

the big picture

(iT cANt rAiN aLL tHE tIME)

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B a c k C o v e r

Progress is immortal.
Chaos in to order.

Driven by the will and vision of one man.
You can not live outside of Progress.

Invasive and complete.
Share in the vision.

Don't live a lie.
SLA Industries is Progress.

2001 – P D F C o n v e r s i o n

The fourth issue of tHE bIG pICTURE, produced in 1996, January I think.

A good piece by Tony Maguire was the only outside contribution, people seemed reluctant to have a go at writing for SLA themselves.

It has one of my all time favourite illustrations on the cover, originally from the MRB, but now taken out to make room for one of the three Ebon character sheets in SLA 1.1. Strange world eh?

Issue 4 still has stolen artwork in the interior, from the MRB and Karma, but it had a lot less of it, it was more 'wordy'. things were getting in to their stride.

It has turned out to be the second highest selling issue, more through luck than content: there were a lot of people getting in to SLA in 1996, and they were all hungry for anything they could get their hands on, which was not very much at the time.

Max Bantleman, 2001.

INTRODUCTION

Issue four. Well, who would have thought it? Anyway, lets get on with it shall we.
(Anyone out there actually reading this?)

Basing games on Mort is becoming more and more involved, with the amount of material being 'made up' by individual Gamesmasters far out weighing that produced by WOTC. This leads to problems in integrating the stuff in the Mort Sourcebook with what is already 'real' to our players.
(Mort Sourcebook? Who he?)

As for 'off world' stuff.... We have already developed Shaktar Homeworlds, Wraith Raider Homeworlds, the Stone Rim Colonies and an area known only as Dark Space, where there are rumoured to be remnants of the Conflict Wars.
(What do you mean rumoured....)

The Big Picture was actually born from a need to expand the SLA Universe, but now it seems to be coming into conflict with some of the official WOTC stuff. Frothers, for instance, have been developed into clans and families, with new skills and backgrounds. Do these clash with 'official' views? And what if they do?
(How would we know, nobody tells us nufink.)

Is there any real need for **The Big Picture**, or for any fanzine that produces stuff at odds with 'official' releases?
(Blasphemy I tell you, blasphemy!)

A big s-o-rr-y must go to the artist (formerly known as Steven Punter), who was not credited with his contributions in the last issue. S-O-RR-Y.
(Blame Max, I tried to tell him you'd notice.)

Is SLA Industries becoming just another game you run when you can't fit in other campaigns? Is it destined to go the same way as Jorune *(Who he?)*? The basic theme of the game; the darkness and deception, the struggle to remain sane and humane in a maddeningly arbitrary universe, is a hard

one to maintain. There is only so much doom, gloom and frustration players can take before they lose the will to try.
(Too bloody right! Another Cannibal Sector BPN and I quit!)

Differing playing styles and Gamesmastering techniques obviously lead to a multitude of SLA Universes, each with it's own feel and playability. Whether your players advance quickly, change character class every other session, or tortuously explore every aspect of their favourite character type. In worlds of broadly painted backgrounds, where the Cannibal Sectors are a filthy horror story, to worlds of mind numbingly detailed society, where the protocol of Carriens is explored. The world of Progress can support it all. There is enough depth, background and scope for everyone, players and GM's alike.

Anyway, Sarah says I have to go and lay down for a bit now....
(Don't forget your pill....)

Many suggestions for improving **The Big Picture** *(The Fuzzy Picture eh?, Ha bloody ha!)*, including questions and answers section, changing the layout, shrinking it to A5, trying to get people to advertise in it, a contact section for clubs etc., and throwing our lot in with one of the other 'main stream' publications.
(News to me, but then, what isn't....)

Any ideas?

It may be worth mentioning the submission guidelines again. Anything considered, as long as it can be associated with the World of Progress. Typed format, better still on floppy (IBM compatible formatted disks). Artwork **desperately** needed.
(We will try our best to leave your name ON next time....)

Whatever your contribution to the World of Progress, either through playing or running games, wouldn't you like to share it?
(With us we mean, and not get paid for it. Course you would!)

On the question and answer side of things....

Do Stormers have normal sexual drives and desires, or are they sterile and void of such feelings? If so, should the sterile disadvantage be allowed?

Can Wraith Raiders die from heat exposure, if so at what temperature? Is their heat signature different from humans?

Are Necanthropes changed in the White or are they merely possessed by beings that live there?

(Shut up Max.)

Yeah, sorry.

How about writing to us with suggestions for additions and amendments to the basic rules, we can print some and pass them *all* on. You must have some things you change, some 'house rules', I mean surely we can't all be happy with the Auto Fire rules....

Guns kill.... but so does.... whatever.

(iT cAN't rAiN aLL tHE tIME)

STREET GANGS

Street gangs roam all areas of Mort, except Uptown. They are a part of everyday life on Mort, most citizens have had (or will have) some contact with gangs during their lives. The street gangs vary greatly in organisation and membership, depending upon the location of the gang and it's 'function'. We have given details of five of the more prominent gangs in Mort Central, though we can not be sure of the complete accuracy of the information, most gangs are in a constant state of flux and change.

The attitude of SLA Industries towards the gangs varies depending upon the individual gangs profile and reputation. Street credibility and reputation is the life blood of a gang.

Gang Name : The Pack

Location : Sectors 218 / 219, suburban base with forays into Downtown.

Gang Emblem : Wolves head.

Details : The Pack tend to run the streets of the two sectors where they originate, acting as a kind of vigilante gang, monitoring the streets and keeping other gangs out. They cruise around in cars or on Power Boards, they seldom go on foot unless it is to a meeting. Most members of The Pack are in their late teens or early twenties, members are expelled from the gang when they reach thirty.

Gang Name : Disciples

Location : Sectors 440 / 443, largely the upper reaches of Downtown.

Gang emblem : Stylised 'double - d'

Details : The Disciples are a notoriously violent gang with no respect for anyone or anything. They exist for their own benefit and gain, running full of delinquents and criminals. The Disciples are simply a gathering of lower street criminals, many of them in their early teens (and younger). The gang offers it's members protection and a way to sell their spoils, as well as security from other gangs.

Gang Name : Red Rain

Location : Sectors 110 / 112, territory exclusive to them runs near the wall with central.

Gang Emblem : Lightning strike.

Details : Red Rain consist of the bored offspring of corporate workers and lower SLA executives. They are well dressed in 'street' clothes, and follow fashion with a keen eye. They roam the suburbs on pristine bikes and trikes, looking for trouble with other gangs and those unfortunate enough to be deemed 'too uncool' to be on their turf. They have been known to actually cooperate with Monarch in the chasing down of a felon. Not violent unless pushed to fight another gang, when they prove to be surprisingly well armed.

Gang Name : Ant People

Location : Sectors 570 / 580, strictly a Downtown organisation.

Gang Emblem : Smiling ant's head.

Details : The Ant People are one of the more feared gangs of Downtown. Made up of beggars and street children, they seem to have eyes and ears in every corner of Downtown. Their main source of income and support is the information they will sell

to anyone who wants it. They never gather in large numbers, and will melt away from a fight or conflict. They are ruled by a council, known as the 'hive', who make decisions about membership, punishment, distribution of wealth, etc.. No Operative can afford to get on the wrong side of the Ant People, they can make someone's life very easy or very difficult.

Gang Name : BulletHeads

Location : Sectors 740 / 746, mainly on the freeways and roadways of the outskirts of Mort Central.

Gang Emblem : Grinning skull with three eyes.

Details : BulletHeads are a gang for speed freaks. They are dedicated to racing cars and motorcycles, they will also race power Boards and copters, but this is not their preferred vehicle. They will fight to keep control of their roadways, and will patrol them to clear them before a big event, going so far as to shut them down during a major race. All the members are employed with a high disposable income, which makes the gang even harder to control and shut down. BulletHeads have to prove their worth by racing an existing gang champion before they are asked to join, dedicated speed freaks only need apply, they live to race and take risks on the road.

Gangs are essentially a social unit, and their make up reflects this, with different people within the gang fulfilling different roles. Each gang has a different structure, though all of them share some common features. Every gang has a leader, usually a single figure, though there are two gangs in Mort (the Reervers and the Ant People) that do have a ruling council. Gangs will also need contacts and fixers, mechanics and muscle as well as the common 'foot soldiers' that will go to make up the rank and file.

As a general guideline, most gangs will have between thirty and a hundred members. Each member will have a rank within the gang that is the equivalent of an Operatives 'reputation, and Operatives may acquire an honorary rank using their reputation in contact with the gang.

As a guide to making up gang members, we have listed typical positions within a gang and given a rough profile of the type of person likely to be found within this position.

G a n g L e a d e r

Will usually have the stats of a prop, or at worst a Civilian Convert. Gang Leaders have to have a bucket load of charisma or the backing of a seriously powerful member of the gang. The Leader will vary from gang to gang, but will usually personify those qualities the gang hold in high regard. The BulletHeads, for example, are lead by a quiet shy woman who happens to be able to handle a customised Calaharvey like she was part of it, while the Hunters are lead by a brute of a man who could quite possibly tear the head off a Carrien with his bare hands (and is rumoured to have done so!).

Leaders will always have contacts either with one of the law enforcement agencies or DarkNight, they can always call in favours when needed and enjoy a certain amount of protection and loyalty from their members.

Skills and levels will depend upon their specialty (gang type) but again, the Prop or convert give a good guide for levels attained.

Their access to equipment will depend upon the gangs strength and it's general success, the leader of the SewerStars actually owns a Blitzer, while the head of the Tower Kids is never seen with anything more elaborate than a baseball bat (but boy, what a swing!).

R I g h t H a n d

The gang's Right Hand is second to the leader in both power and rank. Often the Right Hand will be someone who has qualities the leader does not possess, but who compliments the Gang Leader in their running and control of the gang. So a brutal, highly physical gang like the Chargers, has a Right Hand who is both eloquent and intelligent, able to act as diplomat and peace keeper, with a lot of patience and the ability to calm a potentially volatile situation. The Right

Hand of the BulletHeads is a mean and moody gal by the name of Scythe, she is the gang's enforcer and muscle, being both deadly with her hands and a fist scythe.

The Right Hand will be the equivalent of a Prop, with equipment and skills appropriate to the particular gang.

Fixer

Gangs will often have two or three Fixers, these are the people who procure equipment and services for the gang, as well as selling their spoils through their contacts both on the black market and with corporations such as SLA and DarkNight.

Fixers are always highly intelligent, motivated people, always on the move and always with at least three deals going on. They are never completely trusted by the rank and file gang member, though they can be relied upon by the Leader and the Right Hand.

Fixers usually have their own 'dens', places where they are safe, and that are filled with goodies from raids or supplies for the gang. A Fixers den will sometimes be guarded by a contract Prop, hired by the gang as a bodyguard for their Fixer. The chief Fixer for the Sky Rats is 'shadow mike', his den is in the ruins of tower nine on the derelict sector 290 tower estate, he has the Prop SweetTooth guarding him and the store twenty four hours a day.

Fixers will often be the Operatives contact with a gang, as they have to inter-act with corporations, and sometimes with enforcement agencies.

Muscle

Gangs will have many members who make up their 'muscle', these members will be experienced in unarmed combat and some will have firearms training.

Muscle comes in many shapes and sizes, from the hulking male to the martial artist female, some have personal inter-action skills and some merely frighten their victims into submission.

The muscle of a gang will be present at all gang meetings, and some will be around the leader at all times. Right Hands and Fixers rely on muscle for both enforcement and protection. Muscle is always the first to

wade in against other gangs. Sometimes the muscle element of a gang can be hard to control, often causing unnecessary friction both in and outside of the gang.

Muscle will vary greatly in their characteristics and skills, depending upon the gang, most will be the equal of a Convert or a Prop, though some may be as tough as a Shiver or as weird as a Serial Killer. They will have access to equipment and information relevant to the style and wealth of the gang they serve.

A classic example of muscle comes from the Raiders, their troopers (muscle) are known as Wires, each wears the gangs colours with an additional blade added below the feline logo. Wires are trained in the use of both one handed and sometimes two handed blades, none has access to or uses firearms, there are twelve Wires within the gang, and this number is kept constant. It was a Wire from the Raiders that was responsible for the hit on the BloodBoys Fixer in sector 333, the Fixer and two of his Prop guards were taken out by one Wire, an extreme example of the possible effectiveness of gang muscle. The Wire who carried out the hit is suspected by monarch to also be the Serial Killer known only as Number 9.

Rank & File

Citizens join gangs for many different reasons, yet they all seem to be seeking the same thing; motivation in direction and a sense of belonging. Gangs provide both of these. It is the oldest cliché in the book that gangs 'take care of their own', this is as true now as it has ever been, possibly more so. Rank and file are usually just Citizens, though some may be the equal of Converts. They are the 'foot soldiers', the ones who make up over 75% of the gang membership.

All Rank & File are proud of their affiliation with the gang, each will wear the gang colours or emblems whenever appropriate.

It will surprise many Operatives to find the social range represented within the Rank & File, members come from all walks of life, from the street kids of Downtown, to the technicians from Glow World in the suburbs. Rank & File have varying loyalty

to the gang and it's hierarchy, but each is bound by the gangs code or oaths, and each knows that betrayal brings punishment. The Rank & File will usually carry some form of weapon, be it a kosh or a CAF, it will always be concealed, and usually wielded with no great skill. Usually Rank & File rely on sheer weight of numbers in a fight, or the advantage of surprise through ambushes etc..

Territory

To a gang territory is all important. The territory a gang controls is known by many names including; 'turf', 'patch', 'ground', 'home', 'pitch', 'spread', etc..

Territory is marked in a number of ways, by such things as painting walls, physical markers (poles, banners, etc.) and patrols.

Word of mouth is by far the most important aspect of establishing a territory, people should just *know* when they are encroaching upon a gangs turf.

Operatives will use their Streetwise to spot the tell tale signs that they are entering a gangs territory.

Gangs regularly confront each other over issues of territory, each trying to expand their zone of control. Small wars have been fought over street corners, car parks, shopping malls, etc..

Residents that live within a gangs territory usually show some respect to the gang, and in turn are generally left alone, or only slightly harassed for things like protection money, or maybe the odd freebie from a business. No resident will inform on their local gang as this would be next to suicide.

Many gangs are seen as a sort of neighbourhood enforcement operation, even encouraged by the local citizens, though there are those that stand outside even their local communities (the BloodBoys for example).

Dealing With Gangs

Operatives will need to have high Streetwise and good street Reputations if they are to deal successfully with gangs. No self respecting gang will deal with any corporate slaves or squares, gangs will never rise to the Operatives level, they will always drag the Operative down to theirs.

Directing violence towards gangs is a good way to start a street war. Shivers will show contempt for Operatives that stir up gangs unnecessarily, and gangs will go out of their way to set up Operatives that have used violence against them.

At the end of the day it is all about style, bravado, street cred and walking the fine line between the tribal and the civilised.

Gangs can often swing a BPN one way or the other, ensuring success or failure, especially where the BPN involves investigation or undercover work.

Some Operatives may be granted 'honour' within a gang, this means they are part of the gang's family and generally considered a friend. They will of course be expected to act in such a way as to strengthen these bonds, by doing the gang favours, such as tipping them off to raids and the movements of other gangs etc..

Sometimes an Operative may try to infiltrate a gang while undercover. This is almost impossible and the Operative will nearly always be discovered. Traitors are usually dealt with harshly, being either exiled from a sector on pain of death, or executed upon discovery. Some of the more tolerant gangs, such as the BulletHeads, whose existence is not dependent upon secrecy, will simply cut off communication from an outsider.

Operatives would do well to keep on the right side of their local gang, as all those that live outside of Uptown will almost certainly be in someone's territory.

Game Stuff

Obviously, everyone will run gangs differently, giving them varying degrees of prominence and importance.

The gang sub-culture of the world of Progress offers a different perspective on the SLA universe, harking back to a more primitive 'tribal' way of life, at odds with the seeming civilisation (?) of the world around them.

Gangs can also offer players useful contacts and adventure opportunities, and most players will not shy away from interaction with gangs, either through conflict or co-operation.

Whether you run them as groups of run away kids, hells angels types, or the basis

for crime syndicates, gangs will add colour to any world, and will certainly give the players something to think about. (Paranoia rules!)

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BADGE

Written By Tony Maguire

When Tony's article fell through the letter box (manna from heaven!), it sparked off the usual discussions between us. Why play SLA Industries if you don't want to be an Operative I says. Because it expands the world of Progress and is *fun* Sarah says. But.... (I says). Shut up and put it in Sarah says....

There are aspects we found challenged our personal view of Progress, but we figured, what the hell, who are we to over edit. All that said, we just had to take out the rogue Shaktars....

Enough already.

Behind The Mask

Lets face it, Ops have it big. Big careers, big apartments, big money, big armour, big guns and big fun. Admittedly their chances of living to a ripe old age aren't that big, but hey, they knew the risks when they signed on the dotted line. They don't really know what its like to work for a living, to just get enough to make it through another night, not like the regular guys and gals of Downtown...

If you play SLA Industries a lot, sooner or later you might start getting a bit jaded by the endless round of BPNs, fire-fights and late nights at The Pit. Everybody needs a break occasionally. What to do. Well, you could knock it on the head for a while, switch games or just swap GMs for a different style of play. If none of this seems appealing you could challenge yourself (and your GM) to try something a little different.

Play the game, but don't play SLA Ops....

The concept of playing SLA from a different point of view is a pretty obvious

one and I'm sure lots of people have done it already. However I have encountered quite a number of keen SLA players who either have never considered this possibility or if they have they have never actually got round to doing anything about it. It is them that I would like to persuade. Basically, it can be a lot of fun.

The first question to be tackled is "well, if I'm not going to be a SLA Operative, what am I going to be?" In a game background like SLA the possibilities are, quite literally, endless.

Even if you discount the fact that SLA Industries, the company, is an inter-system concern, and concentrate on the hopefully already familiar backdrop of Mort, there are many avenues to be explored.

Below I have detailed a mere ten alternative career categories that a player might be interested in pursuing. I have listed them in approximate order of acceptability to the company, by which I mean the further down the list you go beyond The Soft Corporate, the more effort SLA are going to make to find you and kill you.

A Word About Character Generation

With the exception of the Retired Operative and the Runaway Operative I recommend you generate these PCs with considerably less Character Points than the normal 300 point Op.

Most of those guys are just civilians, they haven't had much of an education in the company schools and nowhere near the level of training that an Operative receives at Meny or Orange Crush.

I recommend 150 Character Points or less for the Shivers and Thresher Suppressor Power Agent, 125 Character Points or less for the DarkNight Suppressor Power Agent and 100 Character Points or less for the rest of them.

This will build average citizens with pretty average Characteristics and Skills. There is still room for a PC to have a Stat and Skill of 10, if that is what you want. These are just my guide-lines and I would be interested to know how your PCs get on.

The Shiver

As a corporate police force the Shivers primary role is to patrol the streets of Mort and guard SLA Industries and its valuable customers from those who would threaten the peace of Progress. Like all contemporary police forces the Shivers have to be flexible enough to handle many situations. From forensic analysis of a crime scene to the containment of gangers in a riot, the Regular Shiver is trained and equipped to handle most foreseeable contingencies. In the event of an individual squad not being able to handle a situation they can take comfort in the fact that their colleagues on the other end of the radio will.

The service offers a more regimented lifestyle than that of an Op with regular hours, regular pay and regular tours of duty. Of course you can never quite predict what is going to happen, especially if your squad is called in to support Operative activities. But that just adds to the excitement of the job. At least you don't have to pay for your own ammunition....

Shivers are essentially a para-military police force and as such do not receive the same standard of training as an Operative. I recommend 150 character points or less to be spent on characteristics and skills and the following training packages offered.

Standard Troop

Auto / Support
Club, 1 Handed
Drive, Military
Rifle
Streetwise
Unarmed Combat

Dispersal Shiver

Auto / Support
Rifle
Pistol
Blade, 1 Handed
Streetwise
Unarmed combat
SCAF Pilot
Drive, Motorcycle
Navigation
Pilot, Military

Rifle
Pistol
Streetwise

All of these options are probably best embraced on a group basis, for example the KARMA supplement states that SCAF bikes patrol in squads of four. Any APC is unlikely to have more than one type of Shiver in it. You should keep in mind the forensic and medical duties of the Shivers that are mentioned in the source material are not reflected in the NPC skills in the back of KARMA. Try to ensure that some members of the party have at least a cursory knowledge of both disciplines. Equipment for these individuals should be easily ascertained from the illustrations and text of the SLA rule book and KARMA supplement.

The Monarch Law Enforcement Officer

Monarch Law Enforcement are the civilian police force that try and keep the peace in non-SLA territory. You won't find any of these guys in Uptown, they have quite enough on their plates handling the "nicer" areas of Upper Downtown. Under-staffed, under-equipped, under-funded and always under pressure from the company, these guys remind me of the Detroit Police Department as portrayed in the Robocop movies.

As a MLE officer you may not have the power or the prestige of a Shiver Unit but you are still up against the same criminal scumbags. With only CAF weapons, body armour and practically no back-up, MLE patrols really are at the sharp end of the stick. This is a real crusaders job, fighting against all the odds in an attempt to make the difference and keep the streets safe.

As far as character generation goes these guys are essentially no better of than the civilians they protect. I recommend 100 character points or less suggest the following training package.

Monarch Law Enforcement

Persuasion
Club, 1-Handed
Drive, Civilian

Pistol
Streetwise
Unarmed Combat

MLE training is primitive and mostly provided on the job. A rookie officer will pick up most of his practical knowledge from an old-timer and try to make the best of it. Apply all the TV clichés of policing in the Americas inner cities.

The Civilian

The civilian lacks the highly valuable training that other backgrounds possess. The blandness and apparent ineffectiveness of these characters is balanced by the fact that it is unlikely that they will have any serious enemies. The civilian will undoubtedly be a much less powerful character than the other types but they have the potential to be just as interesting, often more so. Playing in a mixed background party will not be fair on the civilian, but who said life was fair?

These characters are suitably generated with much fewer character points than a highly trained SLA Operative, I recommend 100 points or less but it is best to experiment with character generation to see what suits your style of play the most. Although they should receive their inherent racial skills they will not receive training in a SLA package. These characters will most likely be unemployed (85%) but could quite possibly possess the skills necessary to hold down a job in Downtown. If they can't get a regular job, or just don't want one, the gapping maw of Downtown's underworld beckons. Basically civilians get caught up in things. Some players won't like the lack of control over their own destiny, others will see it as a challenge.

Think back to what has happened to some civilians in one of your own games when you were playing an Operative. Mmm, nasty.

The Soft Corporate

You know, up until recently I was under the impression that all Soft Companies were illegal entities, much the same as the rival Suppressor Powers, DarkNight Industries and Thresher Incorporated (I still

assume they are VERY illegal). It was only when I was re-reading the rule book that I realised this wasn't the case. Hell, SLA Operatives can even get sponsored by Soft Companies it seems, if their direct superior approves. So with this in mind there is a whole vista of legitimate business opportunities for the entrepreneur.

I think a group could have a lot of fun and a very off the wall game if they formed their own Soft Company. They would have to come up with an interesting product but that shouldn't be too difficult for a table of imaginative gamers.

As the board of directors of a Soft Company a group of players would have to decide company strategy in relation to advertising, public profile and how they compete with rivals. Of course if the company is peddling illegal products such as drugs or weapons then they will have all the problems associated with running a Black Market Company. Secret production and distribution as well as subtle "advertising" will keep you occupied for hours.

Generate these characters as civilians, 100 character points or less, but allow a few more points to reflect the probable origin of these individuals, the sons and daughters of SLA employees.

These characters are probably reasonably well educated possibly even drop-outs from SLA's education system.

The Criminal

This is an enormous category that could include everything from a mugger that skulks on the gangways of Downtown to a cat-burglar that steals from the corporate pleasure palaces of Uptown and Mort Central. Like most games there is huge scope for characters like this in SLA. It pits the players against the law-enforcing agencies of the World Of Progress, from the meager resources of MLE to the all encompassing grasp of Stygmartyr. Most conducive for group play would be a gang planning a heist. What they are trying to steal and why should be easily agreed upon, there is so much to choose from.

Unless the thieves are ex-Ops they should be generated as regular civilians, 100 character points or less. They are most

likely from Downtown but could be bored Suburbanites or even Uptowners.

The Subversive

With all the cover-ups, clamp downs and Shiver sweeps a few people will always be suspicious of the company. With so much to hide SLA can't be 100% successful in keeping all their dirty laundry out of site. Living in Downtown, you tend to see things best left unseen. Because of this there will always be a thriving culture of trouble makers and rumour mongers trying to find out what is really going on and then trying to let as many people as possible in on the secret.

Downtown has many underground publications, from single page factsheets hastily produced on an old lap-top to newspaper-like collections of the weeks events. Groups of like-minded individuals will carefully set up informal networks of information gatherers, sometimes even exchanging information from sector to sector. A subversive PC will most likely be one of these information gatherers, an eye on the street, watching for Shivers or Ops to do something "un-SLA-like" and reporting that to the network.

Of course, because comparatively few citizens can read (or can be bothered to read), a picture is worth much more than a thousand words. Photographs and video footage of SLA personnel being naughty are highly prized. Channel Resistance is by no means the only rogue broadcasting station on Mort and all of them want airtime of SLA messing up.

Whether you do it for the cause, the street cool or the money, being a subversive will certainly keep you occupied for a few good sessions of play.

Ops don't take kindly to being followed and a few might just fire first and ask questions later.

As you might suspect by now, these guys are just regular civilians, 100 character points or less.

The Black Marketeer

The Black Market is all pervading in Downtown, spanning from the quite innocent provision of illicit videos to the

less than wholesome business of the Skin Trade. The interface between this huge business entity and the public is the ubiquitous Fixer. These people can get you anything you desire, for a price.

As you might expect there are many different levels of Fixer, from small-time street corner peddlers to guys in suits who can get you that Thresher powersuit in a week, no questions asked. Its up to you to style the character as you would like.

The more powerful Black Marketeers are very well organised, much like the crime families of the Mafia today. They will employ all sorts of people in many different capacities and may well pose as "legitimate business men".

Competition between the families is fierce with alliances shifting all the time.

A group of PCs could have a whale of a time with this idea but I warn you, the "Godfather" clichés are almost irresistible. You should keep in mind though that ultimately DarkNight has the firmest grip on the Black Market. If you incur their wrath then be prepared to take a long vacation. Off-World.

Use 100 Character Points to generate these PCs, but keep in mind some of the families will have access to large amounts of money and other resources. More GM bargaining.

The Suppressor Power Agent

Even the media machine that is SLA Industries cannot pretend that the Suppressor Powers are not on Mort. DarkNight is the more obviously successful of the pair involved as they are with the Black Market. They also have the highest public profile, provided by Channel Resistance and reinforced by the plethora of DarkNight products that fill Downtown. DarkNight need people, freedom fighters to some, terrorists to others. Not all are needed to perform the dangerous role of the Interceptors, most simply move Black Market merchandise, observe SLA movements and report to their coordinators. Being more militaristic in nature Thresher tend to restrict their activities to combative strikes against prominent SLA personnel or installations. Still, the need for good intelligence will always be their and

Thresher value their undercover operatives as much if not more than DarkNight value theirs. More careful and stealthy by nature, these people will nevertheless have Thresher arms and armour to fall back on when push comes to shove.

Both of these groups will have a modicum of training, I recommend 125 Character Points for the DarkNight Agent and 150 Character Points for the Thresher Agent. As for Tek Trex, who knows if they have any biologicals working for them at all....

The Runaway Operative

The runaway is simply an Operative who went A.W.O.L. Why they did this is up to you but be warned the company does not take kindly to highly trained assets just disappearing into the woodwork. Perhaps it was the pressure to succeed that got to you, the internal squad competition or simply the unremitting violence. Chances are most runaways probably saw or found out something that was unacceptable to them.

These characters are easily generated using the normal character generation mechanisms. They will retain their training, experience and equipment but will most likely lose contact with their old friends in the company.

These characters are essentially fugitives so some advantages could not be taken or at least would require some cunning explanation.

A Note On Race

All of the material above is aimed fairly squarely at the Human PC. Of course not every alien on Mort is going to work for SLA but you should be careful selecting a alien character to play outside the company. This is how I see things.

Frothers

Basically just a variation of the Human race, Frothers would have little problem passing themselves off as Human if it were not for their fierce pride. Few of them will be willing to dress down and simply be a face in the crowd. They may be treated with disdain by the rest of the Clans but

this is really up to how you play them in your games. It is conceivable that some Frothers live outside the guiding hand of SLA but remember that as citizens their various addictions are more than likely illegal.

Ebb Users

If you want to run an Ebon or BrainWaster character then you are going to have to be prepared to put in a little more effort than usual. If you are a Runaway Operative then chances are you will still have your Deathsuit and you will have generated your character in the normal manner. That's good for you in that you can still use your ebb abilities but assuming that you can't sub-dermalise the suit yet it also marks you as a SLA Operative. You might not find too many people in Downtown willing to trust you, no matter what you say. If you have no suit, the alternative is to use Glyph Cards. While these are just as dangerous to procure and possess at least they have the virtue of being cancelable. You also will have to agree a method of Ebb ability generation with your GM. In one of their published scenarios Nightfall have already set the precedent that feral ebb-users develop their abilities in a non-linear manner. A feral ebb-user could have Blast 1, 2, 5, 9 and 13 but not have a clue about 3,4,6,7,8,10,11 or 12. When I ran these characters I allowed my player to roll 2d10-1 several times and equated the result to an ebb level of the school they were interested in. This was fun but very unpredictable and I probable will do it a different way next time.

Shaktar

The Shaktar have a long and honorable tradition of service to the company. Because of this tradition and the psychology of the Shaktar themselves it is unlikely that many of them would choose to exist outside the bounds of SLA. A warrior race, working for SLA provides the Shaktar with a perfectly satisfactory expression of their culture.

(edit, edit, edit.....)

Wraith Raider

The Wraith Raiders are a pragmatic race with a lack of social conscience that borders on the sociopathic. They work for SLA because it allows them to use their millennia honed hunting abilities to earn their bread. It offers them a competitive background that enforces survival as harshly as the tundra of Polo. If they could see an easier, more lucrative or simply more interesting way to practice their abilities they could be tempted to leave SLA. It is unlikely that a Wraith Raider would leave SLA for any moral reasons, they don't have any morals. It is possible one could decide to go after the ultimate quarry, SLA itself.

Stormers

The Malice 313 Stormer and all that came after it are biogenetic constructs with loyalty to the company written into their DNA sequence. If you want to use them as non-SLA PCs go for it, but I won't even try to justify how this could be done. Born of the company, for the company, simple as that.

A Note On Chipped Operatives

I would suggest that none of the ex-Operative classes have a Finance Chip as part of their background. What are you going to do, wrap a wet towel around your head?

Afterword

Of course the life of an Operative is an interesting and exciting game experience, hopefully a little dangerous and disturbing as well. The challenges of playing a civilian or criminal will be different but equally as interesting and just as rewarding to play. No matter how tooled up an Op is the GM can always take him or her down. As Nightfall stress the game is not about big guns, they just up the stakes. But there is no need for all the threat and counter-threat to be so high powered. If you want to experience real excitement take off the badge.

If you want to experience real fear take on the establishment.

If you want to fight "The Man", well, you know where he lives. Head Office, Mort Central....

For the inspiration I would like to thank: Cathy, Conor, Gary and Helen.

NEVER MIND THE PIG

POLARAC

Polarac are genetically engineered organisms, produced by the subsidiary company KleenEezy. They were created to clean out access ducts, heat risers, sewage pipes, water pipes, etc.. They resemble huge spiders with the tail of a crocodile attached to the underside of their body. They are always black in colour, their shiny black plates glistening with toxic residue. There are no soft spots on Polarac, if they lose a leg or their tail, they can grow another within twenty four hours.

Polarac have no eyes and no ears, they are completely unaffected by light and sound. Polarac sense pests through vibration and smell, they are genetically programmed to react to eight hundred different kinds of pest.

At the beginning of 900 SD. it was discovered that some Polarac had gained the ability to change their programming, deciding to expand upon their list of 'pests'. In the Spring of 900 SD. sixty four KleenEezy personnel were killed while on inspection/cleaning duty in the sewers of Mort. Polarac have now spread to all areas of Mort, infesting anything they can crawl through.

| Stats. | Min. | Max. | Norm. |
|--------|------|-------|-------|
| STR | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| DEX | 5 | 10 | 7 |
| DIA | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| CONC | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| HITS | 2 | 12 | |
| Weight | 30kg | 100kg | 60kg |

Length 1M 2M 1.3M

Walk: 2. Run: 5. Sprint: 8.

SKILLS RANK

Detect 9
Run 6
Swim 7
Climb 7

Weapons PEN DMG AD

Bite 0 1 0
Acid Fluid 1 1 1

Armoured Skin PV ID
Over body 5 10

The Polarac kill their prey by poisoning, they secrete a gaseous cloud containing powerful toxic clogging agents, these attack the lung tissue of the victim, causing them to suffocate. Gas clouds expand to fill an area of 4m² in two rounds, attacks may be made every third round, thirty attacks in a twenty four hour period. The poison works equally well on water breathing animals. Polarac are immune to their own poison as they manufacture oxygen internally, needing to 'breath' only once every twenty four hours. Polarac poison needs a Physique roll, minus strength of poison (2-10), to resist. Success means no affect, failure means suffocation in 30 (minus PHYS) rounds.

At the moment there is no known antidote for Polarac poison.

DNA ALTERED CANINES (DACs)

DNA Altered Canines (universally known as DACs) were first created in the laboratories of Phantom Pregnancy Inc., under the watchful eye of Maxon Hagen, head of department at Phantom Pregnancy Inc. They are recognised as being the forerunners to the fearsome Domino Dog.

Once the Domino Dog project came to fruition in 901 SD. research on the DACs was stopped, and the final production model has not in fact been altered since 899 SD.. DACs are used by many security firms

and wealthy individuals who do not want a beast like the Domino Dog loose around their grounds. While Domino Dogs are primarily for use in the Cannibal Sectors and lower reaches of Downtown, DACs can be found all over Mort, both in the service of SLA and in private hands.

Stats. Min. Max. Norm.

STR 4 10 6
DEX 4 10 7
DIA 1 2 1
CONC 1 2 1
PHYS 4 10 7
COOL 8 12 9
HITS 8 20
Height 1M 1.8M 1.3M
Weight 60kg 250kg 100kg
Length 1M 2M 1.3M

Walk: 2. Run: 4. Sprint: 6.

SKILLS RANK

Detect 7
Unarmed (Bite) 6
Run 6
Swim 5
Tracking 6
Dodge 5
Hide 4

Weapons PEN DMG AD

Bite 3 5 1

Armoured Skin PV ID
Over body 2 8 - 20

DACs have 'genetically boosted' skills, so they may be higher than the governing stat.

DACs only attack using a bite, none has claws, though their teeth are usually enough.

Smaller DACs may have less powerful teeth and should be modified accordingly.

The DACs have a complex bone structure engineered for maximum strength and flexibility, their skin has some armour characteristics, but it is their ability to

regenerate that really sets them apart from 'normal' canines.

DAC's regenerate at a rate of 2 points per round, and 1 wound every third round. They have a natural immunity to most poisons. DAC's can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their PHYS.

DACs seldom go rogue, they are usually conditioned to respond to one or two people, with override command sequences built in for safety. If a DACs breaks it's programming it will become the subject of a Red BPN. DACs hate normal canines and the feeling is mutual, they can sense each other with uncanny accuracy.

Any one of the basic species of dog may become a DACs, recently it has become fashionable to have DACs taken from Poodle stock.

You need a license to own a DACs, and registration with the Dept. of Environment.

SHAKTAR LANGUAGE

The Shaktar language is notoriously difficult for humans to learn. This is mainly due to the 'harshness' of the language and the subtle inflections used to stress parts of words to give them totally different meanings. The almost total lack of vowels doesn't help either.

We have gathered together a list of Shaktar words and their common usage, we have left out pronunciation (in most cases) as we have found this to be a minefield of controversy. Different tribes have different ways of using the same words, and we could not possibly list all connotations of each word.

This is not (and is not meant to be) an exhaustive list, new words should be gathered by yourselves and added to this scant 'dictionary'.

A lot of the words relate to things and places found on the Shaktar Homeworld of Kn'nth, rough translations are used to describe many other things, a good example being the corruption of the word

'Arryd Wch', which is used as a term of contempt in the form 'Arry'ch', most often in conjunction with inferior opponents.

Adj'n : Period of time roughly equal to nine days, used most often in conjunction with the Wdsh'Ar breeding time.

Adja : Period of time roughly equal to twenty one minutes, used in religious ceremonies as well as in the Pits.

Arryd Wch : Small rodent like mammal, prone to 'swarming'.

Awrc'Kjf : Famous Blood Pit site, built on ruins of God War citadel said to have been used by Cunder in his darkest hour.

Chkq : Run down, almost 'Downtown' district of Sh'yn.

Cjw'q Hk : Industrial town on the Southern borders of the Greensea, bordered on the East side by huge swamplands.

Cncht : Root vegetable, farmed all over Kn'nth.

Cunder / Shroud of Judgement, yellow.

D'sqwc : Large swamp situated in the Greensea of the Southern plains.

Dahj : Southern desert region, borders the Southern range of mountains.

Dajah : City on Kn'nth, great city on the Northern Plains, founded upon site of Griedaja worship.

Darn Fkz : Bear like creature related to the Dkcht Fyz, lives in cold climate.

Dhaurn : Large lake to the south of Gwj'kn, known to be a Arryd Wch breeding ground.

Dja'Kch : Literal translation 'wind fall', usually used in conjunction with the Tk'Cys.

Djan : Small town noted for being at the foot of the Fwqctw Mountain Pass.

Dkcht Fyz : Massive bear like creature with a head like a Carrien, tropical.

Doktast : Sea Shark, large with two tentacles under jaw.

Doktetcomast / That which Is Not Seen, black.

Dr'hjqwn : Festival of self discovery and meditation.

Dran : Great lake from early God War days, (now a sea?).

DwtKc : Usually used to describe emotional pain or moral turmoil, the term is also used in conjunction with the Shaktar Switchblade, common translation 'ripped'.

F'jahk : Name of infamous trader in city of H'ntarn, has a series of stores known as F'jahks Emporiums.

F'qhrn : Forested region straddling the equator of Kn'nth.

Fjkn zn : Enhanced state of concentration, almost meditative.

Fk'ahja : City on the Southern plains of the Greensea, operates as a 'city state'.

Frytish / Codex of Fortune, blue.

Fwqctw : 'Pinnacle of Honour', holy mountain.

Fyych Tsh : Feline, six legged sabre toothed beast.

Fzjk-Qwn : Festival of ancestor worship and dedication of new mates.

G'nsh : 'Floating floor', free floating sea grass, grows to incredible densities.

Gart / the Bond of Truth, orange.

Ghan'l : Business sector of city of Sh'yn, SLA Industries has a large arcology within the sector.

Ghqwac : Natural inhabitant of Kn'nth, native bear, now extinct, replaced by Dkcht Fyz.

Gk'tsh : Honourless state imposed on Shaktar by council of elders after a crime against the Honour Code has been committed.

Gr'js'h : Translation of 'Greensea', the name given to large parts of the Southern plains.

Gr'rl : Shaktar Operative currently on Mort, from the Griedaja tribe.

Gr'rl : Shaktar Operative with the Blood Brothers, currently on Mort.

Grdjkn : Large region in the Northern realms, ruled over by the N'chk Qwy family. The area is famed for it's production of transports.

Griedaja / Griedaja of Honour, green.

Gryqa : Beast much like a giant Gorilla which inhabits the Northern Plains of Kn'nth, hides are used to make armour, meat tastes foul.

Gwj'kn : Large city of the central region, very ancient temple site.

Gwnt'k : 'sprawling', southern mountain range.

Gwysh : Large fern, found everywhere on Kn'nth.

H'ntarn : Largest of the cities ruled over by the Gart clan, situated in the forested central region.

Hqn : Large Bovine mammal, migratory, distant relative of the Shahantian Bull.

Hs'thy : Shahntk of the Tchkar tribe.

J'hu : Family of the Cunder Blood, nomadic, wander the Greensea.

J't'k : Shaktar festival of departure, leaving ceremony.

Jhantsh : The name of the family who hold the office of High Lord over the Gart.

Jhyk-A : Large tribe who worship Cunder.

Jkt Acht'kt : Task of redemption, usually associated with Gk'tsh, may refer to quest.

Jn'Qw : Cunder Blood clan who believe Cunder still walks the face of Kn'nth as a shapeshifter.

Jqrad : Small port on northern edge of Sea of Rest.

K'n'th : Name given to the largest central continent on Kn'nth.

K'nl : Truth saying device used by priests of Gart, known as 'Kill Box'.

K'nn : Large city on coast of Sea of Rest.

K'n'th : Shaktar Operative, Mort / Dante, full name Shn-Tf Q'K'nth.

K'tn'Qw : 'Lightning Strike', used in reference to the strike of the Yrr Mrn.

K'tn-Zn : Large city in the Northern hemisphere, name means 'lightning stone'.

Kadecla : Unit of Shaktar time, roughly equal to 343 years.

Kh'rnk : Patrolman with the N'chk Qwy Highway Patrol (rivers authority).

Kh'rns : Domed city, with large Frytish presence, situated in the Northern region of the F'qhrn.

Kh'y : 'Carpet', small flowering grass, has some medicinal properties.

Kh'n : Northern region of the north continent.

Kn kar : Large, venomous snake, constricts prefers dry climate.

Kn'nth : First tribe / Homeworld.

Kn'tkt : Shahi Jcnt'nth warriors rather than priests.

Knk Tchkar : Literally 'deep root', most commonly used as 'dig deep' or 'hide'.

Knkt Jcnt : Honourless Rage, berserk state for combat.

Kr'rwq : Renowned Shahi Jcnt'nth Shahntk.

Kw'n Qrj : Female Shaktar of great honour, taken wife of K'nth.

Kyahani Tnthq : Blood line, used in conjunction with genealogy.

Kyh Swqcn : Blood Pits.

Kyn'Ay : Tribe on Kn'nth, trace ancestors right back to God Wars where they were said to serve Doktetcomast before being called to serve Cunder.

N'chk Qwy : Powerful family of the Shahantian tribe, who rule over the area known as the Grdjkn.

N'dq : 'Spike', cactus plant found widely on Kn'nth.

N'dqwj : 'Deadly beauty', beautiful blooming plant, whose poison is deadly

Np'sh : Shaktar Operative, currently on Mort, 901 SD.

Nt'ss : Shaktar Operative, now deceased, was with the Iron Hand squad, on Kn'nth 900 SD.

Nyalsk : Lesser God defeated by Griedaja in the God wars, banished to outer darkness.

Q'tat : Group of islands, archipelago

Qc'twn : Training camp in the Southern desert, houses six thousand.

Qkw'rt : Southern most city on the central continent.

Qkwey : Fresh water relative of the G'nsh, found in the High Lakes.

Qlafwk : A large fresh water fish renowned for eating anything.

Qlak : Water cut, after the large, predatory Qlafwk, a fresh water fish.

Qw'tch : River that dissects the great city of K'tn-Zn.

Qwc : Reptilian flying creature, natural Ebb ability.

Qy'jkn : Large lake on the Greensea, favourite watering hole for Hqn herders.

R'gn : Shaktar scout on Kn'nth, highly accomplished, never been off world.

R'hl : Shaktar Homeworld, nearest Homeworld to Mort.

R'khn Qk'tkt : Shaktar interviewer with Channel Seven, the Kn'nth Homeworld network, probably the best known Shaktar broadcaster on Mort.

R'ksr : Shaktar Operative, DeepEnd squad, currently on Mort, computer hacker.

R'nwy : Large sea fish, swims in massive shoals.

R'zt : Tiny insect, hives produce honey, they sting.

Rhc'khn : Operative with Nail Pop squad, currently on Mort.

Rk'tsh : Operative on Mort, in Jellyfly squad.

Rkt Jnll : Shaktar Operative on Mort.

Rkt : Shaktar Operative with Gibson squad, currently on Cross

Rodash / the Mother, violet or purple.

Sh'Hysh : Small grazing herd animal, commonly farmed on Kn'nth.

Sh'krl : Alien dating agency contact (fake?).

Sh'nt'k : Powerful corporation of the Kyn'Ay tribe of Cunder Blood, currently holds monopoly on Karma imports on to Kn'nth.

Sh'nth : Shaktar Operative on Dante.

Sh'tk : Kn'tkt of great renown from the Tchkar tribe.

Sh'yn : Largest city on Kn'nth, ruled over by the Shahantian clan, thought of as the 'capitol city' of Kn'nth.

Shahanti : High Lord Shahanti (tribal High Lord, ruler of many tribes).

Shahantian / Shahantian Crescent, first moon, red.

Shahantian Bulls : Beasts created by Shahantian at the end of the God Wars.

Shahi Jcnt'nth : Shaktar Holy Warriors.

Shahntk : Shahi Jcnt'nth priests rather than warriors.

Shintash / Shintash Gaze, grey.

Shk'ha : Overlord of the great Kyn'Ay tribe on Kn'nth, head of the Sh'nt'k corporation.

Sh'llr : Captain contract's faithful Shaktar sidekick.

Shnq'wk : Shaktar priest of the Shahantian tribe, well published and often quoted in lessons given in Meny.

Shnth Gklmn : Combat 'dance' for dodging / avoidance / making it harder to target the Shaktar.

Shnth Kh : Ceremonial garment worn by Shah Jcnt'nth which replaces braid of oaths scarf.

Shz'n : Shaktar soft company, dedicated to the destruction of technology in the K'nn port facilities, religious fanatics.

Ssk'y Arwy : High Priestess of the Rodash clan, ancient Shaktar.

Sskn'Gn : Operative on Dante.

Swl-Zn : Mountain range, literal; 'Sky Stone'.

Sy'n Tka : 'Hidden decay', fungus that grows beneath ground, traps animals in pits.

Sygn : Coup de grace, common use translation as 'killing blow'.

Syk'gn : Death Blow, used in Blood Pit combat.

Tash'Nk : 'Skybound', coniferous tree, nesting site for Qwc.

Tg'hnk : Powerful family of the Cunder Blood, run the training camp at Qc'twn in the Southern desert.

Th'k : 'Prayer', small stunted trees, treated as sacred to Shintash.

Thn'Ysk : Powerful family of the Frytish tribe, resident in Kh'rns.

Thorn District : Temple district in the city of Sh'yn.

Thy-f Dkrt Swlqjcn : The Book of All (Shaktar Bible?).

Tk'Cys : Literal translation 'dead hand', common; Fist Scythes. Ceremonial weapon upon which is based the Shaktar Switchblade made by Multi Job Lacerates (MJL).

Tsh'gn : Forgotten art of Ritual Suicide, now practised only by the Shintash clan.

Undjcn : Holy Mountain, situated in the Swl-Zn range, no translation, can be loosely used to mean 'holy' or 'worthy of respect'.

Vn'Rk : 'Heart', flowering shrub, treated as sacred flower, associated with Rodash.

Wdsh'Ar : Tiny fish, very resilient, can live almost anywhere.

Wry'nqc : 'Sweetness', fruit bearing bush, berries are very sweet.

Ygn Qjch : Large one horned beast, thick skinned and prone to charging, connected to the God Cunder.

Ynt Chr : Sensory control ability, swapping of primary senses.

Yrr Mrrn : Giant beetle, lives below ground.

Excerpt from interview with Fy'n Ghq'wl, Shaktar professor of language at Orange Krush:

"I am aware of the current interest in our language, and of the efforts of those wishing to learn it. We are of course flattered that you wish to show us respect by conversing with us in our native tongue. However, I feel you may think that the learning of our language will put us on some sort of common footing. This is simply not so. No matter how well I speak your language, and I believe I am right in saying I speak it more fluently than do

some of your own race, can you ever forget that I am Shaktar, or that I am an 'alien'? No, of course not.

Learning the tongue of the Shaktar will prove far more difficult for you than mastery of your language has proved for us.

The abruptness and economy of our language will perhaps be the hardest thing for you to learn. We do not have words for many things, and we do not bother using superfluous words, such as 'superfluous'. Short, sharp, observed conversations based on mutual assumptions of understanding, both in cultural and spiritual outlook, govern our language.

Honour is our cornerstone, upon which is based the code for our race. Language is important, it should be used with understanding, care should be taken over what is said and when. If we appear too quiet to you, it is because we feel no need to speak. If we have something to say, you will find it hard to 'shut us up'.

Once you have a basic grasp of our language, you may find yourselves thinking a bit more like us, if only through the difficulty of our language use!

I would be honored to hold classes in the Shaktarian language, and hopefully I can impart a greater understanding of the Shaktar race.

Now, I believe you wanted to ask me about Kn'nth.... "

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FINDING A JOB: BPN'S

By now your players are likely to be gaining a bit in experience and insight (or they are piling up in the morgue), so it's about time we detailed a few bizarre BPN's, just to stop them getting bored....

Ever wondered about off-world....

And just who actually *wants* a Silver BPN....

SCL : 7

Contact Department Of: Expedition

Training Package Recommended: Strike / Investigation / Any

Colour Code: Green

Summary: Operatives required to investigate and retrieve samples from mining works in the Stone Rim colonies. Off-world regulations apply, relevant permits must be sought. Contact Jeremiah Cross on 102 347 020158 for full briefing.

Coverage: Station Analysis

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 2000 c

Payment: Per Squad

The Department of Expedition do not usually advertise their BPN's, they rely on word of mouth and contact through Operatives agents. In this case there is no choice, rumours of the discoveries in the Stone Rim colonies have been circulating for weeks now, and it is time to be seen to be doing something about it.

The colonies are based around the activities of the Core Mining Corporation (CMC), they hold the lions share of the licensing and mining in the colonies. Their headquarters in the colonies is on the small satellite moon of Kleo which orbits the largest planet in the colony system, Zeion. Zeion is mined for metal ores and minerals such as granite, it is the centre of the Stone Rim colonies, all other bases and mines being situated on one of it's seven tiny moons or in the asteroid belt that surrounds it.

Recently the mining operations on Ju, one of the larger moons of Zeion, have been interrupted by a series of freak accidents and 'weather' conditions. Ju has no atmosphere and is basically a barren lump of rock, all of the mining takes place underground.

All of the larger digging machines have been reporting seismic disturbances, three have been lost in quakes and two have been destroyed when freak 'wind' have been released through digging into 'pockets' in the rock. The winds swept the tunnels clean, tearing apart men and machines in gusts of up to 500kph.

Survey teams have found nothing to indicate the existence of these pockets, or any evidence of faults in the rock that might explain the quakes. But that's not all....

Recently (three weeks ago) survey team nine found what appeared to be the remnants of some kind of underground generator. Aeons old, obviously from the Conflict War time, it seemed to be still active. Survey team nine were all killed in a shuttle accident two days after their discovery, the only people they had managed to speak to before they were killed were two executives from CMC, one of whom immediately contacted SLA Industries Head office, the other of whom has not been seen since.

The Department of Expedition need to assess the situation, and in conjunction with other departments (notably Environment and Archaeology), needs to determine the appropriate course of action.

The mine where the discoveries were made has been shut down. The Operatives are to visit the mine, interview the CMC executive who contacted Head Office, locate the other Executive and bring back a full report, including video and instrument readings, from the site.

The Operatives should be made to apply for all relevant permits, for travel, off-world vaccination, insurance, psycho analysis, etc. The passage on the FoldShip will take a short time, distance being no object to these ethereal behemoths.

The Stone Rim colonies are a collection of mining stations and shanty towns, each connected by a sub space shuttle, and each having it's own unique character and feel. All buildings are owned by one of the mining corporations, CMC being the most common (powerful). SLA Industries has offices in all major settlements to monitor production, quotas, permits and the like.

The long arm of SLA Industries reaches into all areas of the colonies, with most places seeming like an extension of

Downtown. All towns are domed, all mining areas are exposed requiring the use of a vac-suit. Vac Suit is a Dexterity based skill. Most standard suits are unarmoured and unpowered, making them cumbersome and dangerous. Superior suits are both armoured (whether lightly or otherwise) and powered, anyone who uses powered armour will be instantly familiar with superior vac-suits.

BPN Detail & Background

Back in the dim mists of time, namely 103 SD., the Research and Development Division of Chronos Laboratories was taking the first tentative steps towards an analogue computer that was to revolutionise the world of Progress. They quickly discovered that their prototypes required a massive amount of power, and operations were soon shipped off-world, to the little known or explored Stone Rim colonies. It was here they were to experiment with many types of computer processing, including the first organic computers. Initially things went badly, with little or no progress being made in either area. But in 109 SD. there was a breakthrough. Chronos discovered that the basic brain tissue from Ebons was suitable for growth into organic 'boards', with each Ebon brain being capable of sustaining a truly gigantic processing unit. Tests continued.

In 110 SD. the project was shut down after what has become known as the 'Intruder Incident'. Details are sketchy, but it seems Intruder did not approve of the project, and personally saw to it's 'termination'.

The machine that has been uncovered on Ju is the last remaining piece from the Chronos days. It is a huge bio-computer, with the brain of an Ebon at it's core. The computer is part machine, part Ebon and part 'ghost'.

The disturbances come from the computers use of folding knowledge. It is probing the limits of it's power, searching for a way to import enough energy to start up all of it's functions. Recently it has attracted the attentions of the White, as the Ebon's

knowledge of Flux is getting to a stage where he is close to the Change.

The Executive from CMC that has gone missing, is trying to get together a number of powerful individuals from different corporations in order to exploit the super computer. He has no knowledge of the Ebon connection or what he is really dealing with (he believes it is alien, and pre-Conflict Wars).

Running the BPN

Once the Operatives get there and do a little digging, they may well find the location of the computer. But this should only be after they have been hampered by the missing CMC executive and his contacts, they may even be lead to a false site in order to keep the computer secret.

Once the Operatives gather what evidence they think they should, they will report back to the Dept. Expedition and that will be that.

If they try to liberate the Ebon part of the computer, either by destroying it or contacting other Necanthropes, they will bring themselves to the attention of Head Office.

If the Operatives do particularly well, they may uncover the CMC Executives conspiracy for example, they will be rewarded by the head of Expedition, Mr. Joshua Makepiece. He has it within his power to grant the Operatives passes to whatever destination they wish, either on leave, or as part of a BPN....

SCL : 6

Contact Department Of: Head Office

Training Package Recommended: Any

Colour Code: Silver

Summary: Operatives are to set up a 'terrorist' cell, in direct competition to DarkNight. Covert operation in Downtown (and other areas), prolonged undercover work will be necessary.

Coverage: Station Analysis

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 1000 c

Payment: Per Operative

Head Office contacts the Operatives and invited them to pay them a visit. Mr. Slayer

himself has chosen them for this assignment. Although they are 'invited' to attend, no invitation from Head Office has ever been refused.

The interview at Head Office will be brief and non-informative, the Operatives will be given a disk to take away and study. It contains details of DarkNight organisation and Black Order briefings. The squad are to set up a subversive terrorist cell, operating from Mort, they are to attack SLA targets as well as DarkNight and Black Order.

The squad will be under the direction of Head Office, no other department within SLA Industries will know of their existence. To all intents and purposes they will become the enemy, being hunted by both Internal Affairs and Cloak, Head Office can offer them no assistance and will only contact them when their mission is to be terminated.

The SLA targets the squad are to attack will be assigned via secret transmissions on Gore Zone, the disk the Operatives have will enable them to de-code the transmissions.

The Operatives will be given funding to the tune of five thousand credits, a one off payment which they are to use as they see fit in setting up their 'cell'.

Head Office will give the Operatives a free hand in the establishing and running of the unit, their only involvement will be in the naming of targets and deciding when to shut the cell down.

BPN Detail & Background

Obviously the Operatives will not want a lot to do with this one. But Head Office can be very persuasive, and they should end up being as co-operative as they can.

The idea behind the BPN is to see how easy it is to set up a cell and to establish contacts with the underworld 'fixers' for the other main terrorist groups. Both DarkNight and Black Order will be hostile towards the Operatives, attacking them at every opportunity.

The SLA targets assigned for the cell by Head Office will always be other Operatives or SLA installations such as offices or storage dumps. A pattern will develop fairly quickly, with targets being assigned on a weekly basis. The Operatives will have a certain amount of freedom to launch their own attacks against other subversives when ever the opportunity presents itself.

There is a better than average chance that Cloak Division will manage to track the Operatives down, this could prove fatal. In this eventuality, the Operatives are fully expected to defend themselves, as they are against any SLA personnel that try to shut them down.

Once Head Office has got the information it wants, the Operatives will be recalled and de-briefed. Cloak and Internal Affairs will be brought up to speed and the Operatives should be free to carry on with their lives.

During their time as terrorists, the Operatives may start to come into contact with some of the more noble subversives who actually believe in what they are doing. They will obviously uncover some dark secrets that they would rather forget, and they may go too far in their attacks on SLA personnel and property. All of these eventualities will be overlooked if they have managed to uncover enough DarkNight, Black Order and other terrorist cells. If they have faired miserably in their efforts, they may well be dumped by Head Office, being declared as fair game to Cloak, even being set up on their next assignment.

This BPN is a good way to get the Operatives away from SLA (if you want to), and it may also wet their appetites for digging deeper into the companies past.

At the beginning of the BPN you may want to let the Operatives meet the Man Himself. This will give you a chance to develop Slayer, letting you put across whatever persona you feel appropriate for this God like being who is at the heart of the world of Progress.

If your Operatives really, really do not want this assignment you may find it best to let them off the hook. If their hearts are not in it they will not last a week. On the other hand, now they know this sort of thing goes on, is SLA going to let them walk away....

Running the Silver will force you to develop your own ideas about DarkNight, placing them in the Big Picture with SLA. Once you have done this, deciding on the exact make up and structure of DarkNight, your Operatives will have information unique in the world of Progress.

How you take it from here is up to you. But be warned, it could be the start of some drastic changes in your universe.

Supposing the players decide they like being outside of SLA, suppose they decide that DarkNight do, in fact, have a bloody good reason to want to bring about the fall of SLA.

It could shift the position of SLA within your game universe to one of 'the enemy'.

If you decide to run the Silver, drop us a line to let us know how it went, and how SLA came out....

EQUIPMENT

FINANCE CHIP UPGRADE

The Finance Chip was one of SLA's greatest innovations, as well as being the first real example of biogenetics, it allows SLA to develop truly loyal Operatives.

It is astounding that an upgrade to the basic design has not been developed sooner.

The upgrade has been developed by a relatively new company, Zero Engineering. Zero was formed just eight months ago by two executives from Phantom Pregnancy, who worked closely with a design team from Tangential Systems.

The upgrade utilises breakthroughs in the now infamous 'nano-chip' originally developed by Karma.

The Finance Chip Upgrade can only be made to an existing, functioning Finance

Chip. Upgrades require a permit from Internal Affairs, who log the upgrade and monitor all progress from the time of the upgrade's fitting. Monitoring time increases from 80% to 98%.

Game System Stuff

The Finance Chip Upgrade costs the Operative a down payment of 100c and a monthly 'on-line' fee of 20c, failure to meet the monthly payment results in the Finance Chip being switched off, leaving only monitoring facilities for Internal on line.

The upgrade operation lasts half an hour, with a recovery time of two hours, during which time the operative requires complete rest. The operation has a 97% success rate, failure means the chip rejects the upgrade and the brain, in turn, rejects the chip, resulting in massive tumor and intrusion damage, which inevitably leads to death.

Operatives fitted with the upgrade have access to three extra services:

1) Satellite positioning system anywhere on Mort, accurate to within six meters and effective anywhere above ground and up to thirty meters below.

2) Incoming transmission, either through Internal via a 'message' service, or direct through personal communicator.

3) Body functions monitored by paramedic company of choice, or direct to Central Retrieval at SLA.

Each of the three services is self explanatory. The positioning allows the Operative to read data via a laptop or Track optics scanner. Incoming transmissions are limited to low frequency messages of ten second duration with a break of twenty seconds in between transmissions. The body function monitoring can of course be linked to any LAD contract the Operative has, acting as a back-up to their heart monitor.

Operatives fitted with the upgrade have a small chance of developing severe migraines, if this occurs work out as per disadvantage.

DEFENCE SYSTEM SHIELDS

Defense Systems Inc. are following up the success of their 'blocker' range with a 'shield' range to suit all needs.

The Defense Systems Shield is made from high pressure molded ceramic plates, making it light and tough, able to withstand some small arms and nearly all physical assault weapons.

The shields are available from all stockists of Defense Systems Inc. products, as well as from many Power projects outlets.

In appearance the shields are like slim kites that strap on to the forearm of the wearer, many can be connected to a Power Glove, though each has it's own mini-power pack.

The shields come in all colours and may be customised the same as any other armour. Defense systems are currently offering a 15% discount voucher with each shield, redeemable with Phase inc. for that special custom job.

Game System Stuff

The shield is fitted to the forearm, either left or right, of the wearer. It may not be worn under or over armour above PP644 Blocker class.

The shields come in varying diameters ranging from 60cm to 1.5m. The smaller shields (60cm to 90cm) take three seconds to fully deploy, the larger shields take up to six seconds.

The battery pack for the shield has a fixed number of uses, after which it will not function. Power packs come in two grades, Regular and Super. Regular packs have fifty charges in them, Super have eighty. Power packs are not rechargeable. All shields come with one free regular pack.

If the shield is worn and wired to a Power glove, such as Jolt or Gash, the shield may be operated using their power supply, draining it of 02% per use.

| Size | Cost | B/M Cost |
|------------------|------|----------|
| Small (60-90cm) | 50c | 500u |
| Med. (90-120cm) | 80c | 900u |
| Large (1.2-1.5m) | 200c | 4,000u |

| Size | P.V. | I.D. |
|------|------|------|
| | | |

| | | |
|------------------|---|----|
| Small (60-90cm) | 3 | 8 |
| Med. (90-120cm) | 4 | 14 |
| Large (1.2-1.5m) | 6 | 20 |

| Size | Weight | Mod. |
|------------------|--------|---------|
| Small (60-90cm) | 1.5kg | |
| Med. (90-120cm) | 2kg | |
| Large (1.2-1.5m) | 3kg | -1 Dex. |

The Dex. Modifier for the large shield applies only when it is deployed.

Obviously, the area the Operative is able to protect with the shield will depend upon the shield's size.

Game Use

The shields have many uses within a game, not only for Operatives but for Shivers and 'body guard' types. Wraith Raiders seem uncommonly fond of them, ducking behind them as they sprint for cover has become standard practice.

Note on Upgrades & Modifications.

It's bound to happen isn't it. Introduce a new piece of equipment and they want to start mucking about with it. Will it take an ECM capability? Can you fit a Vibro disc thrower at it's centre? Can it be charged to deliver a shock, like the Hotline?

I don't know.

Players.... who needs 'em.

'RELIC' ARMOUR

Relic Armour comes from War Worlds, dug from the silos and long forgotten armouries of companies fighting a losing battle against SLA on these desolate, obliterated, torn and twisted worlds of endless conflict. SLA Industries granted War World veterans the right to keep armour and weapons from their tours on such places as Dante, Cross and Hed. Once the Ex-War Criminals began their grisly crusades on Mort, SLA put an end to this practice. But somehow War World hardware still keeps finding it's way to Mort.

Dante has been engulfed in the flames of ceaseless conflict for over five hundred years. In 407 SD., Killa Chassis, a SLA subsidiary, produced their finest, and most deadly armour, the MkIII 'Sinner' suit. A

year later they had gone rogue, joining the ever growing ranks of soft companies snapping at the heels of the SLA colossus. Two years after that, they were completely destroyed, and would have been quickly forgotten were it not for their legacy; the MkII 'Retribution' and the infamous MkIII 'Sinner'.

Game System Stuff

The Retribution and the Sinner were built to fulfill two very different roles. The Retribution was designed to get it's wearer in close, in a hurry. To allow the user to utilise close combat skills and to get out just as fast. The Sinner was a prolonged fire fight suit, built to slog it out in the front lines, or behind lines on deep drops in to hostile territory (not that there is any 'friendly' territory left on Dante).

Listed are brief descriptions for each armour type, as well as it's performance characteristics.

Retribution

The Retribution is designed to intimidate and to hurt. It looks like an alien creature evolved to cause pain and deliver death through close, physical violence. It is awash with blades and saws, covered with telescoping spikes and slashing edges.

The retribution was constructed from Killa Chassis custom material; steel grade plastics. A modular design means the suit is easy and quick to repair with sections 'snap-bolting' on to the mineral steel skeleton.

The Retribution was designed to augment the users Dexterity and Close Combat skills, it enhances movement and has a number of 'smart', sensor driven blade weapons, as well as an independent fire system in the Mite, a rail mounted mini gun that traverses from hip to spine over the shoulder.

The on board computer of the Retribution is used to fulfill a support role, the user drives all primary systems with their movement and voice command, some muscle reflex commands allow the user to operate the suit and still use the voice com. link.

The Retribution was often used in a recon. role, extending it's range with the addition of a limited use 'flight' pack. The flight pack was back mounted and made the Mite inoperable, the pack could be jettisoned at any time from inside the suit and had it's own power supply.

| | | |
|--------|----------|----|
| Cost | BM Cost | PV |
| 4,000c | 100,000u | 16 |

| | | | | |
|----|------|-------|------|------|
| ID | Head | Torso | Arms | Legs |
| | 30 | 100 | 80 | 90 |

Modifiers

+2 DEX While wearing the suit.

Sinner

The Sinner suit looks squat and square, ungraceful and cumbersome, more like a tank than a personal armour unit. Flat sloping plates and sealed weapons systems characterise it's appearance.

The Sinner was constructed from compressed ceramics over honeycombed shell filled with mineral plastic. The suit has unbelievable shock dispersment characteristics.

The Sinner utilises a powered exo-skeleton system, computer controlled and driven by the users movement. It has a number of on board 'smart' weapons systems that may be deployed independently, the infamous 'fire first' systems, and a system of additional 'shields' that are sensor driven to give extra protection to areas of particularly heavy ballistic attention.

| | | |
|--------|----------|----|
| Cost | BM Cost | PV |
| 6,000c | 250,000u | 20 |

| | | | | |
|----|------|-------|------|------|
| ID | Head | Torso | Arms | Legs |
| | 50 | 120 | 90 | 100 |

Modifiers

+3 STR While wearing the suit.

The Retribution may be fitted with a Fusion Turbine to allow for a limited 'flight' and 'jump' capability. Flight is at 20km/h, ceiling of 90m, in 10 second bursts, with a cool down period of 10 seconds between each burst. Jump involves a leap of 20m in

any direction, cool down of 2 seconds between jumps.

Retribution 'smart' close combat weapons may either be forearm mounted 'gash' blades or forearm and thigh mounted chain scythes. Gash blades are deployed independently during close combat, controlled by sensors. The chain scythes are sensor driven and may be set for any range from 20cm to 1m, they will strike anything in their range.

| Weapon | DMG | PEN | AD |
|---------------|-----|-----|----|
| Gash Blades | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Chain Scythes | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Sensor driven weapons may strike once per phase, regardless of users action phases.

The Mite mini-gun may either be activated by the Pandora helmet's sensor, used as a 'smart' weapon, or it may be set to 'automatic' using it's own sensory devices. If linked to the Pandora, it may be fired independently (as a sensor driven weapon) twice per combat round. If set to automatic, it may fire in phases 1,3 and 5. The Pandora allows the wearer to select specific targets, automatic selects any targets in a range of 20m. The firing arc of the Mite is 360° with a target acquisition rate of one per phase, the Mite fires at a base 'skill level' of 6 and has the following stats.

| Weapon | CAL | CLIP | ROF | Range |
|--------|-----|------|-----|-------|
| Mite | 8mm | 100 | 3 | 10m |

The Sinner suit has the following on board weapons, which are fired independently using a sensor driven computer management fire program.

| Weapon | CAL | CLIP | ROF | Range |
|---------|------|------|-----|-------|
| Polly | 10mm | 60 | 1/3 | 15m |
| Zip Gun | 8mm | 80 | 2 | 10m |

The Polly was shoulder mounted, usually on the right shoulder and could traverse from chest to shoulder blade, swivel mounted to cover a spherical firing arc. The Zip Gun was located in the small of the back on a simple universal joint, covering the back of the suits wearer. Both weapons could be fired by the wearer using the

Pandora to target, or they could be pre set to engage all targets using their own sensory systems.

The Polly and the Zip Gun fire in all phases and have a 'skill level' of 5, modified by the Pandora's sensory 'locking' acquisition system.

Notes on Weapons Auto-sensors

If either the Mite, Polly or Zip Gun are set to automatic they will use their own sensor devices. These are programmed to detect up to three hundred enemy profiles, but for speed were often cut down to motion detection. Motion detection means what it says, if it moves, detect it and shoot it. Not very discriminating, but quite effective.

Both suits utilise the 'Pandora' helmet, unique to Killa Chassis. The Pandora is much like the modern day scout helmet in its construction, it can be set for HUD or for direct retinal projection. The Pandora can fight blind via sensor and cam links, it has a full set of filters and audio enhancers and transmitters, as well as dazzle filters and IR/UV scope. The Pandora also has it's own power supply, kicking in during a suit power failure or when the suit reaches 40% power capacity.

Skills Required To Use The Retribution And Sinner

Both of Killa Chassis suits were designed for use by War World troops, each has it's unique features and it's role on the battlefield, each requires differing skills to use.

The Retribution must have a user with a DEX of 11+ and a CONC of 10+, other wise the suit will simply act as ballistic armour and the wearer will gain none of it's unique benefits. To utilise the on board Gash or Chain Scythe weapons, the retribution user must have a relevant skill of 5+, either Martial Arts, Blade 1H, Unarmed Combat or Gymnastics.

The Sinner is more forgiving, requiring only a CONC of 10+ to handle the Pandora's bombardment of information to

the senses. To utilise the 'smart' weapons such as the Polly and the Zip Gun, the user must have Support at 5+, unless the weapons are used on fully automatic sensors, then no skill is required.

Paying The Piper

Using any of the Killa Chasis suits has it's price.

The company used a system of subliminal suggestion to keep it's users happy and combat effective. SLA was largely unaware of this practice, and when it counted Killa Chasis as an ally, did not care too much.

Users of the suits have their subconscious soothed by encouraging messages, designed to make them feel safe and secure, while at the same time instilling in them a deep hatred for their traditional enemies: DarkNight and Thresher.

The subliminal conditioning can bring on the psychoses of Sociopathy, Delusion, Split Personality, Paranoia and Schizophrenia. You should decide which one of these would most likely occur in the user of the suit. Each time the user enters the suit (duration of three hours minimum) they must roll to see if they have a subliminal psychoses. roll once per day the suit is used. A CONC roll must be made with a -1 modifier for each hour they have spent in the suit. Success means the user feels a sense of well being, failure means they gain one rank in the relevant psychoses. Only one rank may be gained every 24 hours.

If the user entering the suit already has a psychoses, so much the better. The same roll is made, with same duration modifiers. Success means the same thing, failure means they gain a rank in their most advanced psychoses.

A very competent (Electrical Repair 6+) engineer would be able to disable the suits subliminal conditioning, once the user is aware it is there. Of course, once the user is aware of it's presence, they may not want it turned off.

Final Note

Now we know it's not about guns, or powerful, spiky, chaos, doom stuff. Relic Armour is there to balance out such

monstrosities as ex-War Criminals, and to give the higher level Operatives something to play with.

A Wraith Raider in retribution.... now that is something worth watching on GoreZone....

SOFT COMPANIES

JINX

Company slogan: "Wanna bet?"

Jinx are an old thorn in the side of SLA Industries, they have been established for over three years now, having a quasi-legal status they have proved almost impossible to monitor (or shut down).

Jinx pedal the relief of frustration and the promise of a brighter future, all this can be yours if you support Jinx.

Jinx run the largest gambling syndication on Mort, with business interests as diverse as numbers running to lotteries.

Nearly all sporting or street fighting events can be bet on through Jinx, they have reps. at all major events and seem to turn up at the most opportune moment during fights and 'situations' involving Operatives.

Jinx will give odds and take bets on anything.

Originally established as a strictly illegal, street based gambling syndicate, they used to operate exclusively in Downtown, but with the recent loopholes in corporate law being brought to light by the Dream Win Lottery Syndicate, they have registered with Head Office, and now operate (slightly) within the law. Until SLA Industries can muster a legitimate take over bid through Stocks and Shares Dept., Jinx are to be treated as a Soft Company.

The most successful of Jinx products, and what brings in over 75% of their income, are their KilcardsTM. These little plastic cards, about the same size as a credit card, are sold for 10u each, with a limit of ten per person. Each KilcardTM is registered with central office and each bears a randomly generated ten digit number. Once a week Jinx select a number from their computer,

and the owner of that card is credited with 100,000 u. Each Kilcard™ is valid for two weeks. The Kilcard also carries a holographic picture of one of the circuits meanest Operatives, and each card may be engraved with a picture of your choice from the Gorezone™ top twenty. If your pictured Contract Killer is killed during the two week period the Kilcard™ is valid, you receive a refund of one to twenty u's depending upon their position in the top twenty (1 for 20, 20 for the number 1).

Game System Stuff

Jinx are a totally independent company, with thirty five 'shareholders', effectively financial backers. Their identity is secret, though the chairman is known to be Marcus DeWinter, one time member of the Klute Mining Corporation. Klute went bankrupt a year ago, with all operations being shut down and staff laid off, there were rumours of embezzlement involving directors, but nothing was made public.

Jinx employees number anywhere around the two hundred mark, and they vary from street conmen, to shop owners and 'legitimate' agents that work within the stock market. Jinx also runs its own chain of betting shops and gambling halls, often sponsoring sporting events or 'street racing'. As Jinx is registered with head Office, it's accounts are available for public scrutiny, these show a quarterly turnover of eight million credits, which is way below what the company actually makes.

The heads of Jinx, DeWinter and his close associates, are filtering off funds and investing in SLA subsidiaries.

All of Jinx operations are carefully kept within the law, and none of their employees is allowed to jeopardise the business.

Jinx have their own security staff, known throughout Mort as 'Grizzlies'. Often highly trained, and usually armed, they have the full backing of the companies legal department, as well as access to good quality communications equipment.

Jinx are fiercely independent and will purge their own ranks of any SLA or DarkNight infiltrators.

SLA Industries will give Jinx room to breath in the hope that they will hang

themselves, or that DarkNight will move in and shut them down.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Chapter saying: "Keep the faith".

Chapter Seven are essentially a Shaktar fundamentalist group who believe the Shaktar race is being deceived by their priests and elders. They have been in existence for over six hundred years, but are only now taking their campaign of violence out in to the World of Progress. They follow their own Honour Code, which is based on the Shaktar code, but varies in several fundamental ways:

1) - Honour

Uphold the honour of the Shaktar gods.

Uphold the honour of the Shaktar race.

Respect the true warriors of your race.

2) - Family

Respect your parents, they gave you life. You must be prepared to return it at their demand.

3) - Friends

Accept as friends only those to whom you owe a debt of honour.

4) - Truth

Never lie to anyone worthy of your respect.

5) - Faith

Complete any task you undertake.

Act to the best of your ability.

6) - Loyalty

Obey anyone you accept as a superior.

Act as an ambassador of the gods at all times.

7) - Purity

Uphold the purity of the Shaktar race.

Purify all sacred places.

Members of Chapter Seven that are found guilty by their peers of breaking the Code are usually expelled from the Chapter, or in extreme cases, such as betrayal of a superior, they are executed by the Chapter Seven assassins, the Kya'h Sy, known to humans as the Blood Killers. The most well known assassination by the Kya'h Sy, took place on Mort in the winter of 900 SD, when a Shaktar Contract Killer known as Razorhead was blown up live on GoreZone's 'Downtown Reign' slot.

The basis for Chapter Seven's disagreement with the Shaktar priests, from all of the tribes, is that the Shaktar Book of All has been corrupted.

Chapter Seven believe that when the Thy-F Dkrt Swlqjcn was handed to the first Shaktar priests, it was done so through Shahantian, and that the god placed things in the Book that were sacred to all Shaktar. Chapter Seven believe there is a chapter missing from the book, and that chapter seven itself is incomplete.

Elders from the Shahanti clan, the first Shahantian tribe, took the original copy of the book and hid it. As the years passed, the knowledge of the books' whereabouts faded, with many false rumours being spread by the clan itself to aid in the hiding of the Thy-F Dkrt Swlqjcn. The priests of the Shahanti clan made two copies of the original book, which they used to teach the other Shaktar the wisdom of the gods, and to recount the birth of the Shaktar as a noble race.

The two copies of the book differed in two fundamental ways. In the first, the end of chapter seven had been changed, so that Shahantian's words as he departed to the heavens were; "keep the faith." In the second, and original text, Shahantian's words were; "keep faith in me, for some day I will return."

Chapter Seven also believe that the first book completely left out (the now mythical) chapter eight, in which the gods each pledged to return should their peoples need them. Chapter eight was also rumoured to contain two poems, written by Shahantian as a form of teaching.

The second book kept all of the original text and was used to teach the tribe that worshipped Doktetcomast, the eighth and darkest god. The priests from the Shahantian tribe called a Great Council, at which they declared the second book a blasphemy as an imperfect copy. All of the seven tribes agreed to abide by the first book, and to banish the peoples of the Doktetcomast to the wilderness. The Doktetcomast tribe fled the central continent, travelling over the Southern Sea, never to be seen or heard from again. Before they left, the priests buried their copy of the book somewhere on Undjcn

mountain, where they believed Shahantian would keep it safe until his return, when they would be called to serve him, having been proved right to keep their faith.

The priest who scribed the second copy of the book is revered by Chapter Seven as a Prophet. Members of Chapter Seven believe the spirit of the priest passes to one of their number every seven years, and remains with them for the whole of the Dr'hjqwn ('seeking') festival. The priests name has not been handed down, and he was executed for heresy by the elders of the Shahanti clan. Chapter Seven refer to him as Tchkar ('root').

In their efforts to find the second copy of the book, which they believe was subsequently removed from Undjcn mountain by the Shahantian clan some two hundred years after it was buried, Chapter Seven are prepared to kill. They obey their own code, which they say is based on the teachings in the lost chapter eight, but they show great contempt for aspects of the 'traditional' Shaktar code, especially the showing of respect to elders. In Chapter Seven the only people who are automatically respected are your parents, everyone else has to earn your respect.

Game System Stuff

Chapter Seven became a terrorist group in 302 SD, when they broke in to a temple of Griedaja and killed the six priests who were worshipping there. They believed the priests were hiding information as to the whereabouts of the book and tortured them for two days before killing them. Since that day, all Shaktar turned against them, killing them on sight, or declaring anyone suspected of being in sympathy with Chapter Seven, Gk'tsh ('without honour') and their land and possessions are confiscated.

In more recent times Chapter Seven have become something of an enigma, with many who think they support the group, especially off world (Kn'nth), but who in fact are not involved with the search for the book. Other dissatisfied Shaktar join Chapter Seven as under cover members, remaining in their positions within Shaktar society and feeding information to their contacts. Most of these 'contacts' are in fact

working for DarkNight, Thresher or SLA Industries. The real core of Chapter Seven remains on Kn'nth and is so secretive as to be utterly invisible. Members of the Chapter Seven clan often do not know the others in their 'cell', those that commit the acts of terrorism and violence against their enemies, seldom realise why they are attacking their targets. The ultimate goal of Chapter Seven is no nearer attainment, for there is no more knowledge now than there ever has been as to the whereabouts of the second book.

SLA Industries believes that the Shahantian clan does in fact know where the book is, though there is nothing to be gained (at the moment) by the recovery of the book. Chapter Seven has been recognised as a 'soft company' and as such all SLA employees are bound to aid in it's destruction.

Chapter Seven sympathisers on Mort have formed several clans and 'cells', each of which is supposed to have a contact on Kn'nth within the original group.

Chapter Seven members tend to be fanatical, though they have a good knowledge of weapons and tactics, so they are not an easy target like some of the other blindly fanatical soft companies on Mort.

There are two distinct classes of member to Chapter Seven, the 'thinker' and the 'doer'. The thinkers are the theorists, the philosophers and the priests. These Shaktar drive the movement, using their knowledge of the Thy-F Dkrt Swlqjcn to aid their search for the second copy of the book. The second kind are those that carry out acts of retribution, vengeance and 'purification', the terrorists.

Usually, targets for terrorist attack are somehow associated with one of the Shaktar Homeworld clans, though anyone considered to have helped one of these clans is 'fair game'.

Most people, Shaktar and human alike, believe that Chapter Seven have lost sight of their original goals, and are simply caught up in a whirlwind of violent beliefs that drive them, and will eventually ensure that they burn themselves out.

Anyone suspected of being a Chapter Seven member is immediately investigated

by Cloak, and usually killed within a week of their uncovering.

Shaktar Operatives must seriously consider the implications of becoming involved with Chapter Seven as it will change their whole life.

Gamesmasters are advised to take great care with Chapter Seven, and to think hard before bringing them into their campaigns.

IS IT ME.... OR IS IT HOT IN HERE?

This was a brief plot outline for a scenario involving the Polarac (this issues beastie). The idea was that a disgruntled engineer had let some loose in the ventilation shafts of a large corporate HQ building, and had then shut the air conditioning down, raising the temperature. The Op's would be called in on a Red to clear out the ventilation system.

DarkNight find out about it and sabotage the buildings power supply.... that kind of thing.... but the file has gone missing....and I'm bugged if I'm typing it in again.

So.

Put it down to a 'glitch' in the pdf-ing of The Big Pictures, something only now available to the faithful few who bought the original hard copy ☺

This issue, 4, was a huge seller, and it has got Chapter Seven and Relic Armour, two of my all time most useful creations.... just ask any of the Players who've fallen to them.

It was puzzling to people who Sarah Harris was, but she hadn't finished with TBP yet.... Alter Ego's are a stubborn bunch.

Max Bantleman, 2001.