

Exhaustis

This stuff started out as a by-product of a handy gizmo called the 'AntiSom' (invented by a gadgeteer about thirty years ago). The problem with being a nocturnal superhero -- or even an after-work one -- is, when do you sleep? For every billionaire playboy, there's a dozen people with day jobs who can't function on four hours' sleep indefinitely. So the gadgeteer came up with the AntiSom; a rugged, reasonably foolproof device that would drain the exhaustion out of a metahuman. Fifteen minutes' worth of use would do the work of eight hours of sleep; and with no long-term effects either, because super-powers.

The only issue was, there was this green gunk that would collect on the AntiSom. Some sort of physical-conceptual manifestation of all that exhaustion, and people learned really quickly not to touch the gunk with their bare hands. It didn't take long for somebody to realize that the by-product itself was valuable, and the refining of it into Exhaustis was not far behind.

Not that *nice* people like to really work with Exhaustis; it's kind of a nasty product. One dose of it (you need about a week's worth of regular AnitSom use to get enough for a

dose) will instantly make a human being incredibly, fall-asleep-on-their-feet exhausted. It's used by some people as a way to knock out captured criminals, and by others as an indirect assassination tool; if administered via the skin, it takes about five minutes for the effects to take hold, which is often just enough time for somebody to get on the highway. Worse: it is impossible to tell the difference between someone legitimately exhausted from somebody who has been dosed with Exhaustis.

Unfortunately for law enforcement, being able to induce extreme tiredness on someone with no particular unusual or lasting side-effects is simply too useful in a variety of fields. Someone who gets knocked out with Exhaustis **will** wake up again, and it's not actually possible to overdose on it. This means that the stuff is definitely regulated, but not impossible to acquire legally.

Plus, of course, criminals routinely break the law.

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