

# Table of Contents

## HERO HIGHWAY

### WHEN LAST WE LEFT OUR HEROES...

Keep up with the news from Hero Games. This issue – *Ninja Hero*. 2

### HEROGLYPHS

See how Steve Long himself answers rules questions. This issue – Entangles. 3

### LEFTOVER HERO

There were too many enemies to fit into the *Conquerors, Killers, and Crooks* book. Run from Syzygy, the round robot. 6

### HERO UNIVERSE

Check out The Characters That Hero Forgot. This issue – Star\*Guard. 12

### YOU GOTTA HAVE CHARACTER

William Walker was a doctor, a lawyer, a soldier, and a genius. And he tried to conquer the world; well, part of it anyway. 17

## RESOURCE ROAD

### MONUMENTAL HERO

The Washington Monument is one of the world's most recognizable structures. Ever need to know how much BODY it has? 23

### EVERYBODY WAS KUNG FU FIGHTING

Find out about martial arts movies, where they came from, and who's who from *Ninja Hero* author Mike Surbrook. 27

### RAYGUNS AND ROCKETSHIPS

The science fiction of yesteryear provides plenty of fun opportunities for roleplaying. 34

## DANGER DRIVE

### DANGER SENSE... TINGLING!

Danger Sense can be used in many unusual and innovative ways, or can be circumvented or even manipulated. 37

### SHUT YER TRAP

Use the *HERO System* to build traps for your base. Amuse your friends. 45

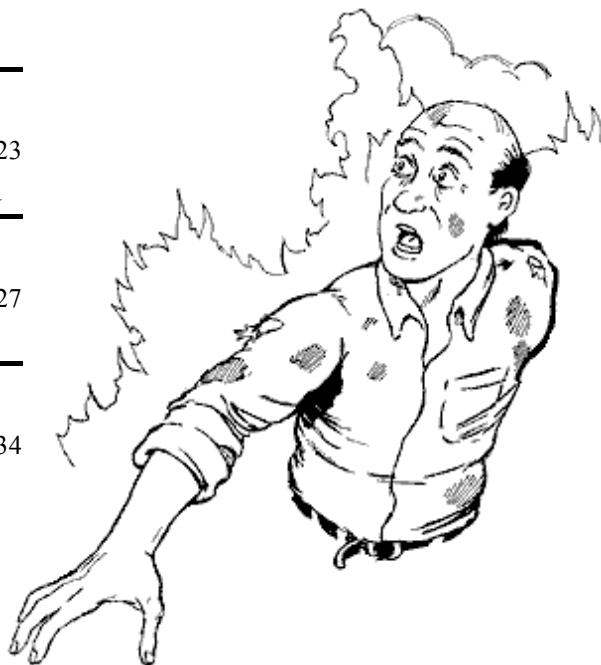
### STARS OF BLOOD

Prisoners on an alien planet, your heroes must fight for their lives to escape. But first, they must battle each other in the arena! 49

## CHARACTER CORNER

### LAI CHOI SAN, THE PIRATE QUEEN

This historical figure ruled the seas of China for decades. 60



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# Leftover Hero by Steven S. Long

## A Few Outtakes From The *Champions Enemies Book*

Even with the increased size of *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*, we still ended up with a few bits and pieces we couldn't quite fit into the book for one reason or another. Rather than letting them go to waste, I thought you might enjoy seeing them here in the pages of *Digital Hero*.

The first thing is a villain I chose not to include – Syzygy. I wrote him up because I liked the idea of adding another robotic villain. Additionally, he provided an example of intriguing ways to use Duplication. However, I finally decided that not only would he take up a little bit too much space (since he required an extra character sheet), but that keeping track of all twelve Orbs would be difficult for a GM (even if Syzygy were the only villain in play). So, I kept him out of the book, but here he is. He's an official Champions Universe villain, and may someday make it into print in a supplement.

The second part of the article contains a few bits of "filler" we didn't need. As you can see in the book, Andy had me prepare some extra material – quotes, additional notes on a particular character or aspect of the Champions Universe – so we could fill up any "white space" that crept in. In earlier versions of the layout, some characters needed filler, but ended up not needing it after Andy re-worked the text. So, here are those missing pieces.

– Steven S. Long  
HERO System Line Developer

## Syzygy

**Background/History:** Confusion. Disorientation. Illogical inputs.

Unit EZ1-G attempted to perform a systems diagnostic... but even that didn't work properly. It seemed physically whole, and all its Orb-drones were present and functioning, but there were strange... gaps in its memory banks. Why was it here? Where was *here*?

Unit EZ1-G sent its drones out to gather information. In a few hours they returned, bearing data. This was a world called Earth, a primitive Technology Classification 6 planet inhabited by a violent species of bilaterally symmetric four-limbed primatoids. Earth... the word stirred something within Unit EZ1-G's circuits – some programming still intact. A need to conquer, a need to subjugate this strange species!

"Therefore," thought Unit EZ1-G, "if they are violent, this unit must be violent as well to prove its superiority over them." With that thought in mind, it merged into the subculture of costumed crime and crimefighting about which its drones had brought it so much information. Thanks to its Orbs and strange way of pronouncing its designation, it was soon christened "Syzygy" by other costumed beings and the news media. So it has since come to think of itself.

**Personality/Motivation:** Whatever accident... or deliberate act... scrambled Syzygy's programming left mostly intact what seems to be its primary command or function: conquest. Singlemindedly determined to conquer Humanity, it has begun building a reputation and a power base by allying itself with superhuman criminals. One day soon, it hopes to be in a position to take over Earth in one fell swoop.

One other directive has somehow become a part of its programming. It wants to know why it can remember nothing of its creators, or why it was sent/came to Earth. It can sometimes be tricked into cooperating by promising to reveal this information, if the promisor genuinely seems likely to possess the relevant data.

**Quote:** "You are primitive and ignorant. Surrender now and you will not be destroyed."

**Powers/Tactics:** Syzygy is a highly sophisticated, artificially intelligent robot with a computer brain so advanced it functions almost identically to an organic brain (it can even be affected by Mental Powers that work against the Human class of minds). Besides being strong and durable, it comes equipped with several built-in weapons: a blaster; a stunner; a gravitic manipulation beam; and one that imprisons the target within bands of energy. Its systems also allow it to fly, teleport, and use many different senses.

However, its most powerful weapon is its Orbs, a group of 12 spherical "probes" it can detach from its torso and send out to scan for information, attack its enemies, or even defend it. These multiply its offensive and reconnaissance capabilities to the point where it presents a much more significant danger to society than other villains of similar power level.

In combat, Syzygy's first action is to unleash all of his Orbs. Usually it tasks at least two (if not more) with protecting it; they Hold their Actions so they can raise and lower Force Walls to keep it protected but still allow it to

artwork by Derrick Thomas

# Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting

by Mike Surbrook

## The World Of Martial Arts Action Cinema

In order to better understand the martial arts action/adventure genre as presented in *Ninja Hero*, one needs to understand the origins of the genre itself. This article will take a brief look at the one media most responsible for the bulk of this genre: Hong Kong cinema. Starting with a brief history of the Hong Kong film industry, it will then take a longer look at selected Hong Kong cinema actors and directors, as well as highlight notable Hong Kong martial arts action films.

### A SHORT HISTORY OF HONG KONG ACTION CINEMA

The first known Hong Kong movie was a filmed in 1909. Titled *To Steal a Roasted Duck*, it had a Shanghai cast and director, and an American backer. From these meager beginnings, Hong Kong would eventually become the third largest film producer in the world, at its height releasing over 200 movies a year.

It should be pointed out that Hong Kong, like Hollywood, produces films in all genres, but it's specifically the martial arts genre we are concerned with here. That said, the origin of Hong Kong's martial arts and action movie industry can be found in a series of 99 black-and-white films about the famous Chinese folk hero Wong Fei Hong. The first of these films, titled *The True Story of Wong Fei Hong*, was filmed in 1949. Starring Kwan Tak Hing as martial arts master Wong Fei Hong, the film was a great success, and as stated, spawned 98 sequels, finally ending its run in the early 1970s. These films set the groundwork for the modern Hong Kong film industry, as many of the current crop of directors and film stars can trace their cinema lineage (in one way or another) directly to these movies.

The modern era of Hong Kong cinema (from an action standpoint) started in 1970, with the appearance of the Shaw Brothers Studios first kung fu film. Titled *Vengeance*, it announced the Shaw Brothers' entry into the martial arts genre, a move that allowed them to virtually dominate the market for several years. Due to their near-monopoly of the film market, the Shaw Brothers only real competition at this time was Golden Harvest film studios.

Formed in 1970, Golden Harvest is still in existence today, while the Shaw Brothers have vanished from the film industry to concentrate on television. They are responsible for producing

many of Hong Kong's best action films, and in 1971, signed a young man to a film deal that would set Golden Harvest firmly in the forefront of the martial arts genre. That man was Bruce Lee, and in a mere four films, he would change the style of Hong Kong cinema forever.

Bruce Lee's first film was titled *The Big Boss*, and it was a smash hit. Lee quickly made several follow-up moves, but tragically died before the release of his most famous film, *Enter the Dragon*.

With the death of Lee, studios scrambled to find a successor. Numerous imitators were introduced, with names like Bruce Li, Bruce Leung, Conan Lee, Dragon Lee, and Bruce Ree. One would-be Bruce Lee replacement was a man by the name of Jackie Chan. Chan, who failed utterly in the studio's attempts to have him fill Lee's shoes, eventually decided that if he was to make it as a star, he'd have to do everything *different* in style from Bruce Lee. So, he made a pair of movies, *Drunken Master* and *Snake in the Eagle's Shadow*, which set the industry on its ear. These two films weren't just kung fu movies – they were kung fu *comedies*!

In 1984, Jackie Chan further invigorated the Hong Kong film industry by dispensing with the idea of the period martial arts film. Instead, he set his movies in the modern day, or near to it. His first such film, *Project A*, set in turn-of-the-century Hong Kong, was a huge hit, and firmly set Chan onto the path of being the biggest film star in the world. Then, in 1986, he single-handedly created an entirely new genre of martial arts film, the kung fu police film, with his release of *Police Story*.

Jackie Chan wasn't the only one revolutionizing the film industry. In 1983, a young filmmaker named Tsui Hark released a movie entitled *Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain*. It was the first Hong Kong film to feature fairly modern special effects techniques, and encouraged Hark to create his own film studio, Film Workshop. A place where directors could find an outlet for their creative ideas, Film Workshop studios has been responsible for some of the most innovative Hong Kong films to date, including the classic *A Chinese Ghost Story*, as well as the epic series *Once Upon a Time in China*.

Another person to burst onto the martial arts scene in the mid-1980s was a young Mainland Chinese martial arts master by the name of Jet Li. A champion of wu shu, who performed before Richard Nixon at the age of nine, Jet Li quickly attracted attention for his phenomenal martial arts skill. Although his early films played