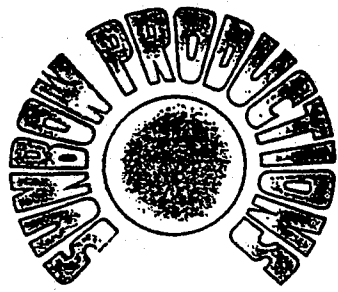


THE TICK

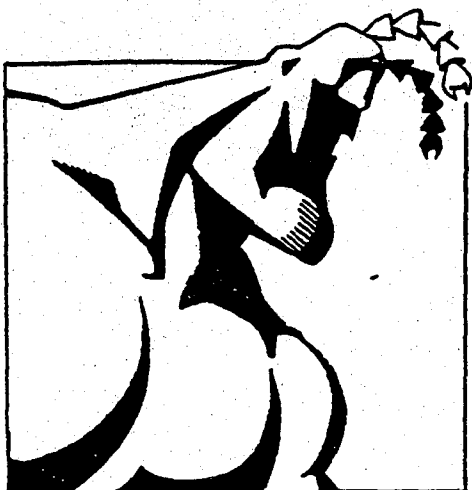
Writer's Guide

Final Draft
April 29, 1993



the **TICK**





Up, up in the sky, the familiar, jagged movements
of a superhero in motion!

But wait! This one seems odd...

Lightning flashes revealing a rather large, dark figure leaping **clumsily** from rooftop to rooftop. The figure is towering and absurdly muscular. **His** leaps are huge and, except for the occasional stumble and unwarranted wobble, his feet land roughly where he wants them to.

He trips once, hurtling off the edge of a high rise apartment building. He falls earthward, never losing his air of confidence and security, and **smashes** into the upper level of a parking garage with a loud, dull plunk. With all the aplomb he can muster, he wrenches himself from his crater and stands tall, surveying the City he's sworn to protect. Lightning flashes again, searing across the sky, across the chiseled, heroic yet disheveled features of...

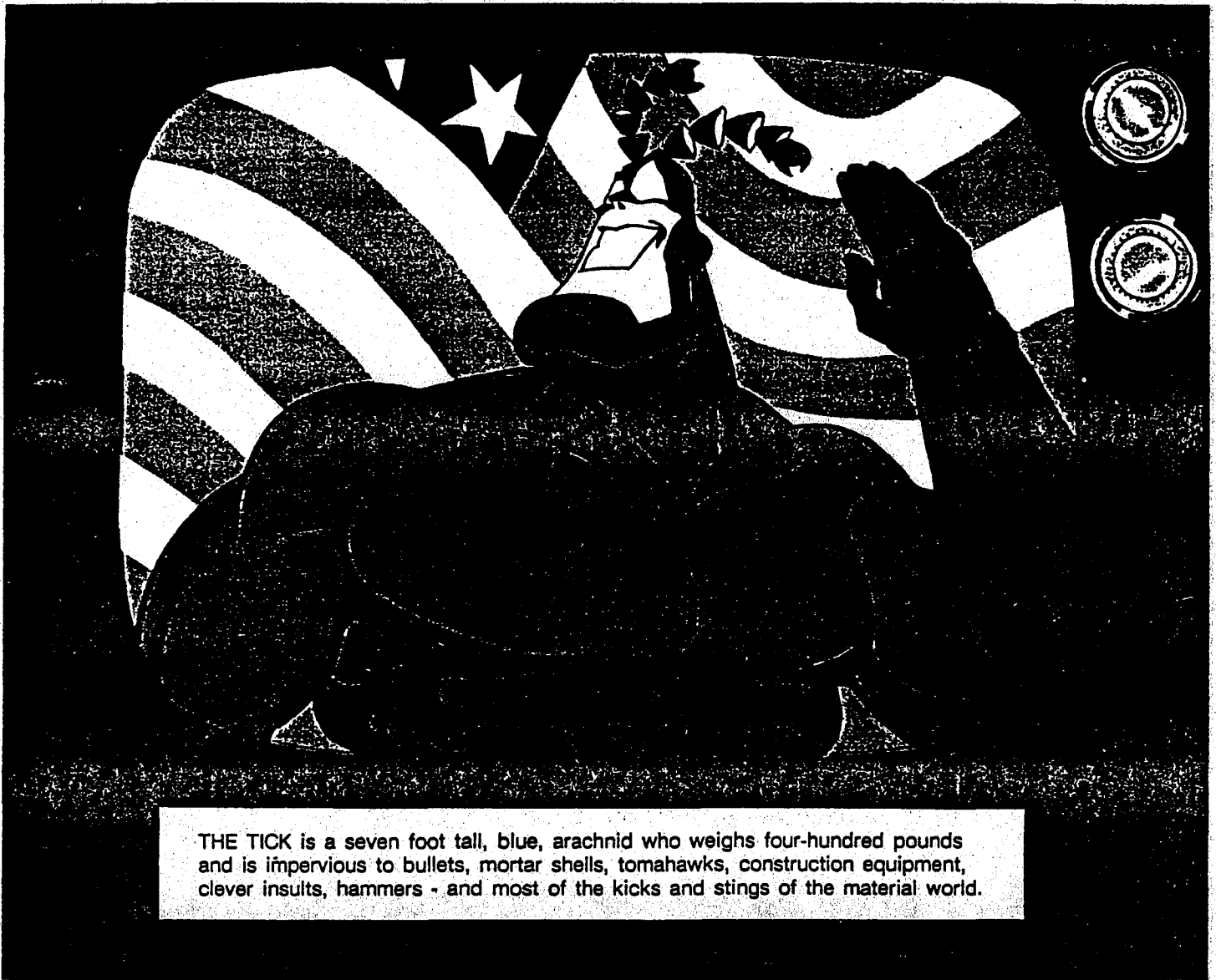
THE TICK



THE STORY

"The Tick" is envisioned as a fast-paced, thrilling yet totally peculiar and erratic, superhero comedy-adventure. Unique and zany comedy will be its most important element. The Tick is a humorous character who generates comedy through his dumb vulnerability, his flair for idiot logic, and his general absurdity. While fighting supervillains and solving crimes, he maintains an active fantasy life, endowing household objects with powerful properties - blurring the lines of the real and fantastic with sheer willpower.

"The Tick" is about people in pursuit of their dreams, about the advantages of not quite fitting-in, and even some of the disappointments we all have when life turns out to be nothing like the movies. All the characters presented are misfits, but they are comfortably nested in a misfit universe.



THE TICK is a seven foot tall, blue, arachnid who weighs four-hundred pounds and is impervious to bullets, mortar shells, tomahawks, construction equipment, clever insults, hammers - and most of the kicks and stings of the material world.



WHO IS THE TICK?

The Tick is a giant, blue, 400 pound crimefighter with antennae and other surface similarities to his namesake. He is intent on saving the world. Unstoppable. Uncrushable, with poor math skills and a heart of gold. A Superhero, just and strong, who seeks truth and honor above all things, who always knows what he wants, whether it's Pez or a "Ticker" tape parade in his honor. The Tick knows no doubt, no feeling of inadequacy. The Tick lives for adventure, for the open road, and to battle the forces of evil. Like other superheroes before him, the Tick does have a battle cry, something to strike fear in the hearts of evil-doers everywhere: SPOON! - although it seldom gets the desired effect. Unfortunately, the Tick is an incredible pinhead. He bounces across the rooftops of the savage City, an uncoordinated, well-intentioned force of nature, who succeeds by accident, but meets failure with dignity. He is invulnerable. Bullets bounce off his bright, blue chest. Flames lick in vain at his great, big, blue feet. Unsavory ideas pry, but gain no entry, into his tiny, grey brain. To be good in a world like this, it's best to be dumb. The Tick may be up for Sainthood...

Together with the help of his sidekick Arthur, an out-of-work accountant in a moth suit, and Dot, a young heiress in love, the Tick fights the master-criminals and supervillains for their world. He and his friends ride a roller coaster of high adventure, battle the criminal menace with stunning and charming inefficiency, and always find time for well-balanced meals and plenty of flossing. And in the end, the Tick and his friends triumph, sometimes by accident, others by design, but always in the funniest way possible...



ADDITIONAL GOOD GUYS

Character Profiles



ARTHUR is the Tick's faithful side-kick. He was an accountant before he bought his strange flying moth suit at the auction of a millionaire's estate. After he took an extended vacation from the firm, Arthur began to pursue his childhood dream: to fight crime and live an exciting danger-filled life.



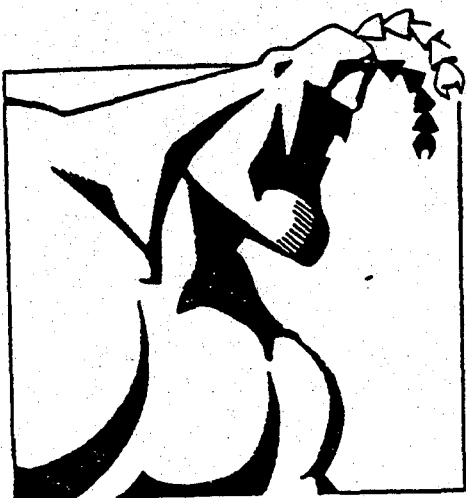
ARTHUR

Arthur, the Tick's faithful side-kick, is an accountant, or was an accountant before he bought his strange flying moth suit at the auction of a millionaire's estate. After he took an extended vacation from The Firm, Arthur began to pursue his childhood dream: to fight crime and live an exciting danger-filled life. Arthur wears his moth suit constantly, to always be ready when adventure calls. But he can only wear the large, unwieldy wings while outside, so he's often mistaken for a wingless moth with large rabbit ears. He's about five feet eight inches tall, slightly pudgy, with a kind face and a pleasant well-mannered demeanor. Arthur respects that he can't leap into action like the Tick unfailingly does. Arthur's problem is that he's too sensible. He won't jump into shark infested waters to diffuse a floating mine that just might explode at any minute, or dodge an oncoming bullet...the ideas just don't make sense to Arthur. He is a rational person. What's a rational person doing at the heart of a wish fulfillment fantasy like "The Tick?" Well, he's the straight man. The Tick is what everyone wants to be, but Arthur is what most of us are: confused, unsure, sometimes frightened, occasionally the victim of ridiculous or unkind circumstances. But, despite his hesitance, Arthur does manage to live his life of excitement and danger.

Arthur is actually fairly intelligent, and is a store house of strange, seemingly trivial information. He reads voraciously, and he comes off like a watered down Sherlock Holmes at times. So great is his backlog of knowledge that Arthur knows a few words of Apache, how to get water out of a cactus, and all the animals of the Chinese zodiac. The Tick always makes sure to be in awe when Arthur discovers some small but crucial detail in a case. It's only polite.



DOT is a friend to the Tick and Arthur. She is an heiress to a large fortune, and is part of the City's upper-class society. One hitch, she can't stand it. She can't stand evening gowns and good table manners, and people who use French words when English will do.



DOT

Dot eventually befriends the Tick and Arthur, adding her own abilities and considerable resources to this unlikely team. Dot is a young woman with dull, brown hair and a bright, open, pretty face. She is an heiress to a large fortune, and is part of the City's upper-class society. One hitch, she can't stand it. She can't stand evening gowns and good table manners, and people who use French words when English will do. She took Ninjitsu lessons. She is, in fact, a Ninja. She just finished her "Learn Ninjitsu in Your Spare Time" correspondence course, and according to her official Ninja World Certificate, she is a fully trained and operational Ninja. This doesn't mean much. For forty-two dollars and proper postage, anyone can be an officially certified Ninja World Ninja. But she has picked up some useful skills, and is brave and resourceful. She is determined, clear-headed, and stubborn. And when embroiled in adventure with the Tick and Arthur, she tends to do most of the upfront thinking. The Tick is too busy spooning over-used superhero banter, and Arthur's intellect tends towards the dreamy and insolent.

Dot is a bit clumsy, and at the heart of her tough rebellious tomboy act, she is insecure and wary. She has grown up without parents, living in a huge mansion with a venomous and mysterious aunt—a skeletal ice-queen named Hamet Curse. Dot is enamored of the Tick, but usually ends up yelling at him out of frustration. The Tick doesn't mind. He looks at it as good, snappy dialogue.



PAUL, THE SAMURAI is a living weapon with deadly skills honed razor sharp. He occasionally teams up with the Tick when their interests meet. He is a good and loyal friend, and honorable above all else.



PAUL, THE SAMURAI

Paul is a true Samurai, a living weapon, with deadly skills honed razor sharp. He is a blood and guts hero, who speaks a language of violence, who praises the test of battle. He occasionally teams up with the Tick when their interests meet. He is a good and loyal friend, and honorable above all else. When he came to America, he baked his Samurai sword into a large loaf of French bread to get through customs. He has yet to strip the stale disguise off his deadly weapon, finding that a good, hard loaf of bread suffices in most battles. He occasionally considers removing it, but is always distracted before he is able to do so.



MAN-EATING COW is a good force that wanders the streets of the Tick's City. She has a surprisingly well-developed sense of right and wrong for a farm animal, and is reputed to devour only the evil-at-heart.



THE MAN-EATING COW

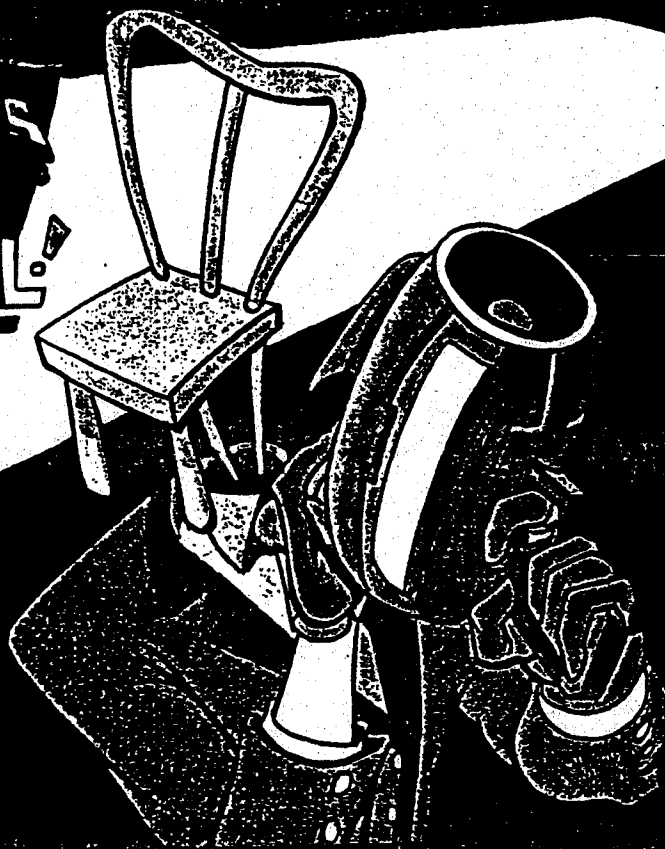
On occasion, in the long and convoluted annals of bovine history, cows have been known to turn carnivorous. There are documented cases of cows devouring entire towns in India and the Midwestern United States. Such a cow wanders the streets of the Tick's City. But this cow has a surprisingly well-developed sense of right and wrong for a farm animal, and is reputed to devour only the evil-at-heart. Sightings are rare, but sometimes, deep in the neon-lit half-night of the inner City sprawl, a ghostly moan sends chills up the spines of the wicked. They stop dead in the middle of their misdeeds and run in blind fear to farm country for the protection of electric fences and cattle grates. To the Tick, she is a most valued ally.



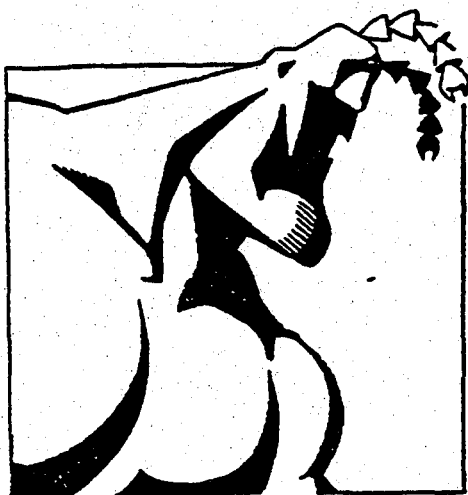
The Bad Guys

Character Profiles

AMERICA'S MOST CRIMINAL!



CHAIRFACE CHIPPENDALE is the classic arch-fiend, the textbook criminal mastermind. He was born with a strange facial deformity, and because of it, turned to a life of crime.



CHAIRFACE CHIPPENDALE

Chairface is the classic arch-fiend, the textbook criminal mastermind. He was born with a strange deformity that set him apart from others, and because of it, turned to a life of crime. Through the years he has gathered a monstrous assortment of criminal underlings, each carrying their own particular disfigurement. They are like a "Dick Tracy Rogues" gallery pushed even closer to the edge of the absurd. He hangs out with such lovelies as:

Headless Henderson
Boils Brown
Devon Ugly
The Cleft
The Forehead
Pineapple Pokopo
Zipperneck
Eyebrows Mulligan
The Crease
The-Guy-With-Ears-Like-Little-Raisins
Cheeks Chaines

Chairface is brilliant, but in his every plan lies some flaw ready to be exploited by the astute adversary. His crimes are legendary, however. He is sophisticated, but will throw tantrums if displeased. He has all the skills that accompany contemporary nobility, and fancies himself the "King of Crime." "Some people sculpt, some people paint...I do bad things...great, big, bad things."



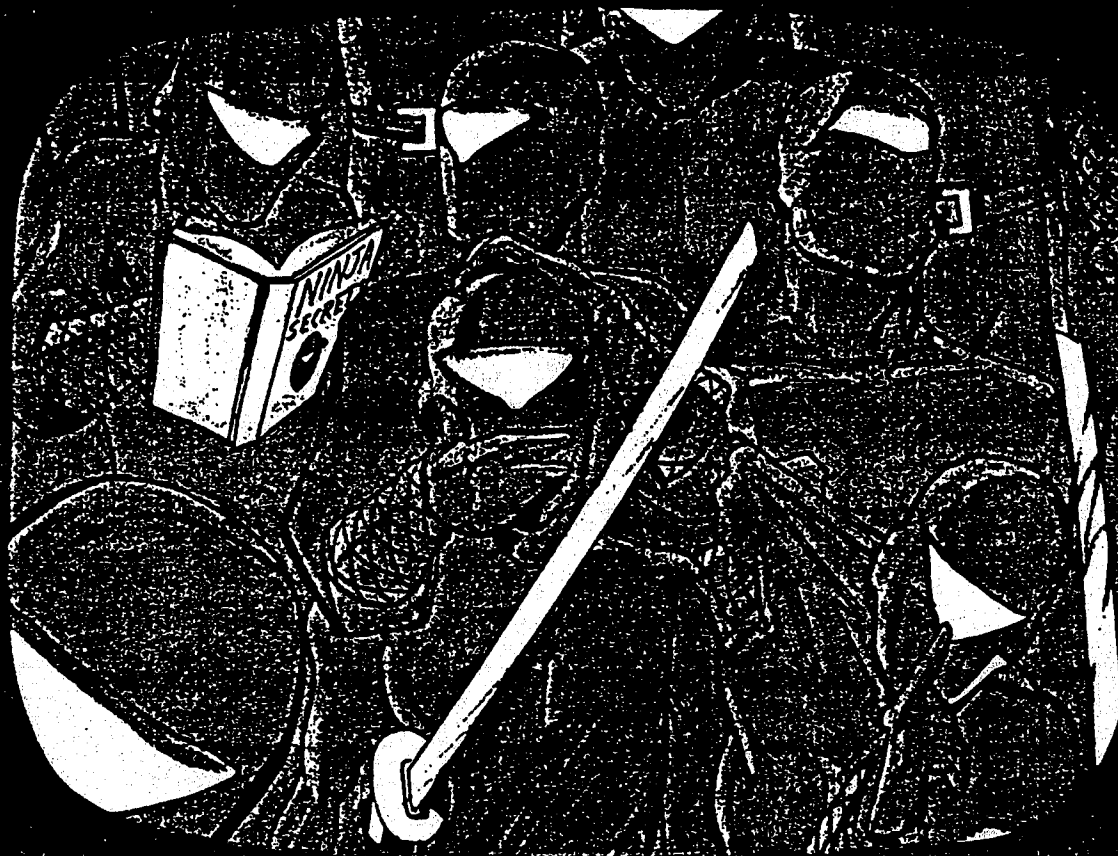
THRAKKORZOG is a big, angry blob with galaxy domination on his agenda. Every time he gets enough energy to open the gateway to our planet, he pays the Tick a visit. Thrak, as his tormented subjects call him, is convinced the Tick is the last thing he needs to complete his army of mindless Gelatin Zombies.



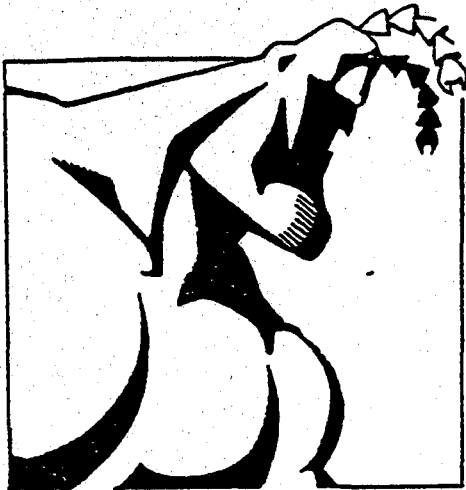
THRAKKORZOG, EVIL AMEBOID DICTATOR OF DIMENSION 14B

Thrakkorzog is just a big, angry pudding with galaxy domination on his agenda. Every time he gets enough energy to open a gateway to our planet, he pays the Tick a visit. Thrak, as his tormented subjects call him, is convinced the Tick is the last thing he needs to complete his army of mindless Gelatin Zombies. He will pop up once in a while and try to suck the Tick's brain out of the top of his head. Thrak wouldn't be above slipping his special mind control gelatin into all the chilled, quivering, lime flavored dessert snacks in the city. But, he only wants the Tick. He's not interested in the earth, it's too sunny, there's too much pollen in the air, too much chlorine in the swimming pools.

Thrakkorzog always seems to appear when the Tick is alone, and the Tick has yet to convince anyone else that the creature exists. It's sort of a "Snuffelupagus Syndrome." He'll pop out of a closet for a pitched two minute battle and then disappear just as Arthur walks in. This especially frustrates the Tick.



NINJA WORLD, INC. is a thriving business that exploits the once secret and elusive heritage of Ninjitsu, the Japanese art of assassination. The Ninja that fill the clan ranks today are goons, incompetent and buffoonish. They still, however, represent trouble for the Tick and his gang.



NINJA WORLD INCORPORATED

Ninja World is a thriving business that exploits the once secret and elusive heritage of Ninjitsu, the Japanese art of assassination. The huge complex is located on the outskirts of the City. It's a martial arts shopping mall, a theme park, a correspondence school, and the actual home to the Americanized Ninja clan. The once unseen Ninja were exposed to the American public and made into a cheap tourist attraction. The Ninja that fill the clan ranks today are goons, incompetent and buffoonish. They are trained in a few months, and although they are used as Ninja World enforcers and agents, most of them only know how to work the theme park rides and concession stands. But they enjoy being a part of the "rich and deadly heritage that is Ninja!"



NINJA DISTRICT MANAGER is the Ninja clan's hugely overweight leader dressed in an enormous kimono. He is responsible for the downfall of Ninja integrity and the massive upswing of their profit potential.



NINJA DISTRICT MANAGER

The clan is run by a hugely overweight business-man in a Kimono, called the District Manager. He is responsible for the downfall of their integrity and the massive upswing of their profit potential. He will sacrifice anything for more money and power, and although his minions are boobs, there's enough of them to present a problem. His newest scheme is his most insidious...a nationwide chain of Ninja World franchises!



SUGGESTED STORIES

1. The Tick sends away for a Super Secret Spy Kit, advertised on the back of his favorite comic book. When it arrives, he dons a discarded rental tux, adopts a clipped British accent, and subsists entirely on a diet of sparkling mineral water. He hits the streets of the City, armed with his impressive array of cheap, plastic spy tools (AA batteries not included), frequenting the dumpsters and back alleys of foreign embassies, looking for "spy action." Of course, he does awkwardly stumble into a spy plot, which unfolds and expands until its explosive conclusion, with the Tick on board a giant stealth-blimp at the mercy of a seductive, femme-fatale! The Tick, sort-of thwarts the evil scheme, inadvertently causing a high-altitude firestorm, which he later terms "ideal for clearing the sinuses."
2. The Tick and Arthur discover a sinister scenario, authorized by the criminal mastermind Chairface Chippendale. He and his deformed gang have stolen a set of perfect lenses, from a lab in Vienna, and brought them to the City. There, in Chairface's hotel and casino stronghold, his terrible plan unfolds. He intends to create a powerful heat-ray, using the stolen lenses, and commit the ultimate act of vandalism: to write his name across the face of the moon! The Tick and Arthur crash his moon-menace party, dressed as bellboys. But, before they can steal back the lenses, they're caught by Chairface and his goons. Finally, they escape and capture the evil gang by taking control of the heat-ray, and threatening to incinerate the hotel. Chairface's plan is ruined; he was only able to finish the first three letters of his name. He is hauled off to prison under the scarred, yellow moon, which now read "CHA" in hundred foot, mile-high letters.
3. The Tick and Arthur agree to keep a valuable sarcophagus at Arthur's apartment, in order to protect it for a museum that fears its being stolen. The Tick obsesses on the Mummy possibly awakening. Eventually, the ancient Egyptian Cult that the Museum was worried about, tracks it to Arthur's apartment and wakes it up. After some initial confusion and a lot of fright, the Tick, Arthur, and the Mummy fight off the zealots and get along pretty well. The Mummy decides to call the museum home and on occasion, has been known to hang out with the Tick and Arthur.

4. Thrakkorzog, inter-dimensional tyrant, clones Arthur from one of his fingernail clippings. He sends the evil Arthur to get a tissue sample from the Tick, so that he, too, may be cloned. While dodging the real Arthur, the clone uses every dangerous object in the house to try and scrape off a piece of the Tick's invulnerable tissue. The Tick is suffering from a slight head cold, and has been blowing his nose all day. The evil Arthur decides that a used tissue is as good as any tissue, and steals the Tick's wadded-up ball of Kleenex for the cloning process. Arthur discovers the clone and battles him, while the Tick tries to figure out which Arthur is real. As the Tick calculates pointless equations, the evil Arthur escapes. Thrakkorzog tries to clone the Tick with Kleenex. The result is a horrible, mucous-Tick, which can go from a solid to a semi-liquid state and suffers from terrible congestion. The Tick and Arthur find Thrakkorzog's secret lab and battle the clones. The Tick, thoroughly disgusted by his snotty double, manages to destroy him by squirting him with nasal spray. Thrakkorzog destroys Arthur's clone by mistake, believing it to be the real Arthur, and then affects his escape, once again defeated.
5. The Man-Eating Cow begins her one-cow-war on crime. Slowly, criminals begin disappearing. The Tick, Arthur, and Dot track the Cow's movements, slowly becoming convinced that she means no harm to the innocent. But, a group of angry, disgruntled citizens of the City take arms and appoint themselves as the City's "new leaders" to eliminate the bovine threat. These self-appointed leaders, too, begin tracking the Cow's movements. They all meet at, what would be, the scene of the Cow's next meal, and discover that since she's gained a reputation for eating people, she no longer has to. She just scares the criminals into turning themselves in. The Tick decides that she is a force for good, and demands that these phony leaders allow her to live in freedom. The angry citizens refuse and an argument ensues. While their debate rages, the Man-Eating Cow slips silently into the shadows, her ghostly "moo" echoing in the alleys and streets of the City, driving an icy wedge of fear into the heart of the criminal world.

THE TICK FACTS

- The Tick, created by Ben Edlund and published by New England Comics, Inc., made its debut with THE TICK SPECIAL EDITION #1 in the Spring of 1988, followed by SPECIAL EDITION #2 a few months later. Edition #1 was limited to a print run of 5,000 copies, Edition #2 had a run of 3,000 copies, and both were distributed through NEC stores and mail order.
- The first issue of The Tick has been reprinted several times since its original release in 1988. It was recently reprinted in a deluxe full-color edition, bringing the total number of copies in print up to 150,000. The original Special Edition #1 now commands prices up to \$75 in the collector's market.
- The Tick is produced on a bi-monthly and quarterly schedule with a current circulation of 50,000 copies per issue. The next issue of The Tick will be released in the Spring of 1992.
- The Tick's success has led to the production and merchandising of buttons, T-shirts, posters, trading cards, paper back collections, and a the creation of a "secret society" with over 2,000 "agents." Supporting characters from The Tick, such as Paul, the Samurai and Man Eating Cow have been spun off into their own well-received titles.
- The Tick and Ben Edlund have received coverage in a variety of local media and national publications including Comic's Scene and Retailer Express. Diamond Comic Distributors, the nation's largest servicers of the direct market, regularly punctuates its regional updates with illustrations of The Tick. Recently, The Tick made a nationwide appearance in America's Sunday Funnies with a cameo in Greg Evan's syndicated "LUANN" strip.

THE TICK BIBLE

[Second Draft, April 23, 1993]

by

Ben Edlund and Richard Liebmann-Smith

INTRODUCTION

The Tick series is envisioned as a fast-paced, thrilling yet totally peculiar and erratic superhero comedy-adventure. The unique sensibility of this production requires a delicate balance of humor, action, and character development—a blend specific to the world of The Tick. The main body of this bible is intended to define that sensibility, and provide writers with the tools to convey it. The first place writers should look for guidance is the twelve original Tick comic books. Our intention is to translate the spirit of those comics into television terms and further develop it through the creative potential of this medium.

THE TICK

The Tick is a seven-foot-tall, four-hundred-pound avenger of evil who lives to fight crime. He bounces across the rooftops of The City, an uncoordinated, well-intentioned force of nature, who succeeds by accident and meets failure with dignity and denial. He is, in every aspect, a caricature of the classic superhero. GAZE UPON HIM! Look at his giant lantern jaw, his mighty musculature, his big mitts. As a character, The Tick takes his essential elements from traditional superhero comics. Unlike these heroes, however, The Tick has no defined Origin Story, no Secret Identity, at least so far.

He is nigh-invulnerable. This means bullets bounce off his bright blue chest; flames lick in vain at his great big blue feet; high explosives stun but do not harm him. He can survive the extreme cold and explosive decompression of outer space, for a while. Cyanide gas gives him a terrible headache. A sulfuric acid bath would be unpleasant and might result in an irritating rash. Clever insults pry, but gain no entry, into his tiny grey brain. An atomic explosion would kill him.

We want avoid any single object or substance (like Kryptonite) that constitutes The Tick's mortal weakness. His body is susceptible to extremes. Sulfuric acid cannot kill him but hypotransforassic acid (whatever that is) could possibly do him in. And he can sense when a danger has transcended the mundane realm and entered the superheroic.

Heat, cold, crushing force, poison, rays of mysterious nature, and runaway antibodies can

all be cleverly exaggerated to present deadly menace to The Tick. Remember: Something that doesn't kill him might nonetheless render him harmless for a certain period of time and hence put him out of the picture, allowing the workings of your plot to develop.

The Tick is possessed of incredible strength. He can lift very weighty objects, i.e., a woman or a man in distress, an automobile, an elephant, several elephants, or a tank. He could even throw a tank. He can stop a speeding locomotive, but it would take a lot out of him. He could topple the Statue of Liberty — but he wouldn't. His super-strength stops short of Superman's, but he refuses to acknowledge it. There is no perceivable end to Superman's strength. He can push planets out of their orbits and throw objects into the sun. The limits of The Tick's strength are more defined. The Tick could conceivably lift one end of a battleship, but it would be an **INTENSELY** draining effort. He would have to lie down for a little bit, maybe for the rest of the episode. There is an opportunity for humor here. The Tick's estimation of his strength often exceeds its actual limits. It's not that he's boastful, just optimistic. In issue #10 of the comic, it falls upon him to dispose of a dangerous monolith (about 800 pounds). Falling back on his notion of superhero capabilities, he concludes that he can "hurl it into the depths of outer space." In fact he is only able to get it a few hundred feet into the air and into a neighboring cornfield.

Other than super strength and nigh-invulnerability, The Tick's powers are fairly modest. He can leap a short building in a single bound -- two or three stories at most. He patrols The City by leaping: a trademark rooftop ballet, a semi-graceful, semi-destructive routine of aerial acrobatics that knocks the cornices off some buildings, chips ledges off others, and betrays a casual attitude towards municipal damage --**THE PRICE OF JUSTICE!** When asked about other powers -- X-ray vision, flight, extra-sensory perception -- he is generally evasive. The Tick avoids self-limitation. In his mind, he could have all kinds of latent, undiscovered powers.

The Tick is basically a big kid, with the innocence and flat candor of a child. His primary drive in life is to fulfill his destiny as an exemplary superhero. Protecting the weak and helpless is part of that, but of at least equal importance are the gadgets, secret headquarters, and epic battles. As he has said: "I don't want to stop crime, I just want to fight it!" The Tick seeks out each element of the superhero lifestyle consciously and explicitly. He is ever trying to complete a mental checklist of superhero trappings -- a sidekick, a secret headquarters, an arch-enemy, a love interest, and deep brooding inner conflict. During the course of an episode he might openly yearn for an arch-enemy, or exclaim, in the presence of an appropriate female: "Aha! A possible love interest!"

The Tick expresses himself in two characteristic modes. When alone, or occasionally around his sidekick Arthur, he slips into a kind of spoken self-narration. In this mode, everything he does or thinks takes on an epic dimension. In issue #3 of the comic book, he stands on a rooftop, and narrates for himself:

"He stands...like some sort of pagan god or deposed tyrant, staring out over the

city he's sworn to...to stare out over. And it's evident, just by looking at him, that he's got some pretty heavy things on his mind..."

In the pilot, The Tick narrates on a bus, describing the events of his day:
"Destiny's powerful hand has made the bed of my future, and it's up to me to lie in it."

Even though he seems oblivious at times, The Tick is always very conscious of how he presents himself and his superhero image. The inflated tone of his self-narration carries over into much of his dialogue. There are two problems with the way the Tick approaches this dramatic tone: he can't keep it up for long, and he doesn't do it very well in the first place. Everything he says is a little off, a little dumb. In issue #8 of the comic book, The Tick, threatening a villain with a city mailbox, makes an attempt at superhero bombast:

"Wicked men! Cease your antics, or I may be forced to assault with the U.S. Postal System!"

When writing for The Tick in this mode, try at all times to exceed the limits of conventional metaphor, skewing it with The Tick's unique perspective.

The Tick's other mode is one of child-like enthusiasm, innocence, and vulnerability. The delivery is straightforward, less theatrical. In this mode Tick gushes his basic feelings and gives away hints of his true vulnerability. In the pilot, as The Tick watches the Idea Men escape into the sky, he exclaims: "Hey Cool! They got a blimp!" And later, when he learns that the Idea Men have gotten their ransom money and still plan to blow up the dam, The Tick cries: "Aww -No fair!"

Much of the charm and humor in the Tick's nature comes from the blurry clash of these two modes of expression. He switches modes not only within scenes, but within speeches, and even within sentences. A good way to view The Tick's personality is this: He is much like a small child, trying to project an imposing, grown-up persona, and failing as often as he succeeds.

This quirk does not represent the entirety of The Tick's eccentricities. He also has a severely limited attention span. The Tick can only be expected to focus on one thing at a time and not for very long. Sometimes a radical shift of his attention results in non sequitur dialogue, which can be funny. In issue #7 of the comic book, The Tick interrupts a dinner discussion with Arthur by blurting, "This dinner needs Pez!" and tears off to find some. In addition, The Tick's grasp of reality isn't so hot. He can slip into a hallucinatory state at times, or escape boredom into vivid, sometimes overpowering daydreams. An example of this occurs in issue #4, when the Tick is surrounded by buildings animated by his overactive imagination. This kind of reality-slippage is an overt example of The Tick's EXCITING NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REAL WORLD! His whole life is a fantasy of sorts.

ARTHUR

Arthur, The Tick's faithful sidekick, is a small doughy man in his early thirties. He is an accountant, or was one until he was fired in the pilot episode. He's about five feet eight inches tall, with a pleasant face and a well mannered demeanor. He wears a shimmering white moth suit, with long feathery antennae, bulbous goggles, and powdery white wings. He bought the suit at an estate auction for seventy-five dollars. He could sense that it would play a large part in his destiny. He wears the suit constantly, ready for the call to action, about which he has thoroughly mixed feelings. His large wings unfold, at the push of a button, from a slim pack strapped to his back. The size of these wings prevents him from wearing them indoors, so he spends most of his time with them folded into his backpack, or carrying them in a briefcase. Because of this, he is often mistaken for a rabbit. He hates this.

Arthur can fly, but mostly he glides. He just started doing this, and he's not so good yet. Apart from flight, his suit so far evidences no other special abilities. Arthur himself has no super powers. He is very susceptible to harm of every kind, and painfully aware of it.

Arthur was an excellent accountant, and still applies those skills where he can in his superhero life. He is a voracious reader, with a vast store of knowledge. Arthur has a working knowledge of everything from algebra to zoology. He knows a few words of Apache, how to get water out of a cactus, and all the animals in the Chinese Zodiac. In the pilot, he explains the mechanics of hydroelectric power to an ever-mystified Tick. In future episodes he might lecture on the history of the Ottoman Empire, or the centuries-old secrets of Ninjitsu.

Arthur's sensible nature is at constant odds with his strong desire for adventure and excitement. Arthur can't leap into action as The Tick unfailingly does, because he suffers from a keen sense of cause and effect. He has a strong grasp of his own mortality. He won't jump into shark infested waters to diffuse a floating mine that just might explode at any minute. Arthur is a rational person. He is our straight man. The Tick is what everyone wants to be, and Arthur is what most of us are: confused, unsure, sometimes frightened, occasionally the victim of ridiculous or unkind circumstance. But despite his hesitance, Arthur does manage, with the assistance of The Tick, to live a life of no small adventure.

Arthur has a soft voice and an unassuming nature. He is fairly innocent and open with his feelings. He always depends on logic and reason, and confronts every challenge with rationality. During his lectures, Arthur takes on a confident, precise, almost pedantic tone:

"For centuries, man has harnessed the power of falling...Today's hydro-electric facility converts the kinetic energy of into stored electrical power by controlling its flow..."

At points of intense emotional or physical stress, Arthur, like any one of us, reaches his

breaking point. He loses it, and might spend a fight scene lying quietly on the ground, waiting for it to end, or start ranting about how stressful his life has become. In the pilot, he suffers a typical stress attack in his apartment:

"Oh, I don't know...I just don't know if I'm ready for this — too much excitement! Too much adventure! I think I'm... I think I'm going crazy."

TICK AND ARTHUR TOGETHER

This show is very much about The Tick and Arthur's relationship, and that relationship should deepen and grow. They first meet in the pilot, and this gives us the chance to see their friendship develop from its very beginning. We want them to eventually be the best of friends. But this doesn't just happen immediately. There has to be a period where they get to know and appreciate each other.

Arthur is a reluctant, over-cautious adventurer who is dragged through dangers by the enthusiastic and overbearing Tick. It's not that the Tick is trying to endanger or dominate Arthur; he simply assumes that Arthur is as powerful as he himself is, and as willing to hurl himself into the gaping jaws of adversity. The Tick is never cruel to anyone, and he seems to have an unconscious sense of how far to push Arthur. He really just wants to see Arthur fulfill his own dreams, to be all he can be. In the pilot, Arthur breaks down and threatens to abandon his pursuit of excitement and adventure. In moments like these, The Tick will adopt his own unique version of a supportive, fatherly tone:

"You're not going crazy Arthur! You're **GOING SANE IN A CRAZY WORLD!** Some people are destined for greater things! Arthur, you are one of those people. You can't hide from it...you've got to **HUG IT! HUG YOUR DESTINY ARTHUR!**"

The Tick and Arthur are more on a peer level with each other than the traditional superhero and his sidekick. Arthur fills in the yawning gaps in the Tick's understanding of the world around him. The Tick provides the motive force to their team, making the near insane leaps of faith that Arthur is incapable of. The Tick understands more about the workings of the Superhero world, and will explain them in detail to Arthur. Their relationship goes beyond the functional needs of a superhero partnership. They can talk about anything, and often share their feelings on more personal or philosophical subjects--the meaning of life, the meaning of love, or how good a good sandwich can get. The way we'd like to see the relationship work, in the long run, is like a friendship between two little boys. They should eventually share a simple unquestioning trust, and be unafraid to depend on each other emotionally, to argue with each other — sometimes vehemently — and to express affection.

SUPERHERO-NESS

To best understand the world of The Tick, go to its source: Superhero comic books.

READ THEM! They have a rich history and strict conventions all their own. Once you get acquainted with the rules of the genre, parodying them is almost effortless. When you think about it, **THEY'RE A LITTLE DUMB, AREN'T THEY?!**

SUPERHERO CODE OF CONDUCT

The classic superhero code of conduct is fairly simple. You fight evil. You right wrongs. You help the helpless. You defend the American way. You take praise humbly and refuse monetary rewards. Your incredible and wondrous abilities drive you to tirelessly defend mankind. You don't lie, cheat, steal, or commit any wrongdoing, no matter how petty. You are chivalrous towards women. You are fearless in the face of danger. All the Boy Scout rules apply, and how!

This is in the "real" superhero world. In The Tick's world, we get much of our humor out of what would probably actually happen if people dressed up in tight costumes and flew around looking for trouble.

First of all, anyone who did this would be unbalanced at the very least. Taking the law into your own hands is an anti-social act. It requires a special kind of conceit. Superheroes, then, are the ultimate narcissists. They are completely self-involved and since they sometimes possess weapons and powers that render them very dangerous, they are loose cannons on the social landscape. In The Tick's city, the public's attitude reflects this. Everyone there at one time or another has had an unpleasant encounter with an idiot in shiny boots and a body sock. One of The Tick's main challenges is to overcome this stigma -- that superheroes are too numerous and too incompetent to be of any help. But because of his own occasional incompetence and generally oblivious nature, this will be a long and arduous mission. **IMPORTANT:** The citizenry is not openly contemptuous of these heroes, and especially not of The Tick. They are mostly just a little wary.

All superheroes share a common vernacular. They all aspire to speak in nothing but a poetic bravado. However their lapses are frequent, and often they overshoot into ridiculously purple bobast and mangled metaphor, or fall out of their dramatic personae into everyday wording and attitude. They are similar to The Tick in this respect, but the Tick is far more extreme. This source of humor runs throughout the series.

SUPERVILLAINS, CRIMINAL MASTERMINDS, AND THE COMMON THUG

A Supervillain is essentially an evil superhero: same powers, same general rhetoric, but rotten -- rotten to the core! Criminal Masterminds are usually "normal" human beings possessed of incredible intelligence who have turned their backs on society, usually in response to some real or imagined slight in their pasts. They use their immense powers of reason to control people and events, and to commit spectacular crimes. Generally, they are

either deformed, obese, or just plain ugly. Sometimes all three at once. Common thugs are your basic street criminals, lower-level gang members, and con-men.

In the Tick's world, the normal conventions of good and evil apply, except that many of the superheroes could on a bad day, slide into the supervillain category for a moment. GUNPLAY is a good example of this phenomenon.

SUPER POWERS

When writing for super-powered characters, it's very important to keep a balance of power present. We encourage you to find new ways for the characters to use their powers. But you should keep those powers in scale to the general level of power in the Tick's world. For example, RUBBER JUSTICE, an elastic hero, is able to stretch his body in order to save a child from the top of a burning orphanage. But he can't stretch out of the Earth's atmosphere, grab a satellite, and pull it out of orbit.

WEAPONRY AND TECHNOLOGY

The same principle applies here. The Tick's world is riddled with mad scientists run rampant! They have the full array of death-dealing beams, rays, bombs, poisonous gases, robot armies, space stations, jet cars, personality-altering devices, mind-control serums, invisibility lotions, cloning booths, lethal couches, man-eating-shark cannons, bionic body parts, insects made giant by secret science miracles, holograms, teleportation, video-phones, sentient computers, inflatable briefcase airplanes, cryogenics, heads that live without their bodies, suits made out of tin foil or something, and more, so much more!

The limits for weapons and technology are the same as those for super powers. It all comes down to balance. Anything you put into this world stays here. Be as imaginative and exciting as you can, but don't bring in anything that overpowers everything else. An example of this mistake can be found in STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION. The Transporter beams on the Enterprise are capable of restructuring dead cast members from DNA records stored in the ship's computers. THIS IS THE DEATH OF DRAMA! If you want to tantalize the viewers with some sort of end-of-the-world device or omnipotent entity, make sure you destroy it by the end of the episode. Or at least bury it deep in the Earth's mantle, where it can await its dramatic re-emergence.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The technology and weapons should be as funny and ridiculous as possible, while still retaining some modicum of real menace. An example might be the above mentioned "man-eating-shark cannon." The shark cannon is a huge transparent cylinder filled with sea-water and loaded with one (1) Great White shark. When fired, it propels the agitated and very hungry shark through the air at any chosen target. Could work!

And finally, don't forget the simple weapons. There's still nothing as elegant as a good

curare dart in the neck, or a big catapult full of Greek Fire!

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY IN "THE TICK"

WEIRDNESS AND INSPIRED WEIRDNESS

We want this show to have an unpredictable edge in its characters, its action, and its atmosphere. Weirdness is very valuable in your scripts. A sense of uncalled-for, extraneous detail, bizarre relationships, and flat-out absurdity is **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED**. To illustrate, here are some examples from non-Tick literature and film:

[] In the film "Buckaroo Banzai," there is a scene that takes place in Buckaroo's secret laboratory. He is racing through the lab, holding a woman by the hand. Strange experiments are in progress all over the place. In one corner, she notices a watermelon in a vice. He stops and looks at her solemnly. "Don't ask," he says, and races on.

[] Likewise in "Ren and Stimpy," in the episode where they play door-to-door rubber nipple salesmen, Ren and Stimpy stop at the home of an obvious psychopath. Halfway through their sales pitch, a walrus bound in a straitjacket struggles out of the house and leans close to them, whispering, "Call the police!"

There is a difference, for us, between weirdness and inspired weirdness. Weirdness you should understand. It's weird. Inspired weirdness comes from nowhere and goes nowhere in plot terms. The straitjacketed walrus asking for help suggests all kinds of strange unwholesome ideas. The fact that it is ignored by the main characters and the plot gives it, and the world of the show, a new dimension. Left unresolved, these strange situations engage a viewer's imagination and build a universe with ragged, unstable edges. In the pilot, an instance of this occurs during a newscast, when anchorwoman Sally Vacuum segues from a serious news item and clowns appear behind her, cavorting on a chromakey screen, with no explanation or follow-up beyond, "And on a lighter note...Clowns!" This is only funny and weird because it's left unexplained. It's not a report about the circus coming to town, it's just stupid. A requisite feature of good Inspired Weirdness is that it have enough substance to develop into a story line, even though it doesn't. The pilot didn't make as much use of this device as other episodes might. Investigate thoroughly.

HUMOR IN "THE TICK"

The Tick is intended to be funny. There is a specific range to the humor. Part of the challenge in writing for this character and his world is capturing a delicate balance between absurdity and human comedy. A basic requirement of Tick humor is parody -- parody of the superhero genre and its conventions. In the pilot, The CAPED CHAMELEON has all the attributes of a "real" superhero, but they are pushed beyond

credibility into absurdity. The fact that he "can't do plaid," introduces skewed humor to basic superhero logic. Likewise GUNPLAY, a psychopathic, gun-toting vigilante, takes the "Punisher" character to ridiculous extremes.

Satire, also present in the series, aims at a larger target: all of culture and society. Satire and parody mix often, and the best parodies have strong satirical elements. The character GUNPLAY is also a good example of this. Initially, he seems like a simple "Punisher" parody. But through him we can make some satirical comments about cultural masculinity norms and a pop psychology treatment of the classic action movie hero. GUNPLAY is real screwed up; he had a terrible relationship with his mother; he seeks out dangerous phallic substitutes to compensate for his sense of male inadequacy; he could really hurt somebody!

There's another great source of humor that runs through "The Tick." At any moment, we can explore what would happen if real people were actually doing this: dressing up, fighting crime, ignoring the basic laws of physics and normal human emotions. A good way to use this vein of humor is to show the characters wrestling through moments of their own awkwardness, their own inescapable humanity. Look for moments where you can have Arthur, The Tick, and other characters share or reveal their humanity. From the pilot, there several examples. When Arthur stresses out during the apartment scene, it is not high drama, not a turning point in the story; he just wants to go to bed. When DIE FLEDERMAUS and AMERICAN MAID's encounter degenerates into petty bickering, we see them as two imperfect human beings in an unimpressive moment. This captures some of the soul of the show, and makes it different.

While parody has an important role in the show, it can't be the sole source of comedy. That's why these other humor elements are so valuable. DO NOT THINK IN PARODY TERMS ALONE.

The show has a very specific comedic tone; it thrives on understatement and absurdity. Avoid Tonight Show jokes. No Zsa Zsa Gabor, no Sylvester Stallone, no Dan Quayle. "I've fallen and I can't get up," is out. "I can taste my spleen," is out. Anything "from hell," is OUT! ELVIS JOKES ARE OUT! NO ELVIS JOKE MADE AFTER 1985 CAN JUSTIFY ITS EXISTENCE! The seventies will work for a while. You can get some mileage out of the "Shaft" movies. MASON REESE IS A GOLDMINE. Try to stick to the obscure, the twisted, the dark warm underbelly of Psyche American Style! Certainly there is no way to legislate good humor. We don't want to try. But an Elvis joke is more like a clip-art substitute for a joke. It's easy and it's not very funny. Don't fall back on punchlines that have been packaged and repackaged so many times that audiences are simply programmed to laugh at them. UNACCEPTABLE! In general, avoid topical, current-events humor. Catch phrases and subjects fresh out of today's headlines are not encouraged. A clever Clinton joke immediately dates the script. THE TICK IS FOR ETERNITY!

ALLUSIONS

Feel free to draw upon a wide range of cultural and historical material to add depth and texture to your scripts. This can be a line stolen from Shakespeare or Yeats, as in issue #4 of the comic book: "What rough ~~beast~~ slouches towards Ninja World at 4:30 in the morning?" When writing for these ~~exaggerated~~ superheroes, pre-written poetry can be very useful. Just keep it in the public domain, or twist it with the kind of poetic lapses The Tick is prone to.

ACTION

The Tick is a comedy/action adventure show. Action is integral to its appeal and especially important to younger viewers of all ages. This doesn't mean that each show must have an epic battle in the last act. We want all kinds of action: exploration, travel, chases, hurricanes, meteors, floods, a good volcano would be nice, anything that moves and threatens our characters. Battle is, of course, very important in the superhero world. You should always try to invent imaginative and exciting combat sequences,

One of the Tick's big problems, in fact, is that he wants heroic battle desperately, but it almost always goes in an unglamorous, silly direction. Sometimes he himself is responsible for this change in tone. In the pilot script, the Tick yells, "EAT DESK!" while hurling office furniture at his foes. This is not exactly a heroic epithet.

THE NATURE OF MENACE

Even though the Tick is a comedy, there has to be a sense of drama; something has to be at stake. We do want strange, sometimes ridiculous villains, but they can't be rendered harmless by humor. They must always present a real threat to The City or our main characters. Their master plans and evil goals should be the dramatic thrust of the show. The Idea Men are merely common thugs with some comedic eccentricities, but by the end of the pilot episode, they hit upon a fairly dangerous scheme. Their plot to blow up the dam, and flood The City, is a serious menace worthy of a superhero's attention.

STRUCTURE

STORY AND PLOT

Scripts for "The Tick" are to be 33-35 pages in length, in a three-act structure. One convention we can't escape is the need, in each episode, for a triumph over a specific eruption of evil -- a mad scientist's scheme, a rampaging robot, a mysterious crime wave -- The Tick and Arthur, and possibly guest allies, must come into conflict with a villain or villains. The conflict doesn't always have to be directly physical, but it has to be there.

Keep the plot simple. The show needs room for quiet scenes, extensive character development, Inspired Weirdness, and structured humor. While the story may have numerous tangents, you should avoid "B" stories. The plots can have twists, but they shouldn't ask viewers to keep track of complex, interwoven storylines. The plot of an episode should be the starting point for the humor. The bare plot of the pilot episode was not, in itself, funny. It was very simple, and gave us time to build jokes into its framework. The development of Arthur and The Tick's relationship should be a kind of ongoing sub-plot through all the episodes. If you need to pull back to quiet scenes that are unassociated with the main action, use their growing relationship. In the pilot, how they get together as hero and sidekick, and then as cautious friends, is in effect the sub-plot. This can also be expanded to include other recurring characters and their interrelationships.

DENSITY OF DETAIL

We have touched on this before in various places -- Inspired weirdness, allusion, satire, and parody -- but it should be defined as an integral element of "The Tick" structure. Wherever possible, try to think things out and give specific, interesting direction to everything seen and heard on the screen. The Idea Men, for example, could have been just a generic gang and served the same purpose in the plot. But give them masks, and you get some humor out of their muffled voices. Give them an identity -- "Idea Men" -- and you can develop a glowing light-bulb logo for their blazers and blimp. Follow this and their "blazer-bulbs" can wink out if they're knocked unconscious. We want this kind of detailed thinking in both the foreground elements, like the Idea Men, and the background elements as well. If there is a place to put an intriguing detail, do so. In the pilot, there is an advertisement on the Motel "L" billboard for a meat raffle. This is no great joke, but it does add a kind of diverse richness to the scene. (This does not mean that we want to see the background cluttered with clever Mad Magazine-style graffiti. Don't get carried away, and don't distract.)

WRITING FOR THE CAMERA

Certainly writing for an animation script suggests the involvement of a camera. What we mean by this is writing cinematically. Think of the camera as almost another character. Use zooms, pans, movement, or stationary framing to enhance humor, suspense, or action. In the pilot episode, as the Tick runs out onto the top of the dam holding the Time Bomb in his outstretched arms, we switch to a Tick POV shot, that, if properly animated, should make the scene more humorous and dynamic.

We say this only because the camera, as a tool, seems often to be neglected in animation scripts. Look at "Batman: The Animated Series." In it, the writers and directors are making a concerted effort to use extensive camera movement. The result is a far more fulfilling viewing experience.

STANDARD SCENES IN "THE TICK"

In addition to the kind of scenes you would expect in a superhero action/adventure series, each episode of "The Tick" should include certain standard segments and scenes:

[] The Educational Lecture Sequence

In each episode, usually at the height of suspense and danger, Arthur is called upon to explain some phenomenon, process, scientific principle, or historical background. This lecture is invariably accompanied with trademark tinny documentary music, and a cut away to a mock educational film. The segments should be tied directly to a problem in the plot and provide accurate information about that question.

[] The Quiet Moment

The Quiet Moment is a moment of pause in the action during which a character or characters can reflect, interact with, or share feelings about each other, their environment, or their situation at that moment. What does this mean? We want to see moments in the story that are antithetical to the standard superhero style of writing. They emphasize the human dimension in the series. They may be funny or poignant or both. While these moments aren't a structural requirement, they are encouraged in your scripts. An example from the pilot occurs in the last act. The Tick runs off with the beeping time bomb, leaving Arthur to contend with a sobbing, demoralized GUNPLAY. Instead of cutting away from this immediately, they are shown sharing each other's space in awkward silence. GUNPLAY finally collapses into Arthur's arms, making an unexpected, incongruous moment in an action sequence.

[] Dream Sequences, Fantasies, and Memories

The interior mental processes of the characters should, on occasion, be available to the viewer. In issue #10 of the comic book, we are allowed access into a dream the Tick is having. He dreams that he is being sworn in as the President of the United States, and then discovers that he's not wearing pants! This kind of momentary escape from on-line reality offers many possibilities for humor and character development. Also, don't be afraid to show flashback sequences, or even thoughts in a visual form. All we're saying is be playful with reality and push it around a little bit.

SETTING

THE CITY AND ENVIRONS

The focus of action in "The Tick" is The City. In the pilot, The Tick was assigned to protect this metropolis from all who would mean her harm. The City has for years been

considered a "dumping ground" for the nation's less competent or less stable superheroes. Because many superheroes fall into one or both of these categories, The City has a very high ratio of superheroes per capita. At this point the streets aren't exactly crawling with superheroes, but you would be hard pressed to get through a day without seeing the flash of a bright cape or the gleam of sunlight off of someone's ridiculous headgear.

Because of this super-abundance of superheroes, the normal citizenry of The City are rightfully jaded. They are not easily impressed. To them superheroes represent a certain amount of damage to public property and the subsequent tax burden that creates. Mayor Blank embodies this ambivalence towards superhuman forces in general. The philosophy of the populace seems to be resigned acceptance of these superheroic entities and their superheroic messes.

The City itself is a mixture of architectural styles and distinct neighborhoods. The business district is a small clutch of sky-scrapers and high-rise buildings. At the downtown edge of the business district stands an imposing sky-scraper, built out of steel and black mirrored glass. At the top, in ten-story-tall neon red letters, is the word FEAR. FEAR is an acronym for the Federation of Enterprise and Advanced Research, and no one suspects a thing.

Running along the river edge is the waterfront district, where all the low-lives hang out, in their seedy bars and nightclubs. There is always a heavy fog and slight drizzle in the waterfront district. Feel free to have characters comment irritably on this meteorological anomaly.

At the center of The City is the municipal district. The City Hall, Court houses, the registry of motor vehicles, and the public library. The municipal district was built on a large Native American burial ground. Under the burial ground runs a large fault line. This spells T - R - O - U - B - L - E.

In addition, The City houses many museums, theatres, an opera house, a big college, an observatory, a subway system (Bingo Transit) a zoo, a City park, and many monuments ripe for supervillainous destruction.

The City is surrounded by ten miles of uninterrupted suburbs. Uninterrupted that is, except for the large volcano that towers over Maplewood. It has been dormant since 1977. Many superheroes live in the suburbs these days, and commute into The City.

To the north of The City lie The Mountains, a jagged range of sheer cliffs and rocky spires riddled with superhero secret headquarters and supervillain secret hideout fortresses.

Other features on the outskirts of The City include: The gentle rolling farmland to the west, the abandoned mineshafts to the south, a large swamp to the east, an airport, many theme parks (Ninja World, Dinosaur Grotto, and Fire Land, to name a few) The City

Stadium, and The City Dam.

ARTHUR'S APARTMENT

Arthur lives in a comfortable one-bedroom apartment with an eat-in kitchen. He has a large, almost uncontrollable collection of books, magazines, and newspaper clippings. This modest flat is the closest thing The Tick and Arthur have to a Super Secret Headquarters. It has no real Secret Headquarter features, a source of constant irritation to The Tick. The Tick wants to upgrade, but Arthur is not sure he can commit that completely to the superhero lifestyle. His home is already a headquarters of kind, in that it already houses the superhero team: The Tick sleeps on the couch although he has yet to fold it out into a bed. That would be a big step.

THE DINER

This glass-front diner, modeled closely after the diner in Edward Hopper's famous painting "Nighthawks," serves as an occasional hangout for The Tick and Arthur, as well as other local superheroes. It may eventually become quite a popular Hero meeting place.

OTHER CHARACTERS

AMERICAN MAID

American Maid is a female superhero who derives most of her abilities from gymnastics skills, martial arts fighting techniques, and some gadgets. She is a forceful presence for good, but has a caustic temperament which sometimes alienates possible allies.

American Maid is a beautiful woman in her late twenties with a strong but feminine physique. She wears a patriotic, red-white-and-blue French maid's outfit, and high stiletto heels. She has been known to remove one and use it as a thrown weapon. She is a master of the projectile high-heel shoe, and can pin a fly to the wall at fifty paces. She can also "kick" them off her feet with equal accuracy. If she misses an intended target, the shoe will complete a boomerang arc and fly back to her. She sports a set of ten, long, sharp press-on nails. With them, she can shred her way through a mattress in under a minute. She is a formidable hand-to-hand fighter, and has the rooftop leaping thing down pat. In combat, she will employ her leaping and tumbling skills, evading blows and delivering dangerous flying kicks. If enraged, she might use her nails.

American Maid is a feminist hero who has tailored her image to become a nightmare version of the objectified woman. Under her extremely provocative appearance, she is a cool, calculating thinker, an excellent strategist, and a stable ally. She is not the classic woman hero with a chip on her shoulder. She does not feel the need to prove herself. If

you don't accept her as an equal then she has no time for you. Her one weakness seems to be Die Fledermaus, who enrages her on sight. They apparently had some sort of relationship in the past, and the memories of it make her very irritable. Please note: She will not "hold a torch" for him, unless there is the distinct possibility of setting him on fire with it.

American Maid speaks in a strong defiant voice, using clipped, precise language. She can be very snide and sarcastic, especially if she dislikes someone:

"You guys take the direct route. I'll come down through the roof. And don't let them retreat! It won't take long for Chairface to figure out you're just a diversion."

At will she can employ a deep, breathy, femme-fatale voice, which she uses to seduce and mislead the criminal element if necessary:

"Oohh. What a big gun you have. Can I hold it?"

PAUL THE SAMURAI

Paul is a true Samurai, a living weapon with deadly skills honed razor sharp. He is a blood-and-guts hero, who speaks a language of violence and praises the test of battle. He occasionally teams up with The Tick when their interests meet.

Paul is about five foot eleven and very powerfully built. He has a classic Samurai face, right out of an old Japanese print. He wears his jet black hair in a tight bun -- into which is stuck a long hairpin. With this hairpin alone, he can disarm and kill a man. He wears either his traditional Samurai armor, or a simple grey business suit. When at home, on the weekends, he makes everyone uncomfortable by working in the garden wearing just his loincloth. When Paul came to America, he baked his long Samurai sword into a loaf of French bread to get it through customs. The bread grew stale and hard, and now Paul uses it as a constant disguise for his blade. Often, he won't bother to remove the bread, as it is an effective enough weapon for most of the soft Western criminals he has encountered. But on occasion, he encounters someone or something who calls upon his greatest resources, and he unveils the deadly razor sharp length of his Katana. It's very dramatic!

Paul is a ronin, a rogue Samurai without a master. He follows the Bushido, the Samurai code of honor, and holds it above all else. For Paul, dishonor is the worst possible crime, and if he is dealt a personal insult, he will not rest until it is avenged. The Bushido is a rigorous code of conduct which dictates his behavior in almost every situation, but he is not a robot. He has great passion, though it is channeled through intense personal discipline. Paul has extensive training in both the arts of battle and the arts of etiquette. He is as at home in the Japanese tea ceremony as he is with his shining katana sword. Paul wants to create, not just destroy. He is experimenting with flower arranging,

pottery-making, and the fine art of Haiku:

Flesh is milky pale
warm above the pulsing vein
the sun on my blade

Paul came to America in pursuit of his arch enemy, but he lost him at the airport. He has since settled here, in The City, partly because he is intrigued by the bold, decadent West, and partly because he hasn't scraped together airfare home yet. He laments the passing of Japan's feudal society, when a samurai — any samurai — was an unquestionable authority, a powerful agent of a good, strong and sometimes insane emperor. Now there are few career options for a full-time Samurai. Paul is trying to deal with a growing sense of disillusionment, and in quiet moments, may reflect bitterly on his troubled place in the world. Paul is a polite but intense loner who never stays long in the company of friends or allies. He may give everyone the impression of a man on the brink of a state-to-state killing spree, but he is truly good and just.

Paul speaks in a low, solemn voice, without a Japanese accent. He has a poetic turn of phrase, and speaks in a tone of polite, even gracious formality. "Ah friend Tick, you honor my home with your presence. Please wait in the front room while I don some slacks. "But in times of confrontation he uses graphic descriptions of violence in his threats and hero banter. In issue #4 of The Tick he makes several of these blood thirsty overtures:

"At last! Now I cut you open like a wet bag of groceries and dance on your sticky bones!"

Paul has a bad habit of smiling when he says these things. His enemies find it very disturbing.

THE MAN-EATING COW

On occasion, in the long and convoluted annals of bovine history, cows have been known to turn carnivorous. There are documented cases of cows devouring entire towns in India and the Mid-western United States. Such a cow may wander the streets of The City. But this cow has a surprisingly well-developed sense of right and wrong for a farm animal. She is reputed to eat only the evil-at-heart. Sightings are rare, but sometimes, deep in the neon-lit half-night of the inner City sprawl, a ghostly moo sends chills up the spines of the wicked...

The Man-eating Cow appears, on the surface at least, to be a normal Jersey cow. Her gentle nature and animal indifference seem to suggest nothing more. But many claim they can see the cold glint of a man-eater in her big brown eyes, and that she has in fact, tasted human blood!

The Tick is convinced that she eats criminals all the time. He thinks her methods are a bit extreme, but he seems to feel she is a legitimate force for good. In truth no one has ever actually witnessed her devour anything but the grass on The City highway's median strip and a leather shoe, which she later spat up.

The Man-eating Cow wanders in and out of scenes occasionally, and may be the center of an episode at one point or another, but her impact is generally more folkloric than anything else. The cow does not speak.

DIE FLEDERMAUS

Die Fledermaus is a dark, bat-like hero who haunts the shadows of The City's night, hanging around on its gothic architecture, striking cool poses. He wears a mask with huge ears and large, flared nostrils. It's possible that his head gear actually emits and receives sonar signals. He has a utility belt and a grappling-hook gun. His cape is very, very long, and often catches on rooftop protrusions. Die Fledermaus never quite seems to be in the thick of battle. He seems to prefer haunting the shadows, occasionally offering a heroic word or two if it looks safe enough. If he is directly threatened, he will pretend he saw "The Die Fledermaus Signal" and leap away to defend The City elsewhere.

He is very vain, the sort of GQ superhero who avoids contact with adversity. He spends most of his time investigating dramatic poses, making sure the wind catches his cape the way he likes it, and practicing polished superhero banter under his breath. He is an out-of-work actor/tele-marketer with an active fantasy life.

Die Fledermaus had a short affair of some kind with American Maid, before she really understood the depth of his character. Now when they encounter each other, it usually results in an unpleasant argument. Die Fledermaus is not completely shallow, and will help someone in desperate need. He doesn't understand why people tire of him so quickly, especially when he's so drop-dead handsome.

To his credit, Die Fledermaus has some of the most polished, professional Superhero banter in The City. This is because he practices constantly, and he took a public speaking course in community college. He has a deep, slow delivery and perfect diction:

"I will haunt the shadows, one with the darkness, a lone vigil in the cold and savage night. Ahem. I will haunt the shadows, one with the darkness, a lone vigil in the cold and savage night. Ahem. I will..."

CHAIRFACE CHIPPENDALE

Chairface is the classic Arch-fiend, the textbook Criminal Mastermind. He was raised in England, the son of wealthy aristocrats. But from birth, he has borne a terrible deformity: his head appears to be a tastefully simple, straight-backed chair. Predictably, he has turned

his back on society and dedicated himself to a life of crime. Chairface is a brilliant criminal, and presents one of the most dire threats to The Tick and his allies.

Chairface excels in all the skills and abilities common to nobility: etiquette, race-car driving, fencing, bad poetry, childish tantrums, and a range of expensive tastes and vices. He has a high genius IQ. He started down the road of wrong-doing by paying career criminals to teach him their trades. He can pick a lock or crack a safe in seconds, he knows all the ins and outs of thievery, smuggling, bribery, extortion, and general anti-social behavior. But it's his flair for spectacle that earns him the title of criminal mastermind. Chairface plots schemes, hatches master plans, and commits criminal acts on an epic scale. "Some people sculpt, some paint. I do bad things...great, big, bad things."

Because of his high-profile criminal exploits, he has attracted a host of career criminals, many of whom are deformed as well. They constitute a sort of doubly warped Dick Tracy Rogues' gallery of villains. He keeps his loose gang of cohorts near him at all times, at his fortress hideout, somewhere in the mountains north of The City. His gang:

Headless Henderson
Boils Brown
Darren Ugly
The Cleft
Pineapple Pokopo
The Forehead
Eyebrows Mulligan
The Crease
Zipperneck
The Guy-With-Ears-Like-Little-Raisins
Cheeks Chaney
Jack Tuber, "Man of a Thousand Faces"

Chairface's modus operandi often includes fantastic technology and deadly weapons of mass destruction. He himself is an able engineer and scientist, but he leaves the hard stuff to his right-hand man and live-in mad scientist Professor Chromedome.

Chairface speaks with an aristocratic British accent. He is also very good at supervillain banter, but his speeches and threats can sometimes descend into whining tantrums if things don't go his way:

"Chairface is anything but redundant. No, I have a real gem this time. Sinister, simple, with just the right touch of spectacle... With this heat ray I, Chairface Chippendale, will commit the ultimate act of vandalism... I WILL WRITE MY NAME ACROSS THE FACE OF THE MOON!!!"

As one might expect, Chairface takes egoism to insane heights. He revels in himself and

his deformity. His unpredictable crimes suggest the actions of a bored, spoiled child. He has long since made all the money he needs, so his motives have become more complex, and far more dangerous.

PROFESSOR CHROMEDOME

Professor Chromedome is a hunched man in his middle forties with a metal dome for the upper half of his head. He is the creator of Chairface Chippendale's most terrible and frightening weapons, including the Moon Menace Heat Ray, The Poison County Carpet, and the notorious Dogs-Playing-Poker. Once a simple traveling salesman, Professor Chromedome had his brain ripped out by a piece of runaway farm machinery. He alertly packed his brain in ice and drove it to the hospital where it was replanted in his head. After the operation, the professor suddenly found he had been gifted with an awesome --but evil -- intellect, and an innate scientific brilliance.

The Professor speaks with a terrible German accent. It's terrible because he's faking it: "Now ve vill giff you a brand new definition uff error und hhart che!"

THRAKKORZOG - Evil Ameboid Dictator from Dimension 14b

Thrakkorzog is just a big angry pudding with world domination on his mind. He appears to be a large mottled blob, with a sharp-fanged mouth and four swaying eyestalks. He has no bone structure -- his teeth are just more goo made too look dangerous -- and can ooze through narrow spaces, even the crack under a door if given enough time. He can rear up to a height of about twelve or thirteen feet, but generally he just sort of sits there, all moist and quivery.

Thrakkorzog is the evil dictator of a dimension that exists in a separate space-time continuum. There his word is law, unquestioned by his eternally tormented subjects. He calls forth acid storms and needle showers for amusement. But here, isolated from his dimensions laws of physics, he is considerably less powerful. He is fascinated by this and has vowed to take over our dimension.

He is said to be from dimension 14b. This is not true. He has only found one portal into this world, and that opens up into a small apartment in The City. Apartment 14b. That apartment has become his Earth Invasion Headquarters. He pays the landlord with bars of solid gold (which is worthless on his homeworld) and plots his eventual dominion over the Earth. When he discovers The Tick, he sees him as the perfect vessel for his plans. Thrakkorzog wants to capture The Tick and bring him through the portal in apartment 14b to his own dimension. There, weakened by separation from his world, The Tick will be susceptible to Thrak's Zombie Gelatin. Thrakkorzog wants a remote control Tick to carry out his plans on Earth. He employs high-tech devices and alien sciences whose functions can be startlingly ridiculous.

Thrakkorzog sounds like a giant bubbling mud pit when he speaks. He is impossibly arrogant, and his tone is one of imposing force:

"FOOLISH HUMAN! ON YOUR KNEES OR I WILL BREAK EVERY STICK IN THAT BAG OF SKIN! NO ONE DEFIES THE MIGHT OF THRAKKORZOG!"

Thrakkorzog is an alien to our world, and his syntax and basic understanding reflect this.

NINJAS AND THE NINJA DISTRICT MANAGER

Ninjas were a secretive cult of assassins with its roots in medieval Japan. Now, in America at least, they are a comic book/toy-merchandising package more concerned with commercial viability than with killing anyone. They have grown far less competent due to the lax entry requirements (a pulse). They carry all sorts of weapons so they can cut or bruise people with whom they disagree. Their predecessors had so many peculiar weapons that the Ninjas of today can't remember them all. They tend to carry a few basics whose names they can remember, like "swords" and "big sticks."

Much of this mass cheapening of Ninja quality is due to the District Manager. He is responsible for the downfall of their integrity and the massive upswing of their profit potential. The District Manager is a hugely fat man who wears a satin kimono and green tinted glasses. He slicks his hair back with wax. He controls the operations of the ninja clan from his office in the head of the Ninja shaped tower at Ninja World.

Ninja World is a large theme park on the outskirts of The City. It's a martial arts shopping mall, a ninjitsu correspondence school, an ninja-themed amusement complex, and the stronghold of the ninja operation.

INCIDENTAL CHARACTERS

THE HUMAN BULLET

A hero who lives in the suburbs of The City. He keeps a large cannon on his front lawn, which he uses to fire himself at distant scenes of distress. Generally he gets his information off the Television, and his coordinates tend to be terribly wrong. He wears a helmet shaped like a bullet and a silver suit.

THE CAPED CHAMELEON

The Caped Chameleon is a thin, fast moving hero in a strange reptile-like suit that changes color to match the background behind it. He can't do extremely complex patterns, and if he tries he goes comatose for a number of minutes. He can crawl up walls and across ceilings.

CAPTAIN LEMMING AND THE LEMMING CORPS

Captain Lemming is a very obscure hero who simply hurls himself off buildings in response to calls of distress. He does not fly. He just plummets. His lemming corps is a crack squad of actual lemmings trained and ready for the big one.

BI-POLAR BEAR

The Bi-Polar Bear is a manic-depressive superhero who suffers from radical mood swings. His whole superhero career thus far has consisted of a struggle to get out of bed and go for a walk...anywhere.

CLARK OPPENHEIMER

Mild Mannered Clark Oppenheimer is reporter/ superhero who struggles constantly to keep his superhero identity a secret. He's become a little irrational on this point. We never see his superhero identity, just Clark unsuccessfully looking for places to change into his costume.

GUNPLAY

Gunplay is one of those post-Viet-Nam-trauma-family-was-killed-by-gangsters-thirst-for-justice vigilantes. He is hugely violent, but vulnerable. He has his inner child at gunpoint, and it's making him a little crazy.

SALLY VACUUM

Sally is the lead anchor for The City news.

MAYOR BLANK

Mayor Blank is The City's mayor. He has a very refined sense of humor for a politician, and is a fairly low-key leader in times of crisis. He likes to deal with forces beyond his control, because he knows he can't be held accountable for failure under those terms.