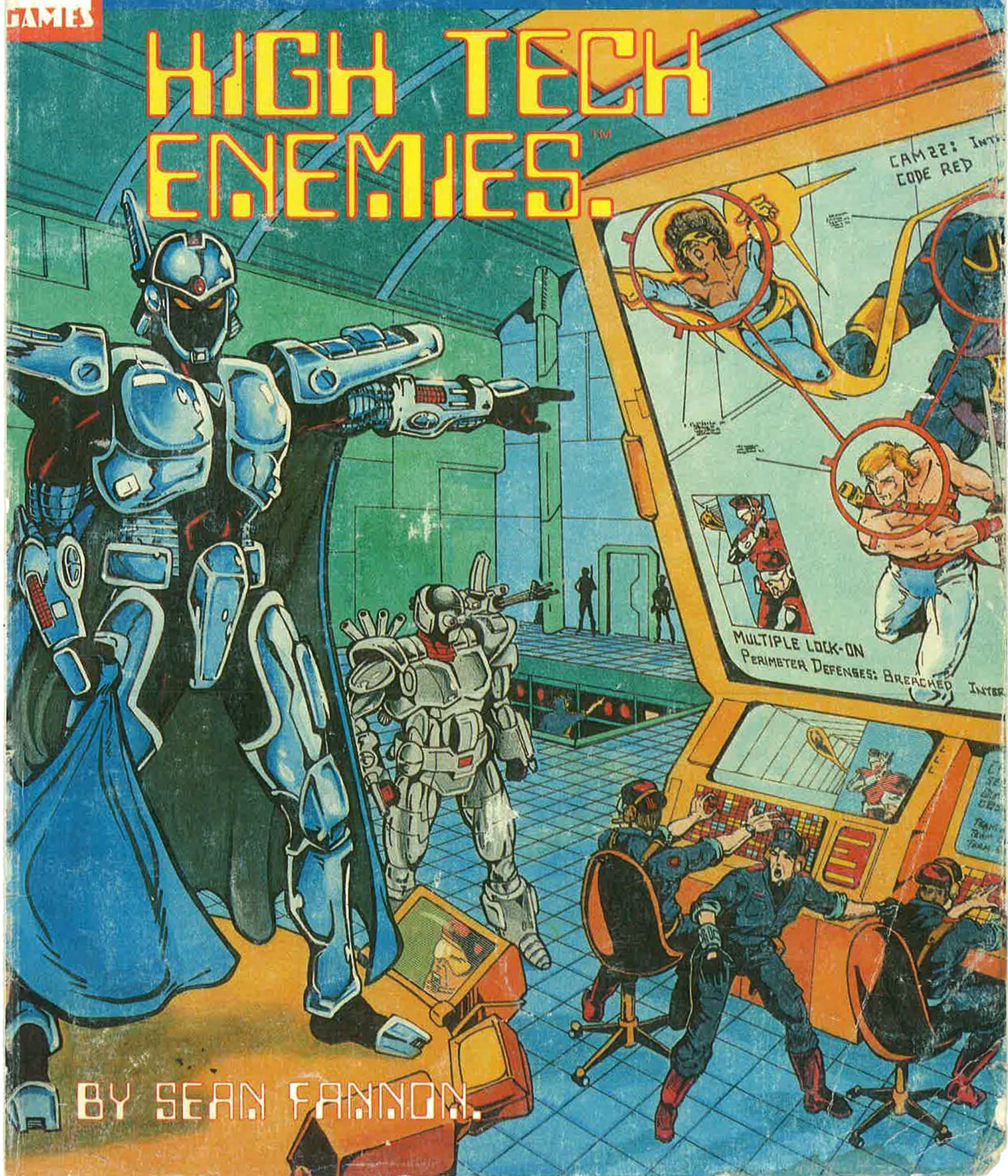


HIGH TECH ENEMIES.



BY SEAN FANNON.

HIGH TECH ENEMIES™

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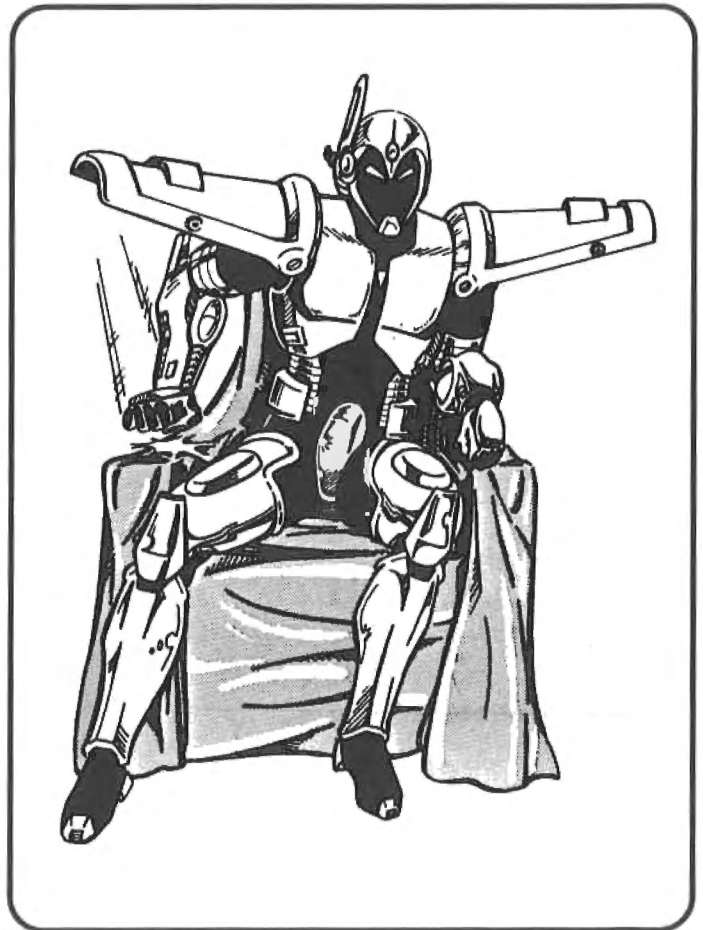
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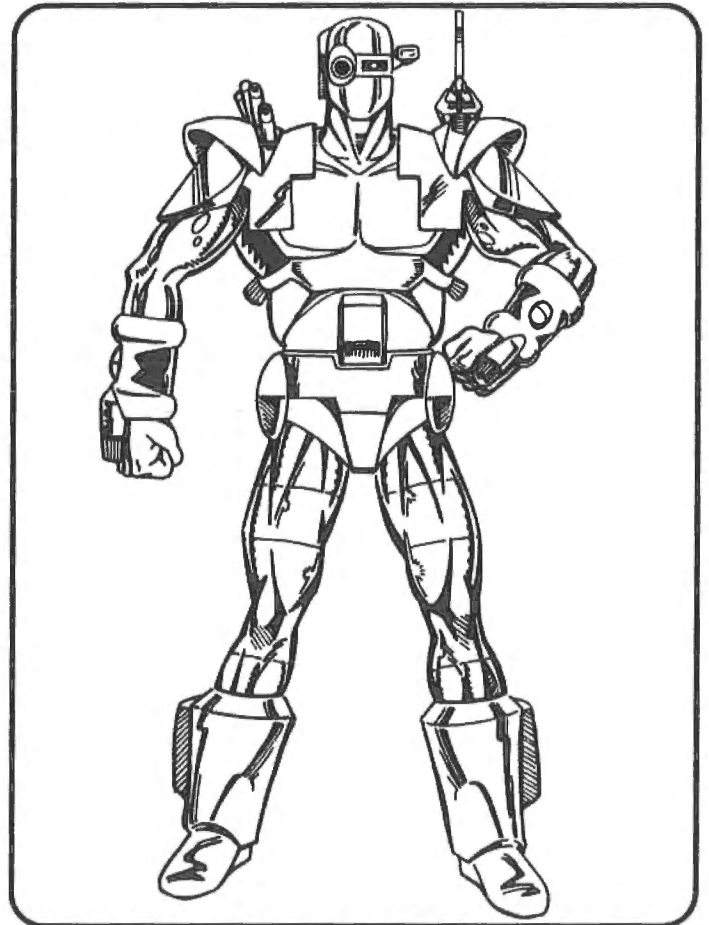
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- Monte—for putting up with my enthusiasm. I know it can get tiresome...
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INTRODUCTION

*"It was a machine. It did not care. It would work if told to
It would not if not. It was no serpent. It would not crush him
It did not crave his flesh. But still he feared..."*

John Steakley, ARMOR

Within these pages are characters that have grown from a long love affair with the high-tech, superscience wonders found throughout comic book history, and indeed throughout all of adventure fiction. In this book, the hat is tipped to many inspiring sources, including Iron Man and Doctor Doom, Batman and Lex Luthor, Steve Austin (the original Cyborg), Flash Gordon and Ming the Merciless, and a host of other heroes and villains who fought their epic battles with the amazing scientific wonders at their disposal. So, if the sound of pulsing lasers and jetpacks jump starts your heart, the smell of grease and crackling ozone prickles the hair on the back of your neck, and you'd really like to see the au natural magician's eyes pop out when he's faced with a mechanical monstrosity from his nightmares, read on and... ENJOY!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

What you will find in the pages that follow are statistics and descriptions for over forty villains. Most of them are listed as part of a team instead of being independent. This is because most campaigns have anywhere from three to six PC's involved (many have more, as crazy as it seems!), and these characters usually work as some type of team. Whereas solo villains abound in the comic books, they are usually pitted against solo heroes. Unfortunately, this does not often work well in the framework of a group-oriented role-playing game.

Additionally, the write-ups for independent characters will often indicate potential allies and team-ups with other villains in the Champions Universe. Also included in this book is a section on The Sci-Tech War, a campaign "thematic idea" intended for introducing the villains in this book on a grand scale. This section also helps the GM provide an interesting explanation as to why incredible technology (such as agents' blasters and hover cars) can exist and not be on the open market or not be readily available except for "certain people." Many readers of comics (including some of the GM's players) have grown weary of the "cost effectiveness" argument.

NON-"SUPER" CAMPAIGNS AND HIGH-TECH ENEMIES

Obviously, the characters contained in this book were designed for superheroic campaigns (the "average" game being in the 250 - 300 point range with 50 - 70 active point attacks, etc.). As with all Hero products, this does not mean that it is not compatible with other *Hero System* campaigns. The revised rules of the Fourth Edition allow for easy cross-over between genres and complete integration of any and all elements with virtually no modifications necessary.

Still, there is a small problem presented in terms of balance and character survivability when you pit your 150 pt. heroic-level agent PCs against a group of supervillains like CY-FORCE or the Destruction Company (described in this book). Most of the villains in *High Tech Enemies* can fit comfortably into any campaign where super-technology exists, including science fiction and space opera games, post-holocaust and "future shock" scenarios, and cyberpunk campaigns. Individual GMs will recognize the need to modify these characters to fit into the power level required, although introducing a single villain at his original power level against a whole group of heroic characters could provide a thrilling challenge. There are some areas where modifications are most easily made with highly balancing effects; this is true not only for converting characters from superheroic to heroic games, but for fitting a villain to a less powerful Champions campaign as well.

DEX and SPEED are two key characteristics that determine much in the way of balance between characters and NPCs. By simply dropping a point or two of SPEED and a few points of DEX (usually increments of 3 or 6 work well), you can even things up and still maintain the flavor of a villain. Attack powers are easily modified by dropping a few dice (often, you need only knock off one to three), and defenses can be lowered by 5 or 10 to bring the villain "within reach" of the heroes' capabilities.

In all cases, it's not really important to keep track of point changes—so long as the villain works, that's all that truly matters. Of course, if you run a really high-powered game, the above changes work just as well—in reverse.

As with all *Hero System* supplements, *High Tech Enemies* can be used by any GM for any genre he desires; all it takes is a little planning and maybe a few modifications.

DESIGN NOTES

I would like to briefly discuss the place, or lack thereof, of real science in the world of comic books. This is a genre of the fantastic, the unbelievable, the impossible. If a GM begins worrying continuously about the scientific principles behind every gizmo and gadget that appears in the campaign, he's asking for some real headaches, not to mention the fact that he's tossing out a major convention of the genre.

I am not a physics major, nor an expert on chemistry, biology, metallurgy, or any other "-ogy" for that matter. I have had more than my fair share of classes in these areas (having studied at a major engineering school for a while), enough to understand and accept most of the basic principles—most things fall down, there are lots of stars, and sulfuric acid smells really bad.

Anyone who has read even a smidgen of the comic books out there—it's hard to believe any *Champions* player hasn't read a few—will recognize that much of what is done as "science" is preposterous. People like Reed "Mr. Fantastic"

Richards and Batman pull some technological miracles that would earn multiple Nobel Prizes and millions in research grants in our own "real" world. Nonetheless, we as readers accept (albeit with some amusement and suspension of disbelief) these feats as part of the story.

We must do no less in the realm of a superhero role-playing game. Dating back to the "pulp," resplendent with "weird science" and "supertechnology," some of the most interesting and "believable" characters are those physically non-super men who use special gadgets and unique gizmos to combat the Forces of Evil. Of course, the Mad Scientist has always been one of the most popular nemeses for Our Heroes, who are usually left standing in the wake of his latest scientific marvel asking, "How does he *do* that?"

The point is—does it really matter? The fact is that, by some strange "scientific principle," he just opened a dimensional gate and dumped the heroes into King Arthur's court. The adventure continues, regardless of the fact that no physicist in his right mind would really accept this as possible. Of course, the particular "principle" used in any given situation might be used by the heroes to reverse the effects, especially if the team has a gadget monger or scientist-type in its ranks. In situations like this, part of the fun for both GM and player is coming up with the pseudo-scientific terms to explain what happened and how to change or stop it: "It would seem he used the Theory of Hyperkinetic Molecular Transmogrification. We must construct a Temporal Phase Field to counteract the effects..."

There is a difference between Realism and Believability. Strict realism dictates that, without extensive research and plausible equations and diagrams, a Temporal Phase Field shouldn't exist. Believability allows it to exist without all that, as long as there are plenty of wires, dials, and flashing lights when it's used. Anyone who watches and enjoys old episodes of *Star Trek* knows exactly what I'm talking about.

I feel it important to note here some considerations I had in mind with certain character designs. Many "by-the-book" players will notice uses (and abuses) of the rules that might concern them. As with everything in the *Hero System*, it is

the spirit of the game that is the most important thing in any character creation.

For example, there are an abundance of characters in this book with the Disadvantage "Normal Characteristics Maximums." I went with the example of Defender in the *Champions Rulesbook* on this decision. The idea is that these are normal people using abnormal devices and gizmos to give them their enhanced abilities. This disad emphasizes their non-paranormal nature when left without their devices.

Two skills that might fall into the "excessive use" category are Systems Operations and Computer Programming. However, we are dealing with a great number of technically-oriented people in this book. This means that they all tend to have reasonable familiarity with the basic tools of science and technology, such as sensory gear, radios, and computers. In many cases, if these guys were a "hero" on the typical team, they would certainly fulfill those roles.

A few of the "independent" villains have one form or another of Damage Reduction. As I explained elsewhere, most games are based on a team of heroes. This means that there are very few (if any) "solo" adventures. Therefore, the average independent enemy in *Champions* needs to be able to handle a great deal of damage to hold his/her own. As described under the power itself, Damage Reduction is the perfect tool to create those kinds of characters. Additionally, it simply fits the conception of many characters (although it's *still* a bad idea for most player characters to get their hands on it).

Finally, some GMs may feel that I overdid it with Talents. To be frank, I have seen little to no use of many of the Talents in other publications, and there were certain ones that definitely fit many of the characters in the past. I believe they were simply overlooked. In any case, there were Talents that best did the job of defining certain inherent abilities for many characters, especially those of "non-combat" applications. Having an on-board computer (or being a computer, for that matter) should provide certain basic functions, such as an internal clock and calculator (Absolute Time Sense, Lighting Calculator).



HIGH TECH ENEMIES.™

High Tech Enemies is the definitive source-book for high-tech villainy. This book is full of everything that every good **Champions™** campaign needs: powered armor, robots, gadgets, androids, huge machines, cyborgs—the list goes on and on. Now your heroes can battle mutants that can mentally control electronics, match wits with mega-villains and their arsenal of devices and armies of agents, and encounter cyborgs from another world. What more could you possibly want?

Forty well-detailed villains and agents, each with their own motivations, tactics and unique powers, are presented here. Most are organized into teams that work with coordinated strategies, making them a challenge to any team. Others are so fearsome that they, too, can challenge a whole team.

High Tech Enemies includes such villains as Kinetrone, with a powered suit allowing him to control kinetic energy, and Interface, a woman who can telepathically control machines. You'll also discover the raw power of the Destruction Company, the nastiest bunch of cyborgs you'll ever want to meet, and you'll puzzle over whether the android Angel-3 is really a hero or a villain. There's no two ways about it, if you're a **Champions** player, you need *High Tech Enemies!*

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