

tHE bIG pICTURE

(pURe mOrNInG)

C O N T E N T S

Introduction – Issue thirteen.... twanky goodness in a zany bakers dozen.

I20 – Part Two – Integration Twenty Remnants - The second find.

Lifestyles In SLA – Angus looks at various Operative lifestyles.

Edge Of Darkness – A Cloak sub-division, arming the agents of Slayer.

Never Mind The Pig – TerraConda and Iron Spiders (snakes and spiders.... ew.)

Finding A Job – Two BPN's, a Yellow (sort of) and a Green.

Equipment – Strike Sticks, Spinal drug Dispenser, Smart Visors.

Soft Companies – Hit & Run and Talisman, the mean and the mysterious.

Meet N Greet – Interview with Zulan, known on the street as RainMan.

OK. One more time for the cynics. **tHE bIG pICTURE** is a non profit making fanzine, where the cover price goes to pay for copying and distribution. We pay nothing for contributions, we all do it 'cos we're extremely groovy and hoopy frood SLA nuts. Nightfall Games Ltd. do not endorse the stuff we put in **tHE bIG pICTURE**, and it must be stressed that we are a completely '**unofficial**' fanzine.

All copyrights of stuff used remain with respective authors. We'd like to think that this means something, and that the stuff here-in will not be produced without our knowledge or permission. Nobody minds, just ask is all. (And DON'T photo copy TBP – buy your own copy!)

If you want to contribute; write something. We'll consider most stuff (not poetry or fiction).

Stuff expressed here is seldom the kind of thing that could get anyone in to trouble, but if it is; then it

weren't not us. We know nothing. We were all away at the time and can take no responsibility for anything naughty. The good and great spanky stuff which gets much deserved praise, money and chocolate things is undeniably ours; and we thank you for noticing.

Want to buy something from us? Of course you do! Personal cheques (in sterling only) or P.O.'s made payable to M. Bantleman.

tHE bIG pICTURE could really do with some funky pictures. Any ideas? Know any artist types? We'd be sickeningly grateful for any artwork we can use.... then we can make all the Nightfall artists happy by stop nicking their stuff.... Right.... I'm off.... No really....

e-mail: max@bantleman.demon.co.uk /
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We're off to see the wizard, it's a jolly holiday with Mary, Swordfish! That was yesterdays password, every old sock needs an old shoe, careful you'll have someone's eye out with that.... hhhmmm Louise.

Unless specifically credited to an author, all material in **tHE bIG pICTURE** is written by Max Bantleman. Rock & Roll. Yummy. Nice. ☺

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B a c k C o v e r

You are a part of The Big Picture.
Mr. Slayer watches and waits.
those loyal to SLA, those with style,
those with true passion and fire in their soul:
they will be rewarded.
There is more than mere survival.
There is the truth.

2 0 0 1 – P D F C o n v e r s i o n

*The thirteenth issue of **tHE bIG pICTURE** featured yet more borrowed artwork from the MRB on the cover, with a cool layout and look by Whitt. Written contributions came from Angus McNicholl and Sam Pay.*

Max Bantleman, 2001.

five to one, one in five

Issue 13. Not through luck but judgement. (Is it time to call it a day?)

Like the new layout? It reminds me of something.... can't think what though....

Thanks to Whitt for the layout (slaving over a hot Mac, no thanks, no reward, just painful, unwarranted criticism, he is a brick you know), if you want someone to sue, it's him, completely his idea, nothing to do with us.

(Now all we need is some artwork.... or do we.... looks kind of groovy as it is we think....)

Sales are kind of dropping off, mainly due to our two main outlets in shop type retail form, cutting their orders a bit.

There seems to be a general slow down of people buying in to SLA. Are they all awaiting developments in the 'SLA .2' saga? Who knows?

General apathy, cynicism and lack of support from the sla-l as usual, no news there then.

New karma is going strong, well done Keith, keep up the good work (and the groovy layout - bastard ;)

There seems to be no shortage of SLA related stuff on the web, some sites are annoying (nicking our stuff without permission), while some are real spanky like.

Speaking of SLA resource;

Sam Pay's excellent web-site (The Pythagorean Lair) can be found at: (<http://www.stsm.demon.co.uk>)

Sam does all the work html-ing (whatever the hell that is) of TBP stuff for the TBP e-zine. Much appreciated it is too. Oh yeah, he does all the copying too. And he play-tests some stuff. And he writes a fair bit. Makes a nice cup of tea too....

Speaking of nicking our stuff.... some people apparently photo copy TBP rather than buying it, thanks wankers, why not buy it you tight fisted twats? If you don't think it's worth the cover price, look at the amount of content, then compare it to other 'fanzines' or fan based material.... get a life tossers.

(Luckily it's our fanzine and we can slate whom we like, (especially the gits that photo copy TBP!)

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So, feel free to write to us. Whatever you like, criticism, praise, ideas, articles, stuff, you know, just anything really. Go on. No really, write to us, I dare you.... if you want to see it in TBP; write it, send it to us, and we'll get on it.... So, what's next?

Hopefully we'll be getting the Dante SB and the Hardware guide out. Both written by Andrew H. Langton and originally intended for 'official' release; Nightfall's loss, our gain :)

Then the BPN Directory, with 50 BPN's, some of each colour, ranging in SCL requirement; an SCL 4 Blue.... should be weird. Stomer Sourcebooks, two of 'em, one from John, detailing Hiararkia, one from Max with 'standard' SLA SB stuff.... both very groovy indeed....

And we're helping to distribute Sam Pay's 'ESP Campaign' booklet, which is an indispensable aid to GM's wanting to really scare their jaded players.

A lot of groovy stuff has come and gone since the last TBP, and far too much time has elapsed.

Maybe it's time to call it a day.

13 is pretty good, and all in all it adds up to a considerable resource.

But it gets a wee bit tedious getting no support and shops seem less and less willing to stock anything that isn't going to make them an overnight profit of 300%. There's commercial and there's serving the gaming community. Business is business, but there needs to be some room for 'fan' based material. Surely?

(pURe mOrNInG)

Note: The mention about the layout is due to the fact that Whitt made the interior look exactly the same as the MRB, with font, page headers, the whole malarky.... obviously that doesn't come across in this pdf ☺

And the bit of abuse about people photo copying TBP instead of buying it, may seem over the top.... but I wasn't very happy about it at the time....

Max Bantleman, 2001.

LIFESTYLES IN SLA INDUSTRIES

Written By :
Angus McNicholl

SLA Industries produces and manufactures products of all kinds and designs of any number of purposes. These products' real purpose is not to function as a tin opener or a wall screen or even a firearm it is function as part of a consumers lifestyle.

Life styles are the product of SLA Industries and if a lifestyle requires something to make it work then SLA Industries will produce it.

For the teeming billions who live on Mort, most can not hope to attain a better life style than the one they have: living on SLA welfare and eking out a meager living on the disheveled and garbage strewn streets of Downtown. For those born into the employ of SLA then Suburbia or Uptown will most likely be there play ground.

But the truth is that if anyone wishes to attain a life style and is prepared to work at it, then SLA will provide them with what they most desire, for a price of course. The principle example of this is the life of a SLA Operative. Most have been located by SLA Recruiters operating in Downtown and they have been offered an opportunity to live the lifestyle of the Operative, few refuse, and of those who make it through basic training fewer still survive for very long.

So the most obvious example of lifestyle choice and mobility are the Operatives themselves, but there is a surprising range and variety in the life styles of many Operatives. Some chose to live in Downtown, close to their roots and any family or gang affiliations that they once had. Others seek the neon umbra of Uptown, though most start out in the crowded Suburbia in one of the thousands of Operative flats and accommodations there.

New Operatives begin a period of six month lease on the Suburban property when they arrive from Meny, after the six months is up they must move to new accommodation to make way for the next class of graduates arriving. This means that all starting Operatives begin with the Suburban Middle Lifestyle (see below for details).

Lifestyles Format

Lifestyle Title: Typical lifestyle description...

Rent: Property leases through-out the World of Progress generally last for a term of six months at a time, the rent is the amount of credit that the Operative must part with each month for the term of the lease. Defaulting on a payment can be unpleasant and leaving a property before a lease has expired still makes the Operative liable for all rent for the lease period.

Consumables: This is the amount of credit that the Operative must expend to maintain the lifestyle, spending more or less than indicated will lead to a bad reputation. If spending too little the neighbours start to look down on you, if you spend too much the neighbours begin thinking that you look down on them. Either way a bad reputation will begin to grow that might come back to haunt the character, particularly when Third Eye do a feature on the Operative and go to interview their neighbours.

Special: Any special circumstances that must be considered usually related to crime or acts of misfortune. This should give the GM some kind of idea as to whether or not the Operative can go out and leave his kit behind and still have it there when he gets back. Also what the chances are that some one or something might get in the middle of the night and try to mug or eat him.

Living In Central

Only a few can ever aspire to live in Central. Few even realise that there is housing in Central itself, assuming it to be entirely the playground of the SLA Operatives who dominate the bars and clubs of the area and those few who are blessed enough to have climbed to the very highest ranks of SLA.

Here under the very eyes of Slayer himself and surrounded by the very cogs of progress only the wealthiest, most influential, and most legendary can survive. Security is always high in Central, Shivers police the streets heavily, DarkFinders watch for any signs of subversion from the shadows of the alleys and the Black Chapter ensure the security of the SLA Industries Head Office.

Available Lifestyles In Central

Central Luxury Lifestyle: All the luxuries the World of Progress can offer are yours if you want (and can afford) them. You have an extravagantly furnished penthouse apartment, 3 bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, garage facilities for your vehicles and a rooftop garden. You eat the best foods that Mort has to offer and many of the finest imports are available for you to sample. A small staff of civilians including a housekeeper and a cook services your apartment. The only people who live better than you are the 'legends' of SLA Industries.

Rent: 20,000c+ per month

Consumables: 10,000c - 50,000c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism never occur.

Central High Lifestyle: Your living in a expensively decorated and furnished apartment in one of the few habitation towers that Central has to offer. 3 bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen and garage facilities for your vehicles are at your disposal as is a housekeeping service.

Rent: 5,000c - 10,000c per month

Consumables: 1,000c - 5,000c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism never occur.

Living In Uptown

Uptown is where everyone aspires to live, the flats are spacious and fitted with all the latest amenities, regular Shiver security patrols walk the streets and the rain has yet to pick up the muck and dirt that by the time it enters Downtown has changed it to a sludge. The problem is one of supply and demand, there is a high demand from Operatives and high level Corporate Employees, this in turn means that the cost of living in Uptown is steadily rising in terms of both credit and bureaucracy. Finding all the relevant paperwork is a nightmare and waiting in the queue for an available property can take months.

Available Lifestyles In Uptown

Uptown Luxury Lifestyle: The Operative has a lease on a detached house with 3 bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen and garage

facilities. You eat good food and never need to worry about the security of your premises.

Rent: 2,000c - 10,000c per month

Consumables: 500c - 2,000c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism are rare occurrences.

Uptown High Lifestyle: Uptown semi-detached house with 2 bedrooms, living room, kitchen and garage facilities.

Rent: 1,000c - 2,000c per month

Consumables: 300c - 1,000c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism are rare occurrences.

Uptown Middle Lifestyle: Uptown apartment with bedroom, kitchen, living room and kitchen.

Rent: 500c - 1,500c per month

Consumables: 150c - 500c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism are uncommon occurrences, assaults are rare.

Living In Suburbia

Suburbia is the intermediate between the splendor of Uptown and squalor of Downtown, most medium level SLA Employees live in this zone. For the newly graduated operative, just off the Gauss Train from Meny this will be their first and in many cases last home. Operative accommodation has been constructed here in vast apartment buildings, and the range of available accommodation varies more here than in any other zone. Anything from apartment flats to a full semi-detached house with garden can be found here and security is for the most part good, with regular Shiver policing.

Available Lifestyles In Suburbia

Suburbia High Lifestyle: Suburban flat with bedroom, living room and kitchen.

Rent: 200c - 500c per month

Consumables: 100c - 300c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism are uncommon occurrences, assaults are rare.

Suburbia Middle Lifestyle: Suburban flat with a bedroom and kitchen / living room.

Rent: 100c - 200c per month

Consumables: 100c - 200c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism are uncommon occurrences, assaults are rare.

Suburbia Low Lifestyle: Shared flat living with another Operative own bedroom but shared kitchen / living room.

Rent: 50c - 100c per month

Consumables: 50c - 150c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism are common occurrences, assaults are uncommon.

L i v i n g I n D o w n t o w n

Downtown is divided into two distinct levels, called Upper and Lower. Lower Downtown is actually below the ground level of Mort and is a place only the most desperate would ever want to live. The Upper Downtown is essentially a slum or a ghetto on a planetary scale. Some areas are noticeably worse than others, as a general rule the further you are from the lower levels the more bearable it is. Despite the plague of Serial Killers, psychos and gun toting SLA Operatives who act with seeming impunity (relative to their SCL) there are a lot worse places to live.

Getting a place to live in Downtown is relatively easy for a SLA Operative, all you have to do is fill in all the relevant paperwork and wait for a place to become available. Depending on how close to the top of dung heap you want to live, it can take from a few days to several weeks to get some place suitable. There are two reasons why Operatives consider living in Downtown, the first is because it's cheap, property rental is a fraction of what it is in Uptown. The second is paranoia, the belief that Downtown is so big and so far from Central that Slayer can't see you.

A v a i l a b l e L i f e s t y l e s I n D o w n t o w n

Downtown Middle Lifestyle: You have a lease on a small flat in a crumbling tenement in one of the upper areas of Downtown, the neighbours can be a problem but at least you're above the areas commonly hit by flash floods. Your flat has a bed / living room, if your lucky you have your own toilet otherwise it's a shared facility with the others on your floor.

Rent: 10c - 100c per month

Consumables: 10c - 100c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism are common occurrences, assaults are uncommon.

Downtown Low Lifestyle: You have a tiny flat with rising damp and a variety of unsavoury house guests, loft rats are common as is the infamous downtown tick. The one room where you live has no facilities and is below the danger line for flash floods.

Rent: 10c - 50c per month

Consumables: 10c - 70c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism are common occurrences, assaults are uncommon. Flash floods occur rarely.

Downtown Squatter Lifestyle: You have a pad were you crash at night and a secret hiding place were you can stash your gear.

Rent: none, but may require protection money

Consumables: 10c - 50c per month

Special: Theft and vandalism are everyday occurrences, assaults are common. Flash floods occur rarely.

Downtown Drifter Lifestyle: This lifestyle includes both living homeless or living out of a vehicle on the streets of Downtown.

Rent: none, but may require protection money

Consumables: 10c - 30c per month

Special: All manner of crime occurs on a dally basis. Flash floods occur rarely.

T h e U l t i m a t e N a r c o t i c A n d T h e H a r d e s t H i t

The ultimate spectator sport and the greatest narcotic the World of Progress has ever know: Television.

No matter the channel, no matter the time of day or night, the bloody televised duels fought everyday by SLA Operatives on the mean streets of Mort contain the ultimate hit and the greatest 'high' for the teaming billions seeking respite from the drudgery of their own existence.

Television addiction is not really a problem in the World of Progress, after all if a citizen is at home, in front of the hypnotic glare of the cathode tube then he's not out on the streets working against SLA Industries.

For SLA Operatives, few really get the chance to sit in front of the wall screen longer than an a few hours at a time before the next BPN sees

them face to face with the horrors few Suburban's actually believe exist. For the most part meeting these horrors face to face and eye to eye invalidates any addictive urge to watch the same on the tube. Why bother watching the box when you can do it for real? The Department of Psychology and Psychosis have recorded a small percentage of Operatives who have succumbed none the less often devolving into couch potatoes and ignoring BPN's in favour of the next episode of Captain Contract.

As a general note the Department of Psychology and Psychosis have noted that of those Operatives who do fall into the trap of the neon glow, the vast majority are human. There are no recorded incidents of any Stormer's, of any type, having become afflicted with this obsessive form of behaviour.

New Mental Disadvantage

Television Dependency

The character has developed a psychological dependency based upon his favourite television channel or show. Each level of this disadvantage permits the character 2 extra points to be spent elsewhere. The exact level of the dependence determines how much time the character must spend parked in front of his wall screen. During this time he can do nothing but provide the channel of his affection with his undivided attention. If he is disturbed (fellow squad members talking over his favourite show?) then a violent or psychotic episode is possible, make a COOL roll subtracting the level of his dependency to maintain control. The level of this disadvantage reflects the number of hours the Operative must dedicate to his favourite channel. Again being deprived of his viewing time will require a CONC roll to prevent the dereliction of duty that going in search of the nearest television will cause, subtract the level of the disadvantage and the number of hours its has been since his last gratification, test every hour. Stormer's may not take this disadvantage.

The player should agree with the referee about which channel the character is dependent on, some examples are given below and the level of this disadvantage should match the Dependency rating of the channel.

Dependency In Game

Television works almost exactly like any other drug, it has a chance of addiction based on the number of hours of viewing. There are the effects of Detox. for those who have become addicted and are suffering withdrawal.

The principle difference between chemical addiction and optically induced brain candy is that all addiction rolls are based from the character's COOL not PHYS. Where pharmacologists might talk about doses of a chemical, television comes in hours and the game effects last for the duration of the show plus one hour.

Alien Sex Channel

Game Effects: +2 on any roll that are dictated by lust or that might lead to sexual gratification (beware characters with perversions).

Addiction: -1 COOL per 6 hours (double the penalty if the character has not engaged in sexual activity within the last three days).

Detox. Effects: -1 CONC, -1 COOL

Dependency: 2 hours a day (double the number of required viewing hours if the character has not able to engage in a sexually gratifying act that day).

Gore zone

Game Effects: +4 on any violent close combat activity and -2 CONC

Addiction: -2 COOL per hour

Detox. Effects: -4 CONC, -2 COOL

Dependency: 2 hours per day

Kill zone

Game Effects: +2 on any violent close combat activity and -1 CONC

Addiction: -1 COOL per hour

Detox. Effects: -2 CONC, -1 COOL

Dependency: 3 hours per day

Slaughter House Six

Game Effects: +1 on any violent activity

Addiction: -1 COOL per 4 hours

Detox. Effects: -1 CONC, -2 COOL

Dependency: 4 hours per day

INTEGRATION 20 – SECOND FIND

FINAL CHAPTER

It has long been suspected that the transmission intercepted by the Dark Night cell that formed the basis of the I20 report (TBP10) was not complete.

The experimental version of Vent being used to break in to Third Eye, which caused the backfire and 'caught' the Stygmartyr transmission, redirected the second part of the message as the SLA Third Eye counter-measure kicked in. It seems that Vent is smarter than anyone at SLA has so far discovered.

The second part of the transmission was sent to a DN 'holding' beacon in Suburbia, where it sat on the recording equipment until it was recovered in a routine DN pick up a month later. The DN cell that performed the sweep of the material gathered, immediately sent it to BlackWatch, a DN cell deep in Downtown where the archives are regularly updated and distributed to safer holding areas on the DN network.

During the download, the transmission was intercepted by Tempest who have been raiding DN material for some time now. Tempest released it to thirty pirate broadcast stations and what follows is an unedited version of that broadcast.

Twenty eight of the thirty stations have been closed down, all incurring total fatalities. The two remaining stations have become roving transmitters, working from all over Mort for no more than thirty minutes at a time. 'Fools Eye' is audio only, while 'Future Present' is both audio and visual.

The broadcast comprises four sections, each of which is better understood after digesting the first eight sections from the original break in transmission (TBP 10).

Section 1

Interview between Mr. Slayer and unnamed journalist, suspected to be Hannah Sheer, recently disappeared on Cross while interviewing the Necanthrope Union; Cradle.

The interview is audio only and is poor quality, suggesting light weight maybe even concealed recording equipment. The 'interview' is thought

to have taken place in the elevator at DreadNought, an Uptown club close to Cloack Division's Headquarters.

HS: "What you told me before? It was a lie?"

S: "I never lie. I told you what you needed to hear."

HS: "But it wasn't the truth?"

S: "The truth? You do not need the truth."

HS: "I am not a child...."

S: "Be careful.... my patience is great but not to be tested by you."

HS: "I thought you wanted more people to realise what you are doing. Isn't this about getting people on your side? Helping them to understand?"

S: "No. This about you and your career."

HS: "I don't care about that anymore. I just want to know...."

S: "Do you? Why?"

HS: "Because I feel I'm so close.... I just need a few more pieces of the puzzle."

S: "You cannot know what the truth is. It would mean nothing to you. A puzzle you cannot even see, never mind put together."

HS: "Because I'm not an Ebon? Or a Necanthrope?"

S: "No. Because you are alive."

HS: "Who can know then?"

S: "Those who need to."

HS: "I thought...."

S: "No. You didn't think. You think you have 'rights', and that these include being told the truth."

HS: "I don't have rights?"

S: "Of course not."

HS: "I don't understand. Why have you given me these interviews?"

S: "Given? You have not told me you are taping this...."

HS: "I tape everything, you know that."

S: "Of course."

HS: "Are you going to let me see the remnants?"

S: "There is nothing to see."

HS: "What of our break in? Has that been destroyed?"

S: "Of course not. Nothing is destroyed."

HS: "Do you still want me to write the article? Or am I too going to disappear?"

S: "The article will be written, if not by you then someone else. And it will be released."

HS: "They trust me. I can take it to them, they will broadcast it."

S: "Of course."

HS: "Then I can put an end to them? I hate them, they are so stupid."

S: "Give them the article, make sure they broadcast it, then contact Lure, she will shut them down."

HS: "I'm sorry I'm so jumpy. I just feel I'm walking a fine line here.... I don't want to fall."

S: "Do as I say and you will be fine."

HS: "Of course."

S: "I never forget. You will be well rewarded."

HS: "But not with the truth? Not with what's going on with the Big Picture?"

S: "Of course not."

HS: "(laughs) I'll get on with it then."

Section 2

Video with sound, recorded deep in Downtown after 'clean up' operation. Shows tail end of operation and follow up interview with two Tempest Operatives and a Dark Finder. Footage is 'hidden camera' and sound quality is dismal, pictures remain too dark to get clear identifications of Tempest Op's, though Dark Finder has subsequently been identified as Sil Harr, currently active in operation 'Clear Hed' on the War World of Hed.

Opening shots of blasted landscape, perimeter wall in background, rubble of destroyed tenement block fills screen. In small clearing beneath shattered water tower are two figures in what looks like Relic Armour. Camera approaches two figures who acknowledge camera and slowly walk back in to shadows.

SH: "You are the last. Did you get the footage you need?"

T1: "Yes.... can we go now?"

T2: "It's not that we don't trust you...."

SH: "I understand. But I have a few questions first."

T2: "Questions?"

T1: "What could we tell you?"

SH: "What do you know of Release? Not the standard media trot out, but what do you really know...."

(silence)

SH: "You are safe. If I wanted you dead, you'd be dead. Tell me. What do you know."

T1: "I've been conditioned. I can't know. I can't know...."

T2: "I can tell you what I know, though it can't help you...."

SH: "Let me be the judge of that."

T2: "It's about the 'spark', the capture of the spark of life.... you know, how they 'birth' Stormers, you know, the spark...."

SH: "Rumour and fantasy. Stormers are constructs, they are programmed."

T2: "You wanted to know what I knew."

SH: "I will listen."

T2: "Ever wondered how they could 'program' a complete personality matrix? What makes a Stormer better than a Manchine or a computer? It's the spark."

SH: "And Release lets the spark loose?"

T2: "Release is just that. Release from the prison of the Stormer's cage."

SH: "How? How does it work?"

T2: "I don't know. I'm not a chemist, or a philosopher. I only know what I think I know."

SH: "Tell me."

T2: "You know about Deathwake?"

SH: "What I need to, yes."

T2: "Why do you think they call it that?"

SH: "Time is short."

T2: "Because it places the spark from those dying in the world in to Stormers, it re-awakens their spark, to birth the Stormer."

SH: "So Stormers are really just people who have lived before? Why is it no Stormers have told me about this, you'd think they'd know...."

T2: "Maybe that's the real art of making a Stormer, programming out stuff, not putting it in."

SH: "And that's it. That's what Release is all about?"

T2: "Like I said, I only know what I know. You know more than me."

SH: "I know Stormers have been known to suicide, I know that Release has so far avoided complete analysis by my Dept. chemists, I know that non-Stormers infected have nightmares and develop delusional thought patterns. I know you must be wrong."

T2: "Maybe. Like I said, I don't know what I don't know."

SH: "Do all agents at your level know what's behind the Release agenda?"

T2: (laughs) "I don't know what's behind Release, I think only RedNun knows for sure."

SH: "Have you ever met him?"

T2: "Yeah, we all have. A most unremarkable man. You'd pass him in the street and never know."

SH: (smiles) "I doubt that."

T2: "How close are we to the truth?"

SH: "The truth? You only ever had two chances of knowing the truth; one died when you were born...."

T2: "And the other?"

T1: "Had?"

The camera walks towards the shadows, thermal imaging briefly kicks in, bursts of automatic fire target the camera and it's user, there is a brief flash of two humanoid shapes backing away, then white noise and tape hiss obscure the rising screams that gradually fade to nothing....

Section 3

Audio only. Voiced recording of Wave Lyndsy's last surviving assistant from the Phoenix press room. Obviously recorded while on the move and under great stress, possibly being hunted.

"Fuck it, how did they find me, I'm sick of running. They can't be human, DarkFinders, what do I have to do to get away from them? Wave said they'd be back, he knew they'd never give up.... what was it he said? They had all the time in the world? Wave said they'd never let it go, said they couldn't, not even if they wanted to. Now they're after me.... they've killed Wave and now they're going to kill me.... and for what; this fucking book. I can't even read the bloody thing, it's all written in some kind of code, Ebon maybe.... only Wave's notes give a clue.... and I don't understand them.... how can I? I'm just a fucking printer.... gotta calm down, gotta get it together, make a record Wave said, make sure you have some back up.... well, I don't know if this is gonna count, but here goes anyway.... My name is Matt, Matt Reiman, I was there with Wave from the beginning, from the birth of the Phoenix, to it's end in the ashes of the print shop in that basement. I saw Intruder, saw him kill Wave.... or at least I think I did.... it was so dark, I was scared, there was the smoke and the fumes, the fire was just starting.... I don't know why but I think Wave started it himself.... anyway.... I ran, I waited then I ran. After he left, there was a DarkFinder, I think it was a DarkFinder, it didn't look completely human, and I'm sure it wasn't a Nec, it went in to the smoking ruins, and I'm sure it was laughing.... so I ran, and here I am on the run. I took the only thing Wave seemed to care about

after his wife died; his precious fucking book. He got it from a DarkFinder, said it was a gift, that it was given to him by someone high up, maybe even the man himself, said it would buy his silence. Then he went all crazy, started talking like he could get his wife back.... I didn't understand, still don't, maybe he was finally losing it, going crazy, god knows I would have. Wave told me that the book was security, that it could be used to bargain with, made me swear to check it every night, check the safe, so I did. It was in my print shop when the fire started, Wave must have known, the fire was in his office, where the safe was.... I couldn't write anything down, just looking at the pages makes my head hurt, so I'll read it out.... gotta sit down....

There are just scribbled notes mostly, in Waves thin, pathetic scrawl, can hardly read them.... in the borders, sometimes over-written in the text.... I'll start with the last, strange as it may seem.... in the back cover, he's written "I was a fool, there is nothing I can do, no one must know, the truth will kill...." looks unfinished, like it trailed off in mid sentence, none of the stuff has dates or times on it.... The first one is "I was right, Stormers are the key. And they don't know." There's some more, written in the same language as the book I guess, then a few pages later; "How can you tell someone? How can they believe you? Why did she die? How did she know, what made her see?" I guess he means his wife, I dunno, maybe.... then there's some kind of formulae with "Tempest – Release.... it would work...." then something I can't read, then "RedNun must know too, I must speak with him." There's pages of scribbled mathematical formulae, I think, and stuff in the language, Wave seems to have forgotten himself in this language, maybe I should take the book to an Ebon, like I know any.... what's that! Shit! Gotta move!"

Section 4

Audio only. Recording of 'final' part of interview between Catharsis (Stygmartyr Necanthrope SCL 3) and Janus (Necanthrope Op SCL 5). Exchange seems to take place on the move, as Janus is being moved from his cell by Catharsis. It is known on the street that Janus is currently at large in Cannibal Sector Three. What has become of Catharsis is not known, rumour has it that he is currently on a Fold Ship heading for the Black Stump.

J: "Where are you taking me?"
C: "To a place where you will be safe."
J: "Safe from whom?"
C: "Bitterness seems to resent our taking you back. He has power, even here his Monitors are seeking you out. Do you want them to find you?"
J: "I don't care...."
C: "Have a care Janus! We are close to your point of no return, I will not play games with you for much longer."
J: "Then let me go. I just want it to be over...."
C: "Then you have chosen?"
J: "I have no real choice, not if what you say is true."
C: "It is true. But Slayer doesn't want your forced obedience."
J: "I don't think he cares how he gets obedience as long as he gets it."
C: "If that were true, why are we free to make choices against him?"
J: "Because it doesn't matter. It's all a sham. It all goes back to him in the end."
C: "Then why fight it?"
J: "Because it can never be anything but a lie for me. I have seen...."
C: "We have all seen! Stop acting like a child! Remember the white, we all glimpse the face of the future beneath the shroud of Progress, we all see, we all make a choice, you made yours. Start taking some responsibility for your choice!"
J: "I want to go back to White Earth, to die in the sands, I want to let him kill me."
C: "Do not mention that name again, if you do, I can't help you."
J: "Where are you taking me?"
C: "Cannibal Sector Three."
J: "Why?"
C: "We have a Cathedral there. There you will make your choice. There you will be cleansed."
J: "By who? Who has the power to take away knowledge? Who can undo what has been done? Teeth?"
C: "The Preceptor doesn't care whether you live in eternal torment or are obliterated from the world forever."
J: "Who then?"
C: "You will see. For some reason the Witch wants you alive."
J: "Senti? No! Don't let her near me!!"
C: "This truly is your last chance. I know what you are going through.... don't let the Bitterness win. There lies only destruction. Choose Hope."

J: "You.... you have been...."
C: "Yes."
J: "How can you live! How can you go on with this charade?"
C: "Because I must. How many would you have die to satisfy your craving for death and the truth?"
J: "I seek only my own death, others are free to choose their own fate."
C: "Are they? Were you?"
J: "I am now. I would rather die than submit to the lie He is perpetuating."
C: "We are here. Be respectful to the Witch. She can grant you your wish, and believe me, death is preferable to what she can do if she chooses."
J: "You have been kind to me, thank you."
C: "I have done what I must. I fear I may have failed."
J: "I don't know.... I am so confused, it was once all so clear.... now.... "
C: "Choose."

These Sections are all based on our own version of the 'truth', though it is not the same as Nightfall's, it does not conflict with any of the basic ideas in the writers guidelines / bible. I don't think there will be much more in the way of 'official' truth source material from Nightfall, and they are getting very defensive about who they will 'share' the truth with. So, time to get on with it ourselves (again). There are hints and suggestions, maybe a few direct references to the Nightfall truth in both I20 articles. I hope these bits from I20 have helped some people ☺
(*+enD*+)

refuse / resist – Kaos SD.

EDGE OF DARKNESS

Cloak Division have their own weapons development sub-division: Edge of Darkness.

This secretive, Head Office funded wing of Cloak, produce many of the unique and deadly weapons carried by both Darkfinders and Cloak Operatives.

They are always looking for enterprising Operatives to 'field test' either completed items or elements of weapons.

Edge of Darkness (EOD) is unique in SLA Departments in two ways.

Firstly, it is a non-commercial organisation with no 'budget' or public representation.

Secondly, it has two Department Heads, each of which makes decisions for the whole Department.

EOD reports direct to Alexander Xavier and Head Office. They have very close ties to both Dept. Investigation and Dept. of Expedition.

There are ties to the Black Chapter, but these are largely secretive, with business being conducted at Dept. Head level.

Structure

Rather than being organised like a 'pyramid' the Dept. is organised like a 'target', with the two Dept. Heads as halves of the inner circle.

The next ring is segregated in to three divisions, each with it's own Section Chief.

The outer ring is split in to five sections, each being controlled by a Watcher.

The Dept. Heads are rarely seen, and then mainly only by other SLA Dept. Heads or sub-Heads. On very rare occasions one of them will take a direct interest in an EOD development, and then they may sit in on the evaluation interview for either choosing a test candidate, or reviewing the performance of the item/material.

Department Head: Low.

Low is an SCL 3F Necanthrope.

Low is a 'solo' Necanthrope, with no ties to any known Union. It is rumoured that Low was once a White Earth insurgency Operative.

Department Head: Fanny.

Fanny is an SCL 2D 313 Stormer.

Fanny has kept his name, to challenge the concept of Stormers being stupid or slow witted. Fanny has served a term on Dante and has commanded a division of Ministry of War troops on Hed.

Each of the Sections specialises in an area of development, having it's own labs, technicians, clerical staff and 'field agents'.

Although there is no direct competition between the Sections, each likes to out do the other in successful weapons development.

Section Chief: Mr. Luther Sell.

Mr. Sell is an SCL 4B Human Operative, specialising in ballistics and explosives. His Division has contacts with many other Depts., and he communicates regularly with other SLA Dept. Heads, searching for outlets for his Depts. tests. Luther is the most accessible of the Section Chiefs, as is his Division.

Section Chief: Fracture.

Fracture is an SCL 4E Ebon.

She has been granted special dispensation from Head Office and the Dept. of Ebb, allowing her to have 'wards' against the onset of Necanthropy.

Fracture's division deals exclusively with Karma and Dark Lament, and through a number of select Financiers, the Ebon community of Mort.

Section Chief: Lean Feraw.

Lean is an SCL 4A Wraith Raider. Lean specialises in Blades, his division has close ties to the Dept. of Contract Sector, the Dept. of Psychology & Psychoses and the Ministry of War.

Each of the five sections has the job of placing various 'projects' in to the hands of either testers or other SLA Depts. for trial. It is the sections that have the vast majority of the contact between EOD and the rest of the SLA corporate machine.

Each section employs between three and five thousand people, ranging from clerical, Financier, Street Scout to BPN rep.

Watcher: Hurul Che'Ragh.

Hural is an SCL 5C Wraith Raider.

Watcher: Mr. Francois Schull.

Francois is an SCL 5B Human Operative.

Watcher: Ms. Delia Timms.

Delia is an SCL 5A Human Operative.

Watcher: K'Tchr R'Qn.

K'Tchr is an SCL 5E Shaktar Operative.

Watcher: Mr. Liam Dougal.

Liam is an SCL 6D Frother Operative.

Inter-Action with the WoP

EOD will largely inter-act with other Operatives via 'add-ons' to BPN's or through direct contact from Financiers.

Often the Consolidated Bonus Scheme may have an attachment dependent upon the Squad demonstrating their use of some piece of equipment, and the successful reporting of the use.

All testing is undertaken exclusively for EOD, and all material and data is subject to their sole rights of possession. Operatives failing to return the test objects are usually given one chance to retrieve them, then executed by Cloak agents if they fail....

We have listed three Edge of Darkness development pieces, together with some suggestions for placing them 'in the field' for testing.

Power Rapier - DarkWire

The Power Rapier, known as the DarkWire is designed for use against lightly or un-armoured opponents. The DarkWire uses the technology developed by MJL for their Power Claymore; the oscillating blade, but with a modification so that an outer 'sleeve' hides a sliding/stabbing inner blade which gives the DarkWire it's high PEN and DAM.

Power Rapier - DarkWire (Sword)
DAM; 5, PEN; 8, AD; 2.
Weight 0.5kg, Length 120cm.

In appearance the DarkWire looks like a slim length of metal rod which tapers slightly towards the end. The 'grip' is a SolutionWare hybrid, allowing greater traction and control.

Next Stage Development: The next logical step for the DarkWire is to replace the carbon filament inner blade with a conductive steel-ceramic unit, allowing the DarkWire to be linked to a Power Pack to be used in the same way as a Jolt Glove.

'Punch' Dagger - Katar

Developed specifically for undercover Op's and for Op's who need a 'tuck away' weapon that can be brought to hand in a hurry.

Essentially the blade is a slim triangular unit, attached to the end of an 'H' shaped forearm-fixing mount. Blade length varies from 20cm to 30cm according to user.

The blade is designed to be 'flicked' in to the extended position, either by a sharp downward movement of the hand, or a throwing back of the wrist.

'Punch' Dagger - Katar (street name DarkBlade)
DAM; 4, PEN; 7, AD 2.
Weight: 0.4kg, Length: 20 - 30cm.

Next Stage Development: The Katar is made from a new material compound, known as 'XC81', it is a variant of a Karma by-product produced from the making of Deathsuits. It has so far only been found effective when molded in to shapes with a small mass, as research continues, the material will undoubtedly become more stable, allowing it to be used in both bigger and powered weapons.

FBH Explosive Round

The FBH Explosive round is being developed using a 'new' explosive compound called 'de-stabilised Cehdrite acid', or DCA.

DCA is extremely volatile when exposed to kinetic energy. It appears to be almost inert when faced with energy input through more 'stable' means, such as heating. The conversion of kinetic energy within the DCA produces a massive explosive release, which 'chain reacts' at a base level, causing material around it to invert, or 'implode'. Result; highly effective explosive.

Drawback; DCA is extremely 'twitchy'. It does not like to be shaken about or greatly disturbed in any 'kinetic' fashion. As a result the round has an outer casing of titanium, which offers some cushioning and acts as 'fuel' upon impact.

FBH Explosive Round – (street name 'Boom' or 'Black Hole')

12.7mm Round. (Pistol / Rifle)
PEN: 14/18, DAM: 26/32, AD: 10.
Cost: 35c / 600u.

FBH rounds are made from a semi-organic material (DCA), and so degrade once out of their protective environment (i.e. once put in to a round).

For every week old the round is, there is a 05% chance that it will 'self combust' when used. DCA rounds 'chain react' if chambered in the same weapon, i.e. all rounds go off.

FBH self-destruct if double one is rolled for their use, regardless of age, all damage being to the user.

Next Stage Development: Obviously EOD are looking in to preventing the round from degrading.

It has also been found that DCA has roughly the same properties as Depleted Uranium, though these are only brought out if another substance, Lechddryin, is added during the distillation stage of production. So far, this has not been authorised, but it is a development that EOD would like to progress.

I d e a s F o r G a m e U s e

Working the equipment in to the game is of course, up to you. Whether you want your players running around with Cloak sanctioned hardware is your call.

The best way to get players/squads introduced to EOD is through Financiers or BPN Hall Clerks.

Financiers will always be on the look out for squads they can put forward as suitable 'test subjects', as this gets them brownie points with Cloak.

BPN Hall clerks have all of the squad/Operative information at their fingertips when they try to place the squad on a BPN. They will often simply match Cloak criteria to BPN applications.

No one is forced to take any item offered by EOD, though they do offer substantial financial reward, and the chance to make some seriously useful contacts.

P o w e r R a p i e r

The Operative will be approached and offered a seemingly innocuous Blue, with a proviso of taking the DarkWire with them to field test.

To qualify for the test the Operative must have Blade, 1-H skill.

SCL: 10

Contact: Randolph Jurin, Dept. Environment; 745/113/98-RJ/E.

Training Package Recc.: Any.

Colour: Blue.

Summary: Clearance of section of disused Storm Drain, in order to enable repair. Squad only.

Coverage: Station Analysis.

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 20c per day.

Payment: Per Operative.

SCL Increase: 0.3

Issued By: Dept. of Sanitation.

The squad is needed to accompany a repair crew in to sector 620 in Suburbia. The crew will take five to six days to weld, repair and re-enforce a section of Storm Drain leading from 620 to the lower clearance 'reservoir'.

It is known that the section of underground pipe has become a lair for the Chain Lightning gang.

The Op's will meet with numerous sewer dwellers, including some wildlife and the gang. As a twist the pipe will be put back 'on line' before the squad and the repair crew are clear, sweeping them down to one of the 'reservoir' Downtown sectors.

P u n c h D a g g e r

The squad or Op can be approached by one of the section Financiers, maybe once they have already taken on a 'suitable' BPN from another dept. to be suitable the BPN must involve the potential for either undercover work, or a lot of hand to hand.

The Punch Dagger will be offered for the duration of the BPN, and then only if one of the squad has an 'unarmed' or Blade, 1-H skill of 5+.

F B H E x p l o s i v e R o u n d s

The FBH rounds will be offered for trial by a squad who are either going in to one of the Cannibal Sectors, or have undertaken a BPN where Cloak know the protagonist may well be a War Crim, though they will not reveal this to the Op's.

Preference will be given to a sniper or reconn. type Operative who is known for their use of a 12.7mm weapon.

T h e P a y - o f f

Cloak can pay the Operative in money or 'a favour'. If it's in straight cred's, then the pay off ranges from 1,000c to 3,000c, depending upon

the evidence and information gathered from the 'trial'.

Cloak will almost always insist the field tests are filmed, and if the squad/Op has no means to do this, they will fit a selected Operative with a shoulder mounted vid-cam. Basically the camera is mounted on a KK30 rig, with the user having a laser painter guidance system through their head (eye) unit.

All equipment or material sent out on a field trial must be either returned or documented in it's destruction during the test.

A 'favour' from Cloak can count as a Rank 1 Minor friend: Cloak Division, until used.

NEVER MIND THE PIG

TerraConda

The TerraConda is originally from the Resource World of Thalix, it was brought to Mort by the Dept. of Environment and released in to the sewers. This was before the 'inner secret' of the TerraConda was known. The huge snake eats rats, smaller reptiles and baby Pigs.

The snake, that has 'parasite' within that causes it to 'frenzy', and ultimately die in agony as the parasite breaks free. Parasite produces venom, which host snake ingests via osmosis, it eventually eats away the motor nervous system. If parasite cannot find suitable host, will try to get in to who / what ever is around.

Stats.	Min.	Max.	Norm.
STR	7	15	9
DEX	7	15	9
DIA	1	2	1
CONC	0	1	0
HITS	14	30	18

Slither 2. Climb 1. Swim 3.

Weapon	PEN	DMG	AD
Bite	6	*2	0

*Venomous bite – Neuro Toxin.

SKILLS RANK

Detect	6
Swim	6
Climb	7
Unarmed (Bite)	12

*The Venom acts as a Rank 8 Neuro Toxin. The victim has to make a PHYS roll with a –8 modifier. if they succeed, there is no affect from that particular snakes venom. if they fail, they get –1 per round to their STR and DEX stat. When either of their stats. reach zero, they are paralysed for 10-20 rounds. After this, they take 1 HP per round until they are dead.

The venom of the TerraConda has two known antidotes: Pain Away and the secretions from the Pancreas of the Shadow Monkey. Either of these prevents the hit point damage from being taken, but can not combat the creeping paralysis. if an antidote is administered, after reaching PHYS 0, the victim regains 1 point in each STR and DEX stat. per round, until they are back to normal.

The parasite within the snake takes two years to grow to maturity, then three months to slowly kill the snake and ingest it's nutrients. It looks like a sinuous, thin, metal worm, with silver scales and no apparent eyes, nose or ears. Once the snake is down to 1-6 HP, the parasite will seek to break free. It ruptures the skin, leaping to a new host. Usually, it will wait until the snake approaches some prey, or is close to another snake, it will then 'leap' from the host, hoping to strike and inject it's eggs in to the new host.

It bites with 'skill' 10, successfully injecting the eggs on following roll of 11+. Once it has deposited it's eggs it will break off and seek out a large body of water, where it will live out the remaining year of it's life. It's last year is spent hunting suitable prey for it's remaining eight egg laying sessions, then it dies.

The eggs hatch quickly, within a week of injection, one becomes dominant and seeks out and eats the other eggs. The parasite lives in the larger intestine and stomach. It grows for two years, inflicting sever pain as it does. Then it accelerates to 'break out', burrowing through the hosts flesh for –1 HP and 1 'Wound' per phase, until it has weakened the host enough to break free. There are a few reports of victims

surviving the parasite's break out, but not many (most die from internal bleeding).

IRON SPIDERS

(also known as 'shrieksters')

Expeditionary Shiver's report (Classified SCL 7+):

"They are some form of mutant spider, 12 - 18cm across back (20 - 30cm diameter inc. legs), very hard exo-skeletons, they stun prey by emitting very high frequency shriek (made by plates rubbing at speed on stomach), then they inject acid that reduces prey's innards to fluid to be sucked out through single proboscis (unusually high PEN). Almost 'crab' like shells, they move in jerky bursts, can 'leap' up to 2 meters. The shrieksters are attracted to power cells, and have been known to 'swarm' and suicide on large capacity cells. Escaped Karma experiment?"

Manfred Ulmier, Expeditionary Shiver,
Cannibal Sector Two, Mort 903 SD.

Stats.	Min.	Max.	Norm.
STR	2	4	3
DEX	10	15	12
DIA	0	1	0
CONC	0	2	1
HITS	8	14	10

Walk 2. Sprint 8.

Armour	PV	ID	
Shells	3	HITS	
Weapon	PEN	DMG	AD
Bite	8	*1	0

*Venomous bite – Acidic Fluid.

SKILLS	RANK
Detect	8
Swim	8
Climb	10
Unarmed (Bite)	(equals DEX)

*The Rank of the acid, the more damage it does. Ranks range from 3 – 9, the bigger the spider, the higher the rank.

Each round after the first, the victim needs to make a PHYS roll (as a Skill, Rank of acid as negative modifier) to avoid taking damage. The Rank of acid is also the number of rounds it attacks the victim, each round a PHYS roll is required. After a number of rounds equal to the acid's Rank, it is dissipated within the victims blood stream, becoming harmless.

The 'shrieking' is caused by the rubbing together of plates on their stomach. This creates a high pitched screaming noise. Those within 1m must make a PHYS roll (using the shrieksters STR as a negative modifier), success means they are unaffected, failure means they are stunned for a number of 'phases' equal to 20 minus their PHYS. For every 10 shrieksters shrieking in unison, add 1m to the range and -1 to the PHYS roll, +1 phase to the stun if failed.

Iron Spiders are an escaped Karma experiment. They can live quite happily under water and in all but the most lethal of toxic atmospheres. They are very sociable creatures, gathering in 'hives' of up to a thousand. They do not build webs. They seek out damp, dark places, and are thriving in the sewers and lower levels of Downtown. recent flooding in Suburbia has caused their spread in to the more secure areas of Mort.

The shrieksters are drawn to power supplies. Like a lot of failed Karma experiments, they seem prone to a mass suicide instinct. On occasion, thousands of Iron Spiders have gathered around a power outlet or coupling, swarming all over it, biting and scratching, shrieking and exposing the raw power line. The resulting surge causes them to 'explode', which is messy but essentially harmless. They have caused some major damage in Downtown and a few black outs. Iron Spiders attack Powered Armour, seeking out the power cells.

GETTING A JOB: BPN'S

A Yellow from Sam and a Green.

Sam's 'Creech' BPN has been played and enjoyed by many, though survived by not all of those.... it was successfully adapted as a GenCon '98 Demo Game.

The Green is just plain nasty.

"We're going to need bigger guns.... no really; really, really big fucking guns.... no, bigger than that, I mean big.... really, really big. Don't you get it?"

THE CREECH

Written By : Sam Pay

Sequence Of Events - The BPN

SCL: 9 (Optional)

Contact: Overseer Dixon, Karma (Biogenetics) K987/544-34/DIX.

Training Package Recc.: Strike Squad / I+I / Any.

Colour: Yellow (?)

Summary: Experimental "Beast 001" Stormer variant escaped from Karma Bio- Storage 917 early this morning. Find and retrieve samples of tissue.

Coverage: Station Analysis.

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 450c.

(Bonus for return of symbiotic armour.)

Payment: Per Operative.

SCL Increase: 0.5

Issued By: Station Analysis

The BPN will lead them to the office of Overseer Dixon, a pleasant enough man with slicked-back hair and a nicely furnished office in Karma. Elegant furniture and expensive ornaments should give the players the impression that he is someone important within the Department. He will be all smiles and sweetness for the briefing, and explain the situation, how the Beast 001 variant ("the first of a series, after all, it took 313 to get Stormers right, yes?") has escaped from Bio-storage. Somehow the south wall of its "playpen" has been destroyed, and it has wandered into Downtown. If it becomes clear that returning it intact will be difficult, the Ops are to retrieve samples of its tissue and ensure that it is no longer a problem for Downtown inhabitants.

He will go on to explain the nature of the symbiotic bond between its armour (never mentioning that it is a Deathsuit, just calling it a symbiont), how it is kept in a calmed state, both emotionally and physically, and how returning the Symbiont intact would result in substantial

rewards from the department. Details of the nature of the escape he will refer to the security at the Downtown Bio-storage.

If Ops ask about the history or nature of either the Creature or the Wrap, he will become more distant, as if offended, and try to hurry things along. While most players will cotton onto his being nervous about these subjects, he will try to maintain a semblance of politeness, never faltering in his speech and never raising his voice.

The Bio-storage is supported underneath a main walkway by support struts, but appears to be in the middle of a cradle of wires, pipes and sewers, giving it a very fragile look, almost like a cable-car. The sewers and pipes stretch miles in two directions, to the east rising into the walk above, to the west diving down into the depths of the sector. Below the building is a vast shaft, burrowing deep into Downtown, clearly caused by some falling object, possibly a building, possibly a craft of some kind. Access to the building is via thin fire-exit-style steps, which lead to a heavily-guarded entrance. Once identified, the Ops will be assisted around the building by a Technician; Jones.

Once arrived at the Bio-Storage, several things should become clear to the Ops:

- 1) The Creature is Huge. A good look at it can be got via the security cameras. At least 15 foot tall, it shouldn't be difficult to track.
- 2) The south wall of its "playpen" just dissolved without any apparent force being applied to it. Not explosive, not kinetic, it just looks like the wall got too weak to support its own weight.
- 3) The Creature was clearly bewildered by this sudden escape route. It wandered around for a few minutes, checking to see if this was some trick, before leaping out and upwards through the wall.
- 4) The Creature obviously took to the Sewers, as 30 feet above the destroyed wall is a sewer with an enormous hole torn into it. The claws of the Creature have just cut through the reinforced steel of the sewer wall, and that combined with the 30-foot leap should give players some idea of its power.

With appropriate Forensics, Detect and Tactics rolls (your discretion), it should become clear to players that no-one could ever walk against the flow of the sewer. Once they find out which direction the sewer flows in (from Upper Downtown, to the West, down into the lower levels), they can begin to follow the Creature.

The Pipe is the most obvious way of tracking, as the access tunnels are too small for the Creature to get out of without destroying the walls of the sewer. Trying to keep clean is a physical impossibility, and the Players can trudge for a long time until they come to a split, which could have allowed the Creature to have taken one of 4 different routes. If the players try to check each tunnel (tracking is impossible, they're wading through liquid excrement), discourage them quickly with more turn-offs and dangerous badly-maintained sewers. If you want, go so far as to introduce the Shaktar or Rupture at this stage.

Once players emerge from the sewers, they'll receive a message from a Sewer Maintenance crew, saying they've found the exit, and also pointing out to the players (if they haven't already discovered this) that communications equipment doesn't work within the sewer tunnels. Moving to this exit hole (they'll have to go via a near-by manhole access point), they will hear echoing gunfire. This is Button Man, who has killed the sewer crew, pushed one of them through the hole that the Creature left by, and is now hiding inside the sewer.

Chances are, the players will assume that the killer has fled (there's a 70 foot drop to the street below), leaving Button man to escape, but illustrating his presence.

Once they leave the sewers, as the Creature has done, it becomes a race to catch him up. The Creature will attack and storm through several locations ("Cream Munchies" ice-cream warehouse, Yolonda Heath Walk, Tyrone West Walk, Heaven's Steps secondary school [abandoned], a Joseph Fredrickson Construction Site [abandoned], DT 992 community centre), and the path he is taking is clearly movement straight down and West, towards CS 3. Contradictory information will also begin to appear, signifying Rupture's movement up towards the Creature. The 6th site will be attacked after the 2nd is, and the damage will be quite different, with bodies

decaying at an accelerated rate. Players may tie this in with the destroyed wall at the Bio-Storage.

If the players take too long in predicting where the Creature may end up, or fail to catch him for several hours, then Rupture will meet the Creature, alter him, and send him back up the way he came. The Creature is now unstoppable, and will certainly slaughter the players, or at least cause them to flee, and beg for backup. If they find and deal with the Creature quickly, then Rupture and Button Man will attack them (heavy automatic fire and a demonic walking corpse making bad opponents), and take samples of the Creature in the same way the players do (they have no interest in the Wrap). If you choose to, you can also find all three of them during the alteration. This will undoubtedly have to be winged by the GM (if interrupted, Rupture will be most unhappy, Button Man will then flee).

If the players get the sample, Station Analysis will contact them and demand their own portion of the sample, as the issuers of the BPN, and will make it clear that this request should not be revealed to Dixon.

Dixon will get his DNA and everyone will be happy. But Rupture may remember them, as may Button Man, or the Wrap, or Dixon, or even future versions of the Creature....

Points For GM-ing

1 - Don't rush the thing. Remember that the Creature is very powerful, and rather than creating head-on confrontations, building up the suspense will only enhance the game.

2 - The Creature is not stupid, and may lay traps, lie in wait once the players announce their presence, or even hit and run (like any kind of wall or drop is going to stop it).

3 - Rupture is invincible. The players may notice this, and get concerned. Play up any fears that they might have. Rupture can also attack them with poisons, hallucinogens and other nasty things.

4 - The interaction between Button Man and a Shaktar player could be interesting if they ever meet face-to-face.

5 - The Wrap is communicable with, and if a stand-off emerges, then having the Wrap do interesting things like flashing "Stop" across itself, or having Ebons noticing Ebb abilities that it's using to calm the Creature down may be the best way to create interesting situations. Alternatively, you could just have the Wrap as a functioning Ebon Deathsuit, with abilities and a voice of its own.

Protagonists

Dixon

Dixon has been described by some of his colleagues as; "a piece of slime that crawls around Karma, messing up projects". He is an 'Overseer', a freelance geneticist who ensures that Karma is investing in profitable lines of research, and who "appropriates" those which are being mis-managed. Projects, staff and funds appropriated never see the light of day again, though their labours bear fruit in the most unexpected places.

'The Beast' project is a combination of ideas he has stolen from around the company, and as a result, is his 'Baby'. Dixon guards his baby jealously, and sees that no harm comes to it, furthering it's growth through meetings, presentations and seminars. A true creep in all important aspects of his personality, Dixon will sweet-talk the Operatives in order to preserve his low profile outside the company. This essentially means that until Players start asking the wrong kinds of questions, Dixon will be as helpful as possible. Once the Op's start poking their noses where they're not wanted, Dixon will become quiet and still, rude and unhelpful through his lack of conversation rather than tone of voice.

The Creature

The Creature is.... well, a Creature. Based VERY loosely on the theory of a combat Low-Wave variant. The 'Beast' is what the Karma boys refer to as 'Beast 001'; a nasty Frankenstein's monster of borrowed DNA strands and sloppily-planned mental implants. Flushed with success at their Vevaphon project, the Doppelganger Institute moved on to larger and more promising terrain - the improvement of the Angel variant. This was, plainly, a stupid move. Angel was, and still is, an amoral killer with no regard for humanity or life. He is also

very intelligent, and perhaps potentially the most dangerous individual on Mort.

Applying the Vevaphon DNA to samples taken at the "Birth" of Angel, Beast 001 was created, and very quickly tore a political rift in Karma. Playing around with the DNA of Angel was not seen as a bright move, and when Ernst Strand discovered the project, he demanded the Creature be destroyed.

The designer, and project head, an ambitious young geneticist by the name of Dixon, persuaded him otherwise, and after many lengthy meetings, managed to get the approval he needed to complete the project.

The Creature itself is a highly intelligent 4 year old child, with near limitless physical strength and a healing factor to make even a Vevaphon weep. It feeds off a number of different energy sources, even photosynthesising if necessary. It has few vital organs, the necessary of which (Brain, Heart, Lungs) are stored deep within its massive chest. It is kept at a dormant level of regeneration and aggression by its semi-symbiotic Deathsuit guardian, and if shed of this, will become an unstoppable force of destruction, a tangled mass of bio-blades and sharp protruding bones fuelled and powered by an unreasoning rage.

Long story short; the players are going to have to be creative or lucky to stop the Beast.

Stats (with "Untamed Stats" below) are:

STR: 28
DEX: 20
DIA: 8
CONC: 4
COOL: Oh, please - (15)
CHA: 3
PHYS: 24
KNOW: 6
HITS: 52 (H=17, T=52, A=26, L=26)

Healing regenerates two wounds per round (Phases 2 and 4), 6 hits per round (2 in each Phase 1, 3, 5).

CLAWS: PEN: 8, DAM: 10, AD: 4.

STR: 40
DEX: 26
DIA: 4
CONC: 2
COOL: You're still being stupid - (18)
CHA: 1
PHYS: 33
KNOW: 3

HITS: 73 (H=24, T=73, A=36, L=36)

Healing regenerates three wounds per round (Phases 1, 3, 5), 10 hits per round (two per Phase).

CLAWS: PEN: 12, DAM: 15, AD: 8.

TEETH: PEN: 4, DAM: 6, AD 2.

Elbow/Knee/Back 'Blades': PEN: 6, DAM: 8, AD: 3.

Other than its obvious physical bulk, the image that the players may get (one of a hunched-over, ape-like creature, very similar to a Low-Wave) is probably totally incorrect. The Beast is a very human-looking 10-foot tall monster. Its face is covered by some kind of green mesh, like a veil, which obscure all features except for the rough location of its oversized mouth, and its piercing red eyes. But proportions are humanoid, and if you look carefully at it, you could almost see real expressions of emotion in those cruelly betrayed, malice filled eyes.

(Basis for the design of the Creature is from the comic mini-series, Greg Capullo's 'The Creech', published by Image.)

The Wrap

The Wrap (the 'shroud' of mesh covering the Beast's head and upper neck) is a highly intelligent Deathsuit, one who years ago absorbed the life of its owner when her original body was destroyed. The Deathsuit acts as the armour/protection of its ward, and constantly soothes and suppresses the Creature, holding it's anger and full strength in check.

It manifests itself as a green semi-transparent piece of clothing, which covers much of the Creatures body, including the head.

The Wrap is in a state of symbiosis with the Creature. While its focus is self-preservation, it will not abandon its ward unless there are no other possibilities. Communicating with the Wrap is possible through Communication Ebb abilities (it must be directed at the Wrap itself rather than the Creature in general), but the Wrap knows that there is little or nothing it can do to assist other than pacify the Creature as much as possible and hope that the Op's are in a forgiving mood.

If damaged severely, the Wrap will flee, leaving the creature defenceless but untamed.

The Wrap

PV: 18. ID: H=15 T=60 L=20

Button Man

"Button Man" is a Shaktar with serious mental problems. A former War-World veteran, T'rp Pt'rr returned to Mort and after a brief period of inactivity, re-signed with SLA for Operative Duty, starting at a provisional SCL 7. Shortly after that, his Psychology + Psychoses report revealed that he was suffering from a subtle mental irregularity, and SLA attempted to recall him. By this time, T'rp had already gone underground, fully equipped as a senior SLA Operative. T'rp gains sexual pleasure from using automatic weapons. While he is still technically a Shaktar, with his honour braids intact and a sense of what is right and wrong, he is hypocritical enough to happily slaughter any non-Shaktars who get in his way. He will be loath to engage other Shaktars in combat, using Hotline if forced to. Any Shaktars in the party who have lived on Mort for any length of time may be contacted by their fellows and alerted to the presence of the Shaktar in their area, clearly looking for something. "Button Man" is the name he has been given by Shaktar Society (it's the phonetic of a particularly unpleasant insult in Shaktarian), and at the moment he is either thieving genetic material in order to buy new equipment, or attempting to stop a former acquaintance of his; Rupture.

Rupture (Optional Element)

Rupture is a servant of Bitterness. He is an optional extra in this drama, as his appearance is not really necessary. His objective is to meet with the Creature, dispose of the Wrap which restrains him, infect him with a rather unique drug cocktail and send him back up towards Central. If he succeeds, he'll create an awful lot of trouble and kill quite a number of people indirectly. Rupture has complete control over his disgusting form, and tends to either infect his prey with the diseases ravaging his own body, tear them apart muscle by muscle, bone by bone, or simply terrify them. Let your players pray that he only scares them. He is unkillable, unharmable, the only way of stopping him being to simply crush his body to a liquid, so that all he can do is flow around your feet. Should he succeed in infecting the

Creature, it simply becomes unstoppable for 8 hours, and then dies, releasing a virus which will kill thousands all around it.

“Sure, A Green. Nice change. Sounds really easy. What the hell, we deserve a bit of good luck.”

STORM TIDE RISING

“The recent rise in incidents of Stormers going rogue is to be kept secret. The situation is under control; neither the media nor any of the soft companies have managed to put the pieces together yet. There is still time to put it right. We know there is one organisation behind this, we know where they are operating from, we know how to get to them. All we need now are a squad of know nothing Operatives who can finish the job. Find me such a squad.”

Ripple, SCL 3 Necanthrope, setting up BPN with an Independent Financier, Mort 903 SD.

The squad will be approached by either their regular Financier or an associate of his. The Financier will act like he is doing the squad a favour by letting them have the BPN, making out he has some debt to repay them and this is his ‘thank you’.

BPN: SCL 9 – BPN Number 00234/61993-DE/S-444

Contact: Deputy Department Head Fergus Sharkey, at the Department of the Environment, Sector 360 Headquarters; 3602/122749-F/S-444.

Training Package Required: Must have at least one Scout / I&I, must have some demolitions knowledge.

Colour Code: Green.

Summary: Squad required to escort Dept. Environment demolitions team in to Downtown Sector 684 (adjacent to Cannibal Sector Three). Squad are to protect demolitions team while they carry out demolition of bridge and surrounding buildings.

Coverage: Station Analysis.

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 400c. Plus ‘performance’ bonus (safe return of demolitions crew), 200c.

Payment: Per Operative.

SCL Increase: 0.5

FINDING OUT ABOUT THE BPN

Let the Op’s dig around a bit, if they want, to find out some or all of the following. You may want to add in some of your own ‘bait’ for the genuine taking of the BPN.

ON THE STREET

Word on the street is that the Financier offering the BPN is one of those rare breed; an almost honest Financier. He is well known and pretty much trusted by all those he deals with (which may arouse suspicion in the paranoid). This BPN is unknown, and seems to have no prior history of refusal by other Op’s. Sector 684 is largely disused and is predominantly an old Industrial sector, filled with abandoned factories and storage facilities. Everyone knows that Cannibal Sector Three is mainly ruled by War World Vet’s that are crazy as a loon.

SLA DATA BASE

The Financier is registered and has his employment history, and his numerous successes listed. This BPN, 00234/61993-DE/S-444, is registered to him and has been active for only two days. No other squads are listed as having been enlisted for it.

Deputy Department Head Fergus Sharkey is acting on behalf of the Dept. Environment (the Sponsoring Dept.), and his career CV is available to those of SCL 8 or above. He has had a quiet, unremarkable, though incredibly efficient career in the Dept. He may well make Dept. head in a few years.

Sector 684 is classified as ‘demilitarised’, and has no regular Shiver or Monarch support. It is due for ‘renewal’ by the Dept. of the Environment; clearing the way for either Industrial or Residential development.

FRIENDS / CONTACTS

This seems to be a good BPN, with rumours about the Dept. offering a Sponsorship deal to the successful squad.

Deputy Department Head Fergus Sharkey – The BPN Interview

The Dept. of the Environment (DOE) building where Fergus has his offices is deep in the Suburban sector of 360. The office building is a

tall, graceful three hundred story building, glinting from the polished steel, tinted glass and the incessant rain. The ground floor is full of registration booths, reception desks, waiting areas and elevators. All visitors are expected to book themselves in, then make their own way to the relevant office. All DOE employees (in this office anyway) are incredibly helpful and cheerful; jobs this easy are hard to come by and all ant to keep theirs.

Fergus has a spacious, well equipped and tastefully designed office on floor 201. His secretary is beautiful and efficient, the Op's will not be kept waiting long before she shows them in.

Fergus is a short, thin, immaculately dressed man in his mid-thirties. He wears chic business suits and a permanent smile. he will be friendly, helpful and enthusiastic about the squad taking the BPN, offering them frequent refreshments and constantly praising their records (which he has open on the desk in front of him).

Fergus has the following information available, which the Op's will have to draw out of him through skill use and role playing. If they don't bother with Fergus, he will simply introduce them to the two Demolitions experts and let them brief the squad on the way.

Sector 684 is classified as 'demilitarised' and is due for 'renewal' by the DOE. This means they have to send in demolition and construction crews. The first demolition jobs are to be prioritised by their potential danger to the following construction projects. The squad are to assist the demolitions team in bringing down a massive free-way bridge which spans the 'roof' of the natural cavern where an abandoned chemical factory is going to be cleared and re-built. The Op's have three days to get the demolitions team there, and help them carry out the destruction of the bridge.

The demolition team consists of two people, both of whom are extremely valuable experts in their field, and both of whom must be kept alive at all costs.

If the demolitions team is returned safely, there will be a bonus of 200c per surviving squad Operative.

It is known that DarkNight use the remains of the chemical factory as cover for a Cell which operates in the surrounding area. Recent reports from the Sector also indicate that a group of Savengers are trying to operate a Sweep

through the factory, reclaiming anything useful. It seems that word has spread of the impending re-development and the vultures are gathering for the last pickings.

As soon as the briefing is over (when the Op's have signed for the BPN, including the usual non-disclosure and disclaimer forms) Fergus will bring in the two demolitions experts:

Demolitions / Explosives Package: The Demo Package is a specialised form of training which is not for the faint of heart. It teaches the essential skills of Demolitions and Explosives handling, both for removal and effective use. The fatality rate among trainees is quite high and a lot of Demo Package graduates are already addicted to Slosh, or some other 'calming' drug, before they leave the academy. Operatives trained in Demolitions / Explosives are valuable commodities, and often heavily protected by an experienced squad.

Demolitions (DIA)

Demolitions Disposal (KNOW)

Detect (CONC)

Electronics, Industrial (DIA)

Electronic Locks (DIA)

Mechanics, Industrial (DIA)

Electronics, Repair (KNOW)

Mechanics, Repair (KNOW)

The Operative must also take four ranks of drug addiction, for which they may choose the drug/s, with the only stipulation being that the drug is a relaxant (downer), and for which they receive no extra development points.

Praaw Ch'rew (known as Sneezy), Wraith Raider, SCL 7. 1.9m tall, 70kg weight.

STR: 8, DEX: 13, DIA: 12, CONC: 9, CHA: 8, COOL: 8, PHYS: 11, KNOW: 11.

Survival 8, Tracking 5, Detect 9, Martial Arts 10, Running 10, Climb 6, Demolitions 8, Demolitions Disposal 10, Electronics, Industrial 6, Electronic Locks 5, Mechanics, Industrial 6, Electronics, Repair 5, Mechanics, Repair 6.

Sneezy wears SilverBack Armour (over his FreezAware coolant suit) and is armed with a Jolt Glove, Gash Fist and Mutilator Glove. All of his equipment is carried in a small backpack. Sneezy is addicted (Rank 6) to Chocolate, which he seems to be constantly nibbling on.

Sneezy carries 12 grenades; 6 Blast / Concussion and 6 Gas.

Munxy Crystal, Human, SCL 7. 1.9m tall, 71kg weight.

STR: 9, DEX: 9, DIA: 10, CONC: 10, CHA: 8, COOL: 11, PHYS: 9, KNOW: 10.

Literacy 7, SLA Information 7, Rival Company 7, Streetwise 9, Unarmed Combat 6, Pistol 5, Bribery 5, Persuasion 6, Leadership 5, Evaluate Opponent 6, Demolitions 8, Demolitions Disposal 10, Electronics, Industrial 6, Electronic Locks 5, Mechanics, Industrial 6, Electronics, Repair 5, Mechanics, Repair 6.

Munxy wears SilverBack Armour and is armed with a FEN 204 Gunhead, which is always loaded with HEAP. Back up is a Blitzer. All of Munxy's gear is stowed in a backpack. Munxy carries 12 grenades; 6 Frag and 6 smoke.

Sneezy and Munxy are a team, they work as a unit and have been together for so long they seem to have a telepathic link, where one knows what the other is going to say or do. Munxy is the 'leader' and the one who does all the talking. Both are quiet, professional and like to keep contact with the squad to a minimum. While in the company of a squad, the pair will take their lead from the squad's actions, never stepping in to situations caused by the squad and always keeping focused on their goal. Once they are with the squad and on their way, Sneezy and Munxy will each need to pick up a large kit bag, weighing 80kg each, which has their explosives and detonators in, they will carry these themselves.

Getting To 684

Getting to 684 is a problem. It is so far beneath the ruins of Downtown that normal vehicles are useless, there simply aren't any roads and few spaces big enough to drive a vehicle through. The only way to get there is Gauss Train, which will drop the team within 1km of the bridge. From there they need to take a 'drop tube' down to the level the bridge is on.

Drop tubes are near vertical elevator shafts that were sunk to allow maintenance on the gauss Train lines and the power tunnels that run along side and beneath them. The small metal elevator tube is circular and ten feet in diameter. The main problem with the drop tube is that it has a weight limit of 800kg, anything over this and the breaking system fails, letting

the elevator free fall the full distance of the drop. Sneezy and Munxy can not leave any gear behind, so it's up to the Op's. If the squad decides to do it in two trips, Munxy will tell them that drop tubes are one shit deals, there is no power to raise them again. The squad will either have to leave some gear, or be extremely ingenious....

Once at the bottom of the tube, the squad will exit in to a wasteland of broken ground, demolished buildings, abandoned decaying factories and tenement blocks. The rain here is slight and drizzly, making everything damp and oily, permeating everything, making all equipment damp and slippery.

After about half a kilometre the squad will see the bridge stretching out before them, covering a distance of about two kilometres. The ground falls away beneath the bridge and the roof of the natural cavern is about a hundred feet above the bridge. There are massive steel bundled cables hanging from the roof at intervals along the length of the bridge, and colossal support pillars that rise from the floor three hundred feet below, to support the bridge at half kilometre intervals. The bridge is eight lanes wide and in remarkably good condition.

From their position at the South end of the bridge, the squad can see hundreds of lights and small fires burning in the ruined chemical plant below. Smoke and small wisps of steam float up to the bridge, there are occasional steam discharges from some of the smaller chimneys below, wreathing the bridge in a light hazy mist. There is a faint hum rising up from the floor below and the sounds of distant machinery working in some of the factory buildings. Other than the occasional light which stabs up from the camps below, the roof of the cavern, and the bridge, remain in complete darkness. There are hundreds of collapsed walkways, ladders, cables, conduits, pipes and girders that hang down from the roof of the cavern, some stretching down to the bridge, making it impossible to see clearly from one side to the other.

Blowing The Bridge

It will soon become obvious to the squad that there is a huge community living among the ruins of the chemical plant below. Sneezy and Munxy will appear to be completely

unconcerned, setting about their business of laying and setting the charges at the supporting pillars. If the bridge collapses, which it will if the charges are detonated, hundreds, maybe thousands of people could be killed.

Under The Bridge

The real reason the bridge, indeed the whole sector is being 'redeveloped' is that Tempest have their headquarters beneath the bridge. Under the central span, there are two Gauss Train carriages suspended directly beneath the bridge, they are largely invisible from the surface of the bridge. Tempest have had some warning about the impending demolition and are in the process of evacuating the HQ, all the remaining personnel are 'foot soldiers' and teckies taking down the computers and destroying anything they can't take with them. Once the Op's arrive, Tempest may send out a lone negotiator to talk to the Op's, disguised as a simple homeless citizen, they will try to get the Op's to acknowledge the existence of the people below, and try to talk the Op's out of blowing the bridge.

Sneezy and Munxy will begin work as soon as they arrive, they will largely ignore events around them, focusing on laying the charges without blowing themselves up. If they are not protected by the squad, they will defend themselves with grenades, small arms and hand to hand, calling for help from the squad while they do.

Tempest 'Foot Soldiers'

Human, aged between 17 – 30, average height and weight.

STR: 7, DEX: 7, DIA: 7, CONC: 8, CHA: 6, COOL: 9, PHYS: 7, KNOW: 7.

Literacy: 3, Detect: 4, Streetwise: 5, Tempest Information: 3, Rival Company (SLA) 3:, Unarmed Combat: 4, Pistol: 5, Rifle: 2, Auto Support: 3, Blade 1-H 3, Sneak: 4, Hide: 5, Running 4.

All Foot Soldiers have stolen FEN 603's, most have a MAC Knife as well. A few are armed with SMG's or Rifles, and these may be either stolen SLA or stolen DarkNight. Most will wear a Padquill Flak Vest over Striker. A few may carry grenades (mostly Concussion or Smoke). Each soldier has a clip of 'Release' drugged ammo, and will use it if they can

against any Stormer targets. (See TBP 8 for details).

The soldiers will swarm out once Sneezy and Munxy get half way across the bridge or before if the Op's inspect the bridge and discover their hide out. They will be fighting a retreat, hoping to give the teckies enough time to finish off and get out. Once they get the signal from those inside the HQ, they will take full flight, heading for the North side of the bridge and waiting ropes and lines.

Bridge Sentinel

Living in the superstructure of the bridge, with a twisted metal lair in the cavern's roof, is a 'released' Chagrin that has gone 'native'.

Quark: 714 Chagrin Stormer; broken SLA programming, almost insane.

2.8m tall, weighs 180kg. Walk: 1, Run: 2, Sprint: 4. 'Clamber': 2. Move: 103kg, Half M: 309kg, No M: 515kg.

STR: 23, DEX: 15, DIA 5, CONC: 7, CHA 3, COOL: 15, PHYS: 19, KNOW: 6.

Quark has Level 3 Assertion Tendons, Quad Limbs (four arms), Lash Vertebrae (prehensile tail), Maul Claws and Teeth, Skeletal Enhancement Teeth and Elbow Knees, Surveyor Trans Optics.

Claws: DMG; 10, PEN; 3, AD; 1. (Includes STR Bonus).

Teeth: DMG; 8, PEN; 3, AD; 1. (Includes 0.5 STR Bonus.)

Tail: DMG 11, PEN; 4, AD; 1.

Unarmed Combat: 15, Intimidate: 5, Evaluate Opponent: 6, Hide: 10, Sneaking: 9, Martial Arts: 9, Climb: 12, Acrobatics: 9, Blade 1-H 8, Tactics: 5, Detect: 6, Pistol: 5, Rifle: 6, Auto Support: 6, Throw: 6.

Quark is an ex-WarWorld Operative who was sent to assassinate the leader of Tempest. Unfortunately he was pumped full of 'Release', and now lives in the caverns of the roof above the bridge. He hunts food from the camp below, as well as picking off the Carrien that venture down on to the bridge from the sectors above. Quark can move equally as well clambering around the collapsing steel structure's supports, beams and cables, as he can on a level surface. He's an Operative's worst nightmare; a tricked out Chagrin gone AWOL. The Chagrin sees all Operatives as the enemy, and will attack

anyone he can if they are wearing any kind of armour or carrying weapons. he is not stupid however, and will use his stealth rather than a frontal assault. Quark will try to pick off one or more of the Operatives once they venture on to the bridge, those he can't carry off to kill and eat at his leisure, he'll simply try to push off the bridge or rip out their throat.

Note: Remember that Sneak and Hide, if above the Detect of the person being crept up on, act as 'passive success' skills unless the victim is trying to actively use Detect: that is, if the Sneak / Hide is higher than the victim's Detect, no roll is needed for success. If the victim tries to Detect, then use the Sneak / Hide skill as a negative modifier.

What's It All About Then

This is a very simple BPN with one aim in mind: to get the Players to confront the fact that SLA can be savage in it's treatment of those it considers 'expendable'. The clearing of the sector will cause the deaths of thousands of people.

The Operatives will have to decide whether they can condone this, or whether they have the balls to go against SLA.

The bridge encounters are designed to test the Operatives against a structured and well trained enemy (the 'soldiers') as well as a nightmare like the Chagrin (Quark may have a fear rating of 8/9).

All this will be done in the company of two very strange SLA Operative companions (Sneezy and Munxy) with the added danger of lots of explosives being used.

EQUIPMENT

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL STRIKE STICK

"It's a club! It's a Blade! It's a Jolt Stick!"

ITB Graffiti campaign slogan, used by Street Sprayer 'Malcom Y', Mort 903 SD.

Shivers are forbidden to carry blades, though many do as a 'back up', just as many carry either 603's or some kind of firearm, also

against regulation but essential as a back up. More and more Shivers can be seen with the ITBA MFSS instead of their Pacifier Baton, much to the annoyance of the citizens they run across, who bear the scars and bruises.

Most Shiver sergeants turn a blind eye, and unless there is an investigation in to a resulting death, so do the higher officials within SLA.

The most worrying thing about the 'Muff Stick' (as it is known on the streets) is the profusion appearing in the hands of gangs and Prop's. It would seem the Black Market had them about three hours after their 'official' launch.

Game System Stuff

Ian Thomas Bradley (ITB) formed a subsidiary late last year, specialising in Shiver weapons design and, more specifically, weapons of riot control and minimal damage: ITB Associated, known on the streets (and among Shivers) as 'Joy Division'.

Much has been made of ITBA's utilisation of the GASH Pacifier Baton technology, and the on going law suit brought by GASH is testimony to their belief that they have been ripped off. Meanwhile the Multi-Functional Strike Stick (known as the 'Muff Stick') sells by the thousand.

The stick has three main uses, each triggered by a thumb controlled switch on the handle:

PeaceKeeper Club – it oscillates at extremely high frequency, much like a Pacifier Baton and can be used to deliver non lethal blows. In this mode it utilises the 'Club 1-H' skill.

Lacerate Blade – four blades slide from the inner tube of the club, forming four 'fins' that run along the length of the club, they act much like a Mutilator Glove. In this mode it utilises the 'Blade 1-H' skill.

Shock Stick – the blades are withdraw and the club is 'armed', the plasti-steel contacts along it's edge deliver a 'jolt' much like that of a Jolt Glove. Use club 1-H.

It takes two phases to switch from one function to another.

Muff Stick	DMG	PEN	AD
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Club	4	1	4
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Blade	4	2	2
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Shock	as user		4
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Costs: 170c. Black Market Cost: 3,000u.

The 'shock / jolt' from the stick stuns Powered Armour for 30 seconds, no save. Stuns Armour Wearer for 12 phases, save of PHYS roll –20 to avoid stun. Stuns unarmoured targets for 2 minutes, no save.

The Muff Stick comes with a belt-mounted power pack, good for 1000 hours use, which is attached via a steel filament wire to the base of the stick.

SPINAL IMPLANT DRUG DISPENSER

Many Operatives find the use of the syringe clumsy. They want something slicker, easier to use, and preferably something that does not take up the use of one of their hands.

Back street surgeons have been offering the implant service to Props and gang muscle for a number of years now, and as the techniques have been perfected and the accident rate dropped, word has reached the Operative community that the scum on the street may be getting one step ahead.

Protests began to trickle in to Karma, and when the Contract Killer 'Jam' was killed by a Prop (Jam assumed the Prop was dead and turned his back for a second....) the trickle became a flood.

Two weeks after the triggering incident, Operatives were being offered the chance to have the Spinal Implant fitted.

Game System Stuff

Karma left the Spinal Implant market to it's wholly owned subsidiary, 'Reflex', which specialises in implants and the growth of replacement limbs and organs.

The implant consists of a series of 'glands' grafted to supporting muscle tissue which form eight 'pockets', within which can be contained up to a hundred doses of any non-corrosive narcotic. So a full string of eight glands can contain up to 800 doses.

Most Operatives begin with a single gland and then, when funds allow, add further glands to the string.

Each gland can only contain a single type of narcotic.

Each of the pockets is linked to a specific neural and muscle and movement, the use of

this movement triggers the release of a set amount of the drug contained in the relevant gland. For example, Kick Start Solo in a gland is set to release in two dose quantities, it is linked to the flexing of the fingers on the right hand in a specific sequence.

The glands can be triggered to release from one to six standard doses of a narcotic in one go.

The glands are put along the spine for protection and ease of access by the surgeons.

Spinal Implant Drug Dispenser

Cost: 300c per gland.

Game Use: may be used to trigger the release of any narcotic contained in the gland. Release of drug takes a single phase. A number of 'doses' from 1-6 may be set to release at each triggering.

Recovery Time: 2 Days, during which time the Operative is confined to bed, no physical exertion is allowed otherwise the glands will rupture, releasing all of their narcotic content in one go.

Addiction Modifier: (Something the Reflex technicians will not tell you about!) The user of an implant gets a –2 modifier to their PHYS addiction roll for the relevant drug, they are far more prone to addiction than other Op's.

To use the gland, and release the pre-set quantity of the drug contained in it, the user must make a successful CONC roll (as a skill); success means the drug is released, failure means they have not managed to produce the physical movement necessary to trigger the release. If they fumble their roll, they will accidentally trigger the release of 2-4 times the gland's set dose of the drug. Remember to use modifiers to the CONC roll for being under fire, in combat, etc.

For every two glands in excess of the first, the user gets a –1 modifier to their CONC roll for triggering, i.e. someone with 6 glands gets –2 to their CONC roll.

Leakage

If an Operative receives a very severe blow to the spinal area, it may cause leakage from the gland, or may rupture it, causing it to dump all of it's contents at once. This is left to the GM to moderate and rule on.

SMART VISORS

The Scout Helmet is one of the most outstandingly useful pieces of equipment produced by FEN.

One thing that annoys Operatives is the way the Scout Helmet is designed to fit specifically to the 'Scout' training package, making it all but useless to the vast majority of Operatives trained in other packages.

In an attempt to broaden the scope of the market thrown up by the Scout Helmet, FEN have designed the Smart Visor, which can be attached to any 'standard' helmet, as long as there is a power supply, the Visor will work.

Game System Stuff

The Visor links to an exterior power supply, it relies on two small processors and three cables to feed it the information. The processors are housed in small, lighter sized units, which must be attached to the helmet. The cables run to the visor either internally, or if there is not enough room, externally; they are armoured and insulated.

The Visor itself is made of ten layers of laminate, each one treated with liquid crystal and charged with a different response frequency.

The Smart Visor: Functions

Cost: 280c

Weight: 0.25kg

PV: 8 ID: 10

I/R Sight; when activated filters to the I/R spectrum, as well as allowing partial 'normal' light vision.

U/V Sight; when activated filters to the U/V spectrum, may be used in conjunction with the I/R Sight, but normal vision is restricted.

Targeting Grid; when activated splits view to grid sectors, highlights any Laser Painters, gives the weapons user a further +1 to hit.

Clock; shows the time in the top right of the visor.

Navi-Grid Reference; shows the users position on the standard SLA Navi-Map Grid Reference in top left. This works as long as the users headset is functioning.

Range Finder; when activated allows user to measure range to selected target, up to 100M, utilises retinal Feedback (from internal visor

sensor) target is selected by user fixing with stare for two seconds, may not be used in combat, +1 to hit target.

Anti-Dazzle; constantly ready, this stops the user being dazzled by rapid increases in light, effectively a super-fast tint reaction.

Smart Visors are designed to be voice activated by the user. Each visor is keyed to an individual's voice patterns; functions are activated by naming them, they can also be switched off using voice commands.

Due to the liquid crystal nature of the displays, they tend to 'burn out' after roughly 2000 hours. Power Packs can be bought for 2000 hours, at a cost of 20c, or the Visor can be powered from a suits power supply.

A break through by FEN in the 'tuning' of the liquid crystals in the Visor means that it is immune to power surges, and suffers no ill effects from 'Jolt' weapons.

SOFT COMPANIES

H & R (Hit & Run)

Company Slogan: "Make problems go away for good."

Hit and Run appeared on the streets of Downtown Sector 380 two months ago. They took out a small gang of youths that were terrorising a section of the Harry Hill Shopping Plaza. They drifted in, killed eight gang members and simply disappeared.

Now there are H&R franchises operating in most of the Downtown Sectors.

They seem to be invisible to the Shivers, Monarchs and other 'enforcement' agencies. Word is they pay the money to the right people. They dress in 'street wear', wear no badges, carry no distinctive gear and cover their faces with black scarves, in the style of the old world 'bandits'.

People on the street generally look upon H&R as a vital 'service company'. They seem to offer reasonably priced services, ranging from killing to maiming, or a simple 'punishment beating'.

Gangs hate them with a passion, as do rep.'s from some of the smaller Soft Companies.

SLA have been slow to respond to the presence of H&R, and no BPN's have so far been issued either for their investigation of closure. There is a feeling among the citizens of Downtown that H&R may somehow be sanctioned by SLA.

Game System Stuff

Hit and run is the brainchild of two people; Penelope Rivers and Harry 'BoneHead' Stark. Penelope and Harry were both Sergeants in a Sleeper Shiver squad, both were sick to death of being given shitty assignments, where their actions were dictated by ineffectual laws and directives. SLA did not understand what was needed on the murderous streets of Downtown. It was not hard for the pair to fake their disappearance and deaths in Lower Downtown. After a raid on a DarkNight holding Cell, they were 'killed' when a gang, the 'Black Dogs' counter-attacked.

Penelope and Harry have made the gang their own, using it as a front for their H&R activities, as well as guardians for their various meetings and business deals.

It was not hard for the pair to contact those Shivers they knew felt the same as they did. They assumed the pseudonyms of 'Lucy' and 'Hogg'.

It took four weeks for the infrastructure of H&R to be set up.

Lucy and Hogg, together with the more suitable of the Fixers from the Black Dogs, set up a network of contacts in Downtown, contacting vigilante groups, citizens groups, traders associations, unions, federations and anyone else who had a grudge against the 'scum of the street'.

The deal is simple. H&R negotiate with the 'client', identify the target, do some digging, turn up locations, details of the target like arms and numbers, and then contract the work out to the local 'franchise' of H&R which consists of Shivers. The Shivers carry out the 'hit' during their off duty and get paid in cash when the job is done.

The 'client' is kept completely unaware of where, when and by whom the hit is done.

Although H&R are essentially a contract killing mercenary outfit, they are driven by sense of

law and order. To date they have not 'hit' any SLA employees, though they have killed two suspected DN Op's and a Black Order recruitment agent. H&R do not fear the Soft Companies, and see them as a source of both income (through hits) and gear (through theft). The Shivers that carry out the hits do so with their own weapons, which are largely taken from 'street sources' and so are untraceable. There are never any witnesses to a H&R hit, and citizens are not going to offer up testimony against them.

SLA have no idea that H&R are connected to Shivers. They see them as simply another vigilante group, that ultimately will be shut down or replaced by some other group in the natural order of the streets.

As H&R become better organised, and grow in the franchise market, they will also become better equipped at the 'core'. Eventually the Black Dog gang will supply candidates for training as assassins and thugs, and they will be equipped with either stolen DN gear, or stuff bought from the Black Market. This may well signal the beginning of the end for the Soft Company, as their presence becomes more high profile, and they become more vulnerable through the use of 'street' types.

Hit & Run Service Prices

Intimidation: 1000u. (Free 'Beating' if not successful)

Beating: 1000u per subject. (Free 'Maiming' if not successful)

Maiming: 2000u. (Preferred method in 'knee capping' or blinding)

Assassination: 3000u per target. (Method to be determined by H&R)

TALISMAN

Company Motto: "Don't leave it to chance. Let us make your luck."

Superstition is rife in the WoP. Everyone believes in something. Everyone believes there is good luck and bad luck, many people go through small rituals and habits to make sure their luck stays good. It is only natural to want something to help you ward off bad luck.

Talisman make charms to bring good luck and chase away bad.

Whether you want a crystal, an animal's body part, a piece of some native plant or rock, or a collection of personal belongings brought together in a lucky bag; Talisman can do it for you.

They have a good rep. on the street, most of their Hoodo men are left alone to go about their business, regardless of territory or Sector trading boundaries. They are always welcome at markets and Malls, granted the protection of the local street muscle.

They are seen as an essential part of the fight back against the science gone mad of SLA.

Game System Stuff

Talisman have a core of eighty employees, each of whom is capable of training other Hoodo Men. Each comes from a street background and has an immense store of both street lore and 'mystical' human beliefs. They act as a Soft Company in order to further their beliefs that the technological drive of SLA must be balanced by more spiritual considerations. They pander to the populations superstitions in order to infiltrate the psyche of the Downtown citizen, forcing them to question their place in the world and to challenge the bland message of obedience put out by SLA.

The Hoodo Men wander their designated Sector, setting out their wares on make shift stalls at set markets and Malls, taking orders for Talismans and arranging meetings for 'consultations'. Each Sector has a core of ten Talisman Op's, who make the Talismans and conduct the meetings.

They are quite happy to train others in the Way of the Hoodo. The usual applicants for training are gang Fixers.

The money made by Talisman goes towards the cost of material and upkeep of their core Op's. They do not make much money, putting most of their profits in to the growth of the Hoodo Network.

On the face of it, Talisman would appear to be one of the most harmless Soft Companies around. SLA, however, has other ideas.

There is a series of falsely held beliefs that SLA uses to gauge it's reactions towards Talisman:

Talisman are a 'front' organisation for the Feral Soft Company 'Purge', they use their Hoodo Men to carry Ebb Crystals around Downtown.

Talisman are affiliated to DarkNight, filtering information back to the arch rival.

All Hoodo Men are Feral Ebons.

Talisman are secretly building some kind of 'Ebb Device', using their contacts and network, they are gathering Ebb material, such as Glyph cards, to construct a destructive device.

It must be stressed that all of the above assumptions are untrue.

There are currently three White and one Platinum BPN in operation to try to get to the bottom of Talisman. Every time a BPN ends and only uncovers information SLA do not want to hear, they issue a new BPN. SLA will not move on Talisman until it has some 'proof' of the subversive nature of the Soft Company.

Talisman Prices

The prices vary depending upon the material used, off world material costs a fortune and takes a long time to get hold of, more common stuff like Mort based rocks and crystals are relatively inexpensive. All prices start at 50u.

Meetings and consultations for readings, such as tarot cards, crystals, runes, etc, start at 200u for 30 minutes, and go up by 50u per half hour after the first.

Hoodo Men are notoriously tight lipped and will not divulge any of their information gained from the streets for free. They can be paid for 'street information' and are willing to be seen talking to anyone with money who shows them some respect. Gangs and Shivers often use them to get a feel for what's going down on the street.

Having a Good Rep. or Bad Rep. with Talisman can drastically affect an Operatives other Rep.'s in the relevant sector.

MEET N GREET

Frank Weiss caught up with RainMan, a deep cover Operative working from Downtown sector 386, after a Cloak 'sweep down', involving the liquidation of the Soft Company 'Death Is Art'. The interview was conducted with Zulan in dark shadow, though at one point the glint of his pure green eyes is clearly visible. All material licensed to Inter-Com © 903 SD. Eye 4 Inter-Com, under license from Third Eye.

FW: "Thank you for giving me this interview, I know how valuable your anonymity is."

RM: "Well I doubt that. I blow my cover, I'm dead, as well as a shit load of contacts."

FW: "So why the interview?"

RM: "Well, I figured it was about time some of your viewers knew how it really is as an undercover Op; it aint as glamorous as they paint it in the comics and cartoons."

FW: "Dangerous stuff."

RM: "Well yeah, but people should know."

FW: "Were you involved with the Cloak shutdown of Death Is Art?"

RM: "Yes. A dangerous softie, hiding behind the clothing was a very subversive message. You absolutely cannot afford to get complacent with SLA. They did and they died."

FW: "Is there any truth in the rumour that you are helping to found it's successor?"

RM: "I work for a lot of people, some may walk a dangerous path."

FW: "So what's the worst thing about being deep cover."

RM: "Not having anyone to trust."

FW: "You don't mind the wet and the squalor?"

RM: "No. You don't notice it after a while. It's just natural, the way it is."

FW: "So, it's the loneliness?"

RM: "And the betrayal. Anyone crossing SLA must be aware of the risks. Sometimes it's hard to draw the line."

FW: "Between?"

RM: "Between the truly subversive and dangerous and those just trying to survive in a shitty world."

FW: "Surely that's not your distinction to make?"

RM: "In an ideal world, maybe not. But in reality choices are made every day, choices which may force you to cross the line or bend it a little."

FW: "Is the solo career a permanent one?"

RM: "I think so. It gets so you can never really trust anyone. I don't think I could fit in a squad, no matter how loyal we all were to one and other."

FW: "A true loner then?"

RM: "Don't get me wrong, I enjoy socialising. It just gets harder and harder to relax, to let go of the paranoia."

FW: "So what would you say to those who want to go solo?"

RM: "Think long and hard about it. Make sure you can survive with yourself as your only true friend and ally."

FW: "Some people might say that was the case in the world today anyway...."

RM: "They are idiots. People like me live miserable lives so that others can enjoy a semblance of normality, to not take advantage of that is foolish."

FW: "You see yourself as some kind of guardian?"

RM: "Put it any way you want. I live the way I do so that others don't have to."

FW: "Nicely put. Final thoughts?"

RM: "Join a squad. Make friends. Trust SLA."

FW: "And presumably stay out of your way?"

RM: (laughs) "That would be good, yes."

Zulan 'RainMan' Mulor

Classification	Human, Male
Package	Kick Murder
Squad	Solo
Strength	10
Dexterity	10
Diagnose	10
Concentration	10
Charisma	10
Physique	10
Knowledge	10
Cool	10
Walk	1
Run	2
Sprint	3
Movement	35
Half Movement	70
No Movement	105

SKILLS	RANK
Literacy	4
Detect	6
SLA Information	4
Rival Company	4
Streetwise	6

Unarmed Combat	4
Hide	6
Sneak	6
Martial Arts	10
Climb	5
Acrobatics	5
Blade, 1-H	10
Pistol	10
Throw	5
Interview	4
Haggle	4
Persuasion	4
Computer Use	4
Bribery	4
Drive, Motorcycle	4
Drive, Civilian	4
Evaluate Opponent	5
Advantage / Disadvantage	
Ambidextrous	--
Major Enemy (Shiver Captain)	Rank 10

RainMan is a 'deep cover' Operative of SCL 6D. He operates alone, and his identity is known only to those in Cloak's 'DeepCover Division'.

Zulan wears Custom Striker Protection under his clothes at all times, his streetwear is geared to make him look like a Prop. or Gang 'Muscle'. He is known as a 'hired hand', making himself available for both protection jobs and 'hits'. His street rep. is impeccable, and he got his street name from a Gang Leader, who said he was made for the streets 'just like the rain'.

Custom Striker Protection

PV 5, ID 10. Black Leather like substance with plasti-ceramic plate inserts.

Zulan will always be carrying:

Two MAC Knives, five throwing knives, a BLA 446A Derringer (chambering HESH) concealed up left sleeve. Main weapon is a FEN 091 Farjacket (chambered with HEAP), ten spare rounds for 091 in concealed pouches in coat.

Zulan has no regard for any other SLA employees, he shows them no respect and sees them as 'soft targets' should a firefight break out. He will only reveal his Op status to save his own life.

Zulan has contacts within Cloak that can get him 'blank' termination warrants.

Issue 13 was effectively the last issue to be produced in hard copy, selling well and rubbing my nose in it as far as not being able to do hard copies anymore. People like them damn it! ☺

But as last gasp efforts go, it was pretty good. Layout was sorted, covers were coming along, with a new style and look. Pretty much there. But it was not to be. So. it's pdf from now on.

Max Bantleman, 2001.