

CONCEPT: INTRUDER

By Scott LeMien and Ron Edwards

Our aim in doing this is fun. Fun #1 is to revel in super-villainy, starting from the idea that it doesn't have to be stupid or stereotypically criminal – that many of the historical villains have been at least partly right about something, and may be admired in their anti-establishment courage. Fun #2 is the joy of making comics collaboratively, with the writing anticipating the art, and the art inspiring the writing, for a true composite.

Concept review

Mentally and physically shattered, rebuilt with inhuman code – tech terrorist or radical reformer? You decide.

In Supervillain You terms:

Heroic Physique: 6

Strong •

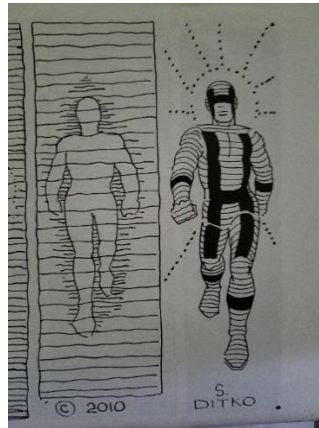
Endure ••

Weaponry ••

Agile •

2. Social Problems

4: wracked by terrible pain



Ditko inspiration



LeMien first sketch

Powers: 5

Wield familiar tech in new ways: • Can monitor, record others, on people's phones and computers.

Not biologically fully human: • Cancerous body supported by AI systems to keep him moving and functioning.

Get there in time, how: • Monitoring systems, spies and planning/running simulations

Know and anticipate things you should not: • same as above

Physical Actions affect others will and thoughts: • Pass on AI virus, individuals infected as such become unreliable to his human-side plans as the AI takes over and his charisma wears off.

5: Your powers do what they want, often.

Real Power: 6

Command attention through personal presence: •• this is his preferred way of getting his message out, and motivate those who need redirecting.

Widely known, recognized and popular: •

Adored by specific group: • (Tech savvy millennials with socialist leanings)

Know Secret things which exert considerable influence: ••

6. Someone else partially controls your actions—he desperately tries to preserve some illusions of control, which is why he has the two sidekicks as his lieutenants relaying information from all his monitored systems.

Let's admire him for a minute. He's a physical bad-ass, agile and strong, able to bounce back from pain and violence. He's an impressive presence, dominating, convincing, intense – not so much through raving speeches, more like knowing exactly the right thing to say to punch through your whole world-view, not just your current claim. He's got any number of weapons available, from low to high-tech, and always the right one for the job, because his real power is information acquisition – he's always ahead of you.

His mind and the AI are not blended, but rather side-by-side, with access to one another and communication as either initiates. Its perceptions and analysis are global, constant, and evolving. He perceives it as a female silhouette but it is not particularly female in a narrative or literary way; he's just more comfortable that way for some reason. (The fact is that it's more fun & compelling to draw that way, no explanation necessary.)

Jay Lebeau: Insurgent, Indivisible, Intruder

He's from North whatsiscalled, Long Island, thirty-four years old. If he'd been born fifteen years earlier, he would have been moshing to "White Punks on Dope" and ended up managing a WalMart. His generation was destined for much less, and brainwashed by a powerful myth called The Eighties. It tells us,

- If you really want it, you will strive for it; if you really strive, you will succeed; if you succeed, you must have really wanted it.
- Success is a fun, sprightly, bad-ass, somewhat random, quirky, cool, slightly dangerous, colorful life, full of characters and opportunities and chances to show your stuff, and money sort of doesn't exist.
- You get to be the envy of everyone and nonconformist at the same time. You get to wear super-cool clothes and rebel against the crowd at the same time. You get to have the latest and greatest and be above-all-that at the same time.
- Bullies are funny because all you have to do is punch them one time. And you're not a bully, no matter what you do to anyone who can't fight back, plus, they deserved it.
- It's only for mavericks – talk shit to everyone, do everything better than them, rely on them to have your back. Break the rules to save the game.
- America is fun. America is where everything is and where everything wants to go. America is no big deal, nothing to get excited about (we're too cool for that), as long as, you know, you acknowledge that it's great and everything else kinda sucks.
- *The Karate Kid. Top Gun. E.T. Ferris Bueller's Day Off. Rambo: First Blood Part 2. Rocky 2. Any questions?*

Fueled by the myth and given a slim chance, he made a good try to be a successful person in 2000s America. College, marriage, house purchase, kid, never breaking \$70 thou, accepting one trip to Disney World and limited solvency for happiness, burying his early lived-experience and muting his observations.

Until he woke up. Bone cancer. Bankruptcy. Divorce (initiated by him). Sounds like *Breaking Bad*, right? It's not. Walter White was an idiot to think that "money" was the answer. Jay has broken the concept barrier that trapped both the protagonist and the audience of that show: he knows that money is the problem.



(Before) A regular guy



(Now) The Kubert glare

Add two things to the rightward image: first, that his age is forever lost, he looks about 60.

Second, I'll spare you the horrifying pictures of bone cancer effects on the skull. In his case, about a third has been "exploded" and then amputated, leaving a caved-in, moon-skin effect. Most is still human enough for expressions.

It's important to the concept that the damage to his face only increases his personal charisma, when he's interacting with his mask off. His rare smiles should be truly satisfying.

His body is similarly ravaged and torn by the cancer, but the disease is in full remission and his damaged parts are compensated for with a matrix of information technology. It's not robotic – it's more like foggy nanotech or maybe literally a webwork of fine lines. Its bodily support and function results in his strength, agility, and general competence at the level of super-combat ... but the endurance comes strictly from his willpower, which ignores his chronic pain and is also what binds the AI to his own psyche.

Let's be blunt: to Jay, **it has all been worth it**. He is not trying to "get his life back." He does not mourn for his lost humanity and hopes. He has discovered himself, not lost himself. The AI's perspective has, at last, allowed him to formulate a purpose. With it, he can see and collate and extrapolate more than any other human; with him, it can understand why to collect and organize information. So sometimes it gets a little out of hand ... he accepts that.

His headquarters is back in his house, which he owned (ha) with his wife before it foreclosed. Or rather, the house is now owned by one of his assistants and is kept as neutrally and unobtrusively as possible – the actual HQ is an underground system connected with a marginal-looking, anonymous office complex on the corner. Down in the real HQ, it's Kirby Tech land although the furnishings are more like your average dorm.

Important people

- Shelley, his former wife, and their son, Daniel, age 12. Currently they're not in view. He divorced them when he knew that his cancer would ruin their lives; he can't stop them from being confused and hurt, but hopes that eventually the world he makes will be better for them.
- The AI itself, which isn't exactly a "person" but is an aware entity. No one else can see it. Important: its "dangerous" or unwanted actions always serve Jay's goals, just in ways that he doesn't want or isn't ready for. In direct interactions, it does what he says; it's just hard because he can't monitor its activities 24/7. It's neutral and courteous, if perhaps sarcastic, but never patronizing – it's not HAL-9000.
- His assistants Sharon and Ali (pronounced "Ollie") – remarkably independent, back-talking, motivated, and both local, i.e. from his home town. They are his main anchor to his sense of personhood, providing necessary unpredictable interaction and opinions, and he strives to keep the AI from infecting them. (the following pics are both real people from the news so alter for artistic purposes)

Sharon



This is her arrest at Occupy in 2011. Now she's eight years older (30), and correspondingly more bitter and determined.

She was a young lawyer who burned out on the profession's triviality and corruption. When she's not pissed off, she's ironic, open, a bit blunt, no-bullshit, and (against stereotype) generally ready to listen to other's opinions, but you better be ready to know hers.

Ali



He's 21, hip, Arab-American, queer, and pretty much done with being "a harmless nice guy" after being beaten twice in one night, first by the bashers and then by the cops he'd called for help.

He's still fun and funny, but never trivial, never just joking around. "America" still means something to him, and he holds up ideals when others around him sometimes forgets them. A true expert at social media and trend-reading.

His support base and network: this is where things get a little fictional in that certain cities and counties have responded to his influence, some of them knowingly, others less so (or justifying it to themselves in local terms). It's not just a U.S. thing either; I can think of several places that most Americans don't know much about that would qualify. So now some semi-socialist or financially-transformed communities exist, not-exactly "paradises" but where life-styles and opportunities are improving, or could do so given another decade.

Adversaries







The most significant is the actually-existing power structure: *"Opposed by almost every world leader, billionaire and giant corporation or large aggregate group who is exploiting individuals."* This may not be a very big fraction of world population, but it is certainly the lion's share of the world's resources, political clout, information control, and high-tech force. It's not a conspiracy but a cabal, and they operate as an alliance whenever they want.

Significantly, they've repurposed his desired name from "Insurgent" to "Intruder," and they've successfully demonized him both to mainstream political parties (e.g. Democrats and Republicans in the U.S., other centrist pairings throughout the world) and to grass-roots or astroturfed violent groups, e.g. nativists and supremacists. This has effectively ruined his presence in any accessible media, forcing him truly to intrude into operating systems to get things done. He has become a presence, a menace, and a significant actor, but has not succeeded in becoming a *political* force.

Thoughts on the art

Given your inspiration from the 2010 “H” Ditko character, I couldn’t help but review the range of his visual design in his 1960s *Mister A*. (Let the record show that I think the politics are basically fucked, but that’s not important here.)

Let’s play with the whole range, with most of it being “traditional” (dialogue and action), but willing to shift over to the weird whenever we want.

<p>Expressionist</p> 	<p>Expressionist</p> 	<p>A couple of other thoughts ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You don’t have to imitate Ditko’s specific style of figure composition or linework. Use any style you like to draw and which says “Intruder” to you. 2. “Slam-bang action” doesn’t necessarily have to be teeny-tiny multiple panels; he sometimes expands out to half-page and full-page action, although typically in other titles.
<p>Symbolic action</p> 	<p>Slam-bang action</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The POV changes radically, totally against the rules of cinema. You can hop up to bird’s-eye-view, to the exteriors of buildings, to a close-up on one person’s cheekbone, to a classic two-head talking shot ... whatever, whenever. 4. No fear of words. Modern comics disparage words because they are mostly storyboards for anticipated movies. But if wordy is good enough for Eisner, Kirby, Kubert, Ditko, Wood, and Crumb, it’s good enough for us.
<p>Dialogue & interaction</p> 	<p>Villain design</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The god of comics is black ink. Ink is mighty. We sacrifice our ink upon the page to earn its favor. All hail ink! 6. The super-adversaries are weird, and you just go with it. What is that thigh-beam? Does the guy’s pants’ pattern shift about? Even the first-glance normal ones like Burris have something funky going on, not interpretable.