Once the suit has been repaired to a MAX OP END of 100, it functions normally (i.e., with an END of 300) thereafter. If the suit's MAX OP END has been reduced to zero or less it may not be repaired — at least, not by Manfred. The original builders may or may not be able to restore it, if it can be gotten to them.

Concealed antigravs on the belt and the boots provide a flight capability equal to that of a light aircraft. Top speed in an atmosphere is over 700 kph and is higher in space, possibly to escape velocity from a Class M world. The suit can sustain life for 36 hours without undue effort, but it is incapable of warp flight.

The suit is armed, carrying the equivalent of a stunner in each wrist cuff, aimed by pointing the entire arm. There is also a reworked phaser I-A in the belt buckle, useful for applying heat or wide-angle stun shots or even disintegration as required. This weapon is considered to be a normal phaser I-A in all respects, except that it has an effective Power of 120.

The belt also contains the powerpacks and all controls for operations of the suit. It takes approximately five minutes for trained personnel to don it and activate its systems. In all respects it handles like an environmental suit except for its 'springy' muscular feel and strong tingling sensation on the skin from the protective field.

Currently the suit is sized for a 17-year-old, and will be a tight fit on any adult character. Certain adult female characters might find it no problem at all to put on and use.

