

Tom Tresser in Comics!



NEMESIS

BALANCING THE SCALES

by John Trumbull



CARY BURKETT



"The scales of justice ... held in perfect balance, they symbolize a fair and impartial judgment between men. But unbalanced, truth and equality are mocked! One man risks his life to regain that balance! A man called ... Nemesis!"

From the very beginning, Nemesis was a somewhat mysterious character. A 1980 double-page ad for DC Comics' new eight-page backup features showcased such familiar characters as Adam Strange, Firestorm, and the Huntress, but one character stood out by being UN-familiar: a silhouetted figure standing behind the scales of justice. The caption only read

"Nemesis: A New Hero Appearing in *The Brave and the Bold*."

ENTER: NEMESIS!

The man commissioned to create this new hero was writer Cary Burkett. "[Batman editor] Paul Levitz had a tremendous amount of input into the creation of Nemesis," Burkett recalls. "He tapped me to create a backup series for *Brave and Bold*. Paul always liked the idea of comics with more than one story in them, and a lot of his books had backup series.

"His instructions were for me to create a character who was a 'non-costumed' hero, one who would fit well into a Batman-themed book ... with some general similarities, but strong differences," Burkett continues. "He would be non-powered, but highly skilled in a variety of ways. As I recall, I think Paul threw out the idea in one brainstorming session that he might be a hitman who had reformed and was fighting crime with inside knowledge. Paul also came up with the name, eventually, though we batted around a few other ideas."

Burkett's background in theater added an important element to the character: "The idea of a master of disguise had strong appeal to me. But I didn't like the idea that he was a hitman in his past and driven by guilt to atone for his crimes. I wanted him to have a more positive motivation, a certain idealism that was foundational to his nature."

Regarding the selection of the illustrator of the "Nemesis" strip, Burkett says, "Paul had Dan Spigle in

PERSONAL DATA

Alter Ego: Thomas Tresser
Occupation: Inventor, later Vigilante
Marital Status: Single
Known Relatives: Chet (father, deceased), Craig (brother, deceased)
Group Affiliation: None
Base of Operations: New York City, also mobile
First Appearance: THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #166
Height: 5' 10" **Weight:** 170 lbs.
Eyes: Blue **Hair:** Blond

HISTORY

Tom and Craig Tresser were the sons of widower Chet Tresser, a good friend of Ben Marshall, a field agent for America's largest law enforcement agency. Tom and Craig idolized Marshall, who was promoted to the administrative level of the bureau. When their father died, Tom and Craig asked Marshall if they could work for the bureau. The two brothers went through intensive training, but only Craig became a field agent. Tom was equally good, but due to his talent for invention, he was assigned to develop special equipment.

Craig infiltrated the criminal gang of Jack Vanders, a subordinate of Jay Kingston, who was one of the leaders of a nationwide criminal organization called the Council. Vanders discovered that Craig was an undercover agent and told Kingston, who told the "Head" of the Council. Tresser was captured and sent to the Heild, who had scientist Otto von Riebling brainwash him. Craig assassinated Ben Williams just before the ceremony making him director of the bureau, and then was killed by a bureau agent.

As the brother of an assassin, Tom Tresser was stunned. He decided to abandon the name of Tresser until he could make up for Williams's death. He took the name of Nemesis, and pledged to honor Williams by carrying on his work and trying to balance the scales of justice. He took the name of Nemesis, and pledged to honor Williams by carrying on his work and trying to balance the scales of justice. He kept an unbalanced scale with a weight labeled "Ben Williams" on one side as a reminder.

Nemesis principally fought against the Council itself. He and The Batman (Joe Batman II) tracked down the Head, who had Von Riebling shot, and who, in turn, was killed by Von Riebling before he succumbed to death.

Nemesis and The Batman teamed up again to keep the Council from killing a

U.S. senator. To prevent a remote-controlled Council helicopter from bombing the senator and other people, Nemesis crashed the bomb-laden craft into the Council's headquarters, killing himself and the Council's sole remaining leader, Irene Scarfield. In memorial, The Batman placed a weight marked Nemesis on Tresser's scales.

POWERS & WEAPONS

Nemesis was a superb hand-to-hand combatant and a master of disguise. He had developed very thin face mask material that adhered to the skin and could be dislodged by a chemical spray projected from a device on his collar.

Nemesis shot special "freeze bullets," which contained toxins that would temporarily paralyze a victim but not kill him. He carried a pistol, a machine rifle, and concealed knives. He flew a helicopter he appropriated from the Council, and developed miniaturized "bugging" devices. His air-blast concussion gun could blast through metal.

Art by Dick Spang







