

## SUPERHERO HISTORY

1935: First appearance of the supervillain **Garrote** in Chicago, a modern-day Jack the Ripper; he commits about thirty murders until his disappearance in 1936.

1935-1940: **ShadowWalker** and the **Hammer** (respectively, San Francisco and Chicago) become active in bootlegging and, according to various popular accounts, in espionage as well. The latter is apprehended and later dies in prison. A weird, demonic character named **Jack O'Lantern** commits a series of warped thefts in and about London, concentrating on items with mystical reputations, mostly jewelry but notably a mummified hand.

1938: First appearance of superhero **Dr. Arcane**, basing operations out of New Orleans. He travels to London and Jack O'Lantern's thefts cease, although police were not satisfied with Dr. Arcane's explanation.

1940: As Europe plunged into WWII, four masked individuals decide to provide an international private task force called **Legion**. They are Dr. Arcane (American), **Ironclad** (Scottish, MacPherson), **Captain Cold** (French), and **Osprey** (Jewish-American, and the only woman). They fight Axis supervillains such as **Whitefire** and **Scourge** who terrorized France, on the front, and home-style villains such as **Black Market Bill**. A closemouthed, nonpartisan group (aside from the enemy), they never attempt to support or defy any non-Nazi power and thus are never supported or suppressed.

1945-1955: The Legion turn mostly to individual ways. Dr. Arcane grant a rare interview in which it is revealed his legs were crippled in the war. He mentions a demoness named **Ch'Andarra**, which discredits him somewhat. **Osprey** disappears; **Captain Cold** and **Ironclad** become caught

up in internal politics in their respective countries. Whitefire died at Breslau in 1943; Scourge escaped Europe and was never tried for his crimes.

1958: The Legion members each contribute one recruit for a new supergroup, based in New York and minimally publicized. However, **Puzzle** (a tactician), **Conjuror** (a dandified stage illusionist), **Rubber Sam** (former athlete, apparently invulnerable), and **Hourglass** (sixteen and again, the only female) never become unified as a team.

1960-61: Bizarre thefts occur in London and then in New York, involving the same items that figured in the Jack O'Lantern thefts in the 30s, including the Mummy's Hand. The Legion recruits investigate, resulting in the death of Rubber Sam (apparently caught in an airtight vault), the disappearance of Hourglass, and the disbandment of the group. Superheroes become less popular after this event.

1965: Neonazi organization called **Toward the Advancement of Law in Our Nation (TALON)** becomes active in America. Also, an anti-Yakuza crusader called the **Sensei** begins operating in Japan, until he disappears three years later.

1967: First appearance of countercultural "superhero" **Psuper Psycho**, who advocates recreational drug use, participates in anti-establishment activities, and opposes the Viet Nam war. He is shot and killed in the riot at Kent State. Current rumor has it that he was actually correct in accusing US military intelligence of lying to the public, but at the time he is widely denounced as an irresponsible loon. In the public eye, "real" superheroics become associated solely with WWII.

1978: First appearance of phenomonally skillful international hitman

called the **Assassin**, whose success record is only matched by his flamboyance. He evades various international manhunts and continues to be active.

1985: Chinilaya, the poorest and least strategically located Central American country, becomes dominated by a mysterious dictator and cuts off all information flow and diplomacy.

June, 1986: The dictator of Chinilaya makes himself known to the world as **Omnibus**, and demonstrates the country to be invulnerable to nuclear attack. He issues a standing offer to the "most worthy" of superpowered/paranormal comers to join him in conquering the world.

Mid 1986: In response to Omnibus' offer, many supervillains and a few superheroes appear. Also, many international restrictions on biotechnological research are lifted. An organization called **PSI** (Parapsychological Studies and Investigations) becomes active in Chicago. **Nucleon** nearly causes the Zion Nuclear Power Plant to melt down but is himself destroyed by **Oculon** and two mysterious young women. A much-publicized self-styled hero, **Diamond**, begins operating in Manhattan but is found shot to death shortly thereafter; the crime is not solved. **Ripper**, a hideous psychotic, is captured by conventional forces and incarcerated. A particularly vicious Chicago street gang, the **Royals**, include supervillains **Jump Cut**, **Supercool**, and **Slipkid** in their ranks. **Sunburst**, **Phosphene**, **Parasite**, and **Widget** attempt to raid the Dare robotics company but are partially stopped (the latter two captured) by a new superhero group **Shield**, comprised of **Firenza**, the winged **Pyra Aquila** (the two women previously mentioned), **Spectre** (a spectral sort), and **Coriolis** (Richard Hannah, the grandson of Dr. Arcane, with wind powers). Dare's connections

to organized crime are revealed; the company folds and its president, **Stewart Rhodes**, goes to prison. Also, the death of **Dr. Clinton Avery** and his career as **Dr. Arcane** are revealed.

Late 1986: The governor of Illinois **Roger Ashby** welcomes local superheroes; his challenger in the upcoming election, **Matthew Bennett**, distrusts them and supports the building of **Stronghold**, a maximum-security prison. Another challenger, **Thomas Hines**, is discredited when his ties to neo-Nazi boys' camps is revealed. The **Garrote** reappears in Chicago on the 50-year anniversary of his disappearance and kills, among others, **Ashby** before he is stopped by **Spectre**. Therefore, **Bennett** becomes governor.

**Stronghold** is built and experiences its first attempted breakout, fortunately stopped by **Shield** and another new supergroup, **Strike Force**, comprised of **Oculon**, **Dire Wolf**, **Jetset**, **Virgo**, **Spyder**, and **Amethyst**. A rivalry begins between the two groups, neither of which are very helpful to the curious media. For example, a series of robberies and murders centered around the **Field Museum** are stopped when **Shield** spends a night there, but no one learns why. **Shield's** headquarters are in **Richard's** mansion in **Glencoe**; no one knows where **Strike Force** operates from.

A series of kidnappings and disappearances of people with borderline psychic powers occurs. **PSI** is shown to be the culprit and shut down; simultaneously, **Shield** battles the **Royals** and **Coriolis** kills **Supercool**. A crank named **Eric Darrell** appears in Chicago, accusing his daughter, **Angela**, of being only half-human ("An alien had my baby") and subsequently disappears.

Internationally, supervillains including **Ripper**, **Sunburst**, **Phosphene**, and **Barrier** cause problems, stealing an experimental nuclear submarine. Governor **Bennett** demands further local control over superpowered

individuals. He is assassinated by the Assassin at a benefit dinner; however, he is then revealed to be an android. The event is widely publicized, and Omnius is held responsible. Shield attacks the company SynTech in Arizona and crosses paths with Strike Force there; the two groups fight and cause a great deal of damage. Virgo is not seen again after this conflict. Shield then travels to Chinilaya and confronts Omnius there, capturing the submarine but barely escaping with their lives.

Spectre is accused of murdering a psychic, Annette Holmes, and is briefly put in Stronghold. A new superhero joins Shield; unlike the others, the speedster Runaround is perfectly happy to converse with the media and reveals himself to be Jack Flash, a popular blues musician. Coriolis, in contrast, becomes more violent and unpredictable, destroying large amounts of property. This culminates in his conjuring a hurricane over the North Side, resulting in the worst disaster in recent Chicago history and the loss of his powers. Much of the considerable fortune of Dr. Arcane goes to make reparations, as his defense, that he was mind-controlled by a fifteen year old girl named Andrea Crusoe, is not accepted.

The first hard evidence of other intelligent life in the universe appears in the form of a space armada approaching Earth and landing on the moon. Omnius claims them to be his allies and encourages the governments to put up as good a defense as they can, as it won't do them any good. The international situation becomes very tense; for instance, Libya fires an ineffectual nuclear missile at Chinilaya. Then, mysteriously, the armada leaves. The superheroine Pyra Aquila also disappears at this time. The tense nuclear situation nearly escalates to first-strike when the President of the US is kidnapped; Shield rescues him and diverts war by showing the deed was done by Omnius. Omnius is not seen again, and the group members

(Spectre, Firenza, Runaround) are hailed as heroes.

The post-Omnium world is somewhat calmer, but supervillains are now a major part of crime, business, and international relations. A group of the nastiest call themselves the Chosen (as in, "by Omnium") and become terrorists-for-hire (for instance, sinking American ships in the Persian gulf). They include Barrier, Sunburst, Phosphene, and Psistorm.

Shield (with a new member, a woman called Tesseract) solves the mystery of Diamond's death in New York; the android expert Dr. Raymond Long is put in jail. When Vanguard (a new electronics company run by the reformed Stewart Rhodes) buys out the US branch of Yamashita Electronics, Shield must fight supervillains hired by a group opposing the sale. Strike Force and Shield come into conflict again, this time at O'Hare, and again destroying a lot of property. The former is held responsible and put into Stronghold. A mysterious new crime boss comes to power in Chicago, at the expense of the Royals; called Patternmaster, he apparently has connections to Vanguard, as Sunburst and Phosphene attack the Vanguard building roughly coincident with his disappearance. Jack Flash puts out an album presumably about the blues of being a superhero.

A fundamentalist group called the Church of Divine Harmony is founded in Chicago, eventually becoming quite influential. They often come into conflict with Shield and are responsible for a general cooling-off of public opinion toward the group, which is not helped by a sixteen-year-old girl claiming to be pregnant by Spectre. The Hannah mansion and Jack Flash's apartment are firebombed, for instance. A demonic supervillain Nightmare uses the CDH to sway the vast majority of Chicagoans into attending a ritual sacrifice/riot in Grant Park; Shield (with new member Golum, a bizarre mystic being) barely manages to put a stop to the event,

after which their reputation improves.

At this point, many of Shield's escapades become obscure to the public. The Case of the Mummy's Hand arises for the third time with the re-appearance of the bizarre supervillain Jack O'Lantern, including the Mummy's Hand and the mysterious jewelry. Again, no explanation of the weird thefts is forthcoming. When Jack O'Lantern attempts to dump nerve gas over downtown Chicago, they stop him, but the incident is not clarified. Sometimes the public doesn't care, as when Shield defends downtown Chicago from an extraterrestrial monster. At other times, the obscurity is irritating, as when the State of Illinois building is nearly destroyed in the capture of Psistorm.

Certain superhero-related organizations have become known. Sidekick is formed by reformed supervillains Slipkid and Parasite to provide money, support, and PR for superheroes. Star Reach, a multidisciplinary research company, carries out xenological research based on the body of the alien Shield was forced to kill. A government agency devoted solely to superpowered individuals may be in existence.

Shield has lately been instrumental in the exposure of several organizations such as TALON and the Japanese Yakuza group Yellow Dragon, which included the powerful Japanese supervillain Raiden. Both organizations were connected to international smuggling and a criminal mastermind called Raptor. Rumor has it that they fought the Chosen recently in California. The results, if this is true, may include the death of Golum. Also, it was recently announced that the body of a young woman found in a car accident has been identified as Firenza. Apparently she was the victim of the Assassin, but managed to take him with her, as his body was also found in the wreck.

Active superheroes: Shield (Spectre, Tesseract, Runaround), Strike Force  
(Oculon, Dire Wolf, Amethyst, Jetset, Spyder)

Dead or presumed dead superheroes: Dr. Arcane, Ironclad, Captain Cold,  
Rubber Sam, Psuper Psycho, Diamond, Virgo, Golum, Firenza

Whereabouts unknown: Osprey (last seen 1945), Puzzle (last seen 1961),  
Conjuror (last seen 1961), Hourglass (last seen 1961), Sensei (last  
seen 1968), Pyra Aquila (last seen 1987)