

SECOND STRING. SECOND SHIFT.



January 2025

It isn't easy making a career out of being a superhero. Every city's got their headliner. Manhattan has Vorpall, Philadelphia has Lodestar, Tokyo has Kusanagi, Columbus has Avalon, and St. Louis has Captain Stratosphere, to name a few. For every A-lister there's a hundred sad fucks with a dime-store power who aren't making rent this month, and you, my friend, are one of them. But it's January 2025 in Philadelphia, the Eagles are going into the Wild Card against the Packers this upcoming Sunday, and the stars have aligned. Everyone is collectively holding their breath, and in a few weeks, if Saquon Barkley keeps doing what he's doing, the city's going to be drunk and generous and you just might have a chance.

Philadelphia has three hero teams. Keystone, the civic heroes. The Lodestar Foundation, a nonprofit. And Daybreak. Daybreak does heroism as contract work. Daybreak does Form 1099s and runs out of the old Germantown YWCA. Daybreak gives amateurs the opportunity to test their mettle in the field of real hero work. Daybreak takes care of arranging dispatch jobs, public appearances, brand sponsorships, and leaves the heroing up to you.

The Daybreak roster is looking lean after the events of late 2024. Third Rail made it big and transferred to Austin, rebranding as Gauss II. Gawain washed out and turned to villainy. The only capes left on the whiteboard right now are Sequence, Skyshatter, and Torque.

Five openings on the roster, and you could take one of them and make it into the big leagues or go into debt trying.

You have to file the Business Income and Receipts Tax even if you make under \$100k gross. Sorry but I don't make the rules.

What you need to know about how the world functions:

The Bureau <i>Who keeps the order?</i>	<i>The machinery of paperwork that keeps this afloat is at several removes from the street level, which is where you live. Don't worry your pretty little head over it, kitten.</i>
The Conspiracy <i>Where do powers come from?</i>	<i>This is even further out of your pay grade. Maybe Caitiff, the Synod, or any other number of competitors will get closer to cracking it as they claw each other to death over Longinus's posthumous broadcast in the smoldering wreckage of Cleveland, but that's not likely to have any bearing on your story. Okay? Yay.</i>
The Exemplar <i>Why do people tolerate heroes? Who sets that example?</i>	<i>For a Philadelphian, that's Lodestar and his nonprofit and the wing in CHOP named after him and forty years of heroism. For an American, that's Vorpall, because she has put down pretty much every threat that has hinted at being existential without breaking a sweat.</i>
The Boogeyman <i>What if someone doesn't stick to the rules?</i>	<i>Caitiff and the Blackguards. The Boojum. Belly of the Beast. A few more, but not many. Most capes that could be boogeyman candidates either optimize for stealth and slipperiness over atrocity, or get obliterated by Vorpall or other renowned headliners. Do you think you have what it takes to fill that void? It'd be a different story, and probably a very short one.</i>
The Walking Apocalypse <i>What are the threats that even a villain would stand and fight against?</i>	<i>Vorpall, if she decides she's tired of being nice and wants to go apeshit. More broadly, any cape that has the capacity to become an existential threat. The people who are powerful enough to break the status quo are generally also powerful enough that they vastly benefit from maintaining a status quo that serves the powerful.</i> <i>But these things still happen. The first hint that a cape gone wrong might herald the end of humanity as we know of happened back in 2015, when the entire city of Chattanooga was imprisoned in a looping time bubble still around to this day. The Galveston Von Neumann crisis in 2017 was the first formal deployment of Svalinn, a critical response team for national crises with potentially catastrophic fallout. Since then, Topaz, Jericho, and Bluescreen have headed this team, pulling from the deep roster of the nation's headliners for each specific problem in need of a solution.</i> <i>The ceiling of what damage powers can do is getting higher at an unsustainable rate. If you ever get a real job, maybe keep your 401k contributions to exactly the match rate, going higher seems a little optimistic.</i>

The setting is a little lighter-hearted than similar works such as Worm, from which this takes heavy inspiration, insofar as death is not the expected terminus of a character’s arc, unless you are Fucking Stupid and/or A Murderhobo.

The tenor of this campaign is more interpersonal/social in scope. Dysfunctional individuals with powers that make them unique but not especially divorced from the concept of baseline humanity, and existential pressure laundered through economic pressure. A good calibration for tone is: imagine the visual novel Dispatch, but instead of the Z-Team at SDN, the five of you are the cast of *Always Sunny* doing gig work as superheroes. Your coworkers are weird freaks under the mask, deal with it, get along, or talk to HR about it. (You’re contract workers. There’s no HR.)

Table of Contents

A handy table of the document’s contents.

Players

Current

Dead & Gone

Queue

Groups

Keystone

The Lodestar Foundation

Daybreak

The Borgata

emcee

Coat of Arms

Independent Heroes

Independent Villains

Civilians

Timeline

Players

Those currently in the fray.

Current

Player	Character	Fealty	Notes	✓
				✕

Dead & Gone

Player	Character	Status	Notes

Queue

Player	Priority	Player	Priority	Player	Priority	Player	Priority

Groups

Know where you live. Only publicly available information, not guaranteed to be correct.

Keystone

Philadelphia's local hero team, or Pennsylvania’s state hero team, depending on who you ask. Stationed in a shiny new headquarters built over what used to be the Roundhouse, which the pissed-off Broadside demolished in late 2020. Broadside got thrown in federal, sure, but he also got a mural for it. Under the aegis of PR manager Marshall Ahlström, who has secured for them sponsorship upon sponsorship, black-tie appearances, and a deli with a menu of sandwiches named after them. Despite being from Pittsburgh, Ahlström is thriving.

Anthem	<i>Operates a suit of power armor mounted with speakers and subwoofers with output high enough to disintegrate concrete point-blank.</i>
The demographic split between Anthem's diehard fans and haters is whether or not they’re old enough to have hearing problems. Since her arrival in Philadelphia there has been a flurry of noise ordinance legislation. Formerly a vigilante going by Decibel working out of a chop shop in Erie. Off the clock, Anthem is a rapper in the reggaeton style, and has her first album deal in the works.	

Holmgang	<i>Leaps into the sky; upon landing, traps him and his victim in an impact crater with a caldera of earth encircling them.</i>
Recently written up after an attempt to fight at the emcee underground cape fighting/betting ring, where he was identified immediately. Every time he jumps he ruins the day of at least four people - the guy he lands on, the sewer guy, the Comcast guy, and the PGW guy. The premium on Keystone’s cape liability insurance would make you openly weep. He got blamed for a nasty sinkhole in Manayunk, but this is unverified.	

Lionheart	<i>A personal forcefield worn as armor, plus an aura that comes part and parcel when the armor’s on. Fear-adjacent, the effects are more akin to awe and dominance.</i>
Named at nineteen by a focus group of high schoolers, Lionheart transferred in from Chicago a year ago after tabloid drama involving a stalker who got too close, filling the spot from when Encore was let go from Keystone in October 2023. He had a great many parasocial fans and is finding Philadelphia, a city that boos its heroes with glee, a very refreshing change of pace.	

Rumpus	<i>Controls a plump, feline projection the size of a U-Haul called The Great Rumpuscat. It’s sturdy and translucent and she tends to ride safely in the interior.</i>
Rumpus is a card-carrying member of the International Cat Committee, an informal organization and occasional meet-up excuse for heroes and villains across the globe with cat-themed names, including such greats as Takamagahara Sendai’s Manekineko, Indianapolis’s headliner Friday, Busan’s Baekho, the infamous Kilkenny, and Ninelives, who is still trapped in the Chattanooga Temporal Exclusion Zone. Much to his chagrin, Lionheart was not invited. Her merchandise line sells like hotcakes and bootleg Rumpus Cat is everywhere.	

Misericordia	<i>Wields an arsenal of teleporting blades. Currently a throwing knife, a rope dart, and whatever she's trying this month.</i>
The most recent addition to the Keystone roster, Misericordia spent two years as an independent mercenary operating out of Fairhill and taking jobs across the tri-state area.	

Aqua Regia	<i>Produces a highly corrosive substance she can control with great telekinetic precision. Once demonstrated dissolving a Honda Civic in about fifteen minutes.</i>
Aqua Regia hasn’t formally debuted and isn’t allowed to hit the streets barring the rare vetted occasion, the okay from higher-ups signed in triplicate, and adult supervision. She’s a high school senior and she’s expected to debut at the end of the school year once she graduates.	

The Lodestar Foundation

A Philadelphia nonprofit hero organization, founded by one of the oldest living capes, headquartered in Rittenhouse Square after the board moved it from University City in 2016. The roster never exceeds two, Lodestar and his sidekick. He’s had several over the years, Gauss, Gigawatt, Amp, and now Miss Blitz. No affiliation to Berlin’s hero group Leitstern or Hokkaido mascot hero Hokuto-kun.

Lodestar	<i>Juggles thousands of magnetic push and pull vectors, clean enough to make it look like effortless flight. Can sling a Buick with ease.</i>
Got his powers at nineteen, and his sole two surviving contemporaries are Avalon and Captain Stratosphere. Not the top of the tier lists, not in a world with Vorpai, Nevermore, or Event Horizon, but you could make a cogent argument for placement in the top ten. In 1996, his first sidekick, Gauss, decided to seek his fortunes elsewhere and made it big in San Diego, and two years later died from an ambush by Calibre of the Tijuana cartel. Lodestar flew there personally and delivered disproportionate retribution, which kicks off international referendums on jurisdiction, extradition, and powered persons in armed conflict.	

Miss Blitz	<i>Can move with inhuman speed in short bursts, and produces electricity from her hands. Combos with Lodestar to do a railgun trick, much like Gauss used to.</i>
Lodestar's current sidekick, after her predecessor and mentor Amp was hospitalized after being deployed by Panopticon to aid the Svalinn response team in the July 2024 Cleveland incident. Wears a penalty-flag yellow football-themed costume carefully designed to infringe on nothing of the NFL’s and goes absolutely ballistic if you ask if those are Steelers colors. Recently subdued a disgruntled Gryphon Rampant at the Eagles’ regular-season finale against the Giants, who was there and crashing out because her applications to be the mascot were continuously rejected.	

Daybreak

A C-list team with high turnover. Something between an incubator for amateur heroes and a predatory staffing agency.

Sequence	<i>Whatever his powers are, they aren’t flashy. He’s been seen to exhibit preternaturally adept hand-to-hand prowess, but he could just be a high-dan black belt.</i>
Formerly a B-lister known as Renzoku. Takamagahara’s Nagoya branch is fully defunct now, in the fallout of whatever incident provoked Sequence’s departure. His ex-partner Setsuna was last spotted in the Las Vegas villain circuit, one of Kusanagi’s custom swords still on her person.	

Skyshatter	<i>Makes jagged spatial distortions that hang in the air, which fade after a few minutes. Capable of flight, but leaves the same distortions in her wake.</i>
Skyshatter cannot operate in a city with skyscrapers or within a given radius of any airport whatsoever. She had a brief and unsuccessful run in Manhattan on Empire’s B-list before transferring to a place that could reasonably support her, and every flight she takes has to be cleared by the FAA. The Conshohocken branch of Daybreak technically deploys her and signs her checks, but she doesn’t do much in town. Doing well enough that she made an appearance at a Lodestar Foundation charity gala, though.	

Torque	<i>Wears a scrappy lightweight exoskeleton frame, a wheeled biped that has been cited for doing higher than 180 down I-95 in the dead of night.</i>
Torque is making a name for himself, though his power’s greatest weakness seems to be traffic, traffic jams, traffic lights, and traffic law. He’s scheduled to make an appearance at a charity youth basketball clinic at the Wells Fargo Center this upcoming week.	

Gauss II	<i>Absorbs electricity to reinforce his own body. Past a threshold, it becomes a tangible aura. He can discharge at will, with concussive thunderclaps in his repertoire as well.</i>
Used to go by Third Rail until the Lodestar Foundation offered to pass on the Gauss legacy in exchange for residuals. Widely regarded as a sellout and by all reports succeeding in Austin, but not well enough to make it onto the National Favorites menu in Hal’s.	

Gawain	<i>Forcefield armor that glows bright and gets dimmer as he takes a beating. Charges back up, presumably from sunlight.</i>
Gawain left Daybreak for undisclosed reasons. It’s not clear if he was coerced by his new villain partner Absinthe, or if he was already on the outs to begin with. He’s still causing trouble around town, so if you ever run into him, maybe you can ask.	

The Borgata

Lodestar beat RICO to bringing the Scarfo regime to an end. Nobody got around to flipping, and the Philly mob just went quiet. They collectively returned to the Angelo Bruno ways: no press, no bodies, no drugs. They have been meticulous about never kicking that particular hornet’s nest again. Despite the name, operates primarily out of South Philly, though they do still have presence in Atlantic City.

Pizzicato	<i>Manifests garrotte-thin forcefield wire to ensnare or dismember. Can leave up plenty at a time to create cordons.</i>
Pizzicato is the one responsible for the majority of the Borgata’s naming scheme. Neurotic about fine dining, according to rumor. Don’t call him Pizzacutter if you value your life.	

Capo	<i>Fires rings that switch from intangible to tangible that pass partway through whatever they hit and then cinch.</i>
Originally from Manhattan, where his former colleagues would tell you it’s short for <i>caporegime</i> , while Pizzicato would insist it’s short for <i>capotasto</i> .	

Sordina	<i>Mutes sound in a bubble around her. Given what she’s accomplished, there’s almost certainly more to it.</i>
Recruited from Chicago after she liquidated an entire Triad headquarters solo. Cleared enough turf doing it that the offer was a formality, and was inducted despite being neither male nor Italian. She has said in the one interview she has ever given that she was going through a divorce at the time.	

Burn Notice	<i>Pyrokinesis. Specifics unknown.</i>
The only member of the Borgata who refused to get a pretentious musical name assigned to him by Pizzicato. Largely known for incinerating savesies markers. Does a fine job melting the snow off the streets.	

emcee

A former Atlantic City operation, emcee now operates in the Navy Yard, booking the cards for underground cape fights and running the books. The Borgata takes their cut for the privilege of ensuring emcee continues to thrive as one of their most profitable sources of income.

Caduceus AKA The Cad	<i>Converts serious injuries to minor ones that last considerably longer. Exacerbating them sometimes causes the original wound to remanifest.</i>
emcee’s ringside doctor, not so much a healer as a loan shark of flesh. Even so, the pseudo-healing is one of the rarest abilities around. Bridgeport’s Azoth, Green Bay’s The Harmacist, and Seattle’s Noblesse Oblige are the preeminent three, and all of those have strings attached too.	

Sword of Damocles	<i>Capable of short bursts of flight. Telekinetically controls one to three glowing swords.</i>
Sword of Damocles is the most popular bout on the card. Used to duke it out against Misericorde regularly before she became a hero, and has a favorable record against her. He also moonlights as a stunt actor (or maybe he’s a stunt actor moonlighting as an underground fight ring brawler).	

Scrimshaw	<i>Armors himself with ablative, regenerating plates of bone. Weak corrosive or disintegrating touch, mechanism unverified.</i>
Scrimshaw was on the Indianapolis hero team Apex back during the corruption debacle in 2015 when the group's leader, Sovereign, was discovered to have been moonlighting as the villain Obol. Rather than take up the mantle again when the dust settled, he eased into a more laid-back life of taking down contenders for a purse.	

Blunt Force Trauma AKA B.F.T	<i>Attracts metallic debris, forming crude armor that boosts her physicality or massive improvised weapons.</i>
Self-styled Big Fucking Tank, but the newscasters won’t say that. A popular sight on the emcee cards, but spends most of her time hauling scrap to be sold. Despite similar powers being an occasional sign of familial relation, she has publicly disavowed any affiliation with Lodestar.	

Coat of Arms

Villains with a semi-ironic heraldry theme that took over the vacuum left by the K&A Gang’s absence after Kilkenny and Shillelagh left for Chicago.

Treason	<i>A brawling regenerator that can grow a lot of extra expendable limbs. Has been seen throwing down with six arms at once.</i>
Despite the fact that he's been known to grow six hulking arms and punch some poor bastard straight through a rowhouse, Treason doesn't get into fights all that much. Coat of Arms doesn't often get into actual, large-scale fights, really, and violent crimes in their turf are kind of a rarity. He’s the subject of several diss tracks and provocations to fight from six-armed Tampa villain and rapper Anansi, but has never clapped back.	

Red Right Hand	<i>Severs her own hands and launches them. Severed hands operate autonomously, like big meaty spiders. She regenerates the missing hands quickly.</i>
Known to the public as Red Hand for short, despite insisting to everyone she assaults that her cape name is Badtouch, which the newscasters won’t repeat. The name was bestowed upon her by Donovan Davis of 94.1, and she hates his guts. The hands decay after a short while so she can't build an army. Most we’ve seen in one swarm has been about fifteen-ish.	

Gryphon Rampant	<i>Turns into some sort of half-bird creature that can fly. Every time she transforms, she looks a little different from the last time.</i>
Heraldic, self-serious, and permanently furious at a city that makes folk heroes out of a fat man in a fursuit firing hot dogs at children. She tried out to be the Eagles mascot. They said no. She is never going to forgive them and she is never going to stop bringing it up, and at some point during the bit you will remember that she has talons. Currently in county after being unceremoniously tazed by Miss Blitz for crashing the Giants game.	

Argent	<i>New hire. Powers unknown.</i>
(This entry marked for deletion due to lack of content.)	

Independent Heroes

Capes flying solo, capes who refused to sell out.

The Anchor	<i>Capable of making himself or others much, much heavier. He can withstand the extra weight. Most others aren’t so lucky.</i>
An independent hero working out of Port Richmond and Port Richmond alone for nearly three decades. In 2009, Hal put him on the menu, then all of a sudden every other cape wanted their name up there with him. The rest is history.	

Aftershock	<i>His fists can make shockwaves that range from paltry to devastating. He usually attacks the terrain instead of his opponent.</i>
In a recurring bout with the villain Claymore that started on the emcee card and spilled out into the streets. The property damage has been excessive. Everything that gets rebuilt in their wake also seems to get gentrified.	

Cumulonimbus	<i>Controls a large gray cloud. The cloud can solidify and deflect gunfire.</i>
A vigilante on the Bridesburg beat who showed up just under a year ago.	

K.O.	<i>Vigilante. Powers unknown.</i>
Cumulonimbus’s partner or sidekick. Keeping a low profile. Rumor has it she’s got a Manhattan accent that sticks out like a sore thumb.	

Memento	<i>Vigilante. Powers unknown.</i>
Seen very intermittently operating from Montco to Manayunk. Reports say melee-oriented.	

The Troubleshooters

Veteran mercenaries with a national track record.

Amphetamine Queen	Capable of flight. Conditional invulnerability, specifics unknown. Favored mode of offense: crash landing on you.
Appearing briefly on the emcee cards for as long as her partner Redshift is in town. Her partnership with Redshift began in Akron, in 2014, before he even got his powers, and they’ve since operated all over the States.	

Redshift	Mercenary. Teleports short distances, regenerator.
Fifteen years in the business, ten of them powered, and charges accordingly. Feats include restoring some semblance of order in Indianapolis when Apex when under, breaking Sunsetter out of Terre Haute, infiltrating and exfiltrating Cleveland before the Exclusion Zone cordon went up, and claiming the massive bounty on wanted villain Obol.	

Independent Villains

The loners and outcasts.

Absinthe	Stealth and smokescreens. Aerosolized hallucinogens and intoxicants.
Partners with Gawain (see Daybreak above). Most recently spoiled the Mummies Parade whilst Gawain attempted to rob the Barnes Foundation. Although he didn’t succeed, they made a clean getaway and are currently in hiding.	

Claymore	Explosive terrakinesis. Scoops out asphalt or concrete and detonates them into shrapnel.
Teams up with Freezerburn for smash-and-grabs. Freezerburn wants no part in the beef with Aftershock.	

Freezerburn	Hurls sharp icicles faster than most of the pitchers for the Phillies. Not Wheeler, though. Produces a vapor that can cause frostbite.
Together, Freezerburn and Claymore have busted no small number of store safes in the river wards. They’ve thus far managed to give The Anchor the slip.	

Civilians

People without powers who are important enough to be on this list anyways.

Marshall Ahlström	Keystone. PR manager.
A former Pittsburgh resident, Ahlström came to Philadelphia in 2019 and began the lunchboxification of every hero on the roster. The numbers look good. The Q-scores are up. The one loss he’s eaten during his tenure here is Encore, and he let her go clean with nary a scuff on his own sterling record.	

Marah Adler	Philadelphia Inquirer. Investigative journalist.
Marah Adler has a higher kill count than anyone else on this page. She received the Polk in 2006 during her tenure at the Times-Picayune for post-Katrina coverage of what heroes and villains did in the aftermath. The article exposed Starduster’s staged rooftop rescues for publicity and ended her career, and she has been cultivating that streak for almost two decades. After the 2012 layoffs, she went freelance and uncovered Sovereign’s alter ego as the villain Obol. She started working for the <i>Inquirer</i> in 2019.	

Donovan Davis	94.1 WIP-FM. Sportscaster and talk show host.
Your constant companion on the morning commute. Guy who calls the Keystone team the Keystone Kapes. Guy who made calling Pizzicato “Pizzacutter” stick and somehow hasn’t been beheaded for it. Every morning, tells Philadelphia its own guys - capes, athletes, whatever - are bums. Takes calls from people who have strong opinions about capes they’ve never met.	



Hal's (Conshohocken)

★ 4.8 · (11k+ ratings) · Sandwiches · \$\$

25–40 min

\$3.99 delivery

5.6 mi



Menu

Reviews

Photos

My Favorites

♥ The Holmgang

\$16.50

Corned beef brisket, pastrami, fries and slaw tossed in malt vinegar, swiss cheese, stone ground mustard, fried sweet-and-spicy pickle...

🔥 200+ recently



Local Favorites

The Anchor

\$12.50

Slow-roasted pork shoulder, broccoli rabe, sharp provolone, garlic-jus, on a Sarcone's seeded long roll.

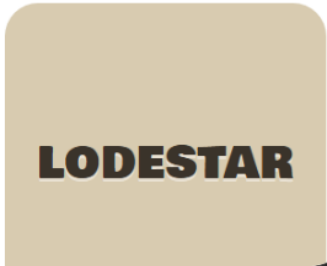
🔥 1.5k+ recently



The Lodestar

\$11.75

Beef-and-pork meatloaf griddled under a weight, havarti, long hots, sweet onion, brown





Menu

Reviews

Photos

Beef-and-pork meatloaf griddled under a weight, havarti, long hots, sweet onion, brown gravy for dipping, on a soft Amoroso's roll.

A portion of proceeds supports the Compass Fund.

1.4k+ recently



The Anthem

\$15.00

Adobo churrasco, smoked ham, pork belly, American cheese, shoestring potatoes, guava-chipotle mayoketchup, on pressed pan sobao.

800+ recently



The Miss BLiTz

\$13.50

Bacon, lettuce, tomato, served atop a chicken salad blended with crumbled bacon, shredded cheddar cheese, and ranch sauce, on lightly...

500+ recently



See more

National Favorites

The Vorpai

\$17.25

Smoked beef tongue, horseradish cream, pickled mustard seeds, watercress, crispy shallots, on a black-poppy kaiser, sliced...

3k+ recently



Timeline

The story so far. All information in logs not marked as public information are to be treated as meta-knowledge.

Key



Session: Regular session. *Treat as meta-knowledge*



Digression: A written exchange, speech, or relevant document. *Treat as meta-knowledge.*



Public Information: Events or information that most characters would be at least broadly aware of.

Declassified: Session was private at the time it was played.