

CAMPAIGN NAME - New York Street Rangers (NYSR, 'nicer')

VENUE - My house, 4224 Griffin Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90031; Face to face, no full-time remote players

TIMING - 7 PM every other Saturday starting August 11, 2024; We may skip days, but will not move them

HOW THIS WILL PLAY OUT

- (1) You will create an exceptionally talented HIGH SCHOOL kid with initiative and desire, and possibly budding super powers. Your kid will pass as normal at first. They will be recruited into an NYSR club to publicly patrol the streets, and secretly train to become heroes. NYSR colors are red, white and blue. Your exceptional talent can be anything from art, science or social skills, metahuman abilities, extra diligence in martial arts or individual sports, or just a fervent and fearless desire to be a superhero.
- (2) A 'trainer' will be assigned, but this will not be a school activity. Teams will meet in secret, learn stuff, be given gear, and sent out on the streets to prove themselves. Groups showing promise will get a better trainer. Sometimes individuals will wash out or disappear, and sometimes new kids join. Your trainer will have access to some illegal resources. They will expect NYSR members to attend training and to report on their school and neighborhood.
- (3) Drama will happen. In a very few introductory sessions the NYSR team will develop rivalries with real gangs and have battles. These will immediately escalate to problems with even worse criminals. You will get a new counselor that seems shady and arrogant, but is better able to help you against rising hostility.
- (4) You will be involved in a villainous incident at a shady laboratory. You will gain or increase superpowers of your own design. There will be side effects that you will need to overcome in a few sessions away from your parents.
- (5) Your NYSR team will strive to emulate the Teen Titans, who have broken up. Stuff will keep happening until the campaign loses its appeal.

NYSR WORLD - Major Marvel and DC comic heroes are real, Superman knows Spider-Man, Wonder Woman knows Dr. Strange, etc. Other comic heroes (Dark Horse, Heroic, etc.) don't exist except perhaps in print. The mutant war is settled, some resentments linger. Superheroes and supervillains regularly contest many things. Powerful artifacts affect life. There was no cosmic apocalypse a la MCU. The streets are mean, the people are lean, but the future is bright. The Sony Walkman is the height of personal electronics. Most people still use pagers. Cellphones are emergent in the business class. Wifi connections are scarce, cellular data is expensive, and satellite data is slow. Entertainment comes primarily from cable TV, MTV is still huge, and cable internet is replacing DSL and modems. Supers have beam weapons and alternate worlds are known. There is no magic inherent to this world. Magic is power ported in from other dimensions, be it Hell, the astral plane, Fairy, etc. Dr. Strange leads the worldly effort to seal off other planes. Aliens exist, are officially denied and MIB works to contain them.

NYSR MILIEU - New York City, July, 1999, centered around Harlem. The sweltering streets are alive with gangs, hustlers, hip-hop dancers, and buskers pandering to tourists. Drag and costumed performers work the streets and the clubs.

Regular people live regular lives, be they straight or queer. (That is not true in suburban and rural areas like Staten Island and Long Island. Many queer folk leave the hinterlands for NYC, LA or SF.) A prestige move is to carry a boombox and share your music with everyone. Nightlife is world-class. Clubs are famous world-wide as venues of hyperactive music, dance, drugs and mild lewdness. Mayor Giuliani is 5 years into his efforts to reign in the craziness and crime. Nude performances are outlawed, prostitutes, pimps and johns are getting arrested, and cops can stop and frisk anyone.

Project exile is jailing gun violators in federal prisons for long terms. This has chilled the gun culture that used to rule the streets. Gangs have increased presence and swagger instead, and face off in various contests with unwritten rules. Street folks are known as players, and have 'street cred', both in their own gangs, across gangs, and borough-wide in weekly tabloids (supported largely by ads for porn and escort services). Street cred is not city wide due to inter-borough rivalries.

NYSR CHARACTER DESIGN GUIDELINES

Please do not start writing down numbers. Instead, tell me about your character. What gender, sex, race, ethnicity, economic status or immigration status do they identify with? Just declare the few that matter to you. Tell me how your character stands out in school enough to be recruited. Are they great in Shop Class? Chemistry? Acting? Sports? History? Computers? Then tell me how your character will play out as a NYSR. What drives them to participate? Finally, tell me what superpowers your character will gain in the group incident. I don't need to know power levels, but want to know the power origin - Focus? Genetics? Unknown alien ancestry? Magic? Radiation? What it is doesn't matter much to me, but I need to fit it into a good story.

- Jim Gettman

THE SETUP - Mayor Giuliani, holds a press conference and announces NYSR, ('nicer',) the New York Street Rangers. He is flanked by a Rangers hockey player in the team colors of Red, White and Blue. He is also flanked by Bruce Wayne and Iron Man. "NYSR is not the boy scouts, it is a gang for good kids. For now, you must stay in school, get all A's in one subject, and at least C's in all others. You must wear the colors..." he waves at an array of bandannas, shirts, skirts, sweat-bands, and leotards "...but how you wear them is up to you." He gestures to Mr. Wayne.

"You don't have to buy anything, but you can if you want." He puts on a gawd-awful sequined jester's hat, smiles, and quickly tosses it aside. "You have to apply, and be accepted individually. Your parents must sign a waiver. Then you will be contacted by a team counselor and assembled into a diverse group. Your group may not start out as your friends, but will be your neighbors. You should give it a chance to work out, but can quit if you want." he nods to Iron Man.

"Your counselor will not be a cop, and you will not be snitches, but you will get one of these and must carry it at all times." He holds up a standard looking pager. "Here is the button for help." He points, then presses. "It's not an alarm. It's not a weapon." He holds it up. "It is a radio beacon. It summons the police. Once the button is pushed police will find it, and hopefully you. There's more. Ask your counselor."

Mayor Giuliani thanks both men and finishes the speech as they leave. "But, what does a Street Ranger do? Good question. You hang out on the streets and have fun. You help people. You go out for pizza..." He's interrupted by the hockey guy.

"...and you get 2 free tickets to a Ranger's game, at The Gardens..." he holds up a pair of tickets.

The Mayor resumes, "...and you teach us about what it takes to bring safety back to our streets. NYPD is great..." He holds up his hands to quiet some jeers. "But you are greater. That's why Bruce and others encouraged me to try this out. I can't make NYSR work, but, maybe, you can."

He takes questions for 30 minutes. The press is clearly hostile, especially the Daily Bugle. The Daily Planet is less hostile, but plays to parental fears. Clearly this plan is not well thought out yet. There is no insurance, and no assurance that NYSR kids will be kept out of danger. There is a pledge for cops to come when called, and for criminals to be prosecuted.

----- Notes and commentary -----

(anonymous)

I'd be more interested if the powers were tightly linked to a common origin -- the incident at the lab either exposes them to cosmic radiation, or a magic dimension, or an alien super-scientist, etc. (Just a suggestion; I don't think I'll be able to attend.)

Also, getting an "A" in anything can be really difficult for some otherwise good students. Can they broaden that to include "a B in one subject, along with perfect attendance or a written recommendation from the teacher/principal/guidance counselor"?

(JG)

The campaign I want is not compatible with 'otherwise good students'. It is to select for savants in one subject that are probably also nerds. A team like that can be seen in Big Hero 6.

(anonymous)

...Concept is slightly interesting. I'm amused by using 1999 as a period setting. Mixing the two comic book settings is something Albert tried, and it doesn't work well. They are not mutually consistent.

(JG)

...As for Marvel and DC inconsistencies, I have the advantage of blissful ignorance. I won't follow any of their plots and characters from either comic or cinematic IP will be props. Of special note, this will NOT be about my Spider Gwen version. She will NOT appear.

1999 was chosen because -

- It corresponds to a campaign run by David Rackonitz from whom I hope to cadge materials
 - It was a good time in NYC, crime was declining, and culture was expanding
 - Mayor Giuliani seemed less corrupt than he turned out to be
 - Not everyone had a cellphone with a camera, and cameras were not all over the place like they are today
 - I already did research on this era in NYC
 - The 2nd terrorist attack on the World Trade Center is 2 years off. That event may well cap this campaign.
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More world notes not yet formalized -

- Superheroes and Super Villains are known at cosmic, national, regional and metropolitan levels, and generally have color themes, fans and street hustlers selling merch. Cosmic heroes include Dr. Strange (maroon and orange) , Captain Marvel (blue and white) and The Green Lantern (green and black). US major heroes include Superman (blue and red), Iron Man (red and white), The Hulk (green and purple) and The Flash (red and yellow). NYC's major heroes include The Batman (gray and black), Spider-Woman (red and blue), Wonder Woman (gold, red and blue) and Daredevil (red). (New England has no famous regional super hero.) These heroes all have secret ID's
- Technology is 1999 standard - Sony Walkman, boom boxes, cassette tapes, VCRs, CTRs being replaced by flat-panels, functional Internet that is not yet completely ruined by commercialization, modems being replaced by cable-TV boxes, and satellite dishes being installed. Cell phones are flip and slide models with either 9-key or qwerty chiclet keyboards.
- Politics simmer, terrorism abounds, and crime is rampant at all levels. President Bill Clinton and Mayor Rudy Giuliani are cooperating on a crackdown using the broken window theory. Stop and frisks are common, and felony gun charges are vigorously prosecuted in Federal courts under a philosophy known as Project Exile.
- Street justice is growing in NYC. The papers decry vigilantes in page 1 headlines with pictures above the fold. With the crackdowns, gangs and thugs are abandoning guns and have developed tiered escalations
- Gangs are rampant both day and night