



# HELLFIRE HOSTAGES

BY ALLEN VARNEY

Every hero's  
nightmare: the  
ultimate terrorists

Artwork by John Statema

Allen Varney has published modules for the D&D® and AD&D® games and the AD&D SPELLJAMMER™ campaign set, and game books for TSR's book division. He designed the GAMMA-RAUDERS™ board game, and he's currently working on a trilogy of adventures for the new D&D HOLLOW WORLD™ campaign set. He returns to the MARVEL UNIVERSE™ with an adventure based on his Deluxe City campaign set.

Terrorists have taken over the Hellfire Club, "bastion of the wealthy imperialists." The Hellfire Club's Inner Circle members dare not reveal their mutant powers by defeating the terrorists, so they defer to the police. But the terrorists look immensely powerful themselves, so the police call in the super heroes!

This MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ adventure works best for a Judge and 2-4 relatively low-powered but experienced heroes. You need the Advanced Rules to play. The *Deluxe City* campaign set and several volumes of the *Gamer's Handbook to the Marvel Universe* series should prove helpful but not necessary.

## The Club

An old and prestigious upper-class club, the Hellfire Club stands at 410 Fifth Avenue, between 66th and 67th Streets, in New York City—just a few blocks from Avengers Mansion.

The club figures prominently in the social life of the wealthiest class of New Yorkers. Politicians, financiers, and industrial moguls visit for drinks and relaxation in the afternoon. In the evening, the Hellfire Club's frequent (and frequently bacchanalian) parties draw Manhattan's elite.

But the club has another, hidden, purpose: Its leaders want to take over the world. As shown in many issues of the various *X-Men* titles, the club's mutant leaders are engaged in a conspiracy of wealth, influence, and super powers. Along the way they've made many enemies—including, it appears, a terrorist group.

**Maps:** For an exterior map, use the west map of midtown Manhattan in the *Deluxe City* campaign set; assume the Hellfire Club is the square building on Fifth Avenue between 48th and 49th Streets, just north of Charles Scribners' Sons bookstore.

If you don't have the *Deluxe City* set,

locate the Hellfire Club on the Advanced Set's map at the Armstrong Hotel, at the corner of Johnson Street and 8th Avenue.

An interior map of the Hellfire Club is provided with this adventure. The following description is drawn from the "Hellfire Club" entry in the *Deluxe City* campaign set.

## Inside and Out

Complete layouts of Hellfire Club Mansion have not yet been revealed. This information and the accompanying map are based on published accounts and are not official. Later accounts may invalidate parts of this description.

**Exterior:** "Mansion," with its connotations of grandeur and display, seems an inappropriate term for the Hellfire Club's headquarters—at least as seen from the street.

The brick building (Good-strength walls) occupies the entire block, but it is inconspicuous. Designed in New York elite style, the building is only 30' (two areas) tall. Its entrance is set off from the street by a short, simple flight of concrete steps. Beside the white wooden door (of oak, Typical strength) is a small bronze plaque reading HELLFIRE CLUB—ESTABLISHED MDCCLXIII.

A small steel hatch on the roof leads to the closet of a private bedroom on the second floor. The hatch and its lock are of Good strength.

**Entryway:** The street entrance is locked by an ordinary lock of Typical strength. This is because the Hellfire Club admits only members and their guests. Inside is a small foyer and cloakroom. (Such Typical strengths are true of the entire building. Nothing about the mansion's construction betrays that it is anything but an ordinary social club.)

**Interior:** The interior decor is 18th-century Colonial, matching the senior members' eccentric predilection for dressing in 18th-century garb during meetings. Walnut panelling, chandeliers and candelabra of cut glass, gaslight globes in wall sconces—all project an air of not-at-all understated elegance.

The mansion's simple floor plan gives pride of place to the great central ballroom, a spacious carpeted room over 120' (one area) long and 40' wide. The ceiling is 29' (two vertical areas) high, reaching the roof of the building. There is nothing between the ceiling and the roof but electrical wiring.

Many elaborate doorways lead to the ballroom. The dominant feature of the room is a palatial fireplace, where a great fire blazes cheerily every evening during winter months. The fireplace stands to the right as one enters through the foyer from the main entrance on Fifth Avenue.

**Rooms and chambers:** A hallway surrounds the ballroom on both floors of the building. On the upper floor, the hall opens onto a sturdy wooden balcony (Good strength) overlooking the ballroom. Public rooms and private chambers are arranged along the outer sides of the hallways on both floors.

Public rooms are all on the ground floor. These include a large smoking room, an extensive library (with a large selection of books that earlier centuries deemed "indecent"), and a dining room that seats 64. Next to the dining room is a large and well-equipped kitchen.

Two staircases and an elevator give access to the second floor. Members always refer to the 18 small cubicles on the upper floor as "chambers." The semantic difference between "chambers" and "rooms" is that rooms are public but chambers are for private matters—business, gambling, or romance. Most chambers measure 15'×10'; truly high rollers reserve one of the two 15'×15' chambers. Each chamber has one round table, one chair, and a wide padded divan. Chambers are soundproofed with Good material and locked with Good locks.

At the rear of the second floor, above the kitchen, a brave searcher finds the private rooms of the Inner Circle. Two fully furnished bedrooms await the rare times when leaders celebrate heavily and are unwilling or unable to drive home. In the closet ceiling of one bedroom, a locked hatch leads to the roof.

Between the bedrooms stands an elegant meeting room, where the Inner Circle once held the X-Men captive.

**Basement:** This concrete-walled (Excellent strength) storage area, accessible only from the kitchen on the first floor, is filled with crates of kitchen and party supplies. A locked and guarded basement room holds a small armory for the Inner Circle's mercenaries. Mercenaries have no barracks, lockers, or lounge areas on the premises, but they often hang around the kitchen.

There was once another entrance to the basement—from below through the

sewers. The hero Wolverine used this to break into the mansion and rescue his fellow X-Men. The basement floor had an iron grate of Excellent strength, locked with a Remarkable-strength lock. The round grate led to a concrete access tunnel and down to the sewers. The Inner Circle used this entrance to smuggle in mercenaries and firearms. But since Wolverine's invasion, the tunnel has been filled in with concrete.

## The Set-Up

**Campaigns outside New York:** If the campaign takes place outside New York City, the heroes could be visiting New York in their public or secret identities. The Hellfire Club may also have opened a branch club in the heroes' city, though this makes a long-term impact on the campaign.

**Getting the heroes involved:** If the PCs maintain official connections with the police, they get the request for aid through their usual channels. Otherwise, the heroes hear about the takeover through a radio or TV bulletin: "Early reports tell of a terrorist takeover at the prestigious Hellfire Club. Gunshots have been heard—no, correction—energy blasts have been heard inside. Police are on the scene."

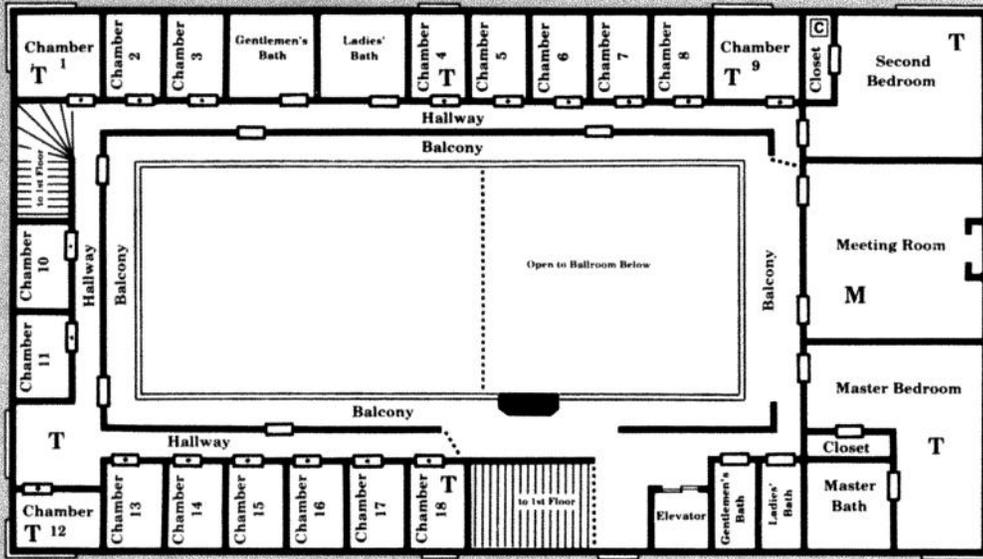
If the heroes are not in range of a radio or television, a friend who belongs to the club could manage to phone a frantic message to the heroes' headquarters: "I'm at the Hellfire Club. A bunch of crazies have taken over, and they've got weird weapons! If you don't do something, they'll—no! Keep away! Aaaaahhhh!"

**At the scene:** As the heroes arrive, police are cordoning three blocks of Fifth Avenue in front of the club. Publisher and club member J. Jonah Jameson stands behind the police lines, fuming at the attack and blaming it on those "super-powered demagogue nuisances who attract this violence."

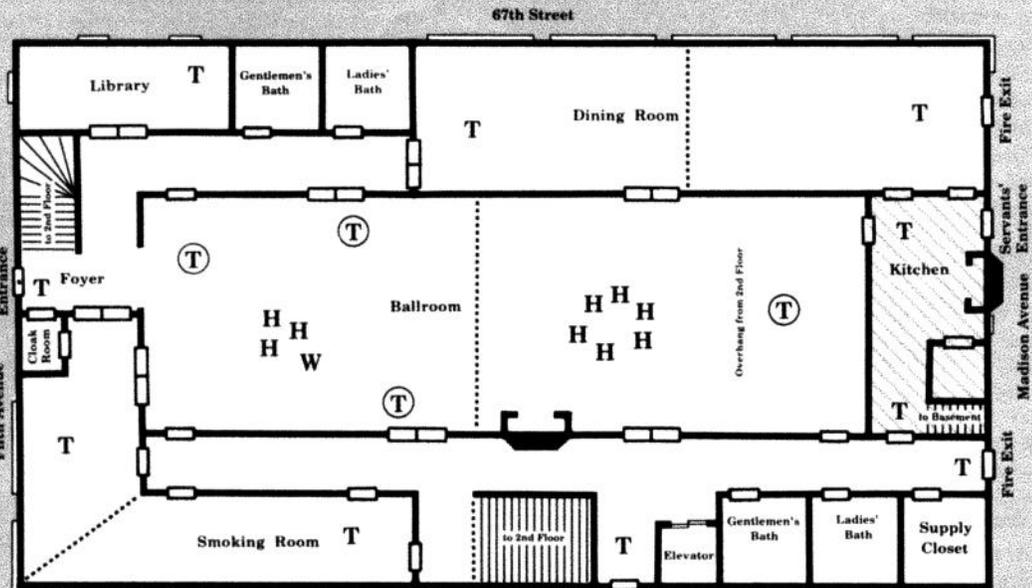
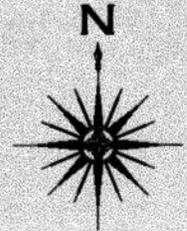
Police lieutenant Michael Mandelman can tell the heroes what little the NYPD knows. A few minutes ago, someone phoned 911 and reported screams, shouts, and "sounds like ray-guns" inside the club. Someone inside with a megaphone is claiming to be with the "United Front for Wakandan Liberation" and is holding several dozen hostages, many of them wealthy and influential. The terrorists have threatened to kill the hostages if anyone

## HELLFIRE CLUB MANSION

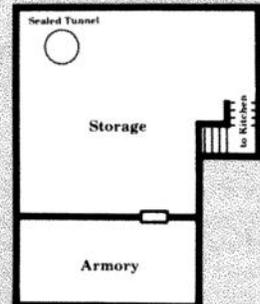
0 5 10 15  
Feet



Second Floor



First Floor



Basement

attacks, but they have not yet issued demands.

Heroes with knowledge of terrorist groups have never heard of this United Front. Wakanda, the small African nation ruled by the Black Panther, suffers no known political unrest. No amount of investigation uncovers any notable connection between Wakanda and the Hellfire Club.

**Entering the club:** Terrorist guards watch all doors and upper-story windows, but given its relatively light construction, breaking into the Hellfire Club is not difficult. Likely entry points include the ballroom and kitchen chimneys (each 2' wide and two stories tall), basement windows (not shown on the map), the roof hatch and, of course, frontal assaults through the doors.

Naturally, any hostage situation calls for caution. As Lieutenant Mandelsman can make clear, a frontal assault would alert the guards and probably doom the hostages.

## Inside the Club

There are 24 terrorists. The four main terrorists, the leaders of the group, are guarding 50 hostage club members and staffers in the ballroom, including Emma Frost (the White Queen) and, at the Judge's discretion, other rulers of the club's mutant Inner Circle. Base the choice of other Inner Circle members on the Hellfire Club's current roster as shown in the comics; on individual villains' personal rivalries with PC heroes; and on game balance, should the PCs end up in battle with the Inner Circle.

Regardless of whom you choose, none of the super villains of the Inner Circle want to reveal their powers in front of the normal hostages. Since the terrorists haven't yet threatened their lives directly, the villains are content to wait for rescue.

Emma Frost can use many of her telepathic powers invisibly. Though the heroes cannot know it, she has tried mental attacks against the terrorists guarding her—to no effect!

Each terrorist's position is marked with a T on the Hellfire Club map. Main terrorists are circled T's; subordinate terrorists have no circles. Small groups of four to six hostages are indicated with H's. The White Queen is shown with a W. As for the M in the second floor meeting room—keep reading.

Statistics for the White Queen, the

main and subordinate terrorists, and the hostages appear in the Non-Player Characters sidebar.

## The Terrorists' Plan

Here is an approximate time line of events:

**As the heroes arrive:** A terrorist leader leans out the upper-story window in the east wall and fires a strange-looking gun at a police helicopter. The gun's blood-red beam barely misses the chopper. "Back away or there's trouble!" the terrorist shouts. Heroes can't identify the weapon's make or model.

At the Judge's option, a police sharpshooter on a roof opposite the club fires at the terrorist. The bullet misses him, chipping the stone of the building. The terrorist withdraws as though he never noticed the bullet. The sharpshooter swears he had the terrorist right in his sights. Heroes who examine the angle of the bullet hole in the wall can deduce there was no way the shot could have missed the terrorist.

**A few minutes later, or as the heroes enter the club:** An unseen terrorist at an upper window, using a megaphone, announces the demands. They want \$10,000,000 and an Army transport helicopter, to be flown in from the National Guard base at Governors Island in New York Harbor. The helicopter is to carry the terrorists and hostages to JFK Airport, where the terrorists want to board an empty but completely fueled 727, with minimal crew, and take off.

"It all happens in one hour," the terrorist says, "or we start bringing down the revenge of the oppressed classes." And he adds, "We'll also deliver some interesting news about the Hellfire Club's leadership."

Though Lieutenant Mandelsman advises against it, the heroes can make ranged attacks against the terrorist. These attacks miss just as the sharpshooter's bullet did, though the heroes may not be certain whether they should have hit. The terrorist, paying no attention, withdraws.

**Minutes later, or as heroes in the club prepare to enact their plan:** One of the hostages, a retired bank executive named Herbert Altick, makes a foolish try at overpowering a terrorist. He launches himself at the man but misses

his target and plummets to the floor.

Belatedly, the terrorist notices the attack and threatens the older man. Altick gasps, "My heart—" and writhes in agony. He is indeed having a heart attack, as his wife, Winona, screams. If he doesn't receive expert medical help within a few minutes, he'll die.

The main terrorists seem to freeze for a moment. Then one turns to Emma Frost and says, "Well? Isn't there something one of you mu— . . . people can do?" The heroes may note that the terrorist stops just short of saying "mutant." Frost coolly replies that she's no doctor, nor is anyone else here. (Frost knows emergency CPR techniques but has no interest in saving Altick. The other members don't know CPR; most of them leave such messy details to their servants.)

If the heroes take no action to stop the terrorists or rescue the hostages, the scenario proceeds as follows:

**Two minutes later:** One of the main terrorists orders two subordinates to carry Herbert Altick outside and leave him on the front porch. The main terrorist announces Altick's heart attack via megaphone, then allows police or heroes to carry Altick to an ambulance. The terrorist offers no explanation why, having threatened to kill all the hostages before, he is suddenly concerned with a single heart-attack victim. (Altick will survive without permanent harm once transported to a hospital.)

Attacks on the main terrorists prove ineffective. All attacks seem to miss, or the terrorists evade them using the surprising powers described later. But heroes can attack or ambush the subordinates.

**An hour later:** A main terrorist announces via megaphone, "We have surprising information regarding the true nature of the Hellfire Club's Inner Circle. They are not what they appear to be. In fact, they're all—" Suddenly, from inside, the hostages scream! The terrorist at the window freezes, then vanishes into thin air!

Emma Frost has used her mental bolts to knock out every hostage in the Hellfire Club—well within her four-area range. This guarantees there will be no witnesses as she (and other Inner Circle members, if present) attacks the terrorists. She does not get far before their blasts knock her out, but other club leaders may well defeat all the subordinate terrorists.

## Non-Player Characters

This abbreviated list of Mastermind's Powers comes from MU3 *Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe*.

### MASTERMIND

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
Gd	Ty	Ty	Rm	Ex	Ex	Un
Health: 52			Karma: 140			
Resources: Gd			Popularity: -10			

### KNOWN POWERS:

*Illusion Generation:* Unearthly level. Damage, though imaginary, is removed from Health; zero Health results in unconsciousness for 1-10 rounds. A Psyche FEAT vs. Unearthly intensity is required to avoid harm. Mastermind can become invisible with this power.

*Mindtap Mechanism:* Unless the Judge decides otherwise, Mastermind does not use this device in this adventure.

Statistics for the White Queen and other Hellfire Club rulers appear in the various volumes of the *Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe*. Here is an abbreviated listing for the White Queen:

### EMMA FROST, the White Queen

*Hellfire Club Inner Circle member*

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
Gd	Gd	Ty	Am	Rm	In	Mn
Health: 76			Karma: 145			
Resources: In			Popularity: 15			

### KNOWN POWERS:

*Telepathy:* Monstrous. Psionic forcebolts of Monstrous strength (range 4 areas) that ignore body armor.

*Psi Screen:* Amazing vs. mental attacks.

*Psionic Rapport:* Amazing strength (range 50 miles) lets the White Queen know what a willing target experiences.

*Psionic Control:* Blocks others' psionic powers (including Illusion Generation) on yellow Psyche FEAT (no range). Victim must make a FEAT roll vs. Monstrous intensity to resist.

*Sedation:* Keeps unconscious victim from waking up unless victim makes a FEAT roll vs. Monstrous intensity (allowed once every 15 minutes).

### TALENTS:

Electronics Skill; +1CS to Reason in administration, business, and education.

## Subordinate Terrorists

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
Gd	Ty	Gd	Ty	Ty	Ty	Ty
Health: 32			Karma: 18			

These 20 goons, all with extensive criminal records, are conventional Enforcers from page 63 of the Advanced Set *Judge's Book*. Mastermind, via the illusory main terrorists, has paid them with (real) iron strongboxes filled with (fake) gold. The goons know a lot about the four main terrorists, their plans, and their itinerary—but all their information is wrong. Improvise misleading details as necessary. ("Yeah, Mr. Hero, I heard them myself. They wanna blow up the Brooklyn Bridge! They got a nuclear bomb!")

### Main Terrorists

*Early in the adventure:*

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
Ex	Gd	Gd	Ty	Ty	Ty	Gd
Health: 46			Karma: 22			

Their futuristic weapons do (illusory) Incredible damage.

*Later in the adventure:*

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
In	Rm	Rm	In	Ex	In	Ty
Health: 140			Karma: 66			

### KNOWN POWERS:

Choose powers from the table on pages 8-9 of the Advanced Set *Players' Book* or just assume that the main terrorists appear to have *all* the powers listed there at Monstrous rank. Their weapons, too, do (illusory) Monstrous damage.

### Generic Hostages

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
Pr	Ty	Ty	Ty	Gd	Gd	Ty
Health: 22			Karma: 26			

Resources: Ex-Rm Popularity: 5-10

### TALENTS:

Most normal Hellfire Club members have Business/Finance Talent or other professional skill, perhaps Heir to Fortune, and one or two Trivia Talents.

The following are a few specific hostages that the heroes may encounter:

### Herbert and Winona Altick

*Retirees*

"Hiii, we're the Aaal-ticks!" They're both in their early 60s, big-time socialites richly dressed. The Alticks are versed in etiquette but tend to be overbearing—prone to finish other peo-

ple's sentences, namedrop, and voice opinions for all to hear. They can appear quite likable, from a distance. Herbert was a bank executive until heart problems forced him to retire. Now he lobbies for the NRA when he is not hunting or fishing. Winona is active in the DAR, the PTA, and the Senior Citizens' Art Appreciation League.

### Elmer and Mary Norwood

*Columbia University professors*

He's tall, thin, bearded, bespectacled, graying, a bit sloppy in his dress. He teaches Political Science. She's shorter, bespectacled, and still trim. She teaches Anthropology. It's hard to tell their ages, but it's likely they're in their early 50s. These two are polite, witty, and interested in everything. Both are endearing academic types who frequently get into political arguments with conservative Hellfire Clubbers.

### Venceslaus ("Sven") Lagting

*Danish/Faeroese fish merchant*

A tall, stout man in his mid 50s, Sven is blond and balding, with a thick mustache and ruddy cheeks. He always dresses well and is pleasant to look at. His heavy accent can be difficult to decipher, but he's friendly—if you don't mind hearing more about fish than anyone could want to hear. This wealthy merchant made his fortune in the Faeroe Islands (in the North Atlantic, governed by Denmark) as a fish exporter. Then he emigrated to America. Now he is the principal stockholder in a firm that controls 18% of all the dried cod imported to the Western hemisphere.

### Other Hostages

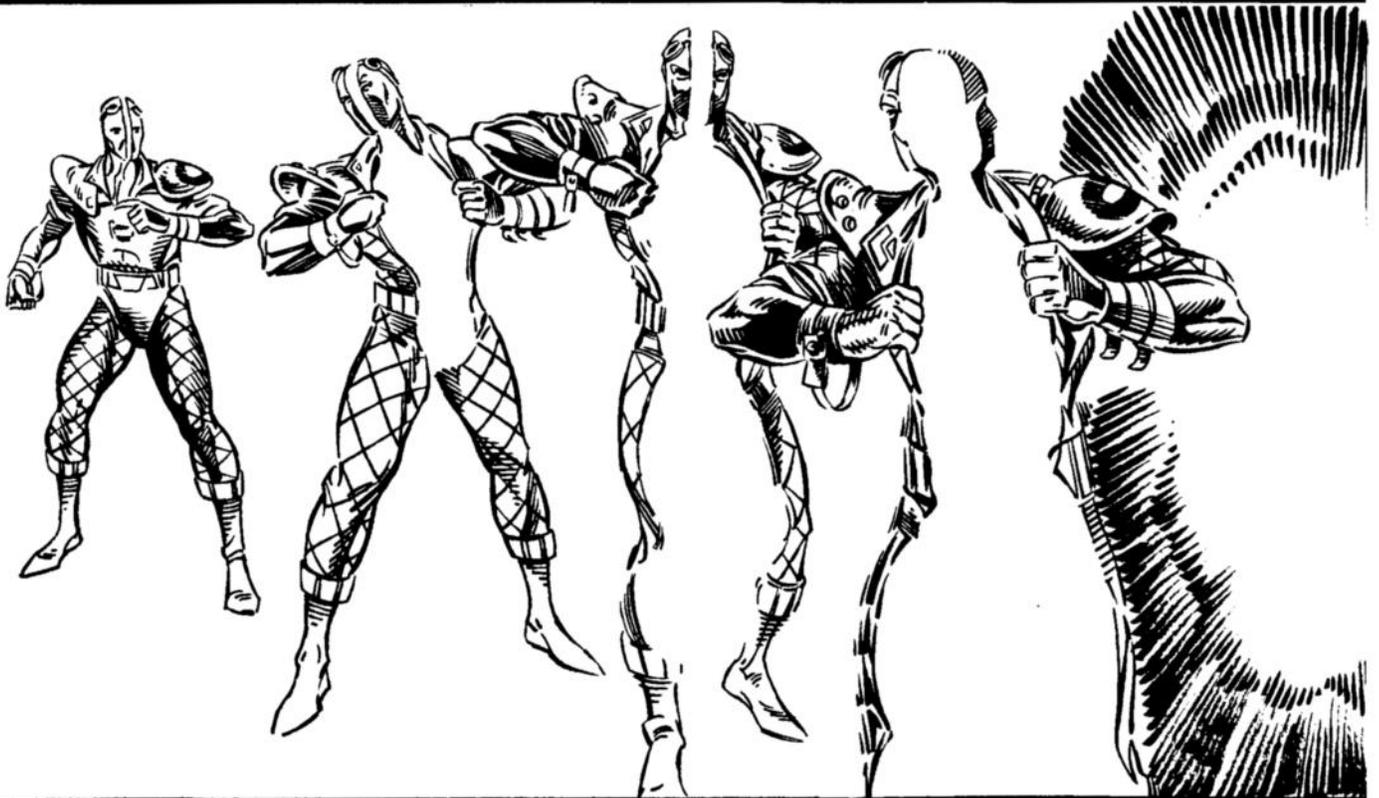
*Carl and Matilda Wentworth*, retirees (the grandparently sort, much interested in doll collecting);

*Isaac Dickinson*, how-to writer (credits include *How to Grout Your Bathroom Tile* and *You Can Build a Redwood Sun Deck*);

*Gwen and Gary Garson*, yuppies who made a killing in the market and got out before the crash (they talk about tennis a lot); and

*Tom Bremmer*, portly yacht club type (former lawyer who retired early for health reasons).

Page 63 of the *Judge's Book* offers statistics for policemen and SWAT team operatives.



At this point the heroes might show up from outside (or from unconsciousness), just in time to witness the Inner Circle members' displays of mutant power as they attack their captors. In the middle of the fight, however, the main terrorists vanish, leaving the Inner Circle bewildered. The mutants have enough presence of mind, however, to bargain with, threaten, or try to kill any witnesses to their true powers.

When the police break in moments later, conscious Inner Circle members all feign unconsciousness. When roused, they say the terrorists started shooting everyone with stun bolts. The subordinate terrorists are lying around like rag dolls, but no one can find any trace of the main terrorists, now or ever. Mysterious!

However, the mystery only persists if heroes have remained outside and haven't tried to rescue the hostages. And what kind of heroes would they be then?

## Fighting the Terrorists

Funny—not many of the terrorists look Wakandan. In fact, they vary widely in color, size, accent, and so on. Real equal-opportunity terrorism.

There are actually two different types

of terrorists, identified by their slightly different uniforms.

**The four main terrorists:** These leaders, all evidently male, wear thick padded uniforms, something like one of Spider-Man's enemies, the Shocker, but in "urban camouflage" patterns (mottled gray-black-olive designs meant to blend into urban backgrounds). It's awfully hot clothing for this season, but the terrorists show no signs of discomfort; they don't even perspire. They wear elaborate, gadget-laden belts or strange pendants whose functions are revealed below. All four carry futuristic firearms of different types. The heroes don't recognize any of the weapon styles.

The main terrorists hide their faces with red ski masks. Heroes with appropriate senses can see under the masks. The main terrorists all have ordinary features, unusual only in being so usual. None look Wakandan.

**The subordinate terrorists:** These followers wear uniforms of urban cammo, not padded. They carry military-issue machine pistols (*Players' Book*, page 42). They conceal their faces with black ski masks that leave the mouth exposed. Experienced heroes can iden-

tify the subordinates as well-known New York thugs, previously unaffiliated with any political movement or terrorist group. Most are male, but a few can be female if the Judge wishes.

## Attack Methods

Any attack works normally on the subordinate terrorists. Heroes quickly discover that these are just ordinary thugs. But the terrorist leaders present a different challenge.

**Ambush:** This doesn't work. The main terrorists appear invulnerable to surprise attacks. Either they somehow sense heroes sneaking up behind them or, even stranger, the heroes attacks always miss! What's more, the terrorist leaders react slowly to these assaults and may ignore them altogether.

**Mental or magical attacks:** Mentalist heroes soon find, just as the White Queen did, that these attacks do not affect the main terrorists. No telepath can read their thoughts. It's as though they don't exist in this dimension.

**Physical assault or capture:** The heroes' attempts to catch the main terrorists all fail, for the supposed Wakandans soon exhibit startling movement

powers. The terrorist leaders vanish, sometimes from right under the heroes' grip (or webbing, or other entangling device). What's even stranger, each main terrorist uses a different method:

—One terrorist runs his fingertips over a complex-looking series of dials on his wide metal belt. Yellow energy crackles around him, and the air smells of ozone. Suddenly he vanishes! With a *bamf* sound, air rushes in to fill the spot he vacated.

—A second terrorist grasps an amulet around his neck. Perceptive heroes notice that it appears to be a jade pendant carved with the grinning visage of a Chinese dragon. The terrorist murmurs an incantation in a language no hero has ever heard (though it sounds Oriental). Then he disappears in a cloud of mist.

—A third terrorist, who carries nothing that looks extraordinary, simply walks through a solid wall of the ballroom and doesn't come out the other side. The inner wall makes *zzz-zzzt* sounds for a moment but appears unaffected.

—Finally, the fourth terrorist runs his hand from the top of his head down his body to his feet. Where his fingertips touch his body, they draw a sparkling green line. When the line extends the length of his body, the terrorist reaches into the line with both hands and pulls it outward into a wide sheet. In one smooth motion, he wraps the sheet around himself, and the inside-out terrorist disappears.

The terrorists reappear on the balcony, down below, or somewhere else nearby to threaten the hostages, especially the White Queen. When the heroes attack, the terrorists vanish again—using different methods from the ones before! Lightning flashes, transformations into hot steam, steps through glowing doorways, even favors from tiny green imps—the Judge should feel free to improvise any bizarre device that produces a dramatic effect.

**Examining the items:** Should a hero grab a belt, amulet, or sparkling green sheet from one of the Wakandan terrorists, the item vanishes in the hero's hand! Magicians can detect no residual magic; scientists can't find unusual radiation of any sort.

## The Secret

Actually, the villainous illusionist Mas-

termind (described in the *Judge's Book*, page 51) has created the four main "terrorists." When a hero sees the villains vanish, this is merely Mastermind ending the illusion—or the hero has moved out of range of Mastermind's power.

Through his illusory creations, Mastermind hired the subordinate terrorists from New York's ranks of criminal henchmen. These flunkies do the actual physical work that an illusion cannot. They don't know much about what's going on, but Mastermind has paid them well—in illusory gold Krugerrands! (If any of these thugs ever make it back to the hidden stashes in their Hell's Kitchen tenements, they'll be surprised when they open those strongboxes Mastermind gave them.)

Mastermind is taking revenge on the Hellfire Club for refusing him membership. Under the name Jason Wyngarde, Mastermind tried to lure Phoenix, at that time a member of the X-Men, into becoming the club's Black Queen. This coup would have earned Mastermind membership as well, by demonstrating his usefulness to the Inner Circle. The plan failed disastrously, and so did Mastermind's chances for Hellfire Club membership.

By simulating this terrorist attack, Mastermind hopes to provoke the Hellfire Club's Inner Circle into publicly demonstrating their mutant powers, thus discrediting the organization. He never expected the situation to last long enough for super heroes to show up, but he doesn't mind their arrival. Perhaps they can force the Inner Circle's hand.

The Wakandan connection is a red herring. There is no United Front for Wakandan Liberation. In typically short-sighted fashion, Mastermind chose this name because it sounded exotic; he can't even find Wakanda on a map of Africa.

## Detecting Mastermind's Scheme

The key is Mastermind's impatience. As the Inner Circle members continue to conceal their powers, and as the heroes continue to fight, Mastermind steps up the main terrorists' abilities. The illusions grow ever more outrageous, as:

- A terrorist flies gracefully through the air, spraying the walls with bullets;
- Another grows large enough to touch the ballroom ceiling, then grinds a hero briefly beneath his heel;
- The third terrorist telekinetically

draws books in from the library and sets them aflame with rays of heat from his eyes;

—The fourth terrorist throws his voice around the room, imitates heroes' voices exactly, and otherwise creates confusion. Then he stretches his arms like Mister Fantastic to punch heroes from across the room!

Given Mastermind's Unearthly ability to cast illusions, the sky is the limit—a phrase that may spring to a hero's mind when a terrorist gestures and the Hellfire Club's roof appears to evaporate!

Soon the heroes should start asking sensible questions like, "If these guys can turn people into frogs, why weren't they doing it before now?" From there, the answer to the puzzle is a simple matter of deduction.

The giveaway clue? A suspicious hero receives an Intuition FEAT roll. A result of yellow or better means the hero spots a one-time tiny wavering at the edge of an illusion, a single glimmer that reveals its phantasmal nature. This won't, however, help the hero in later attempts to disbelieve Mastermind's illusions, since the illusions involve mind control and appear so thoroughly real.

## Finding Mastermind

Mastermind is hiding in the second-floor meeting room between the Inner Circle's two private rooms (see the earlier description of the Hellfire Club. He's the M on the map). Through a peephole, Mastermind can survey the entire ballroom and second floor balconies, the only areas where the "terrorists" appear.

If a hero enters this room early in the adventure, perhaps through the bedroom closet hatch from the roof, Mastermind turns invisible and the room appears empty.

Later in the adventure, if he spots a hero approaching his hideout, Mastermind causes the terrorists to "teleport" up to the balcony and drive the invader away. Should this fail to stop the hero from entering the room, Mastermind turns invisible, drops his terrorist illusions, and fills the meeting room with dinosaurs, giant tentacled things, huge bugs, and similar horrors. Mastermind hopes the hero will be preoccupied fighting these weird illusions, giving the villain time to slip away along the balcony.

*Continued on page 37*

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# MARVEL

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Continued from page 23

Before running an encounter with Mastermind, review the rules for disbelieving illusions on page 82 of the *Players' Book*. Heroes trying to disbelieve the illusions must make an Intuition roll against Mastermind's Unearthly-intensity images. Note that blind heroes or those with different sensory modes, such as Daredevil, still sense Mastermind's illusions (his mutant power affects the brain, not the actual sense organs). Androids and mechanical devices are unaffected by Mastermind's illusions.

**Inner Circle treachery:** Don't neglect the dramatic possibilities of forcing heroes to work with the White Queen or other Hellfire Club villains. Once Mastermind falls, an Inner Circle member may try to ambush and defeat a single hero. Treachery is their byword.

If the heroes aren't aware of the Inner Circle's secret powers, let the White Queen use all her charm on them, offer them honorary membership, and so on.

The club can then use the heroes as dupes in a later scheme.

## Aftermath

The police Special Weapons Force, unsure of what to do with Mastermind, locks him in a special invisibility-nullifying harness designed by Stane International. The harness has Remarkable Nullifying Power (*Players' Book*, page 76) with Feeble range and is made of Good-strength material.

Heroes familiar with Mastermind realize this equipment won't affect the mutant illusionist. If they aren't familiar with him or don't notice this, and don't accompany the police until the villain is locked in a psionically shielded prison cell, Mastermind easily escapes within hours.

If circumstances force an Inner Circle member to go public with his or her superhuman powers, the rest of the Inner Circle, pretending shock, expels the member publicly—but only publicly. The member will return to the Circle covertly or in another identity.

## Karma

Karma should be awarded according to the Karma Summary Listing on page 37 of the *Players' Book*. Here are some possible Karma awards:

Detecting Mastermind's illusions: +5 Karma.

Deducing his presence and locating him: +10 Karma.

Defeating Mastermind: +100 Karma.

Stopping a violent crime: +30 Karma.

Multiple rescues (more than five people): +100 Karma.

Joining the Hellfire Club: +1 Popularity, -1 Karma.

Getting an Inner Circle member to betray his or her powers: +20 Karma per Circle member, to the hero who manages it (and undying enmity from that Circle member in the future!). Ω

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