

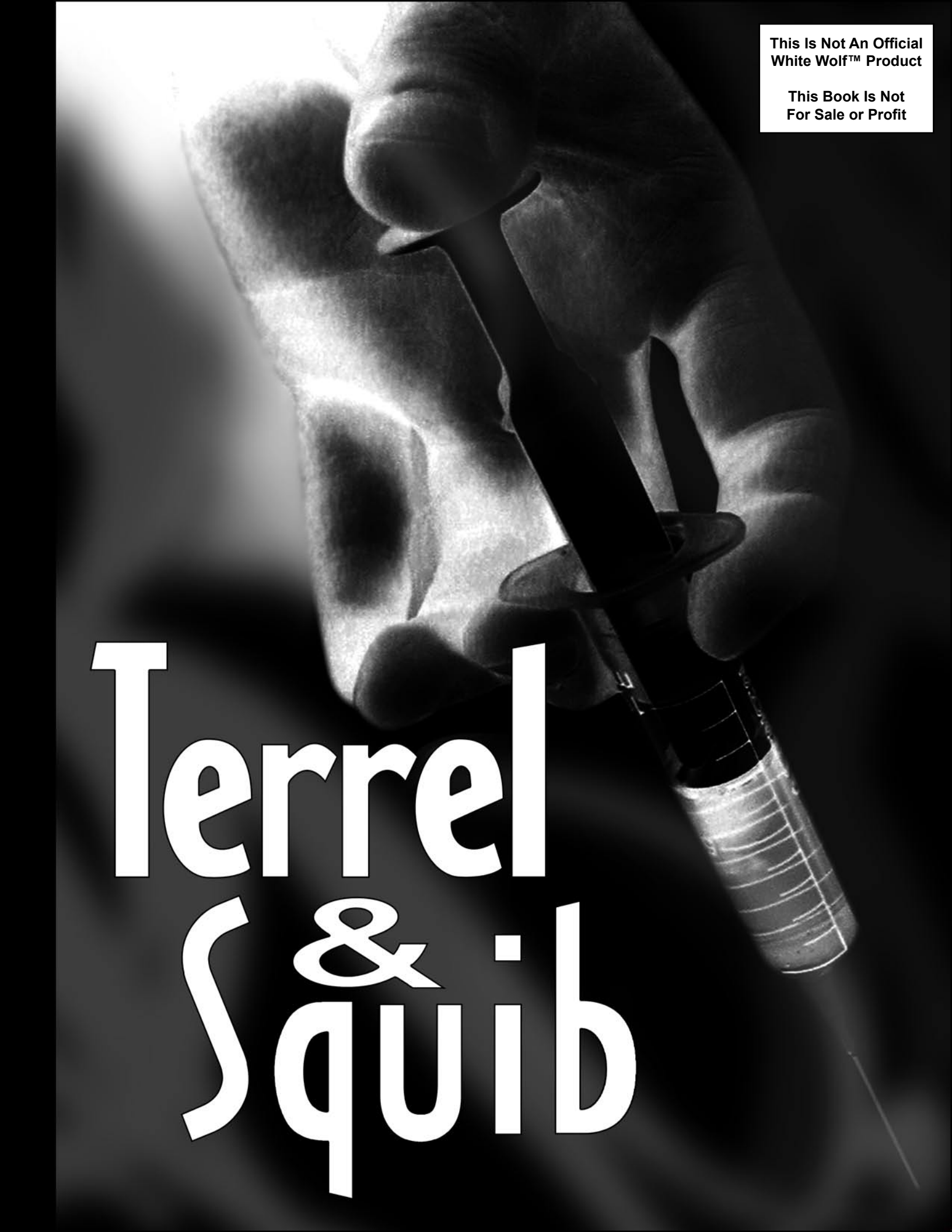
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Terrel & Squib

Terrel & Squib

By Rob Engen, Adam Wells Davis, Steven MacLauchlan, David Plank,
Jason Wallace, Tuukka Hurmeranta, and Tome Wilson

World of Darkness created by Mark Rein•Hagen.

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Dedication

To the man whose golden heart and creative genius brought the classic ghost story back to life again.

You gave us new dreams & nightmares to share with our friends and for that we thank you, Lucien Soulban.

- The T&S Sourcebook Staff & **Orpheus™** fans everywhere.



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Terrel & Squib

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PROLOGUE:

Ladies First

Alright ramblers, let's get rambling.

— Reservoir Dogs

OPERATION: PLAGUE-SEVER 2053H

This time, they were going to nail the fucker to the wall. That's all there was to it. Nail it to the wall and watch it bleed sin, watch it struggle like a knifed rat before they finally blew it back to hell. Best yet, they were going to get *paid* for doing a job that any of them would have given an arm for.

The lights inside the Mobile Command Unit (lovingly referred to as "slicks" by the Terrel & Squib agents that rode inside of them) had been dimmed twenty minutes ago, leaving Jarrod Dunlap and his five companions in near-darkness save for the light shed by nearby computer monitors. There was plenty of breathing room inside the slick, despite the walls of surveillance gear and paratech, but the nagging claustrophobia refused to settle itself inside of Jarrod's gut. The unsightly contraption may have been huge, but he couldn't help but dwell on the fact that the living were sharing it with at least ten other people, unseen, unfelt, but there nonetheless.

He always laughed when saw himself in the mirror before launching an operation. Jarrod had been to his share of student protests back in the day. He had been clubbed in Washington, gassed in Seattle, and shot in Philly, all by the riot police that he now resembled. Jarrod and his fellow operatives wore nigh-identical black riot gear, complete with bulletproof vests, knee-high combat boots, and teal helmets with the T&S logo emblazoned onto the sides. Some days, he felt like this was all a bad joke. Right now, he wished it was.

The small submachine gun he clutched and the steeled look in his eye told the truth. Beneath the bells and trinkets, this was a vicious job.

"Prep yourselves, people," the speaker next to Jarrod's ear blared, "*We've got five minutes.*"

"Is this thing working? Why isn't this goddamn thing working?" said Deshaun, a skinny black man in identical riot gear. The expensive looking goggles strapped to his head flopped up and down with each bump in the road,

a loose latch and power supply obviously overlooked by R&D after another budget meeting.

Slap. Slap. Slap. *Click.* With an annoyed snap of his head into the wall of the slick, the goggles latched into place and started to warm up.

Jarrod snorted. "Yeah, keep smacking it. I hear that helps your wife put out, too."

"Fuck you and die," Deshaun muttered, finally getting the set of Kirlian-feed goggles down over his eyes properly. Miraculously, the indicator lights started blinking and backlight in the display finally powered up. "Jesus. 'Bout time."

Jarrod hated those Kirlian goggles. It was like looking at the world through a set of cardboard tubes, and when they started to break down, the first thing to go was always the real-time imaging. This left the goggles lagging behind what you were actually seeing by one or two seconds... he'd even seen three second lag in the earlier models. If you weren't tripping over yourself, that shit could get you killed, even on a good day.

About that time, Jarrod decided he wouldn't rely on the Kirlians anymore, not for any amount of money.

He reached into one of the several pockets in his bulletproof vest and produced a fistful of lumpy fabric cuts that looked like oversized band-aids. Slap-patches were his *modus operandi*. The patches themselves contained a good shot of the Eidolon drug, enough to get the blood pumping and his dead-eyes warmed up. He peeled off the sticky tape on the back and gingerly applied the slap-patch to a section of his neck just beneath his armor, where the strong adhesive immediately clung to his flesh.

Jarrod took a deep breath and closed his eyes. "By the time that door opens, I'll be rolling and we'll be in business," he thought. The thumping in his chest slowed to a lull, followed by his muscles growing slack under the heavy shell of his armor. Almost in rhythm, the world beyond his flesh started pulsing with his heart; the waves of air around him growing thick and fluid-like. When, just as suddenly as it began, the fluid

**Jarrod took a deep
breath and closed his
eyes. "By the time
that door opens, I'll
be rolling and we'll
be in business..."**

air was pulled from Jarrod's thoughts. The oily caul forming around his face sloshed off into the nothingness, and everything was clear again. The Eidolon patch was working.

"Don't know how you keep doing that shit to yourself, man." The deep voice almost echoed for a second in Jarrod's head. It belonged to his friend Matthias sitting beside him, a big Greek fellow with a thin moustache and an omnipresent gleam of sweat on his brow. He already had his goggles in place like Deshaun and was double-checking the extra magazines pocketed in his vest.

Jarrod waved one of his spare slap-patches at Matthias. "All the action, none of the technical bullshit. Give 'em a chance, Matt. You'll never look back."

Matthias just shook his head resolutely. The way he always did when it was offered to him. "Been down that road."

"Whatever," Jarrod said, slipping the extra patch back into his pocket and checking the clip on his faithful SAF 9mm. "Whatever floats your boat, my friend. This is our night. It's gonna be a feast for the fuckin' crows... bring whatever fork you want."

He looked up. Not surprising, the patch was kicking in fairly quick today. The Eidolon cooked your system faster when your blood pressure was high, and Jarrod's heart was starting to pound with anticipation right now — and already he could see blurred, indistinct human shapes moving among them like strands of silk in the wind. It always gave him a rush to see the ghosts for the first time after patching. Beautiful, fragile, their glassy eyes filled with a silent suffering, their every movement marked with grace and pain. They were like unfinished works of art, wasted on this world because only he could see them.

"That goes for you poor sons of bitches too," he said to them, momentarily attracting the attention of several. They could hear him, even if *their* world was forever closed off to his senses, save through what sight the patches lent his eyes.

Then the slick ground to a squealing halt. The overhead lighting turned red and the cargo door at the back of the motor home opened with the grating whine of grinding, under-oiled servos.

"Deploy. All agents, deploy," the harsh loudspeaker

crackled in his ear, this time with the headset in his helmet playing backup against his right eardrum.

He turned to the rest of his five-man unit, and beckoned wildly. "All right, Ghostbusters! Let's nail this fucker and go home!" He led them on out the back of the slick, and they followed him into Hell.

* * * * *

"HEAVEN" INTERROGATION FACILITY, TERREL & SQUIB RE-EDUCATION CENTER #3 2100H

"Advent."

The concrete room was at least fifty feet below ground, perhaps part of an old Cold War bunker, perhaps not. The floors and walls were a mess of wires and open circuitry crudely slapped together, and listening to the hum of electricity coursing through them was like listening to a choir of dead monks. The air was cold and moist despite the portable heater that had been set up, though the overwhelming chill had less to do with the underground room than it did with the room's current guests.

"Welcome back to Heaven, Advent."

A young man named Robert stood in the center of the concrete room, his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his jeans, a sports jacket draped loosely around his large frame concealing a gray T-shirt underneath. His voice was slow and deliberate, thick with an accent that an untrained ear would hear as a London native, but could be traced more accurately to Johannesburg. His eyes were fixed patiently on the far side of the room, into an area cordoned off by thick horizontal bars sliced with diagonal ones that created a grid work of Stars of David between the bars.

"This is a waste of time." There was a woman there too, standing further away, over by the door. She was young, and could have been hugging either side of thirty. Her short black hair was neatly styled, and her face couldn't escape being defined by its high cheekbones and dark-rimmed glasses. She wore a corporate blazer and matching short manila skirt. Her voice was as sharp and icy as a cold blade. "It won't listen to you, Robert.



**"Welcome back to
Heaven, Advent."**

We've had the breakers at it twice now..."

"Oh, she'll listen to me, Katherine, trust me."

"It's not like it matters, the operation's already underway. If we were going to get anything useful out of it, it would have to had been hours ago."

Robert kept his eyes fixed on the cage... or, properly, what lay on the other side of those bars. "Advent. I know you can hear me."

Something stirred in the cage. Katherine, couldn't see it, of course. She might make an excellent corporate bitch, but she didn't have the gift, not the one that Robert did. There weren't really any shadows in the little concrete room, except the ones cast by the cage's bars. Those shadows, however, didn't fall upon the creature that was curled up in the cage, knees pulled up against her young chest, hateful little eyes peering out at him. The bars didn't end where the walls begin; they wrapped themselves across the concrete on all sides of that corner of the room, creating a full enclosure. The concrete alone wouldn't have been able to hold her... but as it was, she was trapped.

Someone, probably a late 60's radical, had once spray-painted a peace symbol on the concrete wall behind the cage, before Terrel & Squib had acquired the old facility and put the bars in. It lurked there, criss-crossed by the bars, as a smoldering red stain.

"Fuck." Katherine spat the word out with matter-of-fact impatience. "Robert, when was the last time you even broke a ghost? You're not *qualified* for this anymore."

"It's been a while," he said. "But I remember the last time I did it. Advent does too, don't you, darling?"

He watched her body — no, her gauze — flinch, and he let his mind wander backward in time. It had been too long since he'd broken a ghost. He'd been one of the pioneers of the practice at Terrel & Squib, taking half-baked, low-Vitality ghosts and breaking whatever was left of their spirit, turning them into conscripts to back up T&S investigative operations, willing or no. It wasn't a hard procedure; ghosts were walking passions, pure emotion left over after all the flesh had rotted or

burned. That made them, psychologically speaking, easy to crack once you got good at it... and Robert had been very good.

"Advent" had been his greatest accomplishment.

She was stronger than others, with more power and self-consciousness than most ghosts. It had taken him over a month to finally break her, and he still remembered every detail. He had loved her enough to give her a name rather than just a mundane designation like all the others he had broken.

That hadn't been enough, however. She'd relapsed somehow, managed to shake off her careful, thorough conditioning. She had run off.

"Can you get on with this? I thought I'd be home an hour ago..."

"Yeah, yeah," Robert

said, studying the lithe little ghost in the cage carefully. *You look like hell, Advent. What did you do to yourself?*

He produced a handheld tape recorder from his jacket pocket and pushed down on the Record button. Standard operating procedure for T&S ghostbreakers was to tape everything. Every moment, every procedure. The machine couldn't hear the ghosts unless they manifested, but Robert knew there was probably some middle-management dickweed who got a hard-on listening to descriptions of what he and the other ghostbreakers did to the ghosts in order to break them.

Hell, even *he* got a hard-on about it sometimes, but that was the way of it. If you were going to stay in his line of work for long, you had to learn to take some pleasure in it.

Robert glanced at his watch, cleared his throat, and then began. "Interrogation session commencing twenty-one-oh hours, Field Coordinator Robert Mashego recording. Subject is female, deceased at... oh... approximately age twenty, likely wild Spirit-class entity, though how she overcame the previous conditioning is anyone's guess. Also known as specimen F-037 from the company files. Answers to the name of *Advent*." He took a few steps closer to the cage. "It should be noted that this is not my first interaction with this ghost."

He stepped right up to the icy bars of the Labyrinth

**Subject is female,
deceased at... oh...
approximately age
twenty, likely wild
Spirit-class entity,
though how she
overcame the previous
conditioning is
anyone's guess.**

Cage but didn't quite touch it.

"It was nice of you to let yourself get caught, Advent. Because of that, I'm going to give you the chance to do this the easy way. But whatever you choose, we're going to have us a nice long chit-chat. So be a good girl and get ready to tell us everything about this *Charnel* thing that we want to know."

* * * * *

OPERATION: PLAGUE-SEVER 2120H

It was a bug hunt. Find the Spectre, kill the Spectre, go home, fuck your S.O., have a cigarette, try to go to sleep without having nightmares about the face you just splattered all over some CEO's expensive interior design. All part of a day's work at Terrel & Squib.

But this Spectre had killed before, and we knew it was going to do it again. The shadow critters didn't have to kill too many operatives before T&S blacklisted them and sent in the wetwork teams as a contribution to the "public good."

Yeah, that had been how the first team had been sent in. Enough of them hadn't come back to make Jarrod unsure of whether he should be raging or frightened. And now they had the son-of-a-bitch Spectre holed up in an old Bell Atlantic telecom building, a squat, three-story tall brick structure sitting on ten acres of pristine inner-city greenery.

The Spectre that called itself Charnel.

Jarrod's blueleg team had crept in through the back of the building after setting up the surveillance packages while the long knives and shatterbrains — the T&S projectors and broken ghosts respectively — went in through the walls. The wing of the first floor was an uninspiring office complex, the spaces between the cubicles like trenches dug between collapsible fabric divider-walls, as claustrophobic as they were cluttered.

Jarrod was taking the point-man position. He quickly wove through the office cubicles on the first floor, Matthias right behind him and the others following suit, letting the barrel his gun lead him like a guide

through the forest. His earpiece receiver fed him with a steady stream of garble and noise, instructions being relayed from the Field Coordinator to the Terrel & Squib operatives on-site, with liberal unintelligible interference cutting through.

"Bra... <static>... come around to the central... <static>... roger, nothing to repor... <static> ...continue your sweep, watch those stair... <static>..."

"Fucking equipment," he thought, not for the first time or the fortieth. The safety switch on his submachine gun — in the "on" position now — was an uncomfortably heavy weight in his mind, even if the greaser bullets ("ghostshot" to those who made the shit) made him feel less vulnerable.

"Can't make out what they're saying, man," Matthias rumbled from a few feet behind him, tapping his own earpiece with a thick sweaty finger.

"Too much goddamn interference in this place," he said. "Keep moving. We'll meet up with the other units in the lobby. See if we can get a better signal there."

"I don't like this, Duncie. The transmitter is *right outside* the fucking building."

A pair of T&S ghosts passed through the cubicle hallway in front of them in a dim parody of their own patrol, phasing through one fabric wall and out the other one, barely glancing at the group of bluelegs. They were as silent as the goddamn grave. It did Jarrod's heart some good, knowing that the dead were fighting *with* them. Well, most of the dead.

"Jesus..."

It did Jarrod's heart some good, knowing that the dead were fighting with them. Well, most of the dead.

Jarrod turned around, looking back at Matthias. The big Greek man stood in the doorway to a cubicle, pointing. As he poked his head in, he suddenly saw what he had overlooked in the dim light. The framed pictures in the cubicle were defaced.

No, not all the pictures. The faces had been violently scribbled out behind the intact glass of the photos, leaving sick white blemishes over what had once been the heads of

wives, daughters, sisters and mothers. *Just the women.* The scribbles seemed to contort the faces in pained expressions, if one looked at them hard enough. The T&S agents exchanged nervous glances with one another and then backtracked a few steps to a previous cubicle.

"S'all of them," one of the others growled from further back. "Just the women."

Jarrold felt the rage building in him anew. Usually he could keep it under control, but with his pounding heart and the Eidolon drug cocktail still reasonably fresh in his blood, he didn't feel like wrestling with his own feelings. Better to let them guide him. He slipped the safety catch off on the side of his gun.

"Keep going," he said quietly, then spoke down into his headset. "Field-C, this is Dunlap, are you reading? We got minor ghostsigns in the east wing, first floor, repeat, minor ghostsigns."

"...Go... <static>
...zone and swee... <static>
... lobby ... <static> ..."

"This ain't minor, Dunc. You know it kills women. You know it got Amy..."

"And when I find some chick nailed to the ceiling, I'll start panicking." He gave his headset a futile whack. "They ain't receiving. Let's get out to the lobby."

* * * * *

"HEAVEN" INTERROGATION FACILITY,
TERREL & SQUIB RE-EDUCATION CENTER #3
2125H

He had to project, and despite Katherine's objections about how creepy it was, he had to leave his body lying on a cot that the boys who had built this place had so thoughtfully provided. As with all projectors, Robert could see ghosts in the flesh, but his was a hands-on line of work. A rubber hose, a syringe of Eidolon, and a few happy thoughts later he stood up from the cot, leaving his meat behind and becoming a ghost himself, at least for a while. Pure thought, pure emotion.

Advent was already close to death... death, dissipation, transcendence, whatever the hell happened when the dead kicked the bucket again. Now that he had stepped out of his body, Robert could see just by looking at her that her vitality was painfully low. The Terrel & Squib spooks that had brought her in couldn't have been gentle.

"Not that they should have been gentle with you," he said, striding back over to the Labyrinth Cage. "Giving

you any quarter is just a way to get your throat slit, isn't it?"

Or maybe this was just how she always looked now. Different. Alien. He had seen her Stains before; he'd been the one to teach her how to use them to her advantage. That didn't stop him from wincing, seeing them entirely masking her once-delicate ethereal features. Her body was coated with a green-gold sheen that he knew to be snake scales, punctuated by gaping pustules that oozed an unwholesome black bile that gradually collected and dissipated on the floor. Her fingertips had become a fistful of six-inch long black nails — the kind of nails that looked like they'd been hammered into Christ's wrists on the Cross.

She looked like a nightmare. One of *his* nightmares, escaped from his sleep and curled up in that cage.

Robert stood there studying her, dimly aware of the phantom currents of the Stormwall whispering around him and even more dimly aware of the painfully slow heartbeat of his body on the other side of the room. Katherine was gone now, off to amuse herself elsewhere. For now, it was just going to be him and Advent.

"I'll be honest with you, Advent. Management's furious. You ran away from us, and you were dallying with a Spectre who kills company agents for shits and giggles. They'd sooner slate you for termination than waste energy holding you here."

Advent didn't speak, but her eyes said everything they had to. Inky black ichor pooled on the ground beneath her.

"Tell us about Charnel and it doesn't have to be like this."

Her entire body convulsed slightly, as though wracked with pain. The ghost's glare intensified and focused as her lips moved to form words, but no sound came from her.

Katherine said that other ghostbreakers had already been "over" her twice. He had to hope that there was something left to work with.

There were many ways to break a ghost. Some worked quickly and haphazardly, some took far too much time but were tremendously thorough. This time, however, he wasn't trying to break a ghost, he was trying to get information out of her. Maybe an easier proposi-

**She looked like a
nightmare. One
of his nightmares,
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sleep and curled
up in that cage.**

tion, maybe not. It had been a very long time since he'd worked the apartheid government jailhouses of South Africa, but he remembered how to get information out of the unwilling. You didn't forget shit like that.

The other ghostbreakers hadn't been able to get anything from her, but Robert was the one who broke her, and he knew things that they didn't. Little tricks of the trade, so to speak. Redundancies and failsafes that others never bothered with, but which came in handy in situations like this.

Breaking Advent the first time had been one of the hardest things he'd ever done. It had taken him a long time — most of a December — since she, unlike most broken ghosts, was high in Vitality before he ever got to her. More self-aware, more conscious and sure of who and what she was. He had made sure that there was a psychological backdoor to go through so that he would always be able to pierce her mind, no matter the situation. Robert had loved her too much to let Terrel & Squib have all of her.

But now there were lives at stake. The team was already deployed, hunting for the Spectre that had killed four female agents last week. He had to find out what Advent knew, even if it meant shredding her fragile mind like paper. All he needed to do was speak the trigger. "Swarms spring in December, Advent. Open your eyes for me."

* * * * *

OPERATION: PLAGUE-SEVER
2130H

They found it at the top of the wide lobby stairwell on the second floor. It looked like Hell had beaten them there and set up camp.

Terrel & Squib ghosts, long knives and shatterbrains alike, were tripping over themselves to get at the Spectre, an umbral blur of movement, shadows and darkness

looming above them. The air was suddenly charged with Horrors, spiritual flames and ghostly Wails centered on the creature called Charnel.

The Spectre had something in its claws, though: a T&S ghost. An arc-light. A woman. Her name was Samantha, Jarrod dimly recalled, a hot little package in the flesh, now squirming and shrieking as the Spectre's iron grip pulled the life out of her with all the relish of someone popping the cork off a bottle of fine champagne. The irony in watching a ghost die was somehow lost on him.

Terrel & Squib ghosts, long knives and shatterbrains alike, were tripping over themselves to get at the Spectre, an umbral blur of movement, shadows and darkness looming above them.

"Field-C, where the fuck are you?" he was shouting into his headset, trying to train his SMG on the blurry, incoherent image of the Spectre at the same time. "The scene is hot, repeat *hot!* Is anyone getting this? *Anyone?*"

"What the hell are you all waitin' for?" It was Deshaun yelling to the other bluelegs, who were hanging back while the spooks tried to

nail the thing. "Start that goddamn shootin' or I'll put you in the ground mah'self! Someone try to grab her!" He pulled off a few rounds, the greaser bullets tearing through air and gauze with noisy 9mm sonic booms. "Come on, you crazy fucker! Come ON!"

And then Samantha's projected body vanished into the folds of darkness that either composed the Spectre's body or constantly swirled around it, one of her desperate, grasping hands the last thing to disappear into the shadows. Then the Spectre's bright red eyes flared, looking directly at Jarrod, and...

* * * * *

"HEAVEN" INTERROGATION FACILITY,
TERREL & SQUIB RE-EDUCATION CENTER #3
2135H

"The ladies always go first."

Advent was standing inside the cage now, watching him with beady, hating eyes and rubbing the serrated

iron claws on her fingertips together. It was the sound of ruin and decay, captured in her broken hands. Her voice was fragmented and scratchy, not the melodic whisper that Robert remembered so well.

It had worked, though. The other 'breakers hadn't gotten as deep as he'd feared. They'd left enough for him to work with, enough of her mind for him to delve into. It was a good thing, too: he hadn't fancied the idea of diving into the shallow end. It wasn't working like he had remembered; there wasn't that same degree of control he was used to exerting over broken ghosts. But at least she was more responsive now.

Robert was pacing in front of the Labyrinth Cage now. "We know it goes after the women, Advent. But what is it?"

"The darkness."

"Yeah, we know he's a Spectre. Figured that part out right quick. Why were you with him?"

"Because I never left it."

"Never left what?"

"The darkness." She started to walk as she repeated herself, matching his pacing inside the cage, running her claws along the thick Labyrinth bars. *"The eventide. The shadow. You can't leave it behind. All you can do is lose it for a while, but it will find you. It loves you, after all, and that what loves you finds you out."* Her gaze fixed meaningfully on Robert.

"Time to back up," he heard himself think. Her mind was scattered - probably shattered. He needed to take things carefully. "Advent, tell me why this Spectre's haunting Terrel & Squib. Tell me why it's hurting the women."

"Why...?"

"Yeah, why."

"Because, Robert... I wanted it to."

* * * * *

OPERATION: PLAGUE-SEVER 2137H

The transmitter was dead. Either that or the receiver in the slick was shot to hell, because now there wasn't even static coming in over the radio. Only whispers... small, tinny voices creeping out of the headset like

parasites, sometimes whispering things that Jarrod could understand, sometimes not. What he *could* understand he wished he hadn't.

They were on the third and uppermost floor now, in the west wing of the cubicle farm. Matthias and Jarrod were dragging Deshaun's screeching body away from the Spectre while a long knife hammered it with Wail. Deshaun was now missing his left leg below the kneecap, and the spraying wound gaped as though his leg had been bitten off. The little black man wasn't screaming as much now as he had been a few minutes ago.

Jarrod knew some First Aid, but fuck, this was

Fourth or Fifth Aid, the kind of thing they teach a trauma surgeon, not a guy with an outdated students' certificate... there was blood everywhere, bone poking out, the smell of scorched flesh...

There were still screams coming from other parts of the building. And things that were worse than screams. He couldn't tell if the clamor was from any of his men.

"You're gonna be all right, buddy, just hold your ass together!" he was telling his teammate, trying to keep his voice down as much as possible, and trying his best to bandage the stump with one hand while keeping his SMG clutched in the other. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't bring himself to put the goddamn gun down. "You keep up with that fucking noise and you'll bring it back down on us!"

Matthias wasn't much help. He was sitting on one of the cubicle swivel-chairs, holding his head in his hands, muttering to himself. "Been down that road... been down that road... been down that road..."

And then Jarrod became aware of a new sensation, a surge of cold that suddenly filled the room accompanied by the quiet into which the rest of the building abruptly fell. It took him a minute to spot the Spectre called Charnel. It wasn't moving, it wasn't doing anything, it was just clinging to the ceiling upside-down, watching him.

"...Shit!" He brought up the SMG just as the ghost surged forward

**It wasn't moving,
it wasn't doing
anything, it was
just clinging to the
ceiling upside-down,
watching him.**

"HEAVEN" INTERROGATION FACILITY,
TERREL & SQUIB RE-EDUCATION CENTER #3
2138H

OPERATION: PLAGUE-SEVER
2140H

Robert manifested long enough to key the controls for the Labyrinth cage. A flood of electricity stimulated the energy of the *ferroanimus* matter that kept the bars solid to ghosts. The result was pain for the trapped subject... wracking, debilitating pain on command. Robert hadn't actually felt it himself, but he had been told that it burned the soul something fierce.

"*She deserves it,*" he thought inwardly without enthusiasm.

Advent shrieked and collapsed to one knee as her lithe, snarled little gauze body convulsed with pain.

"You're in league with that goddamn Charnel thing, and you're going to tell me why, or you're going to suffer more!" He lowered his voice a little. "It's killing Terrel & Squib agents, Advent. The people you knew. The people who loved you."

There was hate in her eyes again. "...*What am I... to them...? Just another... pet to mind-fuck, Robert... the part you always loved so much...*"

"I did what I had to. For your own good."

She slowly clawed her way back up onto her feet. "*That's what dad always said.*"

His heart skipped a beat. Shit. She was starting to remember her old life. That wasn't supposed to happen, even with ghosts that shook off the programming. "What's that, Advent?" he asked carefully.

"*Dad said he did it for my own good.*" She started slowly pacing in the cage again, watching him expectantly. "*When he beat me senseless. When he chained me to the boiler that weekend. When he fucked me. It was always to keep me safe from myself, because I was a woman and I was something to be scared of.*"

Jesus. She's remembering. If Robert had been in his meat, there would have been a cold sweat on his brow. She shouldn't be able to remember.

"*But you know what, Robert?*" she looked straight at him... no, straight through him. "*He was right.*"

**When that screaming
was suddenly choked
off with a gurgled
cough, he made for
the nearest door on
instinct.**

This was it. *Game over.*

Jarrold limped through the hallway. He'd dropped the gun somewhere in the cubicle farm, his last clip of greaser ammo burned up blindly punching holes in cubicle walls. He was hurting in every conceivable way. There was blood smeared all over the blue stripe

on his trousers; he wasn't sure if it was his own or Deshaun's. He didn't care. It was over, all a wasted effort. It seemed like he was running on automatic now, scarcely aware of where his feet were taking him...

There was more screaming from up ahead. When that screaming was suddenly choked off

with a gurgled cough, he made for the nearest door on instinct. The handle was locked, but T&S had possessed some shred of foresight and had issued master keys for the facility to the Norms before launching the operation. Struggling with the keys even as he felt the familiar chills cutting their way down his spine, he pushed open the door and, as quietly as he could, closed it behind him.

It was the central mechanical room for the telecom building, insufferably hot and humid beneath his armor.

That didn't matter, though. He wasn't alone.

Jarrold couldn't believe his eyes, first thinking it was an Eidolon-induced hallucination, then thinking that he might have just totally lost it given his unbelievably fucked up situation. He saw a woman on the other side of the room chained to a hot water boiler, stripped and sobbing quietly. The tatters of a business suit lay in shreds around her. Control had said that not all of the telecom employees were accounted for... that some of them might still be in the building...

Jarrold hadn't even realized that he was holding his combat knife until the woman started screaming.

* * * * *

* * * * *

"HEAVEN" INTERROGATION FACILITY,
TERREL & SQUIB RE-EDUCATION CENTER #3
2143H

"I thought it was men that I hated, for the longest time," Advent was saying from inside the cage, the pain forgotten, now prowling back and forth like a predator. Her claws were still fully extended, completing the vicious look. "Dad and Uncle Mike... then you, trying to make me forget what they had done by turning my mind into shit, hoping I wouldn't notice."

Robert kept his composure. "It's not me who hurt you, Advent."

"No, you just tried to fix me like your fucking pet."

"Fuck you. I've seen wild ghosts, and you have too. They can't control themselves or their passions. They create and re-create their own hells over and over again on an infinite loop. I saved you from that. And you betrayed me by running off with goddamn Spectres."

She responded with... of all things... a giggle. *"You never asked me why I did it, Robert. Why I killed myself with that rope on the stairway."*

"I don't care. Tell me about Charnel."

"I told myself that I was in pain. Even after the hurting stopped and I was still here watching them take my body away to the charnel house. I thought I did it because I hated men and wanted to escape from them. I just wanted to curl up in grandma's arms and never have to be hurt again." She smiled grotesquely. *"But the darkness told me a different story, and I like that one better now."*

"People are dying out there, Advent, don't waste time bullshitting me!"

"I didn't kill myself because I'd been hurt, Robert. I killed myself because I hated what I was. I hated being weak and violated, and being too cowardly and whipped to say anything or scream out when they hurt me. They were right, I was weak because I was a woman. I hated myself too much to just slip off into Oblivion and be done with this world. That would have been too easy. And so I stayed. That's what the darkness told me."

"Tell me about the goddamn...!" He was half a second away from manifesting again and flooding Advent's small world with pain when he stopped dead, dread realization welling up in his chest. The pieces were falling

into place, and dear God... Robert was starting to see.

"The... darkness... you mean Charnel? It told you this?"

"The darkness loves me, Robert, loves me as much as it hates me." Her smile broadened with unsettling joy. *"And it loves you, too, because you know the truth."*

It was something in her face, the alien look of vulgar pleasure that finally gave it away. Robert took a step towards the Labyrinth Cage's bars, his gauze body trembling almost imperceptibly. "Charnel isn't just another Spectre, is it?"

Her haunting smile persisted. *"The ladies always go first, Robert."*

* * * * *

OPERATION: PLAGUE-SEVER
2145H

Jarrold knew for sure that the blood smeared and splattered all over him wasn't his this time.

He slumped to the ground in the hot boiler room, sweat mingling with blood, the wet knife clattering its way across the floor behind him. His mind was as numb as his body, staring at the hacked and bloody mess that was still chained to the boiler in front of him.

The Spectre was there too, standing beside him, watching in silence from the folds of darkness.

The T&S agent found it was a struggle to breathe. Was it the Spectre who had brought the knife down again and again on the shrieking, or was it him?

Was it the Spectre's surge of satisfaction he had felt, or his own? Did it matter? It all blurred together in his mind until the answer was *no*.

Charnel reached out towards him, and Jarrold didn't flinch away. He felt a coldness throughout his body as the Spectre lay an inky hand upon his head, and thanks to the Eidolon still pumping through his blood he could see — but not feel — an inky trail of black ichor running down his face.

"Come to me," the voice was deep and scratchy, but feminine. *"I'll find you."*

When he looked back up, the Spectre was gone. Jarrold looked around with dim comprehension, at the

**I didn't kill
myself because
I'd been hurt,
Robert. I killed
myself because
I hated what I
was.**

blood sprays and at the torn body of the woman he had murdered, or had watched something controlling his body murder, it didn't matter which. He stared at it all for a long time before slowly removing his familiar kevlar-lined gloves and reaching down to his belt to unhook the handgun from his holster. It was standard-issue for emergencies, and was loaded with plain ammo, not ghostshot. That was good. T&S wouldn't have to be upset over the loss of one more greaser bullet to top off the evening.

Without another thought, Jarrod wrapped his curling lips around the end of the weapon and pulled the trigger.

* * * * *

"HEAVEN" INTERROGATION FACILITY,
TERREL & SQUIB RE-EDUCATION CENTER #3
2146H

Robert knew it. Knew it even as he spent the energy to manifest and slam his hand down on the Labyrinth Cage's controls, sending a fresh surge of voltage into Advent. She was turning into a Spectre, fast, and was most of the way there, but Charnel wasn't just some accomplice or mentor on her path toward Spectrehood.

Charnel was Advent. Charnel was her doppelganger.

Chills suddenly ran down his gauze, a lancing cold that Robert had grown accustomed enough to feeling in the field, but which felt screamingly out-of-place in the safety of the Terrel & Squib facility. *Spectres*. He swung around, only to see a blur of movement and darkness behind him, and burning red eyes gazing into his. And the face behind those eyes was Advent's, twisted into the same happy smile that the broken ghost writhing in the cage had worn.

Charnel. The name appeared in his mind before he had a chance to articulate it. But it was *impossible*, the Spectre should have been on the other side of the city...

"Fuck...!" Robert lashed out, pushing Vitality into his gauze to lend strength to his ghostly muscles, but the dark blur of a Spectre was too fast and too strong. He felt claws rake across his midsection, stabbing into his very

essence, blades forged of pure misery and suffering.

He landed a blow with one of his fists, but if Charnel felt it no indication was given. A powerful, clawed hand grabbed Robert by the arm and tossed him aside, letting his ghostly form crumple against the hard concrete wall.

What happened next would haunt his dreams and his nightmares.

The Spectre advanced, not toward him but toward the cage that held Advent, the blur of shadows that constituted its body slowly taking substance and congealing into the shape of a teenage girl. Darker, colder, the very sight of it filling him with the same revulsion that he felt toward the most horrid of Spectres, but unmistakably beautiful, and unmistakably Advent. It was her standing there, but it was also her in the cage. There was a blur of motion then, and the heavy bars of the Labyrinth Cage tore like paper, the electricity arcing through them showering out in a billion sparks.

Advent stepped out...

...and Advent stepped forward.

The two beings, their Stained gauze identical in most ways but fundamentally different in others, regarded

one another for a long minute. Then they reached forward and embraced, their twin gauzes melting into one another like hot droplets of water until light merged with dark and was subsumed entirely by both.

When they looked back at him, there was only one. Charnel... Advent... looked at him with a stare that entwined malice with affection. She whispered something that he

would try to remember for the rest of his life, but would never be able to. Then the darkness took him.

* * * * *

"HEAVEN" INTERROGATION FACILITY,
TERREL & SQUIB RE-EDUCATION CENTER #3
2152H

Robert awoke, back in his body, though he couldn't remember returning or ripcording. There was a dull

ache across his chest, which he touched gingerly, only to wince from the pain. *Fuck it all.* His ribs were probably broken; one of the unfortunate side-effects of projecting being the damage that translated back to the body when...

When...

He blinked and realized that he was lying down, not on the cot across the room, but inside the locked Labyrinth Cage. The intact Labyrinth Cage. He had watched it be torn open by the Spectre, but the metal mesh that he wrapped his fingers around was unbroken...

Then his eyes fixed on a slight movement outside of the Cage.

Katherine was hanging from the ceiling, an electrical cord from the overhead light fixture dangling her body — still jerking spasmodically — a few feet off of the ground. A swollen tongue lolled out of her mouth,

her sharp features glossed with the pallid, sickly blue of strangulation. Her hair, matted with blood, was pulled down over her glassy eyes. Robert knew death. Hers hadn't been a fast one. She must have been there bucking and kicking in the air, her cruel eyes watching him sleep away her death barely an arm's length away...

"Jesus..." Robert murmured, slowly pulling himself up to his feet in spite of the pain. "Jesus *fucking* Christ, Advent..."

Click.

It should have been barely audible, but the sound of someone playing with the controls to the Labyrinth Cage was thunder in his ears. He looked around frantically, and saw the controls being manipulated without anyone standing near them, an invisible hand working them with the same skill and patience of someone who had watched it being done a hundred times before.

Terrel & Squib

INTRODUCTION

Remember to close the door
behind you when you leave.

— Red Night

An Overview Of Terrel and Squib, Inc.

The great majority of those working for Terrel & Squib's paranormal investigations division get to sleep at night by telling themselves that what they do is not pleasant, is not fun, and is certainly not right, but is nonetheless deeply necessary.

This is an organization that routinely enslaves and mentally rapes the restless dead. It encourages its personnel to pursue rampant drug abuse, telling them that it's the only way. It sells its services to those who can pay for it, not those who need it. Any shred of benevolence that may once have existed within this corporate pyramid has long since been worn down against the amoral whetstone of big business. And through it all struggle the field agents, the operatives, and the associates, the ones who will never see the company's immense profit margins, but have to deal with death, horror, and the hereafter every day.

This is the World of Darkness™, and it is a world that Terrel & Squib has been designed from the ground up to thrive in.

How To Use This Book

We'll get something straight right from the start: the Terrel & Squib Sourcebook does not conflict with the Orpheus™ metaplot. This is a supplement, and as such it deals exclusively with the workings of Terrel & Squib, Inc. Leafing (or scrolling) through it, you won't find any new, overarching plotline, though that's not to say that you can't make your own, and it certainly isn't to say that there isn't anything going on in this book. Our assumption, however, is that you'll use this book to supplement your own Orpheus™ game using the established Orpheus™ metaplot.

So what will you find in this book? Well, Terrel & Squib serve as one of the primary antagonists for the Orpheus Group from the very start, and since it was never thoroughly investigated in the **Orpheus™** corebook or **Shades of Gray**, we're giving you information on how to bring this sinister organization to life in your game. You'll find stuff to add color, texture, and vibrancy to what has the potential to be a very scary group of unprincipled entrepreneurs indeed.

A Storyteller can use the information in this book to run a chronicle from the perspective of T&S agents, or use it to round the company out as an antagonist in

a more orthodox Orpheus™ chronicle. There's plenty of room for middle ground, of course. You want to use the company as an ally for the players? Swell. Or perhaps you don't want to use Terrel & Squib at all... that's fine, perhaps there are some new rules (Backgrounds, Merits/Flaws, Laments, etc.) that you can find a use for in your own game. What you do with what we're presenting here is entirely up to you.

The T&S Sourcebook is primarily aimed at ST's, as it is first and foremost a chronicle supplement. There is, however, no small amount of information for players too. Storytellers should be judicious about how much information they give out: Terrel & Squib, Inc. is a company built upon many, many layers of secrets...

Chapter By Chapter

The **Prelude** grants a glimpse into a dangerous Terrel & Squib operation and the fruits created by the company's dark side.

The **Introduction** is the part you're reading right now.

Chapter One: History of Terrel & Squib, Inc. takes a look at where T&S has come from, where it is now, and where it may be going in the future.

Chapter Two: The Unearthed Player's Guide is the part you hand over to the players, presenting new "crunchy bits" including new laments, roles, merits and flaws, and backgrounds common to Terrel & Squib operatives.

Chapter Three: Storytelling the Dead is for the eyes of the Storyteller alone. This includes information on how to run a T&S chronicle. It also has information on some of the company's more sinister research programs, as well as new antagonists, Spectres, and four scenarios that can lead up to the destruction of T&S in your chronicle.

Chapter Four: Agents of Note gives players and Storytellers a look at some of the signature characters and NPCs of note that they may encounter, whether working with or against Terrel & Squib, Inc. It also includes the Executive Dossier, giving the dirty details on the upper echelons of the company's corporate elite.

Chapter Five: Terrel & Squib Operations gives several sample T&S operations and operation templates.

Terrel and Squib Lexicon

Terrel & Squib Inc. has developed its own lexicon of slang and technical information unique from anything

else in the world, including the Orpheus Group. Here's a quick primer to bring everyone up to speed on some of the most common terms encountered:

Bluelegs: Slang term for T&S Operations security personnel who arrive on the scene in the flesh rather than projected. Refers to the blue stripe running up the leg of their uniform pants.

Body-Class: T&S technical term for Lament.

Break Squelch: To send a "click-hiss" signal on a portable radio by depressing the push-to-talk button without speaking; used when speaking might reveal your position. Also refers to a spook deliberately flaring their Vitality as a signal when verbal communication might be inappropriate.

Broken Ghost: Any spirit or hue that has been psychologically "broken" by T&S parapsychologists and is now kept in a state of subservient, forced compliance with the company.

Eidolon: A pigment-derivative drug that has most of the same properties as the street drug, but is non-hallucinogenic. A favorite of T&S field teams.

Ferroanimus: Scientific term for the spectre ichor commonly found in Terrel & Squib paratechnology.

Ghostshot: A type of ammunition laced with ferroanimus during forging. Can affect both the living and the dead equally. Most ghostshot ammunition is 9mm made for the sub-machine gun.

Ghostsigs: Evidence of supernatural activity at a location.

Greaser Bullets: Slang term for ghostshot.

Grunts: See "Bluelegs"

Light Up: Slang term, meaning to open fire on an enemy or enemy position.

Long Knife: Slang term for projectors.

Metagnome: A living person (non-projector or spook) gifted with the ability to view spirits.

Paratechnology: Technological devices with features that relate to the identification, capture, extermination, or protection of the supernatural. Most paratech typically includes *ferroanimus*.

Slick: Slang term for one of the T&S Mobile Command Units (MCUs).

Spirit-Class: T&S technical term for "Shade."

Team: T&S favored term for "crucible."

Wild Ghost: Any spirit or hue that has not undergone psychological breaking by T&S professionals.

Zulu: Casualty report.



CHAPTER : 01

History of Terrel & Squib Incorporated

The difference between you and me
is that I make this look good.

— Men in Black

"Don't worry, Miss DeLacey. This won't hurt at all." The young woman in one of the indeterminate white coats said as she bent to fasten a metal collar with multiple blinking LEDs attached to it around her neck. The girl (allegedly a victim of possession, assuredly a young bitch with a bad attitude) just breathed a trifle harder as she tried to get used to the slightly choking feeling the collar was giving her.

The team leader, Murray, nodded. He started digging around his pockets for his cell phone while the rest of the team took position around the girl. The security personnel in their ridiculously futuristic riot armor fanned out a few yards behind her with their large, composite shields held at ready, while the men and women in white coats turned to man the equipment scattered around the expansive living room.

"Is all this really necessary?" the lady of the house asked Murray in an unusually timorous tone of voice. Her husband just clutched her hand, muttering something about "letting experts do what they're paid for" while Murray turned to her with a comforting smile.

"Not to worry, ma'am: it looks a lot scarier than it actually is. To people, that is. We didn't worry all that much about being gentle with the thing that did this to your daughter." The parents receded gratefully, reassured by the honest expression and the sheer anger the mustached specialist had demonstrated when he'd been told of the specifics of the case. It did wonders for Mr. and Mrs. Enrique DeLacey's peace of mind that the spook-hunters at Terrel & Squib Investigations trusted them to know their own daughter well enough to recognize that the horrible things she'd been getting into were anything but normal.

"Dave, get ready to turn it on." Murray spoke to his cell in calm, unflappable tones. "We'll have set the house by 0900 hours." Around him the rest of the modern-day exorcists were setting curious meters within arms' reach and taking last-minute readings from the walls. Two of the helmeted security personnel were opening the lookout windows and back door to grant uninhibited access to the black van looming in the back yard. Everyone in the team knew their place, setting the place up expertly for the conclusion of *Operation: Bright Light*. Their purpose: to save young Mayfair DeLacey from whatever was possessing her, forcing her to actions that would have landed the offspring of a less affluent family in juvenile hall without much disassembling.

The clients' mighty faith in their saviors might have been a bit shaken if they'd known that at the moment Lucas Murray was calling one of a multitude of dummy phones in T&S headquarters, installed solely for cases when calling in a non-existent expert might serve to impress clientele.

Murray looked tensely the laptop offered for his consideration by one of the lab-coated assistants. The lights in Mayfair's collar were flickering in random patterns while she herself reclined in a lounge chair, looking bored and doing her best to obey the investigator's suggestion that she make herself as comfortable as possible.

An almost invisible nod from one of the guards broke Murray's tension. A gasp from Mrs. DeLacey assured him that their attention was fully drawn by the suddenly uniform, Morse-code-like blinking lights at their daughter's neck... and the curious flickering of her expression, as if she had just tried to remember something.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the chase is on!"

Unseen except in the dull red lights of the guards' visors, two shapes came tumbling out of nowhere — or out of Mayfair — at the same moment as the painfully expensive domestic light-show came underway. The two figures of men came to rest in the open space thoughtfully cleared of furniture by the T&S agents, accompanied by a liberal chorus of cursing and yelling.

One of them was a balding man in his late thirties, dressed in a checkered shirt that didn't do much for his paunch. He was still wearing his glasses out of the same habit that had garbed the other man in the memory of a varsity jacket he had earned — and discarded — long ago. Both men swayed a little as they regarded each other in a fighting crouch, looking tired unto death. Even so, all the odds seemed to favor the younger man. He was more visibly fit than the other, and tall enough to probably weigh as much as his opponent (though such considerations mattered less than they once would have). To add insult to injury, he was armed, limbering a black baton that wouldn't have looked out of place in the gear of the heavily armored security guards standing just a few feet from the two shades.

"Where am I?" the shorter man asked with a tremble in his voice. He had the cross-eyed glare of a man going into seizure from information overload, or perhaps just the look of someone who's had the rug pulled from underneath him and found that he landed in a strange land.

The younger man didn't answer. He just breathed heavily — yet another habit that was proving hard to forget — and cast a darting glance around. His hair stood out like he hadn't taken a shower in a while and then had gone out to stand in a storm, while his hands clutched the baton's strangely viscous, coarse surface.

"Who are you, anyway? Joseph Wellington, the disgraced teacher? Drew Reynolds, the electrician who got accused of pedophilia and was killed in jail for it? You don't look like the junior who was hit by a

car while he and young Miss Mayfair were stoned out of their wits."

"I'm, I'm... I am Wellington. Yes, that's my name..." the other man spoke as if far, far away, looking lost. Lost, that is, until his eyes caught Mayfair DeLacey behind the young assailant, being embraced by her incoherently crying mother, once again getting away with murder. All confusion slipped Joseph Wellington's mind as his world switched back to familiar gears, anchored by the hatred for the girl that defined his post-mortem existence. He took a step towards her...

...And was sent reeling back by a blow that would have seen him spitting teeth had he been on the same plane as the people standing obliviously around the showdown. The young man spun his nightstick back into a fighting stance, barked an order to open the doors at the expressionless helmets worn by the guards and flew at Wellington's ghost.

"Shomaker's Drill! Hut-hut-hut-hut...!" one of the guards yelled out as Mayfair was still protesting that she was all right. Murray's parascientists seized the curious hybrids of flashlight and pocket calculator they had painstakingly calibrated beforehand and rushed to fill the cracks between the guards cordoning a section of the living room with their riot shields.

Red beams of light crisscrossed the rooms as a strange, keening whine that made teeth ache emitted from the same devices. "We have them!" one of the scientists cried as a few stray flickers disrupted the rays at one point over the carpet.

"Lockstep! Force it through the door!" Murray screamed as the scientists crossed their lasers over the flickering anomaly on the floor. One of the guards grinned inside his helmet. Theirs was usually the shitty part of the job, but this time all they'd had to do was stand around sweating in their gear and watch the amateur wrestling.

"What's going on?" Wellington groaned in a subdued voice. If he'd looked tired before, he now looked like he was literally ready to come apart, having been assiduously pounded by the ghost circumspectly addressed as Dave.

"I don't think you ever did lay a hand on your students in life," Dave commented as the doors to the van opened like the maw of some black cave. "That didn't keep you from raping Mayfair DeLacey's life after your demise. For the choices you made," he said as he shoved Wellington off his feet, "you can rot in Heaven for all I care!" he yelled after Wellington as he pushed him squarely into the van. A smoked-glass-and-steel door was slammed shut by one of the guards the minute Wellington's shade went tumbling in.

"Don't try to break out." Dave called after him. "It takes a miracle to hurt one of those things, and they'll just recover by taking compensation straight out of you." He wasn't sure if Wellington got a chance to hear him as the van rumbled to life and rolled out to the streets again.

"EC levels going down."

"Field returning to normal."

"Permission to unhook and call it a home run, chief?"

Murray nodded magnanimously, releasing his team to shut down the various gadgets they'd brought in and start removing them from the property. Mr. DeLacey insisted on shaking hands with each and every agent present while his wife cried out of sheer relief. Mayfair looked around dubiously, still only half-comprehending the strangers' presence in the living room (her memory blacked out shortly after Murray's initial questioning had caused her to fall silent except for a few choice insults that actually sounded too cultured to possibly come from her).

Murray accepted Enrique DeLacey's gratitude almost as smoothly as the grateful father produced the check that was to pay for their night's work. The team gathered around for a photograph. Even the guards doffed off their helmets to get a big smile at a job well done eternalized by Mrs. DeLacey. The centerpiece of the photo was her husband holding up the check together with Team Leader Lucas Murray. The absence of a certain unrecorded co-worker named Dave was easy to disregard in the festive atmosphere.



Terrel & Squib

The official history of Terrel & Squib Pharmaceuticals and its founders is a matter of public record. Sorting through it all, the only sordid thing that the company can be found obviously guilty of is branching into the questionable "projecting" industry, as well as being the topic of considerable speculation when assessing just how many skeletons a financial rainmaker like John Terrel has in his closets. Or so it seems at first glance.

The wheels upon which the company's inner mechanisms spin are a more questionable matter. The entire projecting industry occupies a gray area when it comes to the law, an advantage that the leading lights of the industry are pleased to exploit. They perform services that can't be considered criminal only because no legislative body to date has considered enacting statutes regarding ghosts and supernatural exploitation. Orpheus Group, NextWorld and T&S maneuver around each other like cats fighting over territory, each seeking to simultaneously expose its rivals' illegal activities while masking their own involvement in the very same dubious enterprises. It is this mutually assured secrecy shared by each (yet originating from completely unrelated reasons) that ensures that, to date, no one has been able to effectively police the "Three Greats" of the projecting industry.

SECURITY JOB FAIR

Professional security consultants wanted. Prior experience, license to carry firearms a must. Past service in the police or military highly advantageous. Some unusual elements in the job description: further details will be made available upon being accepted.

Full medical benefits and top-of-the-line pay.

Send all applications to:
T&S Investigations, Human Resources Dept.
e-mail: HR@t&sinc.com or call 1-888-555-TASI

FROM THE DESK OF Dr. Lionel Squib, Ph.D.

Mary,

Feeling a bit under the weather. Will stay at the cabin until further notice. Please inform Mr. Terrel and my staff, to expect a couple of days' absence.

L.S.



U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Information and Privacy

Telephone: (202) 514-3642

Washington, D.C. 20530

MAY 12 2003

Asst. Dir. Scott
P.O. Box 897
Oakland, CA 94604

Re: Terrel & Squib Investigations
RLH : DAH : NSD

Dear Asst. Dir. Scott:

As per orders, I've prepared this report in cooperation with Special Agent Osorio's matching work regarding the Orpheus Group. Cross-referencing our work into two of America's leading paranormal investigations companies has been about as harrowing as Agent Osorio has been saying since the Forest incident.

I hope you'll agree that the enclosed information is grounds for the kind of paranoia Jesse has been drumming around the office.

Sincerely,

Sp. Agt. Kurtzveil

Roger Voight

From: "Megan Woolever . T&S Incorporated" <mwoolever@t&sinc.com>
To: "Roger Voight" <roger.voight12@hushmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 09, 2001 10:35 AM
Subject: Re: Human Resources Inquiry

Dear Mr. Voight,

We have reviewed your application and found you to be exactly the kind of person we're looking for. Welcome to Terrel & Squib Investigations! If you will report to our main office on 7th Newman Street on Monday at noon, we can give you the full briefing on your new duties.

Sincerely yours,

Megan Woolever, Human Resources
T&S Incorporated

The contents of this message are private and confidential. If you have recieved this message in error, please notify the sender and immediately delete the email in question including all attachments.

Terrel & Squib Incorporated Internal Security
<http://www.t&sinc.com/security/privacy-statement.asp>

**Phone conversation overheard at the office of
John Terrel, CEO of T&S Pharmaceuticals**

MAY 12 2001

"Hello Charles, John Terrel here."

"Fine, thank you. And how's the lovely new wife?"

(Nervous laughter)

"Yes, I know what you mean. Listen, our doctor friend tells me he's on to something new."

"Wish I could tell you, but he's being quiet about it. Just showed up from unexpected sick leave — apparently the man works even when the rest of us would be lying comatose under the covers — and told me he got some sort of inspiration out there by the waters. Yes, he's got a place up in Michigan..."

"All he's willing to say is that it could change the course of the whole company, if not the face of the earth itself."

"I know he doesn't! He's not at all like himself in other ways, either. God, I've never had to upbraid him about being slack with his job till now. After the way he took it, I don't ever want to do it again."

"Hmm? Oh no, no, everything's fine. It's just one of those things, you know? Shocks always come from the people you least expect. Who'd have thought jolly old Doc Squib had it in him, eh?"

(More shaken laughter)

"Yes, well. He tells me this could require a lot of capital once he's got the necessary tests done. Oh, it'll float. He's dead certain this new formula will work and I'm not about to question a man talking about his 114th or something drug patent."

"Yes, I know how much we can conjure up as needed. I called you because that may not be enough."

(Momentary Silence)

"Then sell the fucking plants! We're not going to pussy-foot around this one!"

"..."

"God, I'm sorry, Charlie. Don't know what's got into me. Look, just play ball, would you? You do your share of the work and I'll handle the rest of whatever Squib's new master plan demands, alright?"

"Great. You know, we ought to have lunch again one of these days..."

Hollywood Producer To Face Charges For Domestic Abuse

Robert Engen • Staff Writer

Movie producer Barry Copeland was arrested on charges of domestic violence last Friday. Police were alerted to the Copeland residence for the third time within two weeks, at each occasion answering to reports of screaming and the sounds of breaking furniture and utilities. The officers on scene reported the latest visit as "unbelievably violent" and "like a war zone". Copeland's wife was found in critical condition and transported to a hospital at once.

Mr. Copeland loudly protested his innocence even after being advised of his rights, screaming incoherently about how the mayhem in mansion was the work of "some invisible force" and even moved on to allude to the horror movie classic "Poltergeist" before being taken away in a borderline hysterical state. Police are investigating the possibility of drug use to explain the violent destruction the residence underwent.

(Continued on D5)

LA TIMES

FOREST HILL MURDERER STRIKES AGAIN!!!

Queens, NY — Yesterday morning the police discovered yet another transient who fell victim to the serial killer of NYC's Parkdale district. According to eyewitnesses, the body had been savaged with signatory violence attributed to the missing real estate developer, Arthur McAlester.

McAlester has been classified as armed, extremely dangerous and criminally insane. Police psychologists have gone on a limb in making their verdict regardless of a lack of study of McAlester himself, citing that "the circumstantial evidence proves without a shadow of doubt that Mr. McAlester should be considered a violent sociopath. He cannot be held responsible for his actions any more than it can be considered safe to approach him." McAlester's mental degeneration can be traced back several months, beginning with his frantic insistence that his home was being haunted by invisible demons. The tragic delusion came to a head last Christmas as Mr. McAlester's breakdown was caught on videotape by consultants from T&S Investigations, whom he had hired to rid the domicile of the nonexistent assailants. The parapsychologists' extensive framework of cameras captured McAlester's brutal killing spree on live feed, recording a battle that claimed the lives of seventeen people and resulted in the entire mansion burning to the ground. Miraculously, McAlester was able to escape

in spite of having been shot repeatedly. He managed to vanish into the forested areas emblematic of the region while rescue crews and police were still preoccupied with containing the fire.

McAlester's unnatural fortitude, as well as the abnormally sudden breakdown suffered by the formerly lucid family man, is attributed in large part to his subsequently uncovered black heroin addiction. Medical experts consulted by the police have posited that any number of dangerous additives might have been present in McAlester's dosage of the illegal narcotics, leading to his mental breakdown and the outbreak of violence evinced on the Forest Hills tape.

Curfew continues in all residential areas adjacent to McAlester's presumed location, but thankfully the numerous neighborhood watches and police volunteers' vigilance has not yet been needed. Citizens are cautioned from entering the Parkdale woods alone or from venturing beyond hearing range under any circumstances.



Terrel & Squib Pharmaceuticals, Inc. To Liquidate Hard-Won Capital

How Will Shareholders React?
By Richard Brodski

Terrel & Squib Pharmaceutical announced today in an unforeseeable move that they will be selling much of their recent expansions in their production capability. Two manufacturing plants in Penn County, Ohio and Kesselbach, Germany were decommissioned, the former having barely gone online before the surprise announcement. Municipal authorities in both locales have appealed the company

to reconsider their decision, but to no avail.

CEO John Terrel was unavailable for comment, but company Marketing Director Neil Ellingwood stated that "new business plans have been drawn that drastically alter company requirements in the near future. We acknowledge the hardship our sudden change of heart imposes on the people who had committed themselves to employment at our factories, but our decision was made at the highest executive level and cannot be changed, not even by our

sense of civic duty to our employees."

Company investors have also voiced disgruntlement at the decision to sell, suggesting that the reasons behind the change of heart have not trickled down from the highest levels they were made at. One of the few shareholders to express continued faith in Mr. Terrel's leadership, Charles Lindé, went on record saying, "The company was founded on John's and Lionel's [Squib, head of Research & Development] vision and skills. I have every confidence that they will continue to buck

the odds with no less success than they demonstrated in the early days."

Company spokespersons refused to comment on how the hastily re-gained capital is going to be invested. Rumors abound of new groundbreaking research headed in utmost secrecy by Dr. Squib, a famous pharmaceutical inventor. However, the nature of any new breakthroughs remains purely conjectural.

* * * * *

Conversation overheard in *La Coupole* - Paris, France
Translated from German

NOV 03 2001

"...these are the final schematics, then?"

"Barring some adjustments to the immediate terrain? Yes."

"And you said you have the land parceled out already?"

"Yes, I do. Choosing the locale was the easiest part of the operation. Spoiled for choice, really; people in the eastern regions are so ecstatic at the profits offered by this new run of cash crops that they'll forsake taxes, barley harvest and legal niceties all at once."

"Hmm. And the authorities?"

"All of them either caught up in toadying to the EU or chasing Islamic extremists who find their way in from Syria or Iran."

"So far, so good, but what about when international pressure starts pointing the national agencies to crack down on operations like ours?"

"I plan to recruit mainly from the local Worker's Part. The PKK has enough subversive irons of their own in the fire that a few bribes will bury the last inclination they might have had to turn informant on me."

"Have you planned contingencies against the... Colombian incidents?"

"The Colombian massacre, you mean? No. How would I? Why should I? I thought this... KS-4?... was supposed to be no more dangerous than the common poppy!"

"I can't really say. All I know is that the chemical side of our operations has advanced a warning to all plantation managers to take contingencies against such accidents."

"So now I should start worrying about my overseers suddenly going berserk while they're toting Kalashnikovs and everyone else for miles around is not?"

"Not worrying as such, but... just look at the devastation this Alvaro left in his wake. Surely some strategic planning could minimize the impact any kind of disturbances could have?"

"I'm a plant manager, not a tactician!"

"Slight correction, if I may?"

You were offered a position as an extremely well-paid associate in this venture, Herr Krohn, because last I heard, you were sick and tired of being a plant manager. We're not offering you a job where lunatics crop up like mushrooms. We're just forwarding a warning about a similar operation where something went wrong, so that you would not be caught by surprise if — Heaven forbid — it turns out to have something to do with KS-4."

"And getting cold feet at this point would be detrimental to my health?"

"I know it wouldn't be in your power to keep us from dragging you down with us. No, it's far better if this was just some Latino who'd been sniffing his fertilizers for too long. Let's just proceed with our plans."

"Fair enough. Now, the Kesselbach equipment shall be installed somewhere along the road between Tarsus and Sivas?"

"As you requested. Do you mind if I ask why?"

"What? You expect us to smuggle gallons of pure extract past Antwerp, every gram of it stinking to the high heavens? The customs dogs would be pointing at our ship like weathervanes before they even docked."

END TRANSCRIPTION

DAILY WORLD NEWS

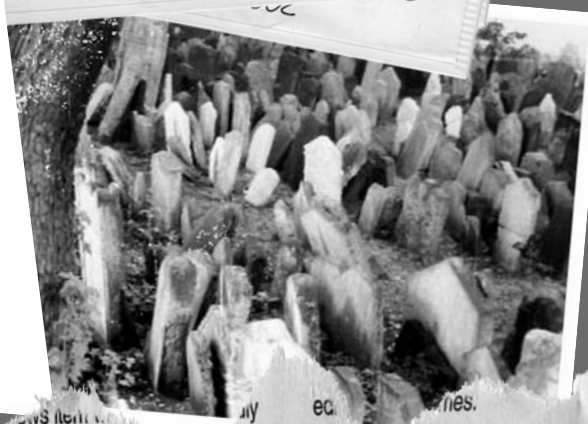
BECAUSE THE NEWS HAPPENS EVERY DAY

The Beverly Hills mansion of the movie millionaire Barry Copeland continues to be haunted for the third week in a row. The police thought they had solved the problem of the unearthly cataclysms when they put the owner, Barry Copeland, behind bars and his wife into St. Luke's Hospital, but the Man was as wrong as ever!

The horrible violence wrought by unseen assailants on the Copeland couple continues in the empty palace on Beverly, where horrified neighbors have repeatedly alerted the police due to eerie screaming and sounds of breaking glass from the supposedly empty building. All the police have been able to do to quell the haunting disturbances is to replace the torn plastic reading Police Line: Do Not

Cross. Obviously ghosts see no need to obey lawmakers who can't enforce their will on the unnatural and the abnormal!

Released of all charges due to obvious uninvolved with the diabolic terror, Mr. Copeland told our investigative reporters that he will turn to the very best in trying to resolve the dramatic horror that has gripped his family. And he's not talking those spatzes at Orpheus Group, either! Determined to answer in kind to the major firepower these invisible fiends have turned against him, Mr. Copeland told the L.A. Enquirer that he's called in T&S Investigations, the people to call when your house is in need of an exterminator. And we're not talking roaches here, dear readers.



Paranormal Investigations Eclipsing T&S' Pharmaceuticals Profits

Terrel & Squib Incorporated (previously known solely as Terrel & Squib Pharmaceuticals) latest quarterly release reveals that the profits of the upstanding pharmaceuticals firm have taken second seat to those received from the company's pioneering work into the field of the paranormal.

The much-lampooned Orpheus Group's most serious competitor's outstanding success record has, combined with its highly priced services, been well received by the well-to-do with problems that in prior years would have necessitated relocating, or perhaps calling the Catholic Church to see if a certain Father Merrick was available. Since Terrel & Squib Investigations' entry into the picture, however, Hollywood's brightest

stars and other members of high society throughout the contiguous United States and the business sector worldwide have been beset by an epidemic of what, for lack of a better term, can be called "hauntings." The speed at which the new "afterlife industries" have released them from their predicament has led some to cry fraud, but Terrel & Squib at least stands above reproach.

"I can't say I understand half of what they're up to on their case scenes, or believe half the contingencies they seem to be taking," said John Malcolm, Ph.D., of Duke University, "but visiting a locale that Terrel & Squib's Investigative branch termed 'violent PLE infestation' sure convinced me that these people are up to no humbug." Despite inconclusive

subpoenas from some of their clients, Terrel & Squib's own experts' testimonies and that of impartial authorities such as Dr. Malcolm forced the courts to concede that Terrel & Squib Investigations provides a legitimate service.

Terrel & Squib's chief rival, the Orpheus Group, has not been so convincing in their efforts, as seen from the recent audit by the IRS into the accounts of the solely paranormally-oriented company. Company spokespersons were unwilling to comment on the possible repercussions if irregularities are discovered during the audit, but it's clear that criminal charges leveled against their largest competitors could spur Terrel & Squib Investigations to even greater successes.

- 5 weeks till next quarterly
- Sales good for 34,70: deficit 28,94.
- Barely in the safe: account switch from euro to \$. Further trouble?

Make headway for:

- New batch for the Phish-worshipping hippies
- discount from Turkish produce.
- Funding, disposable personnel for Project: Covenant
- Dr. Roth's funding request re: Ishida + other Phantasms
- Consult w/ Rayna about introducing foreign profits w/o IRS hanging us all out to dry

Internal correspondence, T&S Incorporated

The first parasynthetic implants have gone online and are producing consistent results in laboratory environments. License for field testing pending: Director S. has forwarded this general order to all research personnel involved.

The P-S Implant test subjects are to be watched for the following conditions: antisocial behavior and mental aberrations most likely including paranoia, hallucinations, mania or depression. This applies to every subject who has received an implant, not only the field-testers of retinal or 'telepathic' implants as previously assumed. Any subjects who at any point demonstrate autism, unforeseen sensory overload or behavior reminiscent of multiple or alternate personalities are to be withdrawn from the program at once and diagnosed by medical staff associated with Internal Security at once. Director S. predicts a remote possibility of violent altercations following such behavior. There also exists evidence of massive physiological trauma as a side effect under conditions of intense stress, but this has occurred in a statistically negligible number of subjects.

Furthermore, physiological degeneration is to be presumed as a common risk to all subjects not sufficiently acclimated to the

implants: rejection stress and side effects are predicted to resemble afflictions including measles, kuru, various forms of cancer, chronic blood poisoning and cerebral palsy. As per the statutes of the volunteer form all subjects knowingly signed at the onset of the project, we are not compelled by law to inform our field testers of the new results.

Human Resources has forwarded a memo to all associated personnel to withhold any and all additional information on the possible side effects from test subjects. Any cases of acute physiological or mental side effects are to be withdrawn from the program and forwarded to Dr. Abdon's department. Research personnel are not to remove implants under any circumstances: Dr. Abdon reports that he's confident any side effects noted at a sufficiently early juncture can be contained without interrupting their participation in Project: Suffrage.

Edward,

I thought we were doing groundbreaking research when somebody brought the hatchet job from brainstorming to reality: so how come Dr. Squib is sending us alphabetical list of what to expect, complete with contingency plans for when it all goes south? I swear, I'm getting worried about what they must be up to at Harvard these days...

~ Mat

Pirate Producer Uncovered, Found Dead in Household Fire

Robert Engen • Staff Writer

Warwick, OH- The outbreak of a house fire on 4 A Neibolt Street yesterday evening concluded the hunt for an illegal broadcasting enterprise that the authorities had been tracking in vain for months. Philip Finlay, 24, died in the fire before the fire department could bring it under control, but swift action by of the rescue crew left the domicile itself largely intact. Police arrived on the scene shortly afterwards, spurred not by suspicions of arson but a distinctly separate investigation into Mr. Finlay's questionable means of earning his living.

Evidence left intact due to their basement location proved Mr. Finlay to be the one-man producer and distributor of Bad Egg Productions, a pirate network outlet specializing in underground culture, conspiracy theories and pornography. He has been subsequently identified as a dropout from Cal Tech who was wanted by the state of Nevada on several charges relating to illegal materials that he alternately sold or broadcast under his trademark. He had fled the state several months earlier.

Police are looking into the curious circumstances of his death, as the coroner's report revealed that Mr. Finlay died of asphyxiation but not smoke poisoning. A gas main in the house kitchen was found severed, suggesting arson turned to manslaughter if not outright murder. Police continue to question eyewitnesses, but no one has reported seeing anything unusual in the general vicinity of Neibolt Street.

Several of Mr. Finlay's friends have filed demands that the case be investigated as pre-meditated murder, having offered testimonies that, ironically enough, only incriminate their late acquaintance further. Following a claim that Mr. Finlay was assassinated by the owners of an electronics plant in Smithville, Ohio served only to uncover security camera footage that identified him as the previously unknown interloper on the property thirteen days earlier. Spokesmen of Terrel & Squib Incorporated, owners of the Smithville factory, had scant sympathy for Mr. Finlay's tragic demise: "He would have been uncovered eventually. Even if he had made it out of his house in time, he would have found he survived a close brush with death only to be charged to the fullest extent of the law for trespassing and industrial espionage."

The late Mr. Finlay's friends' replies to the statement by T&S could unfortunately not be printed due to some moral standards we at the Herald hold dear to our hearts. To quote Chief Bauer of the Warwick PD, "wanting justice for a dead friend is all fine and well, but all these hippies have had to offer is libel against upstanding corporate enterprises and conspiracy theories that would embarrass Chris Carter."

Transcript of Pirate Internet-Video Broadcast

OCT 13 2002

"Quiet now, everybody: your favorite independent news reporter is going deep into enemy territory in Spookville, Ohio..."

(Footage of maintenance door, largely sterile corridors filtered through night vision lenses. Hoarse, excited voice reporting:)

"Rumor mill has it that all manner of weird shit has hit the fan all across the country lately. Yours truly did some digging, dating it all exactly seventeen days after this diabolical facility opened its doors here in the middle of sweet Ohio nowhere. Seventeen, guys and gals, the new Mark of the Beast as demonstrated by the ever-cuddly HaxxorRat at CFortesFortress.com just this week."

(Camera entering larger hallway, veering quickly downwards and to the left. Voice continues hoarse, now out of breath: broken by occasional static)

"Notice the security blips, dear viewers? Your modern-day muckraker has his work cut out for him like Upton Sinclair never would've dreamed of. All I can say is, thank God for underground tech like our unpatented, unpaid for and probably illegal voice recognition hardware that brings you live commentary right from where the action's at."

(Camera darting through double doors, entering large assembly hall of some sorts)

"Wheee-ooo-weee! It looks like Doc Frankenstein's lab was unfaithful with an operating room and had quadruplets!"

(Camera scrolling around unsteadily, making strange dashes, occasionally rising towards security camers)

"I may be only a humble Ph.D. from MIT with a FFD given me by the great CHE, so I don't have a problem saying I don't know what half this stuff is for."

(Camera turning in various directions)

"It don't look like no microchip factory I was ever in. Ooh, now that's interesting..."

(Closing in at bounding run towards large, white machine roughly the size of loading truck)

"What's with those big, black glass cubes at the ends, I hear you wonder? Well, would that I could tell you, but on first glance yours truly is as stumped as you, dear audience. Whatever are lovebirds John and Leo Squid getting up to here?"

(Camera zooming closer, focusing on small, rectangular boxes and moving on towards the end of the aperture)

"Well well well, did anybody tell the good Bible-thumpers of Smithville that they're living next to an arms factory? That's right, gents: as I live and breathe, those little black things are gun cartridges. All set for next day's work, right next to a big mechanical elephant that looks like it came out of Star Trek -or a dentists'- and... lookie lookie, old Mecha-Dumbo's sporting high voltage signs."

(Camera continues to scroll past white expanse of the machinery as narrative continues, comes to halt by the black cube; zooms closer)

"Well, like even my bimbo of a little sister could tell you, this contraption has two functions; Arc and Welding. Rest easy, ye solid burghers of the Midwest, at least nobody's making biological weapons next to your back yard. What are they making, though? I spy with my little third eye a guy in a lab suit standing here all day, fusing something to the rounds for that extra bang for your buck... something that seems to be loaded from this -man, it's cold!- container that enters old Babar through the back door..."

"YHEAA <Violent burst of static>"

(Camera flies backwards, comes rolling down, stays at rest looking at ceiling.)

"Whatthefuckwasthatwhatthefuc..."

(Camera rising to vertical position again, scrolls around almost full 360 degrees)

"Man, if that didn't register on tape I'm cutting this part before I go on the air. Guys wouldn't ever let me live it down if they get to record me squealing like a little bitch..."

"Fuck. Big Brother might've registered that yell."

(Camera bounding towards double doors, exiting to hallway and continues running)

"This is the Bad Eggs Broadcast signing off for the day, everybody: I better be out of here before Cerberus' college buddies gone corporate come sniffing at my ass and decide they want a tenderloin out of my heel..."

END OF TRANSCRIPTION

The Big Picture

Note: This is a Storyteller-only chapter with spoilers about the history of Terrel & Squib Investigations. Please do not read any further if you are ever planing to play in a T&S game or in an Orpheus™ game where T&S will be used.

In the Beginning

Terrel & Squib, Inc. is what Orpheus Group should have been.

When JDG Cryogenics became Orpheus Group in 1994, they embarked on a search for a recipe that would enable them to capitalize on Jane Kennedy's incidental discovery. The company's limited resources meant that when a branch of their research operations finally showed consistent promise, the whole company landed on it like a starved vulture swooping in on a kill.

Their new secret weapon was of course the breakthrough of Dr. Amours Katilian, a botanist who had been studying the infinite varieties of South American plant life and discovered an answer to Orpheus Group's frantic questions. Dr. Katilian presented the Group with a privately grown cache of plants called *Kakos stromithicarum*, from which Orpheus Group was able to extract a reliable serum that facilitated projecting human souls from their bodies. But, as revealed in other sources, Katilian was lying when he claimed credit for the discovery. In truth he was just the mouthpiece of the creature that would both create the drug called pigment and turn T&S Pharmaceuticals into the high-priced ghost-hunting company it is today.

Heaven (and the Spectral hive-mind) alone know what roads led Katilian into the Spectre's path. Had it tagged this very plant as the ideal tool for its creation, only seizing Katilian when he so very conveniently gave it an avenue to transfer *K. stromithicarum* to more civilized climes? Or were the Spectres watching the emergent Orpheus Group from the very beginning, silently working to build a bridge to the living world even as Orpheus' scientists were trying to bridge the same gap from their side of the grave? No one can say for certain.

However, something went wrong from the Spectres' point of view. Orpheus Group was as blind and naked as a newborn puppy, but one whose trashing could be used to break open a barrier that had stood in the Spectres' way for a long, long time... but entities from literally out of their world got in their way. It is ironic that

however impotent Orpheus Group's mysterious backers were in spiritual matters, they were able to stymie the Spectres by the very influence and affluence that made Orpheus Group so receptive to their clandestine support. Malevoy and its kind had no options as these mysterious backers closed their stranglehold on the nascent projecting company. The Marion penitentiary fire, set to bury all evidence of the disastrous Project: Flatline, was the ultimate noose they could tighten around Orpheus' neck. After that debacle they could force the company to toe whatever line they wanted lest their funding vanish, their past sins be brought out into the open and their influential friends leave them to the wolves.

The Spectres are creatures of nightmare. They could have toyed with Orpheus Group's ignorant members for as long as they pleased without fear of retribution. Reapers could have manifested to deliver commands in grating voices, backed by the full horror of relatives and co-workers dying in dozens of unnatural ways. They could have made the walls bleed and windows scream in agony until their shouts shattered themselves... and all it would have earned them was a ship that sunk because something (or some things) sent both the rats and crew fleeing in terror.

Malevoy was a creature of cold, alien intelligence no less keen than that of any of the monsters graced with the title of *Reaper*. It could decipher the antics of the humans it observed from behind Katilian's eyes and recognized the point when Orpheus Group became hopelessly mired in earthly obligations. Its strategy was simple: acknowledge failure and start anew somewhere else. It withdrew from Katilian and killed him, leaving behind the harmless scientific notes he had made during his research and even the warehouse full of anything-but-harmless samples of tainted *Kakos stromithicarum*.

The plants might not be pigment in the same sense as the future street drug, but they were nonetheless the desired poison for the soul that had been Malevoy's aim all along. If anything, leaving them in Orpheus Group's hands only ensured that they would be shot down the veins of a delightfully large number of humans, chaining all their souls on Earth when their bungling intrusion into the Underworld inevitably killed them.

The only good to come out of the Flatline fiasco was a test run for the creation of pigment and a useful ally in the reliably twisted ghost, Uriah Bishop, and the more weak-minded compatriots whom he was able to turn into his personal following. Or so Malevoy thought, until both turned out to be possibly fatal oversights.



Switching Tracks

Following on a respectful suggestion of Bishop's, Malevoy did not merely seek a replacement for Amours Katilian. It turned its attentions to cornering a chemist who not only had enough credibility so that people wouldn't be asking "how could *that* guy come up with the drug of the century?" This person also needed the right connections to begin distribution... *and fast*.

That person was Lionel Squib.

Squib's possession began and was solidified within a matter of days. The doctor went to have a weekend off at his vacation home by Lake Huron; he didn't return until the following Wednesday, explaining a case of the flu that had left him in no fit state to get right back to work. John Terrel (the only one who was in any position to interrogate the company vice-president about his thoughtless handling of a bout of illness) backed off as soon as Squib's suddenly reptilian smile turned his way. Squib made some arrangements that very day to take a temporary retreat from his normal duties: he'd had an idea that he wished to pursue.

Copying most of Katilian's work by rote memory, Malevoy took a back seat for long enough to allow Squib to scribble up the rest of the research notes needed to present a viable plan for a laboratory to begin work from. Though Squib was making groundbreaking discoveries thanks to his diabolical source of inspiration, Malevoy seethed with the forced inactivity this period of its plan forced on it. When the plans were made and a few samples had been readied, "Squib" contacted Terrel again, enticing and intimidating him into becoming one of the greatest drug barons of the dawning century. The battle of wills that ensued between "Squib" and Terrel over the new direction of the company was finished before it ever began. It took almost no time for the famous, admired, successful John Terrel to become acclimated to his status as a second fiddle to his eerily ruthless partner.

Literally under new management, Terrel & Squib Pharmaceuticals began to change. Their entire holdings and capital were summed up in a surprise spring audit: a few of the more prominent shareholders were contacted by a strangely haggard Terrel about how "our miracle-worker" had come up with a radical new business plan. The subtext of Terrel's communiqué was that there had better be no dissenting voices in the new scheme: it was a message that was surprisingly easy to impart after having had to plan high-stakes finance with a Spectre. By hook and the occasional crook, T&S shareholders

were made to stand by and watch as the leading duo put their money to unknown uses.

Behind the scenes, Squib was busy dismembering select T&S facilities at home and abroad to lay the foundation for worldwide pigment distribution. The U.S. sales were made in order to raise capital for real estate, wages, extensive bribes and other necessities of beginning an international collection of narcotics plantations. The European factory was merely decommissioned and its equipment put in storage, there to be conveniently “lost,” sold on to non-existent partners or “scrapped” due to some patently false malfunctions. This equipment would become the tools in the pigment manufacturing plants where the harvested *Kakos stromithicarum* (and other plants that fit the bill) would be turned into ready-to-use, easily transported black heroin. Processing facilities and outright farms were founded in Asia and the Near East. Various local magnates were recruited to perform the work and reap the profits of producing pigment, while selling it on was where Terrel & Squib’s closer associates entered the picture. While Malevoy’s tentative ally Uriah Bishop commanded the supply of pigment to the newly founded pigment cults, T&S entered the market of street drugs, with a growing niche that was guaranteed to remain 100% theirs. They alone would be providing the huge majority of pigment to the demanding black market, and no other source save Bishop could replicate the production process. Once the framework was in place, Malevoy could simply open the floodgates and let greed infect as many souls as possible with black heroin.

As “Squib” was busy building a narcotic empire, he was also drawing plans to open the projecting division of the company. The purpose behind T&S Investigations was simple: Orpheus Group had escaped Malevoy’s control, but they had managed to stay afloat for long enough to come up with a substitute for the *Kakos stromithicarum* plants. Examining the veritable archives of biological and scientific knowledge in Squib’s head alone (let alone the research libraries available to people with the will to plumb them), Malevoy knew that methods existed to access the Underworld even without the help of the Spectre ichor infused into the plants. Knowing that they might well survive enough trials and even their own errors to become a viable force opposing the Spectres’ great work, Malevoy decided that it could do with a weapon custom-made to distract the Orpheus Group. A company that was too busy whoring itself to wealthy clientele (if only to get a leg up from its competition) was a company that was

much farther from some very crucial discoveries about the *true* nature of pigment. Besides, having mortal agents who were hooked on pigment would cut down too many souls with a single stroke for the Spectre *not* to commission them.

Terrel and Squib, Inc. Takes Shape

T&S Investigations, a sister company that quickly eclipsed its parent enterprise in the public eye, opened with all the flash and pomp typical of their later operations. To be sure, T&S Pharmaceuticals’ extensive PR division beat the new projecting firm’s drum for all they were worth, trying to upstage the amateurish or merely non-credible competition (that consisted mostly of Orpheus Group trying to introduce itself over gales of laughter). But with the purportedly more stable “company version” of pigment (called Eidolon) still experiencing some experimental glitches, and a severely deficient work force, T&S was in no shape to contend with Orpheus Group right from the onset. Still, massive capital earned from unrequited promises to investors, the old-established T&S Pharmaceuticals and above all the growing pigment subculture kept the company marching strong in spite of any and all mishaps.

The projecting division was easily funded, but not so easily brought to reality. A lack of experience in skimming that Terrel & Squib’s draconian management practices all but ensured would never go away forced the company to look in other directions for their operatives. They found strength in technology instead.

Burning money on engineering projects landed T&S with functional Kirlian technology that was quickly adopted to portable field units for scientists and ghostbusters alike. Ghostshot ammo was a necessity in the absence of portable nuclear reactors: their invention became a defining turn in T&S’ methodology.

Ghostshot itself is one of the few articles of paratechology produced by paid members of the T&S Paranormal Research division. A simple process featuring unorthodox electronic equipment working at high power is sufficient to lace ichor onto the individual bullets during the manufacturing process; Spectres are hardly needed for anything but ripping one of their own apart and leaving them bleeding in the right corner of the machine. However, everything from Labyrinth cages

onwards tends to be more complicated, requiring direct otherworldly assistance. Many of the Spectral artificers on earth have been drafted to Malevoy's designs, most of them lurking near Headquarters and showing up from time to time in order to keep T&S armed to the teeth. Concern over the ramifications of a single Spectre who remembers soul-forging becoming an Orphan-Grinder forces Malevoy to keep a close eye on the various research projects. Not surprisingly, then, Lionel Squib remains the titular head of Paranormal Research.

Malevoy has had to delegate the various financial, management and tactical duties to sufficiently cowed and talented mortal henchmen such as Terrel, Barclay and others. The end result is that T&S is run competently until Dr. Squib emerges from the labs, delivering new business plans or agendas that the rest of upper management must scramble to implement without delay. This terror-driven leadership scheme partially explains Terrel & Squib's shoddy management practices. The rest of the blame is easy to lay at the door of people who willingly orchestrate global drug trafficking, order troublesome employees to be quietly assassinated and who *don't* put a gun to their mouth rather than work with something like "Lionel Squib."

The invention of Labyrinth cages led to a second angle T&S Investigations has adopted to make up for its lack of a competent pool of projectors. Timeless methods of imprisonment and breaking captives' wills were put to the test against ghosts locked in the cages, resulting in a growing number of spirits and hues doing what T&S tells them to and the building of facilities to make the process more efficient.

Several new top-secret "Re-Education Centers" joined Terrel & Squib's list of drug plantations and Spectral workshops with the completion of the ghostly prison called Heaven. Several more were to be built shortly thereafter in run-down warehouses and abandoned apartment complexes. The company's specialized employees known as "ghostbreakers" use the controlled environment to force captured souls through a variety of psychological hoops and re-programming sessions until they can be trusted to enter field environments and swing the course of operations through sheer force of numbers.

Using these advantages in addition to many the same methods as Orpheus Group is what has put Terrel & Squib Investigations on the map, not to mention the

effect of their extensive PR campaigns and tendency to toady to anyone willing to pay their outrageous fees. As the field of paranormal investigations begins to build a history of its own, a showdown of some sort between the competing "dead firms" is slowly coalescing out of the woodwork.

The Nature of the Beast

T&S Investigations can only be understood when considering that the entire company is a tool. T&S is not in the business of exploring the Afterlife. Why would it be? The entities ultimately pulling its strings know the place intimately. Terrel & Squib Incorporated is the tool that Orpheus Group should have been, a collection of humans who can be set to whatever agendas the Spectres desire and weeded every so often for liabilities and potential assistants. The former are individuals like Grace Ishida and David Stevens: kept for as long as they perform a useful (preferably hazardous) service and slated for termination the minute their usefulness is eclipsed by the danger they present. The latter are those like Dr. Abdon, Security Chief Barclay or many of the Re-Education Centers' staple of ghostbreakers. They police the actions of their fellow humans so that the Spectres won't need to, serving as grunts who can do the work of harvesting the world's ghosts until the hives become fully entrenched. They draw the world's attention to anywhere but where it should be, and in the end the average operative at Terrel & Squib has no idea what they're doing.

However, as PROJECT: COVENANT proves, occasionally the monkeys come up with ideas that are so far-fetched that no Spectre would have bothered... and so tempting that they just have to be indulged. The parasynthetic implants are a good example. Malevoy never considered that humans would expedite the ancient and (in the hive-mind at least) well-documented changes wrought on humans by Spectral empowerment, nor that technology and the changes that befell the Underworld since the rising of the Stormwall might have made them more potent than before. Terrel & Squib is, if anything, more dangerous now than it was ever intended to be.

If Terrel & Squib Incorporated isn't brought to a halt, there is no telling what other dark surprises await within the Pandora's Box, the one that its employees are unwittingly forcing further ajar every day...

CHAPTER : 02

Unearthed Player's Guide

24 hours a day, seven days a week.
No job is too big. No fee is too big.
— Ghostbusters

You want to know what being a spook's like? Fine. Just don't blame me if you never sleep easy again.

A month ago we went out on an operation. We got the usual amount of intel beforehand—meaning you could fit it all on a 3x5 card with room to spare—but this operation was a little different because our client was Terrel & Squibb itself. Seems that one of their research labs had developed a little ghost problem and we were sent in to get rid of it. A cakewalk, they told us.

That was my first clue we were in for a load of trouble.

First off, the place was creepy as hell. Long, narrow hallways, small rooms, and tons of equipment whose purpose I couldn't even guess at. They had Kirlian bluelegs checking out the upper floors, while we spooks went down below. I was in a team with Chico—that's Javier to you, until he says otherwise—and a Broken Blip called Ophelia. Anyway, Chico and I took point, since Ophelia wasn't much good for anything except "Attack that!" We came to the second sub-basement, and all of a sudden I started feeling chills on my neck. You've heard of "someone walking on your grave?" Double that and you'll get an idea of what I felt. You can bet I had my eyes peeled the whole time we were down there.

Javier made some crack about how he scared a reporter half to death by going incorporeal right in front of her, I think to lighten the mood. It didn't work. After a couple yards I noticed something funny with the walls. A thin, slimy gray ooze coated them, and when I touched them it came off on my fingers. It felt like motor oil, but besides that I didn't have a clue what it was. If I'd known then what I know now, I'd have turned tail and run right then. But I didn't know, so I just got a little more cautious and kept creeping forward.

That's when the clicking started. It sounded like thousands of marbles hitting the floor, one after another, and it was getting louder. We froze; there was nothing in the hallway all the way to the end, but when you're a spook that doesn't mean much. Anything can just reach right through and get you. My old Bowie knife formed in my hand, a comforting—but nigh-unto-useless—reassurance.

That's when they swarmed out of the stairwell. Rats, hundreds of them, their skin bloated and festering, their eyes glowing red with pure spite. They swarmed over the floor, the walls, the ceiling... gravity didn't mean anything to them. It was like a flood, and they were coming straight for us.

Now, I've never been too keen on my own death, and I wasn't about to take it lying down. I breathed deep, and then I *wailed* at them. That scream was distilled frustration, frustration at seeing my friends die, at watching Ivanovich turn into a Spectre, at Management for sending us down without even a Kirlian crew for backup... I put everything I could into that scream, and it shredded the rats like razor blades. It flayed the skin and muscle

from their bones, and then blasted the rest to dust. I must've shredded two or three dozen of them, but there were more.

I kept it up as long as I could, but finally I reached my limit and collapsed. Chico grabbed me, the only thing that kept my face from hitting the concrete. "Get us out of here!" I gasped. "Ophelia!" I reached my hand out to her, but she just looked down at me. And then, just barely, she shook her head no.

The rats swarmed around us, biting and clawing our gauze apart. I reached for her one last time, and then everything flashed ice-cold. We were up on the main floor. Javier manifested to get a blueleg to call for backup, while I leaned against a table to get my breath back. Ophelia's face looked at me every time I closed my eyes. You see, right before we left, when the rats were swarming up her body and ripping her gauze apart, she looked down at me and she... damn it, she smiled!



introduction

So, you want to join Terrel & Squib's paranormal division, do you? I guess if you've gotten this far, it means Management thinks you might have what it takes. We'll see how eager you are after I give you the low-down on everything that goes on around here. Death's the name of the game here, and you've got to be quick or it'll catch up with you real fast.

First off, forget all that cheesy Orpheus Group jargon you probably studied up on. "Lament," "Crucible," "Shade..." Management thought it all sounded too corny (and, for once, I agree with them), so we have our own jargon for what we do. Some of them are still the same, but if you start calling your team a "crucible" you'll look like a freak.

Also, get it out of your head that this is some sort of cushy celebrity lifestyle where all you do is go in, get rid of the ghosts, and live a life of ease while Management keeps the paychecks coming. This is down and dirty work, and for every operation with a little girl ghost who just wants to say goodbye to her parents, there are five where the ghost doesn't want to leave, and ten where it's some Spectre wants to see you deader than you already are.

As if that weren't enough, Management doesn't even tell us what's going on before we go. We're on our own past the usual "stop the haunting at such-and-such address." And if there isn't a haunting — if it's just the boiler making noise, for example — you'd better make damn sure that it looks like a ghost *was* there, and that T&S was the reason it went away.

I hope you've got a strong stomach too, 'cause you're gonna see things that'll make you wish you never set foot through that door. I've seen some sights that make me want to puke just thinking about them, and I still get nightmares from OPERATION: SILENT FLAME. Say goodbye to your sweet dreams, kid; you won't be having many more of them.

So... you still interested? Well, you can't say I didn't warn you. Just don't come crying to me when you see your best friend eaten by a Spectre. Onto the real training...

SINCE MOST OF THIS SECTION IS PRESENTED IN THE "VOICE" OF LANCE SHOMAKER, ANY COMMENTS DEALING WITH MECHANICS OR ASPECTS OF THE GAME THAT HE WOULDN'T KNOW ABOUT ARE PRESENTED IN ITALICIZED PARENTHESIS. SOME THINGS, LIKE THE ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES FOR STAINS, ARE NOT, BUT WE TRUST YOU TO BE ABLE TO FIGURE IT OUT.

- THE MANAGEMENT

Roles

Terrel & Squib may have a small team of projectors, but our support staff is huge. For every true projector, there are literally dozens of normal humans providing support, some of them a lot more visibly than others. You might even come from one of these departments, for all I know. Heaven knows that the field operatives get enough NDEs to make a whole company of projectors. So, let's see if you're any one of these guys...

These Roles are provided to give an idea of what goes on behind the scenes of Terrel & Squib, and to give the Storyteller a quick reference for creating NPCs. However, there's no rule saying that a player can't play one of the Roles listed below.

Role: Cameraman

Description: Everybody loves a good show. You're the one that gives it to them. Whether it's by still, video, or Kirlian camera, your job is to get the best shots possible on every operation. Not only does it make the customer happy and gather useful information, but you can beat any reality TV series out there. World War II, Korea, Viet Nam, Desert Storm, 9/11... it's the cameramen that made the scenes that stick in people's memories. Unfortunately, some of the pictures from the "War on Ghosts" that stick in your memory are much more vivid than you would like.

Attributes: (6/4/3) Mental, Social, Physical

Abilities: (11/7/4) Talents, Knowledges, Skills

Talents: Alertness, Expression, Intuition

Skills: Technology

Knowledges: Computer, Investigation

Variations

Medium - Camera Crew Leader (Add +1 to Attributes, +4 to Abilities, and +2 to Backgrounds)

High - T&S Film Chief (Add +2 to Attributes, +6 to Abilities, +5 to Backgrounds, and +1 to Willpower)

Role: Ghostbreaker

Description: You were always fascinated with psychology. Not that Freudian bullcrap they fed you in the university, but real, practical psychology, the psychology that makes other people do what you want them to. You molded people like clay your whole life — your parents, your friends, your teachers, anyone — but eventually it all started getting bland.

People are so shallow, so predictable. You were seriously considering going into law, but then Orpheus

Group came along. How hard would it be to convince a ghost to be your friend? Or your lover? Your mind burned with new possibilities, but unfortunately, Orpheus Group wasn't hiring. They only wanted people that were halfway dead already. Terrel & Squib, on the other hand, needed someone with just your set of skills. Now you work with ghosts like a clockmaker: you take them apart, see what makes them tick, and put them back together however you want.

Attributes: (6/4/3) Social, Mental, Physical

Abilities: (11/7/4) Talents/Knowledges/Skills

Talents: Empathy, Expression, Intimidation, Intuition, Subterfuge

Skills: Performance

Knowledges: Academics, Enigmas

Variations

Medium - Experienced Ghostbreaker (Add +1 to Attributes, +3 to Abilities, +1 to Backgrounds, and +1 to Willpower)

High - Ghostbreaking Department Head (Add +2 to Attributes, +6 to Abilities, +2 to Backgrounds, and +2 to Willpower)

Role: Marketer

Description: You knew you had a knack for selling things. Whenever you did those door-to-door fundraisers for school activities, you always won the prize for best salesman. You paid your way through college by selling cutlery one summer. And then you hit the university and realized that there was more to selling than a charming smile and a quick tongue: there was art. You took every design class you could, studied commercials with a scientist's eye, and even took a few psychology courses, because what harm could they do?

You hoped to make it big with one of the national companies, or maybe freelance yourself out to the highest bidder. But then you saw Terrel & Squib at the Career Fair, and the idea of selling ghosts was just too good to pass up. You made up a spiel on the spot and tried it on the rep manning the booth. She took your name and number, and a week later you got a call. You finished school in no time flat, and now you rake in the big bucks selling what most people don't believe exists.

You believe, of course. Part of your training included going on a few operations. Now you do everything you can to convince people they need your services. The thing is, this time you actually believe it.

Attributes: (6/4/3) Social, Mental, Physical

Abilities: (11/7/4) Talents, Skills, Knowledges

Talents: Empathy, Expression, Subterfuge

Skills: Etiquette, Performance

Knowledges: Computers

Variations

Medium - Regional Marketing Coordinator (Add +1 to Attributes, +4 to Abilities, and +2 to Backgrounds)

High - Chief of Marketing (Add +2 to Attributes, +6 to Abilities, +5 to Backgrounds, and +1 to Willpower)

Role: Field Coordinator

Description: The best-laid plans of mice and men aren't worth jack in the field. No matter how carefully you plan things out beforehand, something always goes wrong. It might be just a short in the wiring, or a flat tire... or it might be a nest of Spectres thirsty for human blood.

Whenever something goes wrong, it's your job to fix it. And whenever things go right, it's your job to keep it that way. All the information for an operation comes into your headset, and you've got to sort through it to figure out what's important and what's not.

In a sense, you've got to be a jack-of-all-trades, telling people on all sides of the operation what they need to do to get the job done. This is what I sometimes end up doing, and trust me, it's a nightmare of a job.

Attributes: (6/4/3) Mental, Social, Physical

Abilities: (11/7/4) Knowledges, Talents, Skills

Talents: Alertness, Intuition, Leadership

Skills: Security

Knowledges: Computer, Enigmas, Investigation

Variations

Medium - Remote Operation Coordinator (Add +6 to Abilities and +1 to Willpower)

High - Chief of Operations (Add +1 to Attributes, +8 to Abilities, +3 to Backgrounds, and +2 to Willpower).

Role: Parapsychologist

Description: Ghosts are fascinating creatures. They don't eat, sleep, age, or do anything living people do... and yet they still think they're the same person.

Maybe they are, and maybe they aren't, but it's the thinking part that's important. In fact, without bodies, ghosts are nothing but thought, which makes your job so much easier.

Sure, most of the "real" psychologists out there don't take you seriously, but you're okay with that. Let them stay in their protective little bubbles. And if one of them ever really ticks you off, you can always find a Blip somewhere that you can convince to "visit" them. Just how "pseudoscientific" would they think ghosts are then?

Attributes: (6/4/3) Social, Mental, Physical

Abilities: (11/7/4) Knowledges, Talents, Skills

Talents: Awareness, Empathy, Expression
Skills: Meditation
Knowledges: Academics, Enigmas, Science
Variations

Medium - Ghostbreaking Consultant (Add +1 to Attributes, +4 to Abilities, and +2 to Backgrounds).

High - Chief of Parapsychology (Add +2 to Attributes, +6 to Abilities, +5 to Backgrounds, and +1 to Willpower)

Role: Public Relations Representative

Description: Damage control — that's what you're all about. Oh, in the best cases it's just making T&S look like a legitimate company instead of some crackpot fringe group. Inviting reporters, film crews, and respectable scientists along on operations fills most of your time, as does the occasional spot on a TV talk show. But when something really goes wrong, you've got to show it in the best light possible.

Spin doctoring comes with the territory, but more than that, you've got to show a good face. People will only believe you if you look confident in what you're saying... and if they believe you, then they won't start asking questions like "What about that Forest Hills incident?" and "Can you comment on reports that a ghost killed one of your customers while you were on the job?"

Attributes: (6/4/3) Social, Mental, Physical

Abilities: (11/7/4) Talents, Skills, Knowledge

Talents: Alertness, Expression, Intuition, Leadership, Subterfuge

Skills: Etiquette, Performance

Knowledges: Politics, Bureaucracy

Variations

Medium: Law Enforcement Liaison (add +4 to Abilities, +4 to Backgrounds, and +1 to Willpower)

High: Official Company Spokesman (add +2 to Attributes, +6 to Abilities, +5 to Backgrounds, and +1 to Willpower)

Role: Researcher

Description: You had the dream of making the next Great Discovery. The problem is, you quickly found that all the Great Discoveries were made by people a lot smarter than you. It looked like you'd be stuck with filling in the details until the next big paradigm shift came along and blasted them all to pieces.

Well, the next big paradigm shift is here. The world

of ghosts is yielding new secrets every day, and even if what you're doing does feel a lot like filling in the details, they're details that no one else has ever seen before.

For the first time in years you're excited about your work... especially when you're assigned to a field operation. The nightmares are a bit troublesome, but there's always got to be sacrifice when pursuing Knowledge.

Attributes: (6/4/3) Mental, Social, Physical

Abilities: (11/7/4) Knowledges, Skills, Talents

Talents: Alertness, Intuition

Skills: Crafts, Technology

Knowledges: Academics, Computer, Enigmas, Science

Variations

Medium - Parascientific Specialist (Add +4 to Abilities, +4 to Backgrounds, and +1 to Willpower).

High - Head of R&D (Add +1 to Attributes, +6 to Abilities, +7 to Backgrounds, and +2 to Willpower)

Role: Security Guard

Description: The scientists and the projectors may get all the glory, but the only reason they work is because they know you're backing them up with a loaded magazine of GhostShot ammo. You're the backup force on operations. The perpetual "Plan B" that hopefully doesn't have to be used. Most of the time, you're not.

Most big name operations end up with no ghost at all, or a little Blip or Drone that can hardly make you shiver. But when it turns out to be Something Else, you get called in.

You've seen some nasty stuff in your time, but you just keep coming back. Not only does T&S pay better than any other security gig out there, but you just can't beat the rush of facing down a maddened Spectre. At least when it can't fight back. And when it can, you'd better run like hell, because they don't take kindly to potshots.

Attributes: (6/4/3) Physical, Social, Mental

Abilities: (11/7/4) Talents, Skills, Knowledges

Talents: Alertness, Athletics, Brawl, Intimidation

Skills: Firearms, Melee, Security

Knowledges: Investigation

Variations

Medium - Operations Overseer (Add +1 to Attributes, +2 to Abilities, +3 to Backgrounds, and +1 to Willpower)

High - Head of Internal Security (Add +2 to Attributes, +4 to Abilities, +6 to Backgrounds, and +2 to Willpower)

Body Classes

Humans live in one world and ghosts live in another. Some people might try to tell you it's all the same, but they're wrong. Normal people live in a world of solid reality where they're the ones that have to bend to fit the rules. Ghosts live in a world where reality bends to suit their whims, and your worst enemy is sometimes the one hiding behind your eyes.

We Projectors jump back and forth between the two, and the jury's still out on which one of these gets the better deal. Terrel & Squib's got them organized them into neat little boxes called "Body Classes," with each of them divided into subclasses.

Orpheus Group calls them "Laments" and they're mostly the same thing. It's not just that "lament" is a hokey name, but here at T&S we do things a little differently, and it shows.

Anyway, here's the breakdown.

BODY_CLASS: PROJECTORS

"Projectors" are what we call those humans who've had enough near-death experiences (without actually biting the Big One) that they can separate their gauze — their souls — from their bodies. It's creepy as hell, but it gets the job done. We recognize three subclasses of Projectors, even though you'll only be working with two of them.

SKIMMERS

Skimmers are probably the most versatile body subclass we've got. They can project anywhere, any time, with only a place to lie down and maybe some mild drugs. Of course, they're also the most vulnerable subclass, since anything they get hit with shunts back to their bodies and beats the crap out of them. (Think Neo in the sparring program from *The Matrix*)

You've probably already heard a lot about this subclass, so I won't bore you with the details. Most of our Skimmers are either self-taught or learned how to skim elsewhere (Orpheus Group, for example).

A complete description of Skimmers can be found on page 95 of the Orpheus™ corebook.

ARC LIGHTS

Arc-Lights are a special brand of Skimmer that, as far as I know, is unique to Terrel & Squib. What happens is that some Skimmers get so hooked on Eidolon that it actually changes their body chemistry, or maybe just their minds (we don't really know which). In any case, even though they've got all the same advantages and disadvantages of a normal Skimmer, they've got a few others tacked on as well.

First off, they start going into withdrawal if they don't get their Eidolon fix, and their bodies need twice the Vitality sent back to them as a normal Skimmer. As if that weren't enough, they can't even use their own Vitality to do it; they have to steal it from other spooks.

The only upshot to this is that they can steal it from any spook, not just those of their own Nature Group, and it's not as hard on them as on most people. Most of our projectors — especially those that get their training with T&S — are Arc-Lights.

If you see yourself start drifting toward that side of the spectrum, be careful; things tend to happen to Arc-Lights that just aren't natural... like being able to listen in on the what the local Spectres are thinking. If you think that sounds like a hoot, just go ask Javier how much fun that is.

Advantages: All those of Skimmers, plus the ability to use Thievery (**Orpheus™** corebook, page 151) on spooks of any Nature Group. They do not gain Spite from using Thievery unless they botch the Spite roll.

Disadvantages: All those of Skimmers (**Orpheus™** corebook, page 95) and additionally, they go into withdrawal after not having Eidolon or pigment for (Stamina) days, imposing a +2 difficulty penalty on *all* rolls. Moreover, the Vitality points fed to their bodies every hour must be stolen from another snook.



KICKING THE HABIT

Drug addiction of any sort can be hard to break, especially with something as addicting as Eidolon. It can be broken, however, it's just not easy. The process of going from Arc-Light to normal Skimmer is long and hard, but a handful of T&S operatives have managed it (such as Devon McCoy, page 292 of the *Orpheus™* corebook). Though the exact process should be decided between the Storyteller and the player, there are three general ways to kick the Eidolon habit:

Dying — Not surprisingly, most operatives don't consider this a viable way to halt their addiction. Keep in mind, though, that while Eidolon is a non-narcotic derivative of pigment, it has many of the same properties, and all Arc-Lights who die are going to become Hues in the hereafter.



Cold Turkey — This is probably the worst way to go. In game terms, once [Stamina] days have passed since the character's last hit, he begins to go into withdrawal (-2 dice on all rolls. The Storyteller can alter this as he or she wishes) and must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) to not succumb to the temptation to take more Eidolon. The difficulty of these rolls gradually increased until it hits 10, and then slowly drops back down. The duration and number of rolls per day for each phase is up to the Storyteller. Once the difficulty drops to 1, the addiction is considered broken, although it will take another [12-Stamina] weeks for the body to scrub enough of the Eidolon out of its system for the Arc-Light to become a normal Skimmer. At the Storyteller's discretion, might need to spend or roll Willpower the first few times he projects without Eidolon.

For example: Javier is an Arc-Light with Stamina 2 and a powerful Eidolon addiction. Never a patient one, he decides to quit cold turkey. Two days after his last hit, he makes a Willpower roll against difficulty six. The difficulty (and number of rolls) goes up each day, until a few days later he's making three Willpower rolls against difficulty 10 each day for nearly a week. Then the difficulties start falling by 1 every two days, until two and a half weeks later he succeeds at a roll against difficulty 1. The habit is kicked, but he won't become a true Skimmer for another 10 weeks.

Weaning — Though slower than the Cold Turkey method, it's much more likely to work. With this method the character takes progressively lower and lower doses of Eidolon, until finally she needs none at all to project. There are still withdrawal symptoms, but the difficulty stays at 6 and must only be rolled once per day at most. An average Arc-Light can reduce her Eidolon intake by 10% per week, and after the last injection she need only make three Willpower rolls against difficulty 6 to be considered "cured." Again, it takes another [12-Stamina] weeks for the Arc-Light to become a true Skimmer. The Storyteller may rule that the character must roll or spend Willpower in order to project while her dosage is being lowered.

SLEEPERS

Even though Terrel & Squib recognizes Sleepers, we don't have any on the regular payroll. Every once in a while a freelancer will show up and try to contract work, but they usually don't stay long. Orpheus Group has a near-monopoly on sleeper technology, and anyone not working for them is taking his life into his own hands. Including us.

T&S doesn't have cryo-cradles, ergo we don't have Sleepers. If you think you've got Sleeper potential, then you can probably find someone out there willing to sell you a cradle. Just don't come crying to me when you suddenly find yourself stuck on the other side of death. Permanently.

BODY_CLASS: GHOST

Ghosts are those people who just won't quit, not even when they're dead. Ghosts with little connection to the here-and-now stick around as Drones or Blips, while the feisty ones reach up into the Echo or Mirage range. Orpheus Group only divides them into Spirits and Hues (Orpheus™ corebook, pages 97-98), but in the spirit (no pun intended) of administrative labeling, T&S also classifies ghosts as to whether or not they've been "housebroken" by the parapsychologists. "Brainwashed" is a better word, if you ask me, but last I checked nobody did.

Anyway, because of all this a ghost's label can get pretty wordy, like *Echo-class Wild Spirit* or *Blip-class Broken Hue*.

Wild Ghosts

Wild Spirits and Hues are any ghosts that haven't been housebroken yet. They're the ones you always hear about throwing knives around the room, possessing the body of their dead lover, dragging chains around at night, and the like. Basically, if it's dead, and it's not with Terrel & Squib, it's probably a Wild Ghost. T&S contracts a few of the more intelligent ones (Echo-class or better) as freelancers and, rarely, as full-fledged operatives if they're especially useful, but we *always* keep an eye on them.

Management doesn't really trust them, and as a result you won't find too many around here. Plus there's always the risk that Management might consider you a lot more useful once you're housebroken, at which point it's time to get out of Dodge while the getting's good.

Broken Ghosts

This subclass also has both Spirits and Hues, but only ones that've been through T&S's "housebreaking" procedures. These ghosts run the whole gamut of Vitality, but it's usually not worth the effort to break a drone as they just can't do enough to justify the time involved in breaking them in the first place.

The exact methods they use vary from ghost to ghost (see page 75 for details), but usually a specially-trained parapsychologist hits a captive ghost with a combination of hypnosis, conditioned-response, and torture (psychological, mostly) until it (the ghost) finally breaks and becomes a loyal T&S lapdog/cannon fodder candidate.

Broken ghosts make up the bulk of T&S's deceased "employees," and are usually creepy as hell. Mirage-class ones aren't so bad, but if you look into a broken Blip's eyes, there's nothing looking back. The one big plus is that a broken ghost usually has a pretty good mastery of their Horrors once the process is done, so they're great to have in a tight spot.

In other words:

Advantages: *All those of their base Lament, either Spirit or Hue. Additionally, the process of breaking a ghost places enormous stress upon the subject, causing them to gain one extra first- or second-tier Horror for free.*

Disadvantages: *All those of their base Lament. Additionally, a broken ghost's initial Willpower rating cannot exceed 4, and cannot be raised with experience.*

- As a note to players, Broken Ghosts can be extremely hard to roleplay due to their ingrained loyalty to T&S. Be careful and talk to the Storyteller if you really want to play one.

BODY_CLASS: HUMAN

We're still not sure if these guys are the lucky ones or not. On the one hand, "Norms" can't do anything supernatural unless they have specialty tech backing them up (like Kirlian goggles or ghostshot ammo). A lot of them feel like they've gotten the short end of the paranormal stick, but I have to admit, I'm jealous sometimes. They don't have to deal with ghosts unless they want to. I, on the other hand, haven't slept well for months.

Most of T&S's employees are Norms, and on a typical operation they'll outnumber us spooks five to one. They're usually the parapsychologists, guards,

cameramen, researchers, and everything else that doesn't involve you having to directly beat up on spooks.

The one major advantage that Norms with T&S have over most people is that they get to use all of the hi-tech gear that has been developed by Research & Development. Kirlian goggles and ghostshot ammo can do wonders to level the playing field. Still, I've seen more than one Norm driven mad by a spook they couldn't see or, sometimes, by one that they could.

A lot of Norms try to compensate for their lack of supernatural abilities by developing their natural ones as high as they can. And then there are those select few that hook themselves up with the parasynthetic implants, the ones that give me the heebie-jeebies. I've got enough Eidolon flowing through my blood, thank you very much; any more and it'll start coming out my ears.

In other words:

Advantages: *Storytellers are encouraged — though not obligated — to give Normal Human characters an extra 10 freebie points to spend as they see fit. These reflect the strong bond between a Norm and her body, and are thus lost if she ever changes body type.*

Disadvantages: *You can't do anything supernatural. You have no Horrors, no Stains, and none of the Default Abilities of spooks. Given sufficient time and effort, a Norm could learn to project, becoming a Skimmer or Arc-Light; see the guidelines for training new projectors on pp. 118-19 of **Crusade of Ashes**.*

STATISTICS FOR NORMAL HUMANS

USE STANDARD ORPHEUS™ CHARACTER SHEETS FOR NORMS, BUT CROSS OUT THE DEFAULT ABILITIES. DO NOT LIST HORRORS OR STAINS; THESE AREAS OF THE CHARACTER SHEET CAN BE USED TO RECORD ADDITIONAL ABILITIES, BACKGROUNDS, MERITS, OR FLAWS PURCHASED WITH THE NORM'S EXTRA FREEBIE POINTS.

NORMS HAVE NEITHER VITALITY NOR SPITE RATINGS. BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO SHADE, A NORM'S WILLPOWER IS CALCULATED USING THE HUMAN BASE OF 3, PLUS ANY ADDITIONAL WILLPOWER CONFERRED BY THEIR NATURE (ORPHEUS™ COREBOOK, PAGE 123).

G a d g e t s

Here's where T&S really shines. The one big advantage we've got over all the other projection firms is that we've got all the best toys. Even though some of it's relatively rare and expensive, you'll see most of these gadgets on an average operation; if you don't, it's time to start worrying. There's also some "elite" tech that I won't bother describing just because your average Joe doesn't have access to it. I'm glad about that, because some of it makes my blood run cold. It's powerful, but you won't see me using it anytime soon.

N o r m a l E q u i p m e n t

Normal Equipment is what we call the off-the-shelf technology that you can practically buy at the local Radio Hut. Some of it's pretty expensive, but it's nothing compared to T&S's specialty tech. Most of these items are used by paranormal investigators around the globe, whether or not they have projectors.

Why do we still use all this stuff when we've got Kirlian cameras and spooks? Simple: we don't know everything, and every scrap of data we can gather helps us the next time around. Some of these have saved my life, and they'll probably end up saving yours, too.

D I G I T A L C A M E R A S

We use a lot of these suckers whenever we go on an operation. Most of them are stationary webcams that relay what they're seeing back to the Mobile Command Unit, but you can usually find a couple of hand-held units (both video & still) in the back of the Hummer if you need one. Even though Kirlian cameras are better, these are cheaper, and they tend to look more impressive when they capture images. A Kirlian picture of a man walking down a hallway isn't nearly as showy as an image showing a white, misty shape drifting through the hall with trailing streamers of gauze.

M O T I O N D E T E C T O R S

These are very useful, or would be, if we didn't have the entire place crawling with agents. For every ten readings these get, nine of them are just one of us, or maybe the family cat. But that one out of ten is the important one, and that's why we use these. They're usually hooked up to either Kirlian or thermal cameras to get the best chance of a reading.

EXTREMELY LOW FREQUENCY DETECTORS

You've heard of Radio Free Death? Well, he somehow makes radio waves, and it seems that most ghosts do the same thing on a much smaller scale just by virtue of their existing. These are devices similar to E.M.F. meters (see below), except that E.L.F. waves get transmitted while ambient EM fields don't.

It's pronounced E.L.F. by the way. Start calling them elfs and the techies will never let you live it down.

ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD METERS

E.M.F. meters are small probes that tell you when you're inside an anomalous electromagnetic field. Before Kirlian cameras, these were the mainstay of your average ghost-hunter (and still are, for those with shallow pockets).

We still use 'em, though mostly for research purposes. The biggest problem with E.M.F. meters is that you have to be inside the field for it to register anything. Also, your average house has dozens of ambient EM fields due to all the electronic gizmos sitting around (Old TV's and cheap clock radios being the worst culprits).

The real anomalies are usually easy to separate from the electronics because ghosts cause a jump on the monitor of at least seven miligauss. Still, if you're going to be relying on these things with your life, it's best to cut the power to the house to get rid of the ambient fields entirely. E.M.F. meters and E.L.F. detectors are usually packaged together in a little gadget that looks like a TV remote or — for the disposable income crowd — a highend PDA.

The really good ones have onboard memory for storing information to analyze later. The techies in the MCU usually have the feeds from these linked up so that if they register a "ping" — like the ones caused by high Vitality Horrors — they can triangulate where it came from. It doesn't work so good on Spectres, though, so stay on your guard.



DIGITAL VOICE RECORDERS

Electronic Voice Phenomena (E.V.P.) is just a fancy term for recorded ghost noises. Supposedly, Thomas Edison came up with the idea and spent a lot of time asking questions to an empty room with a phonograph recording in the background. The spooky part is, when Tom played it back, he heard things answering him.

Now we use state-of-the-art electronics, but the principle's the same. Monitoring it in real-time can be a hassle, though, so we usually just set it on auto-record and play it back later if we're stuck. The voices tend to sound really distorted, and most E.V.P.s come in frequencies too deep for normal human vocal cords to make, so the staff in the MCU has their work cut out for them.

GEIGER COUNTERS

I know what you're thinking. "Since when did ghosts become radioactive?" Well, they didn't, as far as I know. Despite what Management tries to tell you, we still don't know jack about the other side, and if some spook tries to nuke me, I'd like to know about it before I'm dead.

Granted, Geiger counters aren't that reliable as far as detecting spooks goes, but they're better than nothing (especially if the "haunting" turns out to be natural phenomena). Plus they look impressive, and that's what's most important... at least, in Management's eyes.

ION COUNTERS

These portable scanners do exactly what they say: they count the number of ions (charged atoms) in the air. Ghosts tend to make negative ions when they pass, so the handheld ion counters are good for locating a ghost's path.

The trail goes cold after a while, though; its duration depends on the strength of the ghost, what it's doing, air currents, and the like. (A Mirage-class ghost moving through still air with Witch's Nimbus on can leave strong trails that are detectable for well over an hour.)

ULTRA-VIOLET LAMPS

I'm not really sure what these things do. Look impressive, I guess. All those crime-investigation shows on TV have come together to make people think that anyone with a UV lamp knows what they're doing, which I guess is reason enough to carry them. Every once in a while someone finds blood traces that might indicate a violent death (and thus a reason for the haunting), but not all that often.

THERMAL SCANNERS

Everyone knows that ghosts make you feel chilly,

and sometimes you can detect that chill on a sensor. A thermal scanner can find the infrared radiation produced by an object and translate it into a full-color visual map. Things like metal that reflect energy can throw them off, but that doesn't tend to be a problem since you're looking for changes in heat. Because they read in information in a cone — think of it like a flashlight beam — it's best if you plant them in one spot (usually a corner) and let the techies in the MCU keep track of them. Otherwise, you might miss the ghost running through the room because you had it pointed in the wrong direction. And if you get a 15-degree drop right next to you, it's time to ready your weapon and hope he takes the hint.

HELICOPTERS

Yes, we have a few of these, and yes, they're painted black. We don't have too many of them simply because they're not cost-effective, but they sure look impressive. If they're used at all, it's usually to give the customers a birds-eye view of what we're doing down on the ground. It also lets them get away real fast if an operation goes sour. The one other major use for them is tracking a wild ghost that's trying to flee. High-gain Kirlian cameras make them pretty easy to spot over open ground, but if they get into a forest or city, you can basically kiss the trail goodbye.

HUMMERS

You know, you just can't beat the feeling of utter coolness that comes from driving a jet-black army surplus Hummer down a major highway. That said, if you ever try to take one of these things for a pleasure cruise, you'll be fired so quick they'll have to vacuum up your ashes (the official company term is "terminated," which is just ambiguous enough to make me nervous). It usually takes two of them to hold all the people and equipment involved in an operation. On high-profile operations (which usually means all of them), the tropp carriers are backed by an MCU.

MOBILE COMMAND UNITS

The Mobile Command Units (MCUs) are your home away from home: black, retrofitted motor homes packed to the brim with all the standard operating equipment, plus a network hub to coordinate and record it all. We've got two basic types: Alpha and Beta.

We like to take Alphas on commercial operations,

and I swear half the stuff strapped to their chassis is just to impress the customers. Betas are for more private operations, like capturing wild ghosts. There's always at least two techies inside keeping track of everything.

TERREL and SQUIB PARATECHNOLOGY

This is the good stuff. You won't find any of this outside T&S (legally, at least), and it's what makes us able to tackle ghosts like we do. We don't use nearly as many of these toys out in the field as your normal equipment, but these are far more valuable. Take care of them, because they're expensive, and if you break it you probably won't be getting another one. Management doesn't take kindly to anyone losing their hi-tech gadgets. (Some of these items are described in more detail in the *Orpheus™* corebook, pg. 277.)

FERROANIMUS

Ferroanimus (which some of us nicknamed "Spooktonium") is the magic material that makes half our stuff work. No one outside R&D knows what it really is, and they aren't telling. Half the time I think they don't know either. The leading theory around the water cooler right now is that it's "ghost blood" taken out of a ghost when it's housebroken. Then again, before that the popular theory was that Dr. Squib had recovered the goop from a crashed UFO. Whatever it is, it affects ghosts, and it can bind to just about any material you can imagine. It's in ghostshot ammo, labyrinth cages, and some agents' blood (I'll get to that in a bit). It's our ace in the hole, and I'm glad we have it.

EIDOLON

You've all heard of pigment, the new recreational drug of choice in the U.S. of A. Those of you who have tried it will know that it has some interesting properties — namely, it lets you see ghosts. Sounds like a great tool for your average ghost-hunter, except the last thing anyone in the field needs is an operative tanked up to his eyeballs with hallucinogenic happy-pills. So apparently our great progenitor, Dr. Lionel Squib himself, developed a more innocuous version of the stuff for our field agents using some samples pulled in off the street. The new version of the drug is called Eidolon, and it has all the desirable effects of pigment: our Norms can use it in pill or slap-patch (*see below*) versions, and all Arc-Lights use it regularly to facilitate projection. Better

yet, it isn't a narcotic agent, meaning that you don't have agents standing in the middle of a firefight watching their hands move. Serious drawback is that it's still addictive as hell, one of the properties that Dr. Squib claims not to have been able to get rid of (See "Kicking the Habit" earlier in this chapter). Love it or hate it, but Eidolon is what we've got.

GHOSTSHOT

This is your best friend, 'cause even if you can't touch a ghost, these bullets will. In a pinch it works on normal people, too (though if you fire ghostshot at solid people, Management'll be on you in a heartbeat because of how expensive it is to make). The bullets are normal lead as far as we can tell, but the ferroanimus turns them pitch black.

KIRLIAN CAMERAS

Knowledge is power, and these babies are how you get it. Aside from keeping the company headquarters safe from unwanted intruders, it also lets us see what most people can't while out in the field. Usually we'll slap half a dozen of them around the outside of wherever we're investigating, with twice that number inside. All the video feeds back to the MCUs for recording and analysis (and customer satisfaction. Nothing puts a client's mind at ease like watching his resident spook get vaporized in real-time). They need strong electric fields to work, so you've got to put out generators, too. Still, it's better than nothing.

KIRLIAN GOGGLES

Kirlian Goggles are basically portable, closed-circuit Kirlian cameras that let you see a spook's Gauze in real-time on a heads-up display. They use a one-hour power supply that hooks onto your belt, and most people (most smart people, that is) carry a spare, just in case. The goggles' EM-generators only have a range of fifty feet, so if the spook goes outside that you'll lose it.

ADVANCED KIRLIAN GOGGLES

Advanced Kirlian Goggles (AKGs) are highly experimental versions of the normal model described above. Instead of a HUD, you see through glass that has a very thin coating of ferroanimus on it. It's like looking through obsidian, except that anything in the gauze

actually appears brighter than “real” matter. There’s no range limit, but low lighting affects them just as it affects normal vision. You’ve still got to carry a power supply on your belt, too, even though none of us have figured out where the power actually goes.

LABYRINTH CAGES

These black monstrosities are our version of a ghost trap. They’re cubes, ten feet on a side, and they’re big, bulky, hard to transport, and expensive, but you just can’t beat their effectiveness. Once you get a spook in here, he ain’t getting out. The ferroanimus keeps them inside (even Skimmers or Arc-Lights that try to ripcord back to their bodies), and if they try any Horrors, the cage “heals” itself. You ever see that Star Trek episode where they first show the Borg, and the ship repairs itself almost instantly? It’s like that, only creepier and a whole lot colder. I’ve known more than one operative that’s kept beers cold just by setting them on top of one of these while he’s out searching for a Wild Ghost.

Of course, since it takes a small forklift to move ’em, they’re only good for planned traps or keeping Broken Ghosts jailed. But hey, that’s better than nothing at all.

MOBILE CONTAINMENT CAGES

Mobile Containment Cages (MCCs) are the light version of labyrinth cages. They aren’t nearly as impressive (no sliding glass doors or self-healing, though they do feel cold to the touch), but they get the job done. They’re made of aluminum bars coated in ferroanimus that are welded into a coffin-sized collapsible cage. They’re good for capturing drones and blips, since spooks that weak can’t do much damage to the cage. Tougher versions are used by our ghostbreakers for long-term containment.

SLAP-PATCHES

These things can be your best friend in a tight situation, especially for Norms. When the Investigations division first got rolling, they used pigment slap-patches as a stopgap, but the mortality rate amongst stoned agents was frighteningly high, so they started manufacturing Eidolon slap-patches as soon as they could. Slap-patches punch just enough Eidolon into your blood to let you see ghosts. Some people use ’em a bit too often and end up hooked, so don’t use them unless you have to.

GHOST GRENADES

These little balls of death work just like normal grenades, except that they don’t make as big a boom. At least, not to people in the flesh. Instead of blowing shrapnel everywhere, these are designed to blast a fine spray of black ferroanimus grit in a ten-foot radius. People in the flesh only experience a blast of fine black debris — keep your eyes and mouth closed, please — but spooks caught in the blast get shredded (6 dice of bashing damage to all spooks in range).

Ghost grenades are extremely expensive to make, so if you’re lucky you’ll get two of them on an Operation; one is the norm, and you’d better not use it unless you absolutely, positively have to. Got that? If you get in the habit of wasting paratech, Management will send you out on your next job with nothing but a pointy stick.

FERROANIMUS ARMOR

It would be nice if we low-level agents got these, but we don’t. They save these jackets for the high-paying customers who want to stick around and watch the show while feeling “safe.” It looks like jet-black riot gear, and that’s probably what it was before it was coated in ferroanimus. A pair of Kirlian goggles usually goes with it. One of these cost more than you’ll make in a year, so don’t start getting any bright ideas about requisitioning one. They’ll say no, and probably laugh about it, too. (For mechanics purposes, the armor rating is 5, meaning +5B/+5L to soak any damage from ghostly or normal sources, including Horrors).

PARASYNTHETIC IMPLANTS

These things scare the hell out of me. They’re little implants that (usually) go under the skin and deliver doses of concentrated ferroanimus to your bloodstream. This causes all sorts of “interesting” effects, meaning ones that make you feel we’re crossing lines that shouldn’t be crossed. They’re so rare I won’t even try describing them, except to tell you they exist.

Don’t tell anyone I said this, but if someone from R&D or Management comes and offers you the chance to get one, don’t take him up on it. I had a friend once, a blueleg named Greg who wanted some more firepower. He got one of these things stuck in him that let him touch ghosts while he was in the flesh. And then there was this one operation, OPERATION: SILENT FLAME they called it. Objective was to clear out a haunted house. Only the

house had a Reaper in it, and it came after Greg, and... and then he manifested his Stains, in the flesh! I never found out whether it was the shock or the Reaper that killed him, but I'll never forget Greg's face, just before I turned tail and ran. It had three eyes. They were all looking at me. (see the *Storyteller* section for more information on *Parasynthetic Implants*)

Backgrounds

Everyone brings something to the field from before. These are the various little "extras" that reflect what you've managed to earn for yourself, either at Terrel & Squib or elsewhere. These can be incredibly handy sometimes, so don't underestimate them.

Flashbacks

Sorcha and Lance stared helplessly at the bloody symbols that covered the walls. Over and over, the same indecipherable phrase had been written on every free surface.

"It looks like Arabic," said Sorcha, running a gauze finger along the nearest line of characters. "But it might as well be ancient Greek. I don't suppose you know what it says, Lance?" Her mortal partner shook his head.

"Allah Akbar," said Reece, who was staring blankly at a nearby wall. "'God is great.'"

The two spooks turned, and regarded the broken ghost with astonishment. "How'd you know that?" Lance demanded.

"I... remember," Reece said, his voice clearer and more lucid than usual. "I've seen it before. In... the Persian Gulf?" His features creased with the effort of concentration as he struggled to recall more.

The process of ghostbreaking strips most subjects of all vestiges of their former identity, leaving them a blank slate for T&S to mold as they wish. However, some ghosts retain a few memories of their life and afterlife, in spite of the best efforts of the ghostbreakers. A broken ghost with this Background occasionally recalls details of his or her previous existence. When confronted with a situation that might spark memories of the character's past, the player may roll the broken ghost's Flashbacks rating as a dice pool (difficulty 8); each success allows the ghost to recall one detail from their past, or one dot of a Knowledge they once possessed but have forgotten; Knowledges recalled in this way last for one die roll only. Because the degree of recollection is intimately tied to the ghost's remaining sense of self, no character may have more dots in Flashbacks than his or her

Willpower rating. Naturally, T&S is wary of any broken ghost that demonstrates too much self-awareness, so those possessing this Background should be cautious with whom they choose to share their insights...

- X Your past is a complete mystery.
- Sometimes a name or place seems familiar to you.
- You have vague, dreamlike memories of minor incidents.
- A few important details stand out.
- Entire days sometime come back to you with clarity.
- You can remember you past as well as most adults remember early childhood.

Parasynthetic Tolerance

"Think of it as an opportunity, Mr. Stoskopf," the Management woman said with a coy smile. "Most people don't even get that much."

Juraj scowled at her. "Why me?"

"You passed the physicals with flying colors, Mr. Stoskopf," she replied, sliding a sheet of paper across the table to him. "Better than that, even. The labcoats in the basement think your system would have a very benign reaction to the implant. Absolutely ideal. The things that could help your job are..."

"I do my job, woman. I break ghosts, and I do it well. It stays simple that way. What would these 'implants' offer me?"

Her smile this time showed teeth. "Anything you want."

Parasynthetic implants are Terrel & Squib's most advanced application of ghost-based technology, creating miniaturized implants that infuse the subject with ferroanimus matter once the implant has been surgically inserted into their body. This can create a wide range of effects. The body, however, will often reject the invasive ghost material, and studies show that upwards of 95% of all viable subjects will suffer severe side-effects from having parasynthetic implants of any kind in their systems.

Taking dots in Parasynthetic Tolerance designates the character as one of the 5% of individuals who can in fact support parasynthetic implants in their bodies without adverse effects. For every dot in Parasynthetic Tolerance, the character's body can safely support an additional implant. (For more information on the Parasynthetic Implants system, see page 80.)

- X Like most people, you have no tolerance for the implants in your system.
- Your body can tolerate one parasynthetic

- implant.
- Your body can tolerate two parasynthetic implants.
- Your body can tolerate three parasynthetic implants.
- Your body can tolerate four parasynthetic implants.
- Your body can tolerate five parasynthetic implants.

Personal Equipment

Andrew hit the mute button, cutting the football announcer off in mid-sentence. He listened closely, though he didn't know for what.

A cold tingle spread down his spine; that was all the confirmation he needed. He picked up his gun from the coffee table and walked into the study. Ten seconds later the safe was open and a clip of ghostshot ammo clicked into place. He pulled out his pair of Kirlian goggles and muttered several choice curses as he pulled them on. He hated it when his work followed him home.

Terrel & Squib has all the best toys when it comes to dealing with ghosts. But Management doesn't always give you what you need when you need it. This Background reflects a personal cache of parapsych gear you've acquired and can use whenever you want. Like an Arsenal (page 182 of the **Orpheus™** corebook), you have to maintain this Background if you want to keep it; ghostshot bullets don't grow on trees.

Because parapsych gear is so expensive — especially if you're getting it through the black market — you can't have more dots in Personal Equipment than you have in Resources (unless you steal your gear, but that's a whole other problem in itself). This Background doesn't let you requisition extra equipment from T&S for use on operations; you have to have Influence for that (page 185 of the **Orpheus™** corebook).

- X You are totally dependent on what T&S issues you.
- You have a cheap Kirlian camera, or maybe a single clip of ghostshot ammo.
- You own a pair of Kirlian goggles, and maybe some clips of ghostshot ammo.
- You can outfit a single person in full parapsych gear.
- You can equip a small team (3-5) well enough to hold their own.
- You could start a small projection firm if need be.

Special Effects Training

"Command? This is Bravo Team. We found the 'ghost;' it looks like some kids decided to have some fun down in the basement, if you get my drift."

Lance sighed into his headset. "Roger, Bravo Team. Come on back; we'll take it from here." He flipped the mike off and turned to Amy. "You hear that?"

"Yup." Amy's fingers flew over the keyboard. "One haunted special, coming up."

"Good." In ten minutes, there'd be a veritable army of "ghosts" to be driven out. He grimaced, a sour taste in his mouth. Dishonest though it was, sometimes he wished every operation was this easy...

The customer is always right, even when they're wrong. Whenever a "haunting" turns out to be noisy pipes, it's the Special Effects guy's job to make T&S look good. In the old days, people faked ghosts by using slanted mirrors, trap doors, and double-exposed photographs. The tools of the trade have changed, but the basic idea is the same.

Your specialty may be in sound effects, costuming, holographics, or Photoshop, but whatever it is, you do it well. Add your dots in this Background to the relevant Ability when attempting to fake ghostly effects (Subterfuge for sleight-of-hand, Technology for sound systems, Computers for digital image editing, Performance for "possession," etc).

You must take a specialty in this Background, but can buy additional specialties for 1 freebie point or 3 experience apiece.

- X The limit of your "special effects" is a guy wearing a sheet.
- Your bag-of-tricks is good enough to scare the trick-or-treaters.
- Your FX skills are good, but they wouldn't stand up to close scrutiny
- John Carpenter keeps your resume on file, just in case.
- You could keep Houdini, Copperfield, and Penn & Teller on their toes.
- Even seasoned investigators think it's the real thing.

Stash

Javier dropped the handful of slap-patches into the dresser drawer. He'd nabbed five this time, making just over thirty total. He had to be careful; a few patches could easily get lost on an operation, but if he kept this up someone was bound to notice.

He slid the drawer shut. His hands were shaking,

just a little. Just one wouldn't hurt...

He opened the drawer and grabbed a patch, ripping the plastic off before jamming it into his bicep. Liquid fire spread through his veins, and he sighed in relief...

That's the stuff.

Eidolon addiction is a powerful force, and some T&S agents don't quite trust the company to keep them supplied. With this Background, you've got a cache of Eidolon and/or street pigment stored away for a rainy day. It might come from street vendors or simply be swiped from the company lockers, but it's enough to last you for a while.

You lose dots in this Background if you dip into your Stash frequently without replenishing it (be careful; T&S keeps strict records of its Eidolon stores). If you're in a financial bind, you can always sell your Stash on the street (the Storyteller determines the exact amount gained.)

- X You might have a slap-patch hiding in your coat pocket.
- You can last a week without T&S giving you your fix.
 - You have enough pigment and Eidolon stored to last a month.
 - You can meet your own needs for six months, or multiple users for less.
 - You can last a year without T&S, and have the stash of a minor drug dealer.
 - Street dealers envy your stash, which could supply your entire team for a year.

Tainted

Sorcha looked back over her shoulder at Javier. "You okay?" she asked. He shrugged, but kept looking at the walls like he expected them to eat him.

"Oh come on, it's a cakewalk. Come in, find the ghost, clear it out, yada yada. You coming or what?"

He shook his head. "Look, something . . . get down!" He rammed into her just as the blade of a scythe speared through the wall and cut through where her neck had been. The world fractured in an ice-cold spray, and then she was lying on the house's front lawn. Javier reached down and helped her up. Sorcha stared at him, wide-eyed. "How did you know?"

He gave her a wan smile and tapped his temple.

"I've got them in my head, remember?"

The line between light and darkness is filled with shadows, and spooks with this Background can get a bit too close to the darkness. For each dot, you can spend 15 experience points (or 10 freebie points) to learn a

Spectral Horror. Most hues can get two dots easily, while Bright Hues (page 85 of **Crusade of Ashes**) and normal people can only take one. Each Spite rating above a spook's starting Vitality allows you to take an additional dot. Even though few people can ever naturally learn more than one or two spectral Horrors, an infusion of distilled Eidolon (not pigment) almost always taints the soul enough to learn more. Company scuttlebutt holds that projectors who learn to use Spectral Horrors get surreptitious salary raises.

You should be careful which Horrors you choose. Hive-Mind is arguably the most useful — and most dangerous — choice (page 268 of the **Orpheus™** corebook). Virus has the potential for incredible Spite buildup if the character uses it to overwrite innocent blips, while any character who tries to use Rend to step through the Stormwall will likely be shredded in the process.

- X You may not be a saint, but you're not going to the dark side anytime soon, either.
- Yeah, you're a little evil. But who isn't?
 - You've dabbled with the dark side, and you like it.
 - Spectres have trouble deciding whose side you're on.
 - Your fellow investigators are afraid to turn their backs on you.
 - Friends? What friends?

Merits and Flaws

Physical Merits

Fast Metabolism (1-pt. Merit)

Your body is set on permanent overdrive. You've tried to gain weight, drinking all those protein shakes, working out, and even going on a McDonald's binge for two weeks straight. But whatever you put into your body, it burns up just as quickly. Besides giving you a figure many Americans would kill for, any drugs used on you only last half as long as normal before they wear off.

Drug Resistant (2-pt. Merit)

Unlike someone with Fast Metabolism, who metabolizes drugs at breakneck speed, your body simply doesn't react to exotic chemicals as much as the rest of the world. Alcohol, nicotine, morphine, pigment... you name the drug, it just doesn't affect you until you're pumped with enough of it to down an elephant. Besides making you a shoe-in for post-operation drinking contests, it's

USING SPECTRAL HORRORS

TAKING A SPECTRAL HORROR IS LIKE MAKING A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL: IT GIVES YOU A LOT OF POWER IN THE SHORT TERM, BUT EVENTUALLY IT'LL DAMN YOU TO HELL. SPECTRAL HORRORS CAN ONLY BE FUELED BY TAPPING SPITE, AND, AS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT, CERTAIN HORRORS CAN HAVE UNPLEASANT SIDE EFFECTS.

NO PLAYER WHO WANTS THEIR CHARACTER TO REMAIN IN ONE PIECE SHOULD TAKE REND, FOR EXAMPLE. HIVE-MIND IS ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS. EVEN THOUGH IT POTENTIALLY OFFERS ACCESS TO ANY OTHER SPECTRAL HORROR IN EXISTENCE (BY TAPPING 3 SPITE), IT ALSO OPENS THE CHARACTER TO THE HIVE-MIND'S INFLUENCE.

CHARACTERS WITH HIVE-MIND ALWAYS HAVE A 0-LEVEL FORM OF IT ACTIVE THAT MIMICS THE SUPERNATURAL MERIT: HEARING THE BUZZ (CRUSADE OF ASHES, PG. 85). HIGHER-SPITE USES (2-3) OF HIVE-MIND MAY CAUSE CHARACTERS TO AUTOMATICALLY FAIL (OR EVEN BOTCH!) THEIR SPITE ROLLS. ESPECIALLY HIGH USES (4-5 SPITE) REQUIRE A WILLPOWER ROLL (DIFFICULTY 5+ SPITE TAPPED) TO KEEP FROM BEING SUBSUMED INTO THE HIVE-MIND AND BECOMING A SPECTRE INSTANTLY.

SPECTRAL HORRORS CAN BE VERY POWERFUL, BUT THEY CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS AS WELL. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.

extremely hard to get you doped up enough to spill company secrets. There's a downside, of course: you need strong painkillers to get any relief, and any drug you are hooked on requires huge dosages to work.

Mental Merits

Cool Head (1- to 3-pt. Merit)

You know the meaning of "calm under fire," and your friends learned long ago that sneaking up behind you and yelling "Boo!" is just a waste of time. You take everything in stride, even things that would make most people run in a blind panic. For every point in the Merit, you add 1 die to any pool involving resistance against being startled or surprised.

Paranormal Intuition (3-pt. Merit)

All this stuff about the afterlife actually makes sense to you. Any rolls that involve trying to puzzle out the mechanics of the afterlife (what Horror could cause effect X, which Spirit-Class is probably involved in a haunting, etc...) are at -2 difficulty for you. This does not apply to motivations of ghosts or any other supernatural problem that is not intrinsically mechanical. You may be able to figure out *how* the ghost managed to drape poor Mrs. Houser's lingerie from her rooftop, but you still don't know why.

Social Merits

Commanding Presence (1-pt. Merit)

When you're around, people pay attention. The way you hold yourself, your physique, your attitude... all combine to make people shut up when you start talking. Add two dice to all Intimidation rolls.

Assets

Ph.D. (1-pt. Merit)

You worked hard through the university, graduate school, and finally to your dissertation and doctorate. You are a specialist in something, knowing far more about it than most normal people ever want to. Subtract two from the difficulty of any roll involving your specialty. (As an aside, "Biology" is not a specialty. "Viruses," "Cell Anatomy," and "Plant Genetics" are.) You must have at least three dots in Academics or Science to take this Merit.

Technical Training (2-pt. Merit)

Whereas most T&S employees receive only minimal training in paranormal equipment, you've been instructed on how to use everything in the arsenal, from Kirlian goggles to labyrinth cages. With access to the right tools, a successful Intelligence + Technology roll lets you to make field repairs on any T&S equipment, or even modify it to suit your needs (within reason, of course. The Storyteller gets the final call on what's reasonable). You must have at least 3 dots in Intelligence to take this Merit.

Supernatural Merits

Angry Spirit (2-point Merit)

Maybe you're good at channeling what anger you have, or maybe you've simply taken a long, hard look at your own dark side. In either case, you're able to call upon Stains when your Spite rating is less than 4, though a minimum rating of 1 is still required. This in no way protects you from the negative effects of calling upon Stains; it simply makes them easier to reach. Hues cannot take this Merit (they don't need to).

Metagnome (3- to 5-pt. Merit)

(Normal Human Body-Classes only)

You can't project or use any Horrors, but that doesn't mean you can't see ghosts. The Storyteller determines the maximum level of this Merit you're allowed to purchase. At 3 points, ghosts appear to you as heat shimmers in the air. At 4, they look like living shadows, and at 5 they look as normal as if you were using a spook's Dead-Eyes.

Some roleplaying must go into this Merit, especially if it developed early in childhood. If you didn't have someone to help you through it, or find some way to deal with it yourself, you'll end up a few beans short of an enchilada (in game terms, you have *at least* one Derangement). If you developed or discovered your ability in adulthood, then you probably learned to deal with it (either with medication, by denying it, or — if you found it after Orpheus Group came to the fore — accepting it as a natural gift/curse). In any case, you're a valuable asset to Terrel & Squib.

Spiritually Attuned (4-pt. Merit)

You're a lot more in-tune with your inner self than most people let themselves be, and because of that your spiritual gifts start bleeding over. You might have developed this capability through meditation, a low-level dose of Pigment, or just natural gifts, but your spirit can shine through even when you're encased in flesh. For 3 Vitality, you can activate a 0-level effect of any Horror you know while in someone's body (not necessarily your own, but it must be human), keeping it active by spending 1 Vitality for each turn past the first.

You cannot use higher-Vitality expenditures while in the flesh; the resistance is too great. Normal Humans with this Merit are highly sought after by T&S.

M i s c e l l a n e o u s M e r i t s

Fool's Luck (4-pt. Merit)

You just seem to stumble onto things that other people have spent hours searching for. Whether it's hidden staircases, secret vaults, a ghost's hiding place, or just the right web page, you can usually count on finding what you need. Once per session, you may tell the Storyteller that you're relying on your luck to guide you. The exact results are up to the Storyteller, but they are guaranteed to move you toward your goal. (Storytellers are also encouraged to use this Merit to resolve situations where the players' dice just keep failing.) Unofficial research has concluded that every character in Scooby Doo has taken this Merit at least twice.

P h y s i c a l F l a w s

Weak Stomach (1-pt. Flaw)

You don't react well to the sight of blood, gore, or much of anything, really. Anytime you experience something that sickens you (mutilated bodies, torture-in-progress, a projector injecting herself, or even plain old motion-sickness), you must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) or start throwing up. Even if you haven't eaten anything recently, you get the dry heaves and are unable to perform any other actions for [6-Stamina] rounds.

You must make this Willpower roll once for every minute you witness whatever sickened you, but the difficulty goes down by 1 each time, regardless of whether you succeed or fail.

M e n t a l F l a w s

Illiterate (1- to 3-point Flaw)

You're probably from a foreign country, have a learning disorder, or were just never educated. In any case, you can't read the major language(s) of the region you're in. As a 1-point Flaw, you are literate in another language, just not the local native one, or you have a severe impediment that slows your reading speed to a crawl (acute dyslexia, for example). As a 3-point Flaw, you cannot read any languages and cannot acquire more than one dot in skills requiring literacy (such as most Knowledges) until the Flaw is bought off. This Flaw is common among the impoverished street projectors T&S sometimes recruits, but may also result from psychological damage during a ghost's "housebreaking" experience.

Technology-Dependent (1- to 5-pt. Flaw)

Due to high levels of exposure to paranormal phenomena, you become paranoid whenever you are separated from a technological aid that lets you deal with the existence/presence of ghosts. This technology can either be practical (ghostshot ammo) or purely psychological (a religious symbol), but practical items are far more common. Whenever you are separated from your fetish, you lose as many points from your Willpower rating as you gain freebies from this Flaw (i.e., a 3-pt. Flaw causes you to temporarily lose 3 Willpower ratings whenever you are separated from your chosen item). The higher the value of the Flaw, the harder it is to keep your fetish nearby and the closer it has to be. A 1-pt. Flaw might mean a set of Kirlian goggles that need merely be in the same room. A 5-pt. Flaw is along the lines of ferroanimus body armor that you have to be wearing in order to keep your nerve.

Rational (2-pt. Flaw)

(Projectors and Ghosts only.)

You're like Scully in The X-Files, always trying to find a logical, rational explanation for whatever just scared the shit out of you.

Logic has its place, but the world of ghosts isn't it. In extreme cases, you even doubt the existence of ghosts, no matter how often you interact with them (or suffer from a constant existential crisis, if you are one). Any supernatural abilities you use (Horrors, Stains, etc) are at +2 difficulty to succeed. If they don't usually involve a dice roll (such as Storm-Wending), then roll 1 die to determine success; the difficulty is your Willpower rating.

Social Flaws

Amoral (1-pt. Flaw)

Good and evil are just words to you. What really matters is what works and what doesn't. Even though you may defend yourself by quoting Nietzsche (or just telling people to shove off), people see you as a Machiavellian machine and know you'd turn on them in a heartbeat if it suited your needs. The Storyteller dictates which natures (such as Caregiver) cannot take this flaw.

Gossip (1-pt. Flaw)

You live for the coffee break, when you can swap all the latest juicy tidbits about who's doing what, people's latest relationships, upcoming company policy, and anything else you happen to overhear. You don't just heed the rumor mill, you are the rumor mill, and people know it. Everyone is very guarded about what they say about you, because they know if something slips, you'll stab them in the back with it as soon as they turn around.

Spiteful (2- or 4-pt. Flaw)

Either because of natural disposition or life experiences, some spooks just have more angst than others. For two points, you start with one more Spite rating than your Spirit-Class (Shade) and Nature would indicate. For four points, your starting Spite rating is two points higher than normal.

Hindrances

Illegal Immigrant (2-pt. Flaw)

T&S isn't above hiring people with questionable legal status if they provide a needed service. You're that type of person. You came to this country illegally, and if the government ever finds out, you're toast. T&S is protecting you so far, but you'd better stay on their good side. Otherwise, you'll be on the next boat out of here.

Suspicion (2-pt. Flaw)

For whatever reason, the T&S Management doesn't really trust you. They may think you're an Orpheus Group mole, embezzling money, or just getting a little too close for comfort to certain skeletons in the closet. You are never assigned sensitive missions or given sensitive data, although you do get a lot of missions with a higher-than-average chance of you not making it out alive... or dead, for that matter.

Supernatural Flaws

By Darkness Bound (3- or 5-pt. Flaw)

Statistics show that a small majority of ghost sightings actually occur during the day — but they're sure not seeing you. For some reason, you are powerless to assume gauze by day. Projectors with this Flaw are unable to leave their bodies before sundown, and automatically ripcord back to them at sunrise (relative to the location of their meat). Ghosts (including sleepers on extended out-of-body trips) simply fade away with the first light of dawn, only to reappear in the same location they last occupied at dusk. Ghosts subject to the experience have no memories of where they go at this time, only hazy recollections of fog and distant voices, but they do recover Vitality as normal. For projectors, this is a 3-point Flaw; for ghosts, who are effectively deprived of half their existence by it, this is a five-point Flaw.

Spiritually Blind (2- to 6-pt. Flaw)

You can't see ghosts. Ever. Not even when you're projecting, or if you die yourself, or even (and no one quite understands this) through Kirlian cameras. This is a 2-point Flaw for Normal Humans, or for projectors if it's only active when they're in the flesh (this is the only level available to Norms). A 4-point Flaw means that, when in the gauze, the character can see ghosts but not hear them, or vice versa. At 6 points, the character can neither see nor hear ghosts no matter what body state they are in. Spooks with this flaw don't tend to last very long unless they have a friend to tell them when a Spectre is about to rip them in two.

Stained (4-pt. Flaw)

Whenever you are in the gauze, all of your stains are active. You cannot deactivate them without the Visage background (**Shades of Gray**, pg. 116). All of your social rolls are at +2 difficulty, in addition to any other penalties you may suffer from the Stains themselves.

Unresolved Tether (5-pt. Flaw)

(Ghosts only)

You have unfinished business that's keeping you bound to the world of the living. You begin play with one less Vitality than your Shade and Nature indicate, and you can't spend freebies or experience points to raise your Vitality until your final tether is resolved. You don't know what this tether is, at least not at first. T&S often takes advantage of ghosts like this; most Broken Ghosts have this Flaw. If your tether is ever resolved, you must make a Willpower roll (difficulty of 12 – [Willpower rating]) or move on to your final reward, whatever it may be. You can choose to fail this roll if you want, and T&S discourages the resolution of Broken Ghosts' final tethers precisely because of this (too many of them choose to move on, incidentally freeing themselves of T&S influence in the process).

Miscellaneous Flaws

Unrequited Love (4-pt. Flaw)

You are deeply in love with someone who, at best, doesn't know you exist. At worst, he thinks you're scum and uses your infatuation to manipulate you into doing what he wants. Any rolls to refuse a request by this person, harm him, or go against his wishes in any way are at +3 difficulty. If he is ever in trouble, you must roll Willpower to resist going to his aide; you gain at least one Spite point if he suffers any harm due to your inaction.

Team Merits

Privileged (6-pt. minimum Team Merit)

Due to your excellent performance, efficient work, high customer satisfaction — and maybe because one of your team members is sleeping with the boss — your team gets better equipment and more of it than goes into two normal operations. And if you slip up, the higher-ups are most likely going to let it slide (“but only this once”). Most special requests you make of the Management get answered both quickly and with approval. Be careful, though; slip up too many times and you'll lose your perks.

Add-ons:

3 pts - You are the pet team of one of the chief researchers in R&D, and you're usually the ones selected to test the newest, best equipment in T&S's arsenal. This isn't always a good thing, since Management tends to send you into difficult situations to test it — and if it doesn't work, you're screwed. But more often than not, it's a good deal.

6 pts - Your team is personally watched over by either John Terrel or Lionel Squib, if not both. One member of the team must have at least three dots in the Influence background in order to take this add-on.

Team Flaws

Nosy (6-pt. minimum Team Flaw)

Your team gets into things that they shouldn't and knows far too much for its own good. You might have the dirt on Terrel & Squib, Inc., the Orpheus Group, the Mafia, or some other organization, but if they ever find out what you know, you'd better hope they feel like negotiating. Otherwise, you can kiss your life (or afterlife) goodbye.

Add-ons:

6 pts - You don't just know secrets, you know Secrets. These are things that can blow someone's entire operation wide open. If “they” ever find out what you know, you'd better run like hell, because they won't even try to negotiate for your silence. Dead men do tell tales, but they probably won't give you that chance, either.

Stains

BRAINIAC

You're smart, and you make sure everyone knows it. This Stain causes your cranium to swell to massive proportions, usually taking the form of a pulsing, two-lobed structure covered in thick veins and arteries.

Advantages: Bigger is better. You get an extra die on any rolls that involve Intelligence or Knowledges. These stack, so on an Intelligence + Academics roll, you receive two extra dice.

Disadvantages: Your massive braincase is as vulnerable as it is large. Any damage that hits your head (which is now at only +1 difficulty to hit) does double the damage — always lethal — that it would normally do. If an attack doesn't specifically target your head, there is still a 20% chance that he hits there, unless the attacker is targeting something else.

Cyborg

Some people get so familiar with (or so dependent on) modern technology that it practically becomes a part of them. Characters with this Stain have body parts that appear like machinery grafted into their bodies.

Advantages: You receive +1 to one of your Attributes, depending on how the Stain manifests (bionic eyes or ears add to Perception, arms to Strength, legs to Dexterity, etc). Even though the exact manifestation varies from person to person, it always manifests the same way for a given character. (You can take this Stain multiple times, gaining a different benefit each time. Characters who do this end up looking like Tetsuo the Ironman when all is said and done).

Disadvantages: You lose two dice to soak any energy-based damage (Witch's Nimbus, Wail, etc) due to the delicate nature of the electronic interface. If you take this Stain multiple times, the effect is cumulative. If your soak pool becomes negative, you take extra damage equal to the negative score (meaning a net -2 soak pool adds two dice to the damage roll).

Enslaved

Someone or something has you in a noose you can't escape. Whether you've been blackmailed or feel like the world is on your shoulders, you just can't get away. When active, manacles appear around your hands and feet, dangling chains and restraints like Marley from A Christmas Carol. This Stain is especially common among Arc-Lights and Broken Ghosts.

Advantages: The chains can be swung as weapons, dealing [Strength + 2] bashing damage each hit.

Disadvantages: The chains drag the spook down, limiting her movement and maneuverability and costing her one die of Dexterity. If this causes the spook to have zero Dexterity, then she is trapped by the chains and cannot move. A successful Strength roll (difficulty 8) can negate this for a single turn, but the roll must be made each time the spook attempts to move.

Frosty

When some people get mad, they blow up like volcanoes. Your anger, however, is as cold as a glacier and just as unstoppable. When active, this Stain causes that chill to radiate outward and damage nearby spooks.

Advantages: You may tap one Spite per round to deal one bashing damage to all beings — living and dead — within a ten-foot radius. The look on your face — one of barely-controlled contempt and anger — is enough to give you an additional two dice on all Intimidation rolls.

Disadvantages: You always radiate a low-level chill while this Stain is active. It isn't intense enough to deal damage, but it does alert others to your presence. Usually it only makes people have goosebumps, but when you experience especially strong emotions (anger, hatred, loathing, etc), it's enough to make people's breath fog up. That icy demeanor works against you, too. All non-Intimidation social rolls have a +2 difficulty associated with them.

Heart of Stone

Other people's problems just don't matter to you. Whether it's the cries from the neighbor whose son just died or the pleas for mercy from the ghost you're breaking, it just doesn't faze you. Life's full of problems, and if someone happens to get ground under, it's no problem of yours. Not even (or especially) if you're the one doing the grinding.

Advantages: Your interior converts into a rocklike substance. It doesn't affect your appearance, but you get two extra dice to your soak pool while this Stain is

active.

Disadvantages: You feel no emotions for anyone except yourself. You automatically fail any Empathy rolls, and unless an action has some kickback bonus for you, you will not do it. If your best friend is being eaten by a Fetch, all you do is stand on and watch, or maybe leave so they won't go after you next. Sucks to be him, but better him than you, right?

Hollow

You feel like someone's ripped out your soul, even if your soul is all you've got left. Your gauze congeals into a thin crust that appears normal on the outside, but when it's breached there's nothing inside but empty space.

Advantages: Any piercing damage dealt to your gauze (such as by a bullet or knife) does two dice less damage than normal because there's no gauze to shred in your center. For spooks other than Skimmers and Arc-Lights, this translates to the loss of only one Vitality from a lethal piercing attack instead of two.

Disadvantages: Your outer shell is fragile; all bashing attacks do two extra dice of damage, or shred an additional two Vitality.

Masquerade

People oftentimes make themselves appear to be what they are not. Bullies who are all talk and millionaires who donate to charities just for public relations often have this Stain. A mask of gauze forms around the character, making them appear as something that they are not.

Advantages: The outer layer of your gauze separates and forms into a full-body "mask" that alters your appearance, oftentimes making you appear stronger, prettier, or more intelligent than you actually are. You gain two dice on any rolls involving deceit, provided that the person you're deceiving can see you.

Disadvantages: You know you're a fake, and you're constantly plagued by feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. Your Willpower rating temporarily drops two points when this Stain is active.

Nonentity

You're so unimportant, no one would notice if you just disappeared. When this Stain is active, you radiate a psychic field of insignificance, so much so that people's vision tends to just glide over you as if you weren't

even there. You show up fine on electronics, but even then people have to focus to acknowledge that you're something more than scenery.

Advantages: People don't notice you. Any Alertness or Awareness rolls to detect your presence are at +2 difficulty. If you're engaged in combat, opponents (even Spectres) won't attack you unless you do something to really annoy them. Even then, they'll probably just brush you aside in order to focus on the "important" people.

Disadvantages: You are terribly easy to ignore. No matter how good an idea you come up with, if you suggest it, it probably won't be heeded. You can try to force the issue with a Social roll, but the probable result is someone else repeating your idea and getting credit for it. Most of the time those around you aren't even aware of this, making it all the more frustrating.

Silver-tongued

Your wit is quick and your lies come fast. No matter what situation you get into, you can talk your way out of it. Your tongue appears plated with pure silver, often-times glinting from inside your mouth as you talk.

Advantages: Your words are as smooth as silk. All of your Social rolls that involve speech are at -2 difficulty.

Disadvantages: If you ever fail a Social roll with this Stain active, the character you tried to manipulate/charm/seduce is immediately aware of your deception. You automatically fail any Social rolls with them for the remainder of the scene. Depending on how unforgiving the character is, the Storyteller may give further penalties even after the initial effect has worn off.

Yellowbelly

Some people are cowards, plain and simple. This Stain might come from lifelong cowardice or from that one time when it was all too much and you left your best friend to die. Bright yellow streaks cover your stomach or run down your back in a broad stripe.

Advantages: Cowards are nature's best observers. All of your Alertness or Awareness rolls are at -2 difficulty. You tend to jump at shadows, but it's better than being eaten by them.

Disadvantages: You will not engage in combat or any other behavior that you think could result in harm to your person. At best, you'll try to help your comrades with Benefits or moral support. At worst, you run off screaming or curl into a quivering ball of fear that just

wants someone else to make it all go away. Should you be forced to fight, all of your actions are at +3 difficulty.

Zone d

Some people are never completely "all there," their minds drifting into the realm of imagination or simply shutting themselves off. You stare off into space, never totally conscious of the world surrounding you. This Stain is often seen in Broken Ghosts.

Advantages: It takes a lot to jar you out of your reverie. Any actions that require you to be paying attention to affect you (such as Unearthly Repose or the emotion-manipulating aspect of Wail) are at +2 difficulty to succeed.

Disadvantages: You are constantly distracted, and suffer a +3 difficulty penalty to all Wits-based rolls while this Stain is manifest.

Conclusion

So, you're still here. Maybe you do have what it takes to be a T&S spook. But then again, maybe you'll get shredded your first operation. That's what nearly happened to me. Now I'm a cynical old coot, one of the longest-lasting employees on T&S's payroll. That doesn't come from being starry-eyed and full of good hope. Trust me. Death's the name of the game here, and if you want to cheat it you'll have to be quick on your toes.

But with all that said, I want you to know we're here for you. Management might not care one whit what happens to us on an operation, but when you get out there you've still got your teammates. Don't let them down, and they won't let you down. Sometimes they're the only help you've got.

Good luck, kid, and godspeed.

Terrel & Squib

CHAPTER : 03

Storytelling Terrel & Squib

Ripley: These people are here to protect you.
They are soldiers.

Newt: It won't make any difference.

— Aliens

Pale blue light filled the windows of the Grayson manor as the Kirlian cameras and filtered spotlights came online. Sorchia Ross squinted reflexively, and wondered why her gauze eyes were still as easily blinded by bright lights as their fleshy counterparts had been. A few yards away, Angela Dawson looked up from the laptop balanced on top of the field generator, a lock of black hair falling coquettishly over one eye in a gesture Sorchia just *knew* was too cute to be accidental. "We're wired, Chief," Angela said, grinning at Field Commander Lance Shomaker. "Commence Operation: Empty Cradle at will."

Lance returned the smile. "We'd be lost without you, Angie. Thanks," he replied, and Angela blushed girlishly; Sorchia rolled her eyes. "Let's move in, folks," Lance continued. "I'll be just a sec." He settled back in his chair as the Norms pulled on Kirlian goggles and checked their rifles. Within seconds, his body went limp, and his gauze form stepped forth without a backward glance. He motioned for Angela and Sorchia to follow. "Let's go."

"You see anything while you were rigging up the 'tech?" Sorchia asked Angela as they entered the foyer of the opulent mansion. The paratech girl flirted with every man on the field team, and by all accounts was a shameless cocktease, but Sorchia couldn't help liking her anyway. Besides, Angela had the rare gift of mediumship, and sometimes it was nice to talk to someone who wasn't also dead, projecting, or staring at you through huge black goggles.

"Not a damn thing," Angela replied, shaking her head. "No spooks, no shadows. Only clue on the mission name was the nursery upstairs. I wonder what they're not telling us about this one."

"Let's find out the easy way," said Sorchia. She turned to the field commander, who was directing the Norms to search the lower level. "Lance, why don't we grab 'Marvin'" — she indicated a recently broken ghost hovering beside the door — "and check out that nursery?"

"Sounds like a plan," Lance replied. "C'mon, Marvin." The broken ghost trailed slightly behind Sorchia as she and Angela followed Lance up the stairs. Sorchia couldn't help but shiver. "I'm one of the only wild ghosts at T&S," she thought. "Marvin's like all the others, he's here as cannon fodder. Why are they letting me run around unbroken?" She wasn't sure she wanted to know.

"Management didn't say much, as usual," said Lance, as they slowly worked their way down the blue-lit hallway, peeking behind doors and into deserted rooms. "I gather that a little kid vanished after some Poltergeist-type activity, and the cops found blood. Now his parents want

to know if the Boogeyman really *did* get him.

"Sounds like someone trying to cover up foul play to me," said Sorcha, pausing for a moment to examine a painting. "And they can afford it, this is a Goya original."

"Well, they're in for a surprise if we find little Cindy's ghost lingering here," Lance replied, stopping in front of the door at the end of the hall. "I'm not helping anyone hide a child murder, no matter how much T&S is getting paid. Angie, you're in the meat, can you get the door? The rest of us might need our juice on the other side."

Angela slowly pushed the door open; Sorcha concentrated a moment, summoning the ghostly echo of her old sculptor's knife, before following her and Lance into the nursery. The room beyond looked like the subject of a localized tornado. A shattered child's bed and the mangled remains of an armchair lay against the far wall, and the glass in the room's two windows was riven with tiny cracks. The teddy bear wallpaper was badly torn, and dark stains marred the creamy beige carpet. Scattered throughout the room were the fragments of a table and a trunk, a tangled mobile, and perhaps two dozen dolls and stuffed animals, their eyes glittering oddly in the blue light from the Kirlian camera. Angela flicked the light switch; the bare bulb in the ceiling flared for a moment before dying with a low pop.

"What do you make of all this?" said Angela, prodding at the broken bed as the investigators spread out. Marvin, like most broken ghosts without instructions, simply stood in place, staring blankly at the wall. Sorcha's eyes panned the floor, looking for any patterns or oddities in the debris. Lance made a slow circuit of the room, and sighed.

"I don't know," he said. "I'm not seeing anything yet, but I don't like the feel of this place. Whatever happened, this is where it went down."

"Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around."

Lance, Sorcha, and Angela froze, and turned toward the unexpected voice. Marvin, still staring at the wall, was swaying slowly back and forth, and singing to himself. It was the first time he had spoken.

"Marvin, what are you doing?" said Sorcha. "Stop that. You're giving me the creeps."

The ghost ignored her.

"Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground..."

"Who knows why the scatterbrains do what they do?" said Angela.

"Ignore him." But there was a nervous edge to her voice.

Lance, who had torn his gaze from Marvin and was examining the

gouges in the wall, held up his hand. "Everybody shut up a sec. Do you hear something out in the hall?"

The others fell silent. There was a definite creak of slow footsteps from the vicinity of the stairwell.

"Teddy bear, teddy bear, up the stairs..."

"It's probably just the Norms," said Sorchia. "Right, Lance?" She peered out into the hallway, but saw nothing out of the ordinary. Somehow, that wasn't reassuring.

"I told the rest of the team to stay downstairs till we gave them the all-clear," said Lance. His voice settled into the clipped tones of command. "Angie, get on your walkie-talkie and..."

"Teddy bear, teddy bear, say your prayers," Marvin sang, and Sorchia felt a shiver that had nothing at all to do with cold. Beneath her feet, the floorboard began to creak, and then to tremble.

"Lance," she said, "I think we need to get out of here. Right now."

A skewed picture fell to the floor as the shaking intensified. Angela braced herself against the wall of the nursery with one hand, and drew her ghostshot pistol with the other. The lights flickered, and Sorchia had to concentrate to keep from instinctively falling through the wall as the floor lurched beneath her. Lance staggered, but kept his feet. "Abort mission!" he shouted over the splintering of tortured floorboards. "Let's get back down while we can. Come on!"

Marvin turned from the wall, his eyes glazed over, oblivious to the chaos around him. "Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn out the light..."

The blue lights burst in their sockets, plunging the room into darkness. Downstairs, someone screamed, and the report of gunfire followed. The floorboards buckled beneath the carpet, their jagged ends tearing through. As one, the investigators leapt for the door and it slammed in Angela's all-too-solid face. She rattled the knob, and pounded helplessly on the scarred wood. "It's not budging! Lance, Sorchia, go incorporeal, get out of here!"

Abruptly, the tremors ceased. The sound of groaning wood was replaced by a low rustling of fabric and then light was restored, from dozens of tiny red points all over the nursery. The dolls and toys on the floor sat up, their glassy eyes glowing crimson in the dark. A score of tiny, malevolent voices echoed Marvin's words.

"Teddy bear, teddy bear, say goodnight."



THE WORLD OF TERREL and SQUIB

Who are the Characters?

What is a hero?

This is the question that every Terrel & Squib operative has to confront at some point in their stint with the company, should they live long enough. Everyone envisions themselves as the hero and protagonist of their own life story, and in the Orpheus™ game they are given more than adequate opportunity to play the part of the white knight. Battling against Spectres, helping lost ghosts find transcendence — it's all part of the job. When you're fighting the hordes of Oblivion, it's easy for Orpheus Group employees take for granted that they're on the right side.

It isn't so easy for those from Terrel & Squib. The people on the inside know that T&S is amoral at best, and actively malicious at its worst. Their woes are far more serious than the occasional corporate scandal that Orpheus Group has to deal with. T&S agents cope with endemic drug addiction, the horrors taking place behind ghostbreaking, a web of company policies, and officials that don't care a whit about the safety of their agents. Despite having the deck stacked against them, those same operatives still want to be heroes; they do Terrel & Squib's hard legwork, and want to be able to think of themselves as good people because of it. But when they're confronted with the fact that the company they've bound themselves to is a tool of the forces they're trying to fight, they have to take a long, hard look at the true nature of heroism.

Is heroism thwarting every wrong that they find, or is it riding along a wave of sins in order to keep their heads above water? Can you still try and contribute to the greater good that may (or may not) be out there when your weekly paycheck comes from your worst enemy?

You see the dilemma. Most of the employees at Terrel & Squib are well-meaning, "normal" people (in the off-beat sense that any character in an Orpheus™ game is "normal"), but ultimately their successes contribute to the victory of malice and evil in the world. Very few ever come to understand the extent to which this is true, but anyone who has worked with a Broken Ghost or watched a fellow Arc-Light projector shooting up obsessively in the locker room knows, if even just instinctively, that this is a bad situation. This is a bad company. No matter what you do, though, you can't get away.

Characters don't need to be amoral to join Terrel & Squib. It may seem, at first, to be a lucrative enterprise. The pay is fantastic, the security is tight, the organization is large and well-respected, and there's plenty of opportunity for travel and rubbing shoulders with the rich and famous. Whether they were recruited fresh out of the hospital or they come to the company of their own volition (perhaps as former Orpheus Group employees after **Crusade of Ashes**), working with Terrel & Squib looks like a damn good career choice. Once they're in, though, the tune changes. Highly addictive drugs are pushed on agents by their superiors, and they'll be keeping company with psychologically shattered, enslaved ghosts long before they'll be rubbing shoulders with any sort of upper crust.

So who is the hero?

Is it the student idealist who immediately tries to break down the slave pens and free the broken ghosts? Is it the veteran who has learned to accept it all, telling herself that this is still the best way to fight the good fight? Is it the sobbing agent shooting Eidolon or pigment like a maniac every time he projects, knowing that there's no other way?

In a Terrel & Squib chronicle, this is the stuff of heroes.

What do the Characters Do?

The characters in a Terrel & Squib chronicle are, like those in any Orpheus™ game, projectors, and for the most part they fill roles similar to those they would in the Orpheus Group. They investigate paranormal activity, fumigate angry ghosts and malicious Spectres, and receive a hefty paycheck at the end of the week.

The similarities end there.

Terrel & Squib pictures itself as a more scientifically credible company, unlike its main competitors. As such, T&S relies more on non-projectors and high-tech equipment than they do on payroll spooks. Orpheus might send a cameraman or a driver with its projectors on an assignment; while each Terrel & Squib operation is like a major military deployment, with the black MCUs rolling out with the lights flashing and well-armed agents deploying.

Characters in a T&S chronicle are almost never given a full briefing on an operation: the extensive intelligence-gathering that Orpheus Group engages in is eschewed by T&S as being too invasive to the privacy of the client. Terrel & Squib agents are typically better armed than their Orpheus counterparts, however, and



more readily equipped with Kirlian goggles, ghostshot weapons and very rarely, parasynthetic implants that let them interact with the dead in frightening ways. Also, because Terrel & Squib has no sleeper technology, they rely heavily on Arc-Lights and Broken Ghosts to make sure that every job is covered on the supernatural front.

There are plenty of variations on the T&S theme that you can use in your chronicle. Terrel & Squib, Inc. is a big company, and the formal Investigations branch is just one subsidiary of one division beneath the umbrella company.

Chronicles in which the players portray members of Terrel & Squib's elite Internal Security Force, or play special agents attached to the dark Pharmaceuticals department, offer compelling possibilities. More details on the various departments of T&S are found in the "Inside Terrel & Squib" section, complete with chronicle ideas.

Same Old, Same Old

Just because all of these options for running a Terrel & Squib campaign suddenly appear doesn't mean you have to drop your current game for a change in perspective. T&S was designed as an antagonist in the Orpheus™ storyline, and while we presented some options for playing in the meaner atmosphere that T&S naturally evokes, that doesn't change the fact that they make great villains. The company has it all: drugs, lies, scandal, torture, even modern-day slavery, all wrapped up in a shiny platinum-card packaging that appeals to the big-money clientele.

Throughout this sourcebook, we make no assumptions about how you're going to use Terrel & Squib in your game. The options and tools we present here that make the company fun and approachable for players can just as easily be turned into the weapons of the enemy. You, as the Storyteller, have a free hand in implementing this amoral projecting company into your game. So get to it!

If you're planning on using Terrel & Squib as the bad guy in your chronicle, then forget everything about the characters you've already read in this chapter. Terrel & Squib is about power, and it's about fear. Fractures may exist within the company, but it *is* the tool of a Spectre. Therefore, T&S has the power to insinuate itself *anywhere* it wants, from corporate boardrooms to the Spectre Hive-Mind.

The company is in the business of ruining lives: much of its money comes from shadow accounts filled through the international pigment trade. Its Investigations division, while genuine and well-equipped, would much





sooner fake a haunting with trained ghosts and high-tech equipment than have to deal with the real thing. While many of the field-level personnel are good people, the T&S upper management and board of directors are shot through with corruption and greed to the core. Those not pursuing sheer profit are in pursuit of other personal agendas.

These power players keep both of the company's hands in motion, one seemingly aimed at furthering the public good, while the other commands the pigment trade and locks more souls into the afterlife as Spectre fodder. This is the paradox that defines the management behind Terrel & Squib Incorporated.

Between the **Orpheus™** corebook and the **Shades of Gray** supplement, a fair amount has already been written on how to play Terrel & Squib as an antagonist, overtly or secretly, and much of that doesn't bear repeating.

You know how they operate — large, flashy missions, little intelligence gathering, lots of casualties and turnover. You know that they use psychologically “broken” ghosts as cannon fodder in the field, and you also know that they've developed the most effective technologies for interacting with the hereafter. If you have these books, then you already have everything you need to run Terrel & Squib in your Orpheus™ game. Use this book for inspiration, as a source of material and hopefully, to obtain a better understanding of how and why the company operates in the ways that it does.

T&S isn't wholly evil, after all. There are still good

people on the inside that carry out nefarious plans for what they still feel are good reasons.

RUNNING A TERREL and SQUIB STORY

Themes

The themes of a Terrel & Squib chronicle differ somewhat from those that you would find in a more orthodox Orpheus™ game. This is a reflection partially of the companies' wildly different operating procedures, and partially of the darker, grittier feelings that working for a corrupt and largely amoral company are sure to invoke.

- **Fear to Tread:** Terrel & Squib ruthlessly attempts to record, analyze, assess, and quantify occurrences that science is neither designed nor equipped to fully understand. Their scientists and parapsychologists attach labels to every entity they encounter, as though in naming them they will somehow master them, much like the Biblical Adam. Consequently, though, what the techies cannot explain has much reason to be feared — dreaded, even.

If mankind cannot know its enemies, then what can it know?

The unknown, the unseen, and the unquantifiable





hold special terror for those who claim to have all the right answers. Perhaps even more frightening to Terrel & Squib, Inc. is the growing realization that the positive validation they chase is as illusive as a Phantasm's webs, and that the only Grand Unifying Theory for the supernatural is the one that they have deluded themselves into believing.

• **Rage Against the Machine:** Human beings have convinced themselves that technology exists solely to obey our commands, and that it functions so that we can lead easier, faster, better lives. The spirit realms, however, don't operate on those principles. The hereafter is a manifestation of the raw, primal essence of humanity. There is no "substance" in the afterlife — only bodies and materials given shape and definition by the intense passions that humans assign to them. And this is the spiritual wildland that Terrel & Squib seeks to tame with its tools and machinery.

What they haven't realized, though, is that the scientists in their labs are ultimately little different than a chimpanzee holding a stick and scraping the grass with it. They can never fully comprehend the thin pane of glass that separates it from curious zoo-goers. They have learned to manipulate their environment, but their achievements in doing so are dwarfed by the irrelevance of it all when the greater truths are unveiled.

Technology has entrapped Terrel & Squib, and this plays out from the high-level research surrounding PROJECT: COVENANT to the poor field operative whose Kirlian goggles short out during a Spectral firefight. Technology is a trump card, but it is limited by the fact that you can't take it with you. Man has come to rely upon technology, but that technology only treats them to a devastating surprise: that the afterlife is ruled by passions, not programs. Attempts to tame the hereafter are doomed to self-destruct; the spirit cannot be shackled by electrical fields and mathematical theories for longer than it wants.

• **Star Fuckers:** Terrel & Squib caters to the rich. It has expenses to meet, and the massive, impressive performances that give "credibility" to big-shot Terrel & Squib deployments aren't cheap, so they can't afford to do charity work (except where tax credits are involved).

T&S offers a comprehensive ghostbusting "package" and a guaranteed no-questions-asked policy that entices the rich and discreet to partake. Due to the nature of the regular clientele, agents are often an arm's length away from the world's elite, the fickle upper crust of society whose mood swings shape our culture. The company knows that it never hurts to have friends in the highest of places.

Interacting with the elite has had a number of

unexpected side-effects. Particularly adept T&S agents have occasionally been "adopted" into the inner social circles of select clients, garnering a little bit of fame for themselves. While many T&S chronicles are fought out in the street, sometimes more sophistication is required. Identifying a possessed individual at a dinner party calls for social skills and discretion, not black helicopters and ghostshot ammunition. Terrel & Squib, after all, guarantees satisfaction, no matter the situation.

• **Camaraderie:** Although no one knows that the company is being run by an actual Spectre, many Terrel & Squib agents often feel as though it is. The company's operating procedures are dangerous, and border on inhumane. Intelligence capabilities are virtually nonexistent. Broken Ghosts are treated as nothing more than disposable property, and many agents fight a day-in, day-out battle with company-sponsored drug addiction.

The world of the T&S operative is a bleak, dark place, and the mortality rate is close to four times that of the Orpheus Group. It's little wonder that most operatives are so bitterly estranged from the evil, abstract entity that is "Management." The peculiar camaraderie that has developed is also to be expected; no matter how deep their differences, field agents for T&S inevitably feel that they have more in common with one another than with the corporate brass.

Terrel & Squib is more than a bad job. It hires a lot of individuals who have a lot to lose if they leave the company. Many of their best agents, after all, are addicted to Eidolon. Like soldiers drafted into a war, they have a hard time simply walking away from their positions. And like soldiers, T&S operatives ultimately do not work or fight for king or country — they fight for one another.

• **Vietnam:** The inspiration for much of the material that went into this sourcebook came from the Vietnam War. Low-flying black helicopters, pervasive drug use, activist protests, combat patrols, and the "us vs. them" mentality of the agents in the thick of it all hearken back to America's lost war and the times in which it was fought. The world has changed since then, but in many ways it has stayed the same, and there are many who never left Vietnam behind.

The plight of the average T&S agent battling against Spectres is not entirely unlike that of the U.S. conscript stomping through the jungle mist hunting down Charlie. Both are knee-deep in situations that neither of them fully understand, and trapped in a set of circumstances that both would happily get out of... if they could. They can't though, and that same invisible coercion that trapped an entire generation of Americans is now at work pinning Terrel & Squib field operatives to their



duties. Using this theme in a chronicle can be highly rewarding, but it's best done subtly. Don't have the players run into a grizzled Vietnam 'vet named "Cliff" every three blocks, but use some of the popular imagery of the times (helicopters, peace symbols, demonstrators outside a T&S facility, etc.) to create the atmosphere that you want. It's all the more rewarding when the players don't fully realize why their overall situation seems hauntingly familiar.

Types of Stories

Here is a short selection of stories that one can easily work around the established themes of a Terrel & Squib chronicle.

- **Investigations:** Bug-hunts, fumigation, data retrieval, wetworks... Terrel & Squib offers all the same paranormal services as the Orpheus Group, except that they charge much higher prices and cater only to those for whom such money is within easy reach. T&S also has a strict "don't ask, don't tell" policy with its clients, and their privacy and concerns are valued above everything else (including the lives of operatives, it seems). If the client wants a small, discreet, highly-capable team to come in and clear out a ghost in the middle of a soiree, that's easily done, for a price: "standard" operating procedure involves more flashing lights and, to be honest, fraud. Each operation conducted by T&S can make an excellent story, either stand-alone or as a larger part of the chronicle.

- **Pigment Barons:** Terrel & Squib is chin-deep in the pigment trade; they pay plantation owners in Turkey and Myanmar to grow the plant, then arrange for it to be smuggled into the country and processed in their licensed, fully legitimate pharmaceutical plants. The finished product is re-distributed through middlemen and dealers, most of who don't even know where the stuff is coming from. Occasionally, though, deals go sour, middlemen find out more than they ought to, or the DEA starts sniffing around the wrong alleyway. T&S often needs enforcers, and it has two distinct paramilitary bodies (Investigations and Internal Security) at its disposal. If necessary, T&S has the muscle to make sure that the dice always fall the way they want them to. These stories about drugs, crime, and fast money are the darkest side of Terrel & Squib.

- **Activism Gone Bad:** It's inevitable that word is going to leak out of some of Terrel & Squib's more unscrupulous operating practices. The drugs, the ghostbreaking, the violence... in these days of grassroots activism and multinational corporations arranging protests against

other multinational corporations, T&S is quickly going to come under fire from the public. And occasionally things get nasty. Crowds whipped into a frenzy (By a charismatic leader? By peer pressure? By ghosts?) may try to storm a heavily-guarded facility, and the rubber bullets start flying. Or some of their more daring people try to scale a T&S building to hang banners, paint graffiti, or commit some act of sabotage. Terrel & Squib values its public image, and most of its elite clientele aren't going to be scared away by vulgar crowds of students and hippies crying for "Dead Rights Now." But this still isn't the kind of publicity it needs, and the company will go to great lengths to resolve this problem.

- **Broken Ghosts:** Discovering and dealing with the psychologically broken ghosts that Terrel & Squib has enslaved can be a major part of a chronicle. It presents a moral conundrum, and the answers are not readily available. T&S claims to be making the hereafter a better place for all souls, and anyone who's ever watched a friend being eaten by a Spectre knows that there are real threats out there... but does that justify the use of slaves as cannon fodder? They may seem mindless and timid, but they're still people... right? Do the players try to befriend them, or do they go against the company and try to "rescue" them? Or do they treat them as disposable one-shot weapons to throw at the Spectres when their asses are on the line? Also, how do the few "wild" ghosts that T&S has on its payroll (those too valuable or powerful to break) approach the Gordian knot of ghost-breaking? How the characters handle this particular aspect of Terrel & Squib may well color their opinion of the entire company... as well it should.

- **Junkies:** Eidolon isn't just the drug of choice at Terrel & Squib, it's the drug of job security. Arc-Lights may not need it to project anymore, but they crave it incessantly. Norms (non-projectors) need to keep it handy so that they can still see the other side when their Kirlian goggles short-circuit in the middle of a fight.

Not surprisingly, the company sponsors this corporate regime of drug addiction like nothing else, using it to make sure that employees stay in their place, and distributing it or withholding it based upon performance in the field... and in the office. Only a rare few T&S field operatives and investigators aren't severe Eidolon addicts, and the miasma of misery and chilling dependence created by the drug amongst the rank-and-file is a story unto itself. Moreover, like the pigment it is a derivative of, Eidolon "stains" the souls of those who use it regularly, leading to a very large number of hues in the service of Terrel & Squib.

- **Spectres:** Terrel & Squib may be run by a Spectre, but very few people know that... including the Spectres.



Lionel Squib/Malevoy might be able to summon its own personal Spectre enforcers to hunt down fugitive agents, but to the T&S employee in the field, a Spectre is target practice at best and a death sentence at worst. Like members of every other projecting firm, they find that Spectres present the single greatest threat to life and limb, and they treat them accordingly.

“Fumigate on sight” is a common order when it comes to Spectres, and there are T&S teams that regularly go on combat patrols through known Spectre-infested neighborhoods in order to get some hard data or bring down a few of the monsters before retreating. As time goes on, the Spectral threat becomes ever greater, and Terrel & Squib thinks that it’s ready for anything.

Inside Terrel and Squib

Terrel & Squib follows a decentralized corporate system of organization. The umbrella company is Terrel & Squib Incorporated, headed by John Terrel and Lionel Squib. Beneath that, there are many significant subdivisions and departments, including Pharmaceuticals, Investigations / Operations, and Internal Security.

Although John and Lionel hold supreme executive authority over their company, T&S has demonstrated a great deal of corporate fractiousness, most likely due to its decentralized nature (although Squib seems to endorse the cutthroat inter-company politics).

Presented here are the three most important divisions of Terrel & Squib — importance being based upon how critical they are to the continuing plot. There are, of course, other departments: Engineering, Finance, Marketing, and a number of other smaller support departments such as Health Sciences. The three detailed here, however, are the most likely to play a central role in any Terrel & Squib chronicle.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Investigations/Operations department is Terrel & Squib’s fierce venture into the paranormal investigations industry. They’ve brought with them a veneer of respectability and scientific credibility that the Orpheus Group sometimes lacked and that NextWorld never bothered aspiring to in the first place. Investigations is responsible for marketing, receiving clientele, and conducting operations in the field. This is where the bulk of T&S projectors and field personnel are committed.

At a glance, Investigations is a hodgepodge department marked by its dependence upon other divisions of the company. It requires Eidolon from Pharmaceuticals,

high-tech equipment from Paranormal Research, gear from Engineering, and trained ghostbreakers from the Parapsychology department. In return, though, it has turned Terrel & Squib into a household name across the United States.

The Investigations department parallels the Orpheus Group’s practices: it receives a contract related to a haunting or other phenomenon, sends in agents, deals with the problem, and gets paid (although the payment is usually in advance). Their prices are exorbitant, usually hovering around the half-million mark per job, although they’ve been known to make exceptions and bring down the price a little. As previously mentioned, T&S assumes that the customer is always right, and will go to great, impressive lengths to fabricate a haunting if one is not actually present. They deploy quickly and without much in the way of intelligence-gathering as a prelude, arrive in force, and do what has to be done in order to leave the client as dazzled as possible.

A sizable paramilitary force is maintained by the Investigations department, composed mostly of Norm operatives (“bluelegs”), but also including the vast majority of projectors and almost all the ghosts working for (or enslaved by) T&S. By pulling some significant financial strings with the government, Terrel & Squib has managed to secure limited on-duty firearms licenses for all Investigations personnel, although the company liberally greases palms so that the authorities look away when a squad comes in packing SMGs. It’s all about who you know, and Terrel & Squib knows all the right people. While the Orpheus Group would cater to just about anyone with fifty bucks and a spook problem, T&S goes for the big-money names and contracts.

There’s an underlying tragedy to the Investigations department that isn’t readily apparent to anyone. Dr. Squib (aka Malevoy the Reaper) doesn’t particularly value its Investigations division; it sees it as a cover for pigment production, a source of supplementary cash, and, if absolutely necessary, as an unreliable private army. In fact, Squib fears the Investigations department more than any of the others under his control, because field operatives have the best chance of correctly guessing that their boss is, in fact, a servant of Oblivion. As such, Squib actively works to keep the projectors and ghosts oppressed, supporting drug addiction and ghost breaking, and eventually contracting NextWorld to attack the Investigations division shortly after the attack on Orpheus Group (see **Crusade of Ashes**).

Leadership: The Head of Operations is a man named Lincoln Del Cote (see page 122), a capable-but-malleable manager who doubles as a strategist, propagandist, and stage performer. His obsession with how



the company (and his department) looks in the public eye is one of his defining features, and dominates his management of his little piece of Terrel & Squib.

Rivals: As previously mentioned, Internal Security and Investigations personnel don't get along very well. Apart from that, Investigations is so reliant upon the good will of other departments that they can't afford to alienate many people, and generally remains on its best behavior.

Chronicle Ideas: Terrel & Squib Investigations is the default organization for T&S chronicles. It bears at least passing resemblance to the Orpheus Group, so players and Storytellers already familiar with the Orpheus™ game are at least on semi-familiar ground.

You know the drill: the players are special investigators working for Terrel & Squib, they hunt ghosts, do research, and tackle the occasional discreet black-bag job. Of course, the game quickly takes on different themes from Orpheus™, as the players in your T&S stories battle drug addiction, a distant and uncaring Management that makes them work for their fixes, and the moral conundrum of the broken ghosts. Their missions also take them to high-profile areas, from the manors of the rich and famous to corporate estates transformed into Spectre Hives.

INTERNAL SECURITY

Internal Security is a cross-company department charged with maintaining the integrity, privacy, and security of all Terrel & Squib facilities. As the company prizes its privacy and confidentiality (as well it should), it has made a substantial investment in a top-notch dedicated security force that ensures its privacy. They are the security guards, clean-up crews and enforcement agents, and when a particularly dangerous situation arises, they can serve as Terrel & Squib's reserve army.

Those in the Internal Security department are highly professional and, unlike the Operations staff, entirely no-nonsense. They aren't trying to impress clients, because the clients are never supposed to see anything that they're guarding... and if they do, that's just another problem that needs to be taken care of and swept up.

Most Security personnel are Norms, many with military or police training, but the department also counts a number of Arc-Light projectors on its payroll for dealing with threats to the company from the hereafter. It does not, to the best of anyone's knowledge, employ ghosts, broken or otherwise. All T&S Internal Security agents are cleared for firearms licenses and for packing within T&S facilities, and most have concealed





weapon permits for the states they are working in (T&S employees can obtain these permits in any states except Nebraska, Kansas, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Maryland).

It's a dangerous world and a messy job, however, so Internal Security can't afford to be entirely reactionary. They guard T&S facilities, but they also have agents and projectors who are trained to take the fight back to those who would threaten the company. They have their own long knives with which to hunt down rogue agents, defectors, and loud-mouthed pigment dealers. When Grace Ishida leaves the company in **Shades of Gray**, for example, it's T&S Internal Security agents who hunt her down. While this function should technically fall under the auspices of the Operations department, Internal Security jealously guards this particular responsibility.

Leadership: Arthur Barclay (see page 120) heads Internal Security and has gone to great lengths to solidify his position and the place of his department in the corporate hierarchy. He steers this particular ship with an easy hand, trusting those below him to carry out their assignments, and delegating a great deal of authority within his department. While he isn't the world's greatest strategist, Barclay is a clever manager and plays the political games at T&S well.

Rivals: The most bitter rivalry within Terrel & Squib is that which exists between Internal Security and Operations. Security personnel see the field operatives as gaudy high-tech showmen and frauds, while Operations people generally treat Internal Security as though they were common Rent-a-Cop style security guards. This rivalry mainly results in regular scuffles and "friendly" fistfights in the local bars, but can turn dangerous when the two departments try to outmaneuver one another for the allocation of resources. Operatives from these two rival sections generally don't cooperate with one another, even when it would be in their best interests to do so.

Internal Security maintains a close working relationship with both the Paranormal Research and the Pharmaceuticals department... especially the latter, since tight security is needed to cover up many of their illicit activities.

Chronicle Ideas: Internal Security chronicles can offer a change of pace from the more orthodox paranormal investigations chronicle, as the focus shifts to defending T&S's vital interests rather than poking around haunted mansions for money. Although Internal Security deals with the supernatural less than the Operations department does, those threats that it faces are likely to be far more malicious and of a more immediate danger to the company. Corporate espionage, nosy media hounds, self-righteous Orpheus Group agents... Internal

Security has to be able to respond to almost any situation with a variable amount of force, depending on what Management deems to be appropriate. You can blow a snooping Spectre back to Oblivion, but try that on a local reporter hanging around a re-education facility and there's going to be hell to pay.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Terrel & Squib began as a pharmaceutical company, and though it has radically changed direction from those early days, pharmaceuticals remain a critical part of the company's continuing success, accounting for more than half of the annual net profits.

Of course, the legitimate, over-the-counter drugs still developed by Terrel & Squib bring in less than a quarter of these profits. The real money comes from pigment.

Although much of T&S's pharmaceutical production capability was liquidated to help finance the initial start-up of the Investigations subsidiary, it has since that time been rebuilt... and then some. Terrel & Squib Pharmaceuticals has become a highly profitable subsidiary of the parent corporation, mostly because of its cornerstone involvement with the pigment trade. The plant from which pigment is derived, *Kakos stromithicarum*, is grown for T&S in the favorable climates of Turkey and Myanmar. It is then imported and smuggled into the United States, where it is processed into the final product at Terrel & Squib Pharmaceuticals facilities. After that, it is distributed onto the streets.

Agents of the Pharmaceuticals division handle this entire process in a quiet, professional, tidy manner. Production of pigment is decentralized and scattered across several separate, isolated facilities so that even those employees who are intimately involved with its creation have no idea what it is they're making (although some have their suspicions). While the DEA hunts for pigment trafficking on the Mexican border, unfinished pigment is being shuttled between T&S facilities right under their noses in large, boldly marked company trucks. It's also the people in Pharmaceuticals who deal with the distributors on the street.

Pharmaceuticals maintains a few choice operatives, at least one of whom is an especially strong projector, for doing its dirty work, but for the most part relies upon Internal Security to keep its activities under wraps.

Leadership: Rayna Almonte (see page 124) runs the Pharmaceuticals division of Terrel & Squib as the official Assistant-in-Charge to Dr. Squib. She has a keen mind for marketing — both legal and illegal — and knows as much or more about T&S's involvement with pigment as anyone else in the company. Almonte does a great deal



of the dirty work herself, frequently flying to Turkey to oversee the pigment fields in person, and has met face-to-face with representatives of pigment cults and at least one Flatliner.

Rivals: The Pharmaceuticals division of T&S is important enough that Squib doesn't allow much in the way of intra-company maneuvering to touch it. It's also surprisingly self-sufficient, needing little from Paranormal Research and nothing from the Investigations division. In fact, Rayna Almonte has created quite a network of dependence upon her department, as Pharmaceuticals creates both pigment and the Eidolon derivative that allows T&S Arc-Light projectors to function.

Chronicle Ideas: Playing a chronicle focused upon the Pharmaceuticals aspect of Terrel & Squib can be difficult, but highly rewarding. Play to the paranoia, secrecy, and multiple dead-ends that anyone trying to investigate the pigment production line is going to inevitably face. Characters can represent the handful of field operatives that Rayna Almonte keeps on hand to handle jobs she can't do herself, or agents from another branch of the company who have become suspicious as to what Pharmaceuticals is really up to.

Chronicles based around the Pharmaceuticals department will almost inevitably become tied up in the world of drugs, sex, and violence that the T&S big boys play in to get the job done. Almonte's department is made up of shady people, none of whom (except her) know everything but all of whom are threads in Malevoy's greater pigment tapestry, and getting to the heart of their scheme can be a chronicle in itself. At the core, the Pharmaceuticals department is much of the reason why Terrel & Squib is as fucked up as it is. The revelation of this fact to the players can make or break the company in their eyes.

Terrel and Squib Facilities

Something that always makes it into the financial magazines is that Terrel & Squib Incorporated, a big capital-generating venture corporation, has chosen to decentralize its facilities rather than consolidating in order to save money. Rather than one large central operations hub, T&S has dispersed its resources across North America — and Europe, to a lesser degree — making it a pet favorite of politicians who enjoy having a piece of a headline industry in their state or city. The Pharmaceuticals subsidiary of Terrel & Squib is particularly decentralized, although Investigations detachments

of varying size exist in most major U.S. and Canadian cities by the time **Shades of Gray** strikes down the company. This decentralization allows for a broader client base for Investigations, and ensures a greater measure of security for the Pharmaceuticals division. Presented here is a short list of "typical" Terrel & Squib facilities that can be found in many cities.

- **Headquarters:** While T&S remains highly decentralized, you wouldn't think it to look at the corporation's headquarters. It's a massive complex at least as large as the building owned by the Orpheus Group, and is self-contained, with most of the "necessities" for a T&S Investigations crew: ghostbreaking facilities, Eidolon stockpiles, personnel quarters, and stocks of weapons. It is also the electronic nerve center from which John Terrel and Lionel Squib command their multinational corporation... every boardroom is as lavishly equipped as one might expect from T&S, with videophones and personal computers. The board of directors meets here regularly, and the wealthiest clients are brought here — flown in at T&S's expense — to discuss business.

- **Pharmaceutical Plants:** Scattered around the United States, although concentrated heavily near the two coasts, Pharmaceutical Plants are dedicated almost solely to the creation of T&S drugs, both legal and illegal. The larger plants often have expanded facilities to accommodate an in-house security force, sometimes including projector lounges or ghost cages.

- **Regional Centers:** Terrel & Squib Investigations maintains a presence in many major American and Canadian cities through their Regional Centers. These are smaller, dilapidated facilities that serve as a base of operations for Investigation teams (usually two or three, although larger ones support four or five distinct teams plus a pool of replacements). Although there are typically a few lavishly adorned rooms for meeting with clients (the ones who aren't important enough to fly back to HQ) the Regional Centers are generally Spartan and unfinished, the interiors often betraying their origins as warehouses or run-down commercial buildings.

- **Re-Education Facilities:** The name only hints at the nature of these facilities. Always underground, usually in rented-out warehouses or old apartment buildings, these are the buildings in which ghostbreakers practice their terrible trade. The basements and sub-basements are heavily renovated with equipment to contain ghosts. Limited personnel quarters are always provided, both for the ghostbreakers on duty and for the Internal Security



boys. These facilities often have peaceful-sounding names such as Heaven or Elysium, possibly as a grim joke, or possibly as a half-heated effort to conceal the nature of the tortures that are conducted in these terrible subterranean mazes.

PARANORMAL RESEARCH

Terrel & Squib, Inc. has capital at its disposal that the Orpheus Group could never even dream of. Part of this originated from its standing as a successful pharmaceutical company, but catering to big-money clients and the illegal pigment trade have certainly been instrumental in financing the company.

The question, of course, is where do they put all that money? It sure as hell isn't going into intelligence-gathering capabilities, because even when the company was positively flush those never improved. On the other hand, no one is surprised to learn that the Paranormal Research division is one of the best-funded divisions of the company. Headed directly by founding partner Dr. Lionel Squib, the Paranormal Research Department is one of the keys to the company's success — and is also one of the darkest corners of a secretly malefic organization. New tech toys, new ways of interacting with the dead, even an attempt to grow an in-house Hive-Mind; all are given maximum funding priority in the annual budgets. The hereafter was never so well-equipped as when Terrel & Squib was at its peak.

The Unearthed Player's Guide chapter provides basic player information on the results of many of these projects, but exactly how they work is something that players shouldn't know. In fact, all of the information in this section is entirely optional. Parasynthetic Implants, for example, offer tremendous new Storytelling possibilities and game options, but it's entirely possible that you may view them as unbalanced or a contaminant to

the themes of the Orpheus™ game. That's fine. Don't like them? Don't use them. We're not forcing them on anyone. The same goes for PROJECT: COVENANT. If the thought of Terrel & Squib trying to build an artificial Spectre Hive-Mind leaves a bad taste in your mouth, then by all means push it aside. Everything in this chapter is optional information for the Storyteller. That's why it's here, and not in the Players' chapter. We feel that the fruits of Paranormal Research add to the Orpheus™ experience, and we hope you think so too — but if you don't, then take what you like, and leave behind what you will.

EIDOLON

Anyone who has read **Shades of Gray** now knows that the Spectre Malevoy, in possession of Dr. Lionel Squib, is the mastermind behind the production of pigment. The popular, highly addictive narcotic is manufactured in part by Terrel & Squib, Malevoy's chief pawn, and has properties that facilitate projection, particularly for Arc-Light skimmers.

Unfortunately, the narcotic effects of pigment are somewhat undesirable for Investigations personnel in the field, and the pigment slap-patches that were initially produced for Norms were phased out after operatives baked out of their minds by the pigment sustained unnecessarily high losses. Street pigment, while theoretically effective, had some very real practical limitations for use amongst professional projectors.

It was with this in mind that Dr. Squib further tinkered with the pigment formula, producing a new drug that mimicked the core properties of pigment — the ability to see ghosts and a catalyst for spiritual projection — but without the narcotic side-effects. None of pigment's addictive qualities were reduced, but field operatives could use the new drug without undesirable physiological effects. This drug was called Eidolon.





Eidolon is now widespread amongst T&S personnel, and has virtually replaced pigment as a projection catalyst and as a slap-dash method of interacting with ghosts (though many Arc-Light junkies maintain a private stash of pigment, as the two drugs can both satisfy the cravings). It can be injected for an instant fix, applied in a slap-patch form for effect within a couple of minutes, or swallowed in pill form for effect within five, whichever is most convenient. The people down in Pharmaceuticals have never bothered producing a snortable version of Eidolon, as it would tend to ruin the professional appearance.

As mentioned, Eidolon has all the same properties and effects as pigment, minus the narcotic ones. It is still secretly made with Spectre ichor, and like pigment, those who use it regularly are going to become hues when they die. Yes, that includes every Arc-Light on the T&S payroll. Life is hard, and death is harder, as these people will eventually figure out.

B r e a k i n g G h o s t s

One of the things that set Terrel & Squib apart from the other projector companies is their use of slave ghosts. Referred to within the company as “broken” spirits, they are ghosts whose identities have been overridden through extended, often painful parapsychological procedures called “ghostbreaking.” This section deals with the methodologies employed by T&S ghostbreakers in pursuing their task of creating loyal, compliant slaves. Information for creating a broken ghost as a character (for players or as NPCs) can be found in the *Unearthed Player’s Guide*.

B r o k e n G h o s t s

Broken ghosts are pitiable creatures. Most Terrel & Squib employees have no idea just how deep the psychological scarring goes. They are generally docile, vacant, and subservient, existing for nothing more than the orders of their superiors and being “stored” in Labyrinth Cages when they aren’t otherwise needed. Terrel & Squib has found what Southern plantation owners quested fruitlessly for throughout the nineteenth century: the perfect slave.

Ghostbreakers manage to achieve this “perfect” level of control by overriding the identity and personality of the broken ghost through a series of institutionalized tortures. If the process is successful, then the spirit or hue’s mind becomes a blank slate ready for reformatting with the new whims of T&S, Inc. They

may possess some lingering skills and especially strong virtues, but the ghost no longer has any active recollection of the person it once was. Any sense of identity that the ghost once possessed is filled with a strict regimen of T&S programming. Loyalty to the company and loyalty to the ghostbreakers are the two biggest features of this programming, although every once in a while an ambitious ‘breaker will program other commands, leaving “back doors” into a ghost’s mind that only he can access. T&S discourages this and has terminated at least two ghostbreakers for this practice.

M e t h o d o l o g y

When approaching the art of ghostbreaking, it’s important to remember that these are not living people anymore — they’re ghosts. They’re dead. They have no physical bodies to retreat into, no shells in which to lose themselves when the going gets too tough. They are now creatures who are not only driven by their passions, but in a very real way are their passions, tethered to the mortal coil by them and defining their sense of identity through them. They are equal parts emotion and force of will. So when a ghostbreaker tears down their psychological defense mechanisms through whatever method they choose to employ, the whole essence of that ghost is prostrate before them. Breaking a ghost is much easier than breaking a living person: that’s why Terrel & Squib has managed to do it so successfully and to such an extent.

Below are listed some of the most common methods of ghostbreaking. Observant readers will note that the effectiveness of each type of ‘breaking presented here corresponds with one of the nature groups from the **Orpheus™** corebook. This is because certain personality types among the dead are going to be more vulnerable to certain types of torture and ghostbreaking. Why? Simple: trying to manipulate a star-struck Phantasm into falling in love with you through the Stockholm technique is going to be a great deal more straightforward than convincing a wily Wisp of the same thing. Or breaking an outgoing Banshee through the deprivation/dependence chambers of the Labyrinth is going to be easier than doing the same thing to a sour, introverted Haunter. People will react differently to the varieties of torture outlined here, and the Orpheus Group nature groupings are a convenient means of categorizing methods and responses.

These are hardly written in stone, though. Ghostbreaking is an art, not a science, and exceptions to the rules abound. The techniques outlined here are meant to be dynamic and flexible: just because the Transplant



technique works best on Poltergeists doesn't mean that it can't be used successfully on a Haunter character in your chronicle. Ghostbreaking is about individuals, and finding the right technique to break the right ghost with is half the challenge for T&S personnel. So be flexible in your own chronicle. Not every Banshee is going to crack in the Labyrinth, and not every Haunter will be able to resist it... these are just trends based upon personality types. And just as personality is about as easy to nail to the wall as butter, so too there is no "right" way to break a ghost, except for the one that works.

You'll also note that there are no hard "crunchy" rules for ghostbreaking. This is deliberate. Ghostbreaking takes weeks, if not months, of dedicated work by parapsychologists who are generally not the most pleasant folk to be around. The ghostbreakers accumulate Spite fast when 'breaking (especially those who favor the Transplant method), since the processes they use are, without exception, cruel and inhumane. If someone wants to play a ghostbreaker, you might consider letting them act as a kind of slave driver for field operations, commanding ghostbroken spooks in action... but leave the actual process of ghostbreaking behind the scenes. That will make it all the more horrifying when the players find out the truth about it.

It should also be noted that there are a few elements common to many ghostbreaking procedures. The systematic resolution of all of a ghost's tethers is the domain of the Disjunction technique, but resolving some of a ghost's tethers weakens their ties to the world and, therefore, their identities. Sensory deprivation followed by sensory overload is an established brainwashing method that T&S ghostbreakers use frequently. Beatings are common as projectors physically assail the subject ghosts, and Labyrinth Cages can be wired to cause wracking pain within the gauze of any trapped spooks without actually destroying them. All of these

elements are common, but unstated, parts of the procedures outlined here. Painful details, after all, are best left to the Storyteller's judgment.

Disjunction: The ghostbreaking method known as Disjunction requires the most legwork on the part of the 'breaker or her associates. It is considered by some to be one of the more "humane" procedures, although the psychological pain it can cause to the "patient" is still immense. Disjunction was one of the first established ways to break a ghost approved by Terrel & Squib parapsychologists, and still receives the most acclaim as an effective technique from inside the company.

In some superficial ways Disjunction resembles investigative missions aimed at "freeing" a ghost from the mortal coil. First the ghost's tethers must be identified, typically through the use of the Sense Lifeline default ability, and then systematically resolved wherever possible. Rather than infusing a ghost with enough Vitality to ascend, however, the ghostbreaker bombards the patient with evidence (often through photographs) that they are not only dead, but also never really existed to begin with. Many ghosts — especially low-Vitality ones — define themselves by what they have left behind in the world, sometimes to the exclusion of realizing that they themselves have passed on.

With their psychic ties to the world gone, but still lacking the ability to complete themselves through Transcendence, the ghosts' senses of identity begins to fade under the ghostbreakers' regimen of identity-deconstruction. A spirit or hue defined by its passions in life quickly finds that the vibrancy of those passions fades once the tethers are resolved. Its memory and personality become especially malleable, and thereby compliant with Terrel & Squib re-programming procedures.

The Disjunction technique works on a wide variety of ghosts, perhaps more than any other ghostbreaking method, as ghosts of all classifications and natures can

TARGET'S NATURE GROUP	EFFECTIVE GHOSTBREAKING METHOD	INEFFECTIVE GHOSTBREAKING METHOD
BANSHEE	LABYRINTH	NONE
HAUNTER	INFECTION	LABYRINTH
PHANTASM	STOCKHOLM	DISJUNCTION
POLTERGEIST	TRANSPLANT	INFECTION
SKINRIDER	DOMINATION	TRANSPLANT
WISP	NONE	STOCKHOLM
MARROW	DISJUNCTION	DOMINATION
MYSTERY GROUP #3	NONE	ALL



maintain very strong ties to their old lives. However, it has been found to be particularly effective in breaking ghosts of the Marrow nature group, who have typically established a definition of themselves, however strong, based upon validation from external stimuli (Conformists, Fanatics, Followers, etc.). A complete separation from their previous existences is far more likely to make their self-identity malleable. Strangely, this method of ghostbreaking does not seem to have much of an effect on individuals of the Phantasm nature group, who draw their sense of identity from what they can sculpt reality into rather than vice versa.

Domination: A common phobia amongst ghosts is the loss of control. Their lives are finished, they can never fully go back, and their destiny may well be out of their own hands now... and many find that loss of empowerment to be as frightening as actually dying. Playing upon these fears is an excellent way to break a ghost. If in life the spirit or hue was busily defining itself through its ability to control others and its environment, then the ghost will quickly lose that essential sense of self when all control is taken away from them.

Ghosts slated for breaking through Domination are first given some small measure of control over their surrounding environment: typically it's minor authority over "lesser" ghosts. This power is quickly taken away from them, and the real torture begins almost immediately. The keys to Domination are thorough and total control over the ghost and an element of unpredictability: many spirits have been able to maintain some delusion of self-control and defiance by finding patterns in the tortures inflicted upon them by the ghostbreakers. The ghosts are not even given the (very relative) freedom of discerning patterns or timetables behind the tortures they endure: many times a torture session will end, only to pick up again with redoubled intensity five minutes later. Other times, the ghostbreaker will leave the ghost in solitude for days. The ghost's existence becomes an irrational web of fear; not surprisingly, the ghosts whom Domination works best upon tend to fear their total lack of control more than they do the actual pain. That the tortures they have to suffer can be inflicted upon them at any time, and that everything that happens to them is beyond their control, is a burden too great for many.

Domination is as psychological as it is physical, and every effort is made to reinforce to the ghost that it has no control. Its pain and pleasure are at the mercy of someone else, someone who has complete authority over them, and the only way for them to exist (not survive...even final death is not given to them as an option) is to submit, totally and unconditionally. Stubborn ghosts can hold out for a number of weeks, but

their ultimate fall is all the more painful for it.

Studies have shown that the Skinrider nature group is most vulnerable to the Domination form of breaking. Directors, autocrats, and leaders in life, they typically fear helplessness and the loss of control more than most, and thus placing them in situations defined by a total lack of control has a profound effect upon their sense of self. Not surprisingly, this form of ghostbreaking typically has little potency when applied to the Marrow nature group, who are largely followers used to (or even expecting) a lack of personal control.

Infection: Particularly stubborn, introverted ghosts often require brutal regimens of ghostbreaking. Infection is reserved for these individuals. It tends to be time-consuming and extremely difficult for even the most tempered ghostbreaker to watch. Done incorrectly, it also tends to fail spectacularly. When properly applied, however, Infection is one of the staple tools of the trade.

Infection is almost as invasive as Transplanting, although it works in a fundamentally different way. The procedure involves multiple, direct applications of Spectre ichor to the "patient's" gauze, supplemented by electrical currents, which causes violent, wracking pain but also insinuates the ichor into the gauze, causing mutation on a spiritual level. There's no physical body for the infection to destroy, so the "disease" of Spectral ichor begins to eat away at the ghost's personality instead, and the further the subject withdraws into themselves, the faster and more completely Infection works. Paradoxically, the more the ghost attempts to stubbornly internalize the pain, the greater the chances are that it will eat through their essences.

This method is widely ostracized because it isn't well understood. Only a handful of ghostbreakers know precisely what the incorporeal black liquid they apply to the subject's gauze even is, and have little to no idea how it works. Malpractice is therefore high with Infection, as are the casualties that result from it. Also, the direct infusion of Spectre ichor (the puree of Spectral essence, after all) into the gauze can have some powerfully unwanted side effects. Around 30% of all spirit-class ghosts who undergo this treatment become hues in the wake of the Infection, and it is the only known way that a spirit can undergo a transformation into a hue. While this obviously doesn't happen all or even most of the time, it's still a highly disturbing tendency.

As mentioned, Infection is highly effective on ghosts who internalize pain as a defense mechanism, making the Haunter nature group by far the most vulnerable. Of the other nature groups, it has been found that Poltergeists tend to be the least vulnerable to Infection, as their personalities naturally create a more external-



ized reaction to pain that largely protects them from this method.

Labyrinth: The Labyrinth method of ghostbreaking was conceived by an engineer-turned-parapsychologist named Judson Dettorre, who claims that the inspiration came to him in a dream. He reported that, using Eidolon, he was able to peer past the Stormwall into something great and terrible beyond it, which fueled his imagination and led to a new kind of torture. Unfortunately, Judson Dettorre never lived to see his creation, as the unstable genius departed the mortal coil, leaving behind only a cryptic suicide note. His ghost, strangely enough, was never recovered by Terrel & Squib.

Now, T&S re-education facilities maintain at least one underground area consisting of Labyrinth Cages that are installed along select lengths of the hallways. Ghost “patients” are kept isolated in aligned cages, and are occasionally released into the Labyrinth, letting them run through electrically-charged hallways, the layout of which are constantly changing thanks to sliding cage doors built into the walls. The experience is like running in a maze whose passages shift, twist, and warp every time one looks away, and the very ground is a source of constant pain. Claustrophobia, combined with helplessness, complete dependence, and physical pain, quickly erodes the ghost’s passions (and thereby also erodes their sense of identity).

The point of the Labyrinth is to force the ghost to

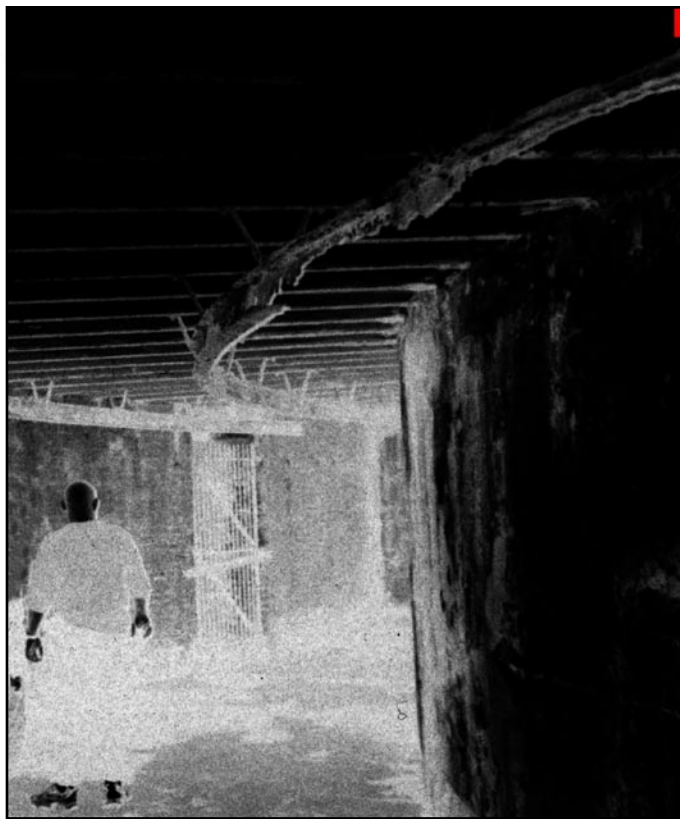
come to the ghostbreaker of its own volition. They come to see the ‘breakers as both the source of pain and suffering and a release from it, and after a month spent in the hellish Labyrinth that’s sometimes all the ghosts can see. They crave human company, stimulation... indeed, anything that happens when and if the right door within the maze is lifted. There is always precisely one “special” door that the ghostbreaker appears at every time. The worst moments within the Labyrinth come when the ghost knows that the ghostbreaker is at the door and tries desperately to get there, but the cage has rearranged itself to make it impossible to reach. After extended periods in the Labyrinth, the moments when the ghostbreaker appears (sometimes constantly, sometimes as infrequently as once a week) are what the ghost starts to live for. The ghostbreaker becomes God, the source of everything good in their existence. The ghost doesn’t mind the other tortures or the re-education sessions that acclimatize the spirit or hue to its new station within the company; it may even welcome them after what it went through in the Labyrinth.

This ghostbreaking method is generally most effective on those for whom human contact is a staple of life: the Banshee nature group has been found to be especially vulnerable to this method of breaking. It is least effective on rebels, loners, and others who crave and embrace isolation from their peers, as they tend to either give up and stare at the ceiling or wander the maze trying to find or create an alternate exit rather than relying upon the ghostbreaker. On the whole, with notable exceptions, the Haunter nature grouping is least psychologically vulnerable to this method.

The Labyrinth isn’t the favored method of ghostbreaking, because it takes longer than other methods do, and the facilities to carry it out are as expensive as they are limited.

Stockholm: This method of ghostbreaking was nicknamed after the infamous “Stockholm Syndrome,” in which captives (typically in a hostage situation) come to identify with their captors as a defense mechanism. Accordingly, this method manipulates the emotions of the ghost in question, and builds a powerful psychic relationship between ghost and ghostbreaker that eventually overshadows the ghost’s vulnerable sense of self. In many ways it resembles the Labyrinth method, and ghostbreakers have found that, in some cases, the two processes can be interchangeable or complementary.

Stockholm is not a scientific process. The establishment of an emotional, one-way bond of dependence between two beings is an art that few ghostbreakers ever fully learn to master. Typically the subject ghost is tortured or threatened with pain and destruction, mostly





to demonstrate that the ghostbreaker has power over the ghost. The ghost, trapped within a Labyrinth Cage, has no hope of escape, and therefore is entirely at the mercy of the ghostbreaker in a very direct way. The mandatory isolation likewise limits the ghost to the perspective that the ghostbreaker wants it to have, and it rarely takes long (more than a week) for the incapacitated spirit or hue to begin to identify with its captor. Some amount of kindness towards it on the part of the 'breaker is usually perceived by the ghost, and manipulating that particular perception of empathy is one of the most critical factors in the Stockholm method. The ghost begins to fantasize that the 'breaker won't hurt it anymore if it becomes utterly compliant and agreeable toward what is happening (the ghostbreakers develop some story about why the ghost is being held "captive" and tortured... the details don't really matter, and are quickly forgotten by the ghost). Eventually this comes true, as the 'breaker becomes kinder and hurts the ghost less.

Once the crucial emotional connection is formed, playing it for all it's worth is necessary, and many ghostbreakers find this difficult, as the emotional bond can go both ways. It isn't particularly uncommon for the 'breaker to empathize with the ghost as well (more than one has claimed to fall in love with their subjects, although those cases never end pleasantly for anyone). However, in order for the 'breaking to be successful, the ghost has to become entirely emotionally dependent upon its "captor," so the ghostbreaker slowly weans the ghost off of its brutal captivity mindset and into the process of indoctrination. There is always at least one "reversion" in which the ghostbreaker slips back into the captor mode and tortures the ghost again (incredibly painful for some 'breakers to have to do) for some minor or irrelevant transgression, instilling blind terror and panic in the subject. This reversion, more than anything else, helps override the ghost's sense of identity, and particularly stubborn ghosts sometimes require multiple reversions before cracking.

After some time (usually several weeks, although it can vary radically by ghost) the spirit or hue is so entirely dependent upon the ghostbreaker and so completely enthralled by their point of view that the final stages of T&S programming are mostly consolidation.

Those who dare to dream are also those who open themselves to being manipulated in the cruelest fashions. The Stockholm method works best upon those of the Phantasm nature group, as they typically comprise society's lovers, dreamers, and artists who will more willingly lay themselves bare before the ghostbreaker.

It tends not to work so well on those who are adept in the arts of manipulation themselves, and thus Stockholm rarely succeeds when applied to those of the Wisp nature grouping.

Transplant: Ghostbreaking, by definition, isn't a subtle art. That bears saying, since among the ghost-breaking techniques, Transplanting is the most direct and less subtle of all. Transplanting is a vicious, cruel process that robs the "patient" in question of identity through a systematic, invasive procedure that quickly destroys not only their identity, but also their sense of individuality.

Transplanting is one of the fastest methods of ghostbreaking, but has some stringent requirements and carries a great deal of risk. First, high-Vitality ghosts are generally immune to this process. Second, it requires a ghost or projector with the Tainted Background and access to the Virus Spectral Horror (**Orpheus™** corebook, pg. 269). The ghostbreaker who possesses Virus (and there aren't very many) uses the Horror at varying levels of power to override the target ghost's personality. The ghostbreaker never goes "all the way" in overriding the spirit or hue's identity, however, and theoretically knows when to pull back to leave the creature at least semi-cognizant (although subjects have been lost). Multiple applications of this hostile psychological takeover, even with only a partial use of Virus, have been known to break a ghost within a week. Their personalities are almost entirely overridden, leaving them perfectly malleable to T&S reprogramming.

Transplanting has its dangers, of course. Repeated use of Virus, even at low-Spite levels, can quickly cause a buildup of Spite within the ghostbreakers, and at least one has been lost to Spectrehood since the procedures began. T&S attempts to alleviate this by rotating ghostbreakers involved in Transplanting onto active field duty on a regular basis. It doesn't help as much as some of their experts seem to think it should, however.

Transplanting works best on ghosts who have a weaker sense of self, who tend to lash out at others for validation, finding a weakness in their constant emotional projection. Generally speaking, Poltergeists are most susceptible to Transplanting, although unlike other forms of ghostbreaking personality is less of an issue when it is being forcibly overridden by a Spectral Horror, and Transplant can be effective on many types of ghosts. The Skinrider nature group, however, is less vulnerable to breaking through Transplanting, as those with such a nature generally have a strong sense of self.



Special Cases

Terrel & Squib ghostbreakers have consistently found it difficult to break those ghosts whose natures fall into Mystery Group #3 (Addict, Barbarian, Deviant, Grotesque, Monster, Wretch) and the Wisp nature group (Bon Vivant, Child, Conniver, Rake, Riddler, Tickster). The reason for this is currently unknown, although theories abound. While ghosts of these Nature Groups can be broken, it takes longer, and there is no “approved” methodology that they are notably vulnerable to. Oftentimes a combination of other ghostbreaking techniques is required, frequently destroying the ghost in the process. Research continues on this knotty problem, but Terrel & Squib researchers haven’t been able to corner anything resembling a solution.

On a different note, ghostbreakers have found that ghosts of the Banshee nature group are easiest to break. These (generally) kind-hearted, extroverted individuals take torture the hardest, their maternal instincts betrayed by pain and torment. While not every Banshee can be broken, there are no known methods that this nature group is especially resistant to. Again, research continues, although in this case T&S researchers are less likely to stare a gift horse in the mouth too carefully.

As a consequence of these special cases, there are fewer broken ghosts of the Wisp and Mystery Group #3 Nature Groups, and a disproportionately high number of Banshees, amongst their ranks.

Orphan-Grinders

It is entirely possible that Terrel & Squib does not exist long enough as an establishment to discover and research the Orphan-Grinder Shade. If they do, however, it should be noted now that Orphan-Grinders are entirely immune to ghostbreaking. They have fought their way through hell — through the depths of the Spectre Hive-Mind — in order to regain and reassert their personalities, and there’s no torture that T&S can pull out of its hat to even approximate that. T&S parapsyches can strap an Orphan-Grinder down and go at him for days, but redeemed Spectres have already fought too hard to let themselves be cracked by mortal mind-games.

It should be noted that while the natures of most Orphan-Grinders fall into Mystery Group #3, not all individuals within Mystery Group #3 are Orphan-Grinders.

Former Broken Ghosts

Ghostbreaking is far from perfect, and occasionally Terrel & Squib’s careful programming either fails to go deep enough or simply erodes with time. It is, therefore, possible for broken ghosts to shake off their mental programming and become free individuals. While T&S eliminates all such “anomalies” from its ranks, there are independent groups such as the Iphigeneia Convent (see “Other Antagonists” in this chapter) that gladly take in former broken ghosts.

System: Usually there is some specific event that allows a broken ghost to kick off its yoke. An artifact from its past life, locating an old acquaintance, going to a familiar location... it’s best left up to the Storyteller what exactly the catalyst is. The occasion gives the ghost a chance to buck its programming, an extended action that requires the broken ghost to acquire at least 18 successes on Willpower checks (difficulty 7) in the space of no more than one hour, rolling once every ten minutes. Any dots the ghost possesses in the new Background: Flashbacks (see *The Unearthed Player’s Guide*, page 52) are subtracted from the total number of successes required. A failure means that the programming stays in place; the ghost should not be given another opportunity to free itself for at least a week. If it succeeds in the Willpower checks, however, then the ghost can immediately spend a number of Vitality points equal to (10 - permanent Willpower), infusing itself with enough energy to throw off Terrel & Squib’s programming once and for all. Circumstantial bonuses can be given to the Willpower rolls as the Storyteller sees fit.

A ghost that manages to free itself no longer has a cap on its Willpower rating and is no longer psychologically compelled to obey T&S superiors. However, the ghost does not automatically regain the Willpower points that it lost when being broken... although it can raise its Willpower above the cap of 4, it must spend XP in order to do so. As a consolation, though, the bonus Horror that the ghost manifested during the stress of ghostbreaking doesn’t disappear once the ghost is freed.

Parasynthetic Implants

Parasynthetics are among the blackest fruits ever conceived by those who dabble in the mechanics of the hereafter. And like the fruit from Eden, Terrel & Squib has been unable to resist them.

Parasynthetics are based upon the same theories as pigment and the patented Ecto-chambers of Dr. Johan



Hendrickson (see **Shadow Games**, pg 64): namely, that ghostly ectoplasm can be infused into solid physical objects, and when said objects are living humans, certain supernatural effects can manifest within the body. Terrel & Squib has taken this research far ahead of the competition, and has determined through extensive trial and error that ferroanimus can be infused into human beings to achieve various effects that can only be described as supernatural. The idea of combining ghost ichor with synthetic implants to maintain a minute, continuous feed of ghostly ichor into the body was put through rapid prototyping and field-testing, and now exists in the workable form of parasynthetic implants.

Parasynthetic implants are small electronic devices that act as receptacles for ferroanimus. The implants themselves are usually tiny (some are the size of pacemakers, many are smaller), but contain enough ferroanimus to last for roughly two months of constant infusion.

Invasive, delicate surgery is required to implant them into the proper areas of the body. Once attached, the ichor is automatically released into the surrounding tissue, imbuing it in a way not entirely dissimilar to the fashion in which Spectre ichor infuses the *Kakos stromithicarum* plant in the first step of creating pigment. The effects vary depending on the type of implant and where inside the human body it's installed.

The human body is a finely tuned organic machine, and it knows when it finds something that it doesn't like; and in 95% of test subjects, the body does not like parasynthetic implants. Maybe it's the implant itself that's behind some of these failures, but current thought is that ferroanimus doesn't produce a happy physiological mixture when directly injected into human tissue.

The body rejects it, often manifesting severe allergic reactions within the region containing the implant. That doesn't mean that these people can't handle it. If they're willing to live with the side effects, they can still benefit from parasynthetic implants... they've never proven to be fatal, except in one or two cases.

Those "fortunate" few whose systems naturally accept the implants have their own problems. A person who can endure one parasynthetic implant often won't have tolerance for multiple implants, and it's the rare individual indeed who can stand to have more than two or three implants in their body with no negative impacts. (In game mechanics terms, this is determined by the Parasynthetic Tolerance Background, page 52).

Parasynthetics only work while a person is in the flesh. A T&S projector with an Interdiction implant who

leaves it back in the meat when she goes out-of-body, for example, gains no benefit from the implant while in the gauze. Parasynthetics are one of the great equalizers for Terrel & Squib, and can give Norm agents a chance to interact with the hereafter above and beyond what they can do with Kirlian goggles and ghostshot ammunition.

While parasynthetic implants are available, they're mentioned in this chapter instead of in the *Unearthed Players Guide* because they're rare even in a company teeming with rarities, and shouldn't be made available to the players as an option except at the Storyteller's discretion. They give characters edges beyond anything that is specified in the Orpheus™ core rules, and for that reason they should only be used in a mature game wherein their ramifications are fully understood by player and Storyteller alike.

One final word of warning for the Storyteller — it should come as no great surprise that there is one final effect to parasynthetics that the T&S researchers know all about, but never bother to warn their recipients of. Like pigment, parasynthetics introduce ghost ichor into the human body — more specifically, they introduce Spectre ichor. Ferroanimus is derived from captive Spectres. Thus, parasynthetics are functionally identical to pigment in terms of blemishing the soul, and any operative who has ever had such an implant is going to become a hue when he or she dies. Without exception. It's a steep price to pay.

System: Any character with a parasynthetic implant installed in their body gains the benefits from it as detailed below. If a character has no dots in the Parasynthetic Tolerance Background, then they suffer a penalty to one or more Attributes for as long as the implant remains installed, as noted in the individual implant descriptions. One dot in the Background allows the installation of one implant without Attribute penalties.

Each implant lasts approximately two months from the time of its surgical placement in the body; after that, the implant must be "recharged" with ferroanimus by trained T&S technicians, a process that takes at least one day.

Additionally, there are some implants that are more powerful than others, and require a certain number of dots in the Parasynthetic Tolerance Background before they can be installed at all. Installing these particularly dangerous implants without the required number of dots results in a massive allergic reaction. Each day with the implant installed the character must make a Stamina check (difficulty 8) or else lose dots in the implant's



indicated Attributes permanently.

None of the implants' abilities work while projected. You can place them into Skimmers, Sleepers, Arc-Lights or Norms, but when a projector is out of body, the spook gains no benefit from the implants.

Also, any ghost, Spectre, or projected entity can clearly differentiate a person with a parasynthetic implant from the mass of humanity, as parts of their body seem to "bleed" foreign Vitality.

RETINAL PARASYNTHETIC IMPLANT

This implant is one of the most difficult to install, but also happens to be one of the most useful. Although a multiple-hour surgery session is required to implant it near the optical nerve, the ichor it releases affects the character's eyesight, allowing him or her to see ghosts without the need for slap-patches of Kirlian-feed goggles. As with other modes of perceiving the dead, this implant allows the character to see, but not hear, touch, or smell, the dead.

System: This implant grants the use of "Dead-Eyes" while in the flesh to non-projectors. Without sufficient dots in Parasynthetic Tolerance, Perception is reduced by one dot as damage is done to the optical nerve.



Dermal Parasynthetic Implant

This implant, often one of the more visible ones, is often attached beneath the armpit or in the hand, and energizes the dermal layer with ghost ichor. This allows for tactile interaction with ghosts, projected beings, and artifacts. However, while it makes the character able to physically interact with ghosts, it does not allow her to

see, hear, or otherwise interact with spooks beyond what her normal capabilities. The surgery needed to install this implant is delicate and frequently goes sour even when the device is successfully installed.

System: This implant grants the ability to physically interact with ghosts, projected beings, and artifacts as though they were solid. Note that any ghost interacted with is solid only to the person with the implant; a sword artifact may feel solid to the character, but swinging it at another solid person has no effect. Without sufficient dots in Parasynthetic Tolerance, the implant reduces Appearance by one dot due to incessant hives and rashes that break out on his skin.

Interdiction Parasynthetic Implant

This implant is unique, the result of a great deal of trial, error, and unrelated discoveries in the Terrel & Squib R&D department. Planted near the base of the spine, the ichor it releases uses the body as a psychic anchor for the area, strengthening the surrounding ethereal currents to the point of solidity for ghosts. Any spook attempting to approach the character will find themselves impeded, as though they were attempting to push their way through a solid object. It has further tactical value in that it prevents Skimmers or Arc-Lights from ripcording back to their bodies within that same personal space.

System: Any ghost or projector attempting to move within 10 feet of the character acts as though impeded by a solid object, and must either spend one Vitality per turn or go incorporeal as normal. This implant also prevents Skimmers or Arc-Lights from ripcording back to their bodies within that same area. Without sufficient dots in the Parasynthetic Tolerance, this implant reduces Stamina by one dot, as it is intrusive and harder on the system than most.

Advanced Implant: This is an advanced-model implant that is particularly invasive and hard on the system. At least three dots in the Parasynthetic Tolerance Background must be attained before this implant can be installed at all.

Nerve Center Parasynthetic Implant

Attached to the base of the spinal cord in a delicate procedure, this implant infuses the subject's body with ichor from Spectres known to possess the Flicker Horror. The ichor affects the central nervous system, warping it



on a spiritual level to increase reaction times. Skinriders possessing someone with a Nerve Center Parasynthetic Implants invariably notice that the “silver cords” inside their bodies are pulled almost painfully taut.

System: This implant grants a +5 bonus on all initiative rolls, and adds two dice to all dodge attempts. Without sufficient dots in Parasynthetic Tolerance, the character’s Charisma is reduced by one dot, as he becomes constantly jittery and high-strung.

P l a t e l e t P a r a s y n t h e t i c I m p l a n t

This implant, attached via a complicated procedure to the heart, affects the character’s bloodstream, constantly infusing it with ferroanimus. Clinical tests have shown that this bolsters the healing process, allowing for faster recovery from injury and a greater capacity to withstand damage.

System: This implant halves all healing times for both bashing and lethal damage, and adds one die to all soak rolls (allowing normal humans a single die to soak lethal damage). Adds two dice to all soak rolls if damage is coming from a ghost or ghost-derived source (direct application of a Horror, gauze weapon artifacts, etc.). Without Parasynthetic Tolerance, it reduces Appearance by one dot as the character’s skin takes on a mottled, sickly hue.

Advanced Implant: This is an advanced-model implant that is particularly invasive and hard on the system. At least three dots in the Parasynthetic Tolerance Background must be attained before this implant can be installed at all.

T e l e p a t h i c P a r a s y n t h e t i c I m p l a n t

Carefully inserted into the cerebral cortex, this implant serves a special purpose. It injects the subject’s brain with chemical stimulants and ghost ichor that allow the transmission of telepathic messages over a long distance. These signals are undetectable by radio and other conventional means, although tests show that they tend to spook animals in the vicinity and may play a role in attracting Spectres. These telepathic wavelengths can only be picked up and decoded by specially-tuned Terrel & Squib receivers. There is currently no known way to open a two-way line of telepathic communication; this implant allows the operative to telepathically send messages, but not to receive them.

System: As a standard action, the character can

burst-transmit a short, silent, telepathic message. Special Terrel & Squib paratech receivers can be tuned to that wavelength and will pick up the message as long as they are within a 3-mile radius. This communication is entirely one-way. At the Storyteller’s discretion, it may also provoke nearby Spectres, whose Hive-Mind communication operates along similar wavelengths. Without sufficient dots in Parasynthetic Tolerance, the implant reduces Intelligence by one dot, as it impedes regular brain activity.

Advanced Implant: This is an advanced-model implant that is particularly invasive and hard on the system. At least three dots in the Parasynthetic Tolerance Background must be attained before this implant can be installed at all.

B L A C K - 4 2 P a r a s y n t h e t i c I m p l a n t

This is a highly experimental implant recently approved by T&S for final-stage development. The character’s spirit is shrouded in a pall of inky darkness, making him almost invisible to non-manifested spirits. This effect is created by the infusion of Spectral ichor throughout the body, effectively clouding the individual from the Vitality-centric views of Spectres and most ghosts. While manifested ghosts or Spectres can see the character with perfect clarity, all others have difficulty spotting him unless he decides to make his presence known. A handful of T&S researchers and parapsychologists possess these implants for the close handling of captive Spectres.

System: The character can make a Manipulation + Stealth roll (difficulty 6); one success allows him to move as a shadow, and the difficulty for spooks to hit him in combat goes up by two; two or more successes mean that he is invisible to ghosts (including Spectres) for the duration of the scene. This invisibility can be “broken” at any time by interacting with the ghost. Without Parasynthetic Tolerance, reduce Charisma and Wits by one dot each, as the character becomes sluggish, apathetic and slow to react.

Advanced Implant: This is an advanced-model implant that is particularly invasive and hard on the system. At least four dots in the Parasynthetic Tolerance Background must be attained before this implant can be installed at all.



Project: COVENANT

PROJECT: COVENANT is the codename for the T&S initiative to emulate and create a Hive-Mind of the same kind as that which unites the Spectres. The objective is to create a uni-mind that will link all conscript ghosts and projectors (and, potentially, other operatives as well) in order to radically increase efficiency and central control, two long-standing company goals. A large research team — headed by MIT parapsychologist Dr. Hillel Abdon and selected specifically for their amoral outlooks — has worked relentlessly on this project for months, experimenting on captured Spectres and human test subjects alike. PROJECT: COVENANT has claimed no fewer than four test subjects' lives already, but as the team seems to be nearing a breakthrough, Dr. Abdon remains steadfast in carrying his project to its “inevitable” success.

PROJECT: COVENANT represents the furthest stage of Terrel & Squib's para-scientific research and development. It is also unquestionably perverse in both the methodology of its scientists and in its higher aims. The test subjects — most of them volunteers from the T&S rank and file — are selectively infused with Spectre ichor and are given intensive chemotherapy and experimental drugs in order to rebuild their bodies and minds as functional parapsychological tools. Months of exhaustive mental acclimatisation and selective ectoplasmic infusions have produced a variety of intriguing results in subjects and a promising research base, even though the project's actual objectives have yet to be fulfilled.

The test subject who has advanced furthest in (read: survived) the procedures to date is a young Caucasian man named Kenton Whitaker, whose progress has been utterly remarkable. Although the endless parade of experimental drugs and infusions with ichor have left Whitaker a physical vegetable, his brain activity has shown almost exponential increases since his treatments began nearly eleven months ago. Most astonishing of all, he has demonstrated what is believed to be some measure of telepathic control over low-Vitality ghosts in the vicinity, and has been known to “speak” through them, a phenomenon that has been recorded eight times. Although much of what was said by the controlled ghosts was nonsense, it was clearly Whitaker speaking through their gauze — an extraordinary development.

Terrel & Squib researchers have reached two major stumbling blocks with Whitaker, however. First, as he seems unresponsive to most external stimuli, there is no known way to control him and his burgeoning powers, which is an essential part of the COVENANT

project. Secondly, even the subject's success in controlling ghosts is apparently very limited, as the potency of any mental influence Whitaker exercises over the blips and drones declines radically at a range of more than five feet. Encouraged by his moderate successes, Dr. Abdon has pressed forward in seeking a solution to the second problem, and is seeking new ways to “transmit” Whitaker's paranormal control over greater distances. Having conducted some promising research on captured Spectres, Abdon believes that the key to the Hive-Mind may lie in the Stormwall that separates this world from the great Maelstrom that lies beyond, and that something in the composition of this Shroud may facilitate the creation of a Hive-Mind.

SPECTRES

Spectres are hardly unique to a Terrel & Squib chronicle, but as with all the projecting firms that survive long enough, T&S is quickly learning that these creatures are the greatest threat faced by operatives in the field. Most people in the company know little more about them than the Orpheus Group did, struggling to categorize and analyze these monsters as they do everything else in the hereafter. So far, their efforts haven't saved many lives.

New Spectre Thorns and Horrors

The following Thorns and Spectral Horrors are among the many displayed by Spectres and are provided here as guidelines, not hard rules, for Orpheus™ Storytellers.

Automaton (Horror): This ghastly Horror combines the worst aspects of Inhabit and Puppetry, allowing the Spectre to control a human through a machine. Before activating Automaton, the Spectre must first Inhabit a mechanical device (one with significant moving parts; an engine or mechanical clock is appropriate, a computer is not) at least the size of a small appliance.

Once this is done, the Spectre may tap three points of Spite to cause the device to leap onto a living being (use the Spectre's Dexterity + Technology, at least one success needed; victims who are aware of the attack can attempt to dodge). Upon contact, the device partially disassembles, wrapping itself around the victim's head and upper torso and extruding portions of its mechanism into their flesh. The victim must win a contested Willpower roll against the Spectre (difficulty 8); if he fails, the device grafts itself to the victim's body, and the



Spectre assumes control within one turn. Outside assistance reduces the difficulty of the Willpower roll by one (to a maximum of -3) for each character trying to destroy the device or pull it away.

The Spectre controls the victim's body, but has no access to or control over its mind; the subject can only watch helplessly from within as the machine invades their flesh and the Spectre uses the body to work its will. While under the influence of Automaton, the victim gains the Spectre's Strength and Stamina, loses a dot from Dexterity (minimum 1), has an Armor Rating of 1-3 (treat this as the Thorn: Clockwork Armor listed below, with the Armor Rating depending on the size and complexity of the device used), and ignores wound penalties from injuries. The Spectre's Abilities replace those of the victim, and brawling attacks inflict Strength +1 lethal damage (or more, if the Storyteller rules that the possessing device is sufficiently dangerous). The Spectre cannot use any other Horrors except Hive-Mind while Automaton is in effect.

Automaton has a terrible effect on the possessed body, as the possessing device shreds flesh and its chemical byproducts leach into the bloodstream; the experience is excruciating for the victim, who remains horribly aware the entire time. For each turn of possession, the spectre must roll Stamina (difficulty 8) or the victim's body suffers one level of lethal damage; this does not affect the Spectre's Spite. Possession ends when the victim dies, the Spectre abandons the device, or a spook with Inhabit enters the mechanism and forces the Spectre out with a contested Willpower roll. Even if the Spectre is driven out, most victims will die without immediate medical attention to extract the machine. Removing the embedded device without injury requires an Intelligence + Medicine roll (Difficulty 3+1 for each turn of possession, maximum 9). Simply tearing the device away after more than two turns of possession automatically inflicts three levels of lethal damage, and will more than likely kill the victim if the mechanism has penetrated the skull. This Horror cannot be used on spooks unless they are in the meat.

Caul (Horror): The Spectre pulls strands from the Stormwall (also known as the Shroud) and uses them to form an ectoplasmic cocoon called the Caul to ensnare other spooks, restricting their mobility and movement. Tapping three points of Spite allows the Spectre to wrap the Shroud around the spook's gauze, which requires a successful Dexterity + Melee attack. Once the Caul has been created around the spook, the victim's movement rate is reduced to one-quarter their normal speed, and all Dexterity-related actions suffer a -5 to all dice pools. Furthermore, skimmers enwrapped in the Caul cannot





rip cord back to their bodies. The spook so ensnared can attempt to push past the Caul with raw muscle, and a successful Strength roll (difficulty 8) made each round can allow the spook to act normally... but carrying out the Strength check means that other actions attempted are considered multiple actions, even if the check fails. The Caul, once created, lasts for the remainder of the scene. This Horror cannot be used on the living.

Clockwork Armor (Thorn): The Spectre's body is covered in an ever-moving network of gears, wheels, pipes and pistons. This machinery provides an Armor Rating of 3 against all physical attacks. In addition, any spooks coming into contact with the Spectre's body (including those striking it with fists, claws, or other brawling attacks) suffers one level of lethal damage from the gnashing gears and churning machinery.

Contamination (Horror): This Horror allows the Spectre to coax out and manipulate the darkness in other spooks. To use this Horror, the Spectre must physically touch a nearby target (usually requires a Dexterity + Athletics check in combat), and can tap anywhere from one to five points of Spite to fuel the effect. The Spectre rolls dice equal to its permanent Spite rating, with a target number of the victim's Willpower. Any successes mean that the victim gains Spite points equal to the amount of Spite the Spectre chooses to tap. Furthermore, each success results in one unsoakable level of bashing damage dealt to the victim, as the Spite wracks its gauge with pain.

Fevered Strength (Horror): A more limited version of Juggernaut, the Spectre taps three Spite and spends one point of Willpower, then rolls its Spite rating (difficulty 8). The Spectre's Strength doubles for one turn per success.

Gashclaws (Thorn): The Spectre's claws or fingernails exude a thick, noxious black liquid that is as corrosive to the body as it is to the mind. Add an additional die to all damage rolls made for a claw attack, and whenever the Spectre scores five or more successes on a single damage roll, the target must succeed at a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) or gain one temporary Derangement of the Storyteller's choice. The Spectre must have the Thorn: Claws or a similar Thorn or Stain to possess this Thorn.

Hoarfrost (Horror): This Horror grants the Spectre power over ice and snow, allowing it to freeze and terrify the living. As a zero-Spite manifestation of Hoarfrost, the Spectre can exert a small amount of pressure on existing ice or snow (for instance, to write "DIE" in the frost on a window, or create a trail of cloven footprints in snow). Tapping one point of Spite allows the Spectre to crystallize ambient moisture into thin layers of frost on any surface, creating slippery spots or killing plants. For two points of Spite, the ice is more substantial, allowing the Spectre to freeze locks, jam doors, or solidify small amounts of standing liquid (up to the size of a fishbowl). The Spectre can also generate sharp icicles that can be used as daggers (Dexterity + Melee for hand-to-hand,





Dexterity + Athletics to throw, damage Strength +1). Tapping three points of Spite allows the Spectre to create larger amounts of ice, including icicles up to a foot and a half long (Strength +2 damage) or encase objects up to the size of chairs in a thick shell of ice. At this level, Hoarfrost can freeze a volume of standing water up to the size of a bathtub. In addition, the Spectre can exert its will over snow and ice, allowing it to send up sprays of blinding snow and ice.

For four points of Spite, the Spectre can create substantial volumes of ice, including clusters of yard-long icicles (Strength +3 damage), twisted sculptures the size of humans, and solid curtains of ice across doorways. Jack Frosts often use this power to craft terrible traps in their lairs, such as precarious masses of solid ice over doors, or sharp clusters of icicle stalagmites at the bottom of a slick staircase. At this level, the Spectre can freeze enough standing water to fill a small pool. Control over snow and ice increases, allowing the Spectre to create drifts or send sheets of icicles flying at any target within ten yards (see the description of Helter Skelter on page 107 of the **Orpheus™** corebook for rules on attacking with multiple objects).

By tapping five points of Spite, the Spectre can unleash bolts of ice to harm or immobilize the living. This attack requires a Dexterity + Athletics roll, and can be dodged. Each success inflicts one level of bashing damage and imposes a one-dot penalty to the victim's Dexterity due to ice clinging to their body; if Dexterity reaches zero, the victim is immobilized. Breaking free is an extended action requiring more successes than the Spectre's attack on a Strength roll (difficulty 7), although close proximity to a powerful heat source (such as a character with Witch's Nimbus) may speed up the process. The Spectre can continue to add ice to the trap; each extra Spite point tapped adds two successes to the total needed to break free, and once the total number of successes reaches ten, the victim will be powerless to free herself. Anyone immobilized by ice continues to suffer one level of bashing damage from cold exposure each turn; Spectres with this power often deliberately leave their victims able to breathe, allowing them to slowly freeze to death from accumulated damage. At the five-Spite level, the Spectre has all but complete control over any ice and snow it can see, and can freeze a volume of standing water sufficient to fill a small swimming pool. Icy spears created at this level deal Strength +4 damage.

Once activated, Hoarfrost lasts for the remainder of the scene, and all lower-level powers are available; thus, a Spectre tapping five Spite could create a mass of four-Spite icicles one turn, use the three-Spite power to drop them on its victims the next, and trap any survivors

with the five-point manifestation in subsequent turns. Complex constructions of ice may take multiple turns and additional Spite to complete, at the Storyteller's option. All ice created by this power exists in the material world and melts in accordance with the ambient temperature. However, the Spectral ice affects both the living and the dead, and can imprison unmanifested spooks as easily as flesh.

Lifeblock (Horror): With this Horror, a Spectre can prevent a single spook from regaining Vitality for a short time. The Spectre rolls dice equal to the amount of Spite tapped (maximum five) + Manipulation, which is opposed by the target's Willpower. Success means that the spook cannot regain Vitality for a number of hours equal to the number of Spite points tapped by the Spectre. This means that the spook's Vitality does not regenerate naturally, even for projectors who have return to their bodies. It also cannot be regained through the use of Backgrounds (such as Memorial) during that space of time, and all attempts on the part of the spook to steal Vitality or to have crucible members donate Vitality automatically fail (though the stolen Vitality is still lost to Oblivion). Gaining Vitality through the reflexive use of Willpower upon reduction to zero still works though, as does tapping Spite for Vitality — a devil's deal for those with no other alternative in battle.

Miasma (Thorn): The Spectre continuously emits greenish steam or other noxious gases which smell of sulfur, oil and bromine. The vapors surrounding the Spectre provide it cover in combat, increasing the difficulty to strike it by two. Moreover, any character in the meat within five feet of the Spectre must succeed at a Stamina roll (difficulty 7) or suffer a -2 penalty to all Strength and Perception-based rolls, due to coughing fits and stinging eyes. These penalties last until the character is able to breathe fresh air for at least one turn, but a new roll must be made if they approach the Spectre again. The Spectre must be manifested before it can use this Thorn on the living.

Rime (Thorn): The Spectre is coated in a thin layer of ice-cold razors, with tiny icicles dangling from its limbs and sharp edges everywhere. The ice provides an Armor Rating of 1, and subtracts three dice from any attempt to grapple or restrain the Spectre. In addition, the creature may attack with a swipe of its frosty arm, inflicting Strength +1 lethal damage. The Rime steams and melts when subjected to intense heat (including Witch's Nimbus), but re-forms as quickly as it dissipates.

Ruin (Horror): The Spectre taps up to five Spite, and for each point reduces a nearby target spook's dice pools by one for the duration of the scene, as the ghost



is overcome by searing, distracting pain throughout its gauze. This can be resisted by the expenditure of one point of Willpower per die lost. The victim's dice pool cannot be reduced below zero.

Speed of Oblivion (Thorn): Spectres lead short, brutal existences in the service of Grandmother, and they often experience their truncated lives at an accelerated pace. Spectres with this Thorn have a movement rate three times faster than normal, and gain a +5 bonus on all initiative rolls.

New Spectre: Castigators

It is said that parody is the cruelest form of torture. It's no surprise, then, that the Spectres have become highly adept at this art.

The handful of ghosts who survived the shadow storm three years ago whisper of ancient empires of the dead and damned. Among the Necropoli of the Underworld, they claim, there walked members of a ghostly religious order whose name has now been lost. They would purify the souls of tainted wraiths, helping them to cope with their Spite and keeping ravaging Spectres at bay. Now nothing remains of this order but fleeting memory, and their legacy has fallen to corrup-

tion at the claws of the Spectres.

Castigators are a special species of Spectres, a cruel parody of that fallen order. They work not to destroy, necessarily, but to corrupt, and their Horrors and Thorns lend strength to a spook's darker side. They channel their own Spite to increase the Spite of others, drawing other spooks closer to Oblivion's embrace and their inevitable fall into Spectrehood. Castigators are absolutely relentless in their task, spreading fear and pain throughout the hereafter as they seek to draw new souls into the darkness that commands them. They possess a keen, alien intelligence and try their best to isolate and corner spooks so that they can work their dark arts upon them.

Castigators look mostly human, typically dressed in the garb of some kind of religious order. Their faces, however, are entirely blank and devoid of all features, and their hands are constantly black, dripping inky Spectral "blood" wherever they pass.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 0, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 3.

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Brawl 2, Enigmas 3, Intimidation 3, Leadership 1, Medicine 3, Occult 4

Nature: Monster

Willpower: 9

Spite: 8

Offensive Abilities: Caul, Hive-Mind, Contamination, Rend, Ruin

New Spectre: Jack Frosts

Even in Western society, the chill of winter remains a threat to the unprotected. In city and small town alike, the cold months quietly claim thousands of lives each year. Jack Frosts are the bitter spirits of those who died of exposure and hypothermia in a world where heat was readily available — lost hitchhikers, slum dwellers in unheated hovels, and the homeless fill their ranks. Resentful of the society that left them to freeze, these Spectres seek to spread their misery to the living.

A Jack Frost appears as a pale, gaunt figure, naked and skeletally thin. Its waxy flesh, drawn tight over its bones, is marked with sickly gray patches of deep frostbite. The Spectre's fingers are elongated into thin, spindly claws, frequently tipped with jagged spurs of ice, and its long teeth come to sharp points. Its hair is replaced by a mass of slender icicles, and male Jack Frosts frequently have icy beards dangling from their





angular chins. A Jack Frost is surprisingly nimble, and often climbs to high places to leap onto its victims. The creature's entire body is covered in a crust of rough frost and small, sharp icicles, and it moves with a chillingly musical tinkling sound. But worst of all are its eyes... frozen solid, the glassy eyeballs are fixed open and motionless, devoid of any emotion save the last cold moments of anger at the society that abandoned them.

Jack Frosts are always solitary, loathing all other beings. They typically remain close to where they died, seeking out the homes of those enjoying the warmth they were unable to find. Their bitterness drives them to seek happy individuals, especially families with children. Once a suitable target is located, the Spectre moves in, using its powers to isolate each member of the household. It is not enough for them to simply freeze to death... a Jack Frost wants its victims to die slowly, terrified and alone, just like it did. Jack Frosts often remain in a dwelling for some time after killing its inhabitants, crafting it into a nightmare lair of deadly icicles and slippery staircases. Sooner or later, more warm bodies will come in search of the dead...

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 0, Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 4.

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Intimidation 4, Crafts (Ice) 4, Melee 3, Survival 3, Enigmas 2

Nature: Loner

Willpower: 6

Spite: 7

Offensive Abilities: Chill, Claws, Hoarfrost, Maw, Rime, Witch's Nimbus (Spite-fueled heat-absorbing version only; see **Shadow Games** pp. 109-10).

New Spectre: Mechanicals

The modern world is ruled by machines. Day and night, the faceless engines of industry churn out new technological toys and simple goods once made by hand, for the convenience of a world too busy to appreciate craftsmanship. But humans are still needed to keep the machines running... and since the dawn of the Age of Industry, those laboring in the factories have known that they were less important than the machines themselves. Mechanicals are Spectres who died in industrial accidents resulting from the uncaring practice of putting quotas and progress ahead of people. Sweatshop employees driven to fatal mistakes by exhaustion and stress, factory workers killed because routine maintenance was neglected to cut costs, and cruel foremen "accidentally"

knocked into the presses by their disgruntled underlings are all candidates for this breed.

A Mechanical appears as a nightmarish amalgamation of human flesh and clockwork, with metallic struts extruding from its limbs and clusters of whirling, sharp-edged gears grafted to its torso and head. One or more limbs are replaced with tools, like rivet guns, die stamps, or soldering irons, and goutts of steam or smoke stream out of its orifices. Pipes and tubes replace ears and noses, and most mechanicals are missing one or more fingers, some replaced by small tools or strange jointed mechanisms. Mechanicals move slowly and jerkily, each step accompanied by the whirring of servomotors, the clank of gears, and the broken moans of the Spectre's continual pain. The human parts of Mechanicals display acid burns, ragged wounds, or other evidence of the tragedy that killed them. Their movements are clumsy, but they are immensely strong and resistant to pain, save that caused by their own warped bodies.

Mechanicals frequently appear in groups at the sites of industrial accidents. They are mad with perpetual agony, and lash out at every living thing within reach. Their only respite comes in temporarily assuming flesh... but their ghastly method of possession (see "Automaton," above) transforms the victim into a horror not unlike themselves, usually killing the unfortunate mortal within minutes. Almost uniquely among Spectres, Mechanicals who once worked together in life are able to overcome their misery enough to coordinate their efforts, sabotaging machinery and pursuing workers in a manner designed to maximize carnage. They assault the living with relentless, clockwork efficiency, never attempting to preserve themselves if there is any chance of feeding another soul to the machines along the way.

No two mechanicals are alike. In addition to the Horrors and Thorns listed below, each Mechanical has at least one unique attack form, such as an arc welder, saw blade, or industrial drill, usually (but not always) replacing one arm or hand. Treat this as a Thorn that inflicts 3 to 5 dice of lethal damage.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 1, Stamina 6, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 0, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 1

Abilities: Brawl 4, Intimidation 3, Crafts 4, Melee 3, Technology 4, Science 1

Nature: Monster

Willpower: 5

Spite: 7

Offensive Abilities: Automaton, Clockwork Armor, Hive-Mind, Inhabit (mechanical devices only), Miasma, Nihilistic Exhalation (from **Crusade of Ashes**, page 30; takes the form of a noxious cloud of poison gas), rivet-gun arm (Dexterity + Technology, difficulty 7, range 5', 4 dice lethal damage).



New Option: Doppelgangers

Some live closer to their dark sides than others. Doppelgangers are the Spectre doubles of spirit characters, malignant counterparts that represent a twisted reflection of the character's psyche. Orpheus Group researchers believed that, since ghosts are beings of pure personality and will, their Spite would hold equal sway in determining the nature of their being after death, thus creating these doppelgangers.

Terrel & Squib continued to fund research along these lines long after the Orpheus Group was a smoldering ruin, and came to some new conclusions. A doppelganger can't just be the manifestation of a spirit's negative personality — were that true, spirits wouldn't possess any Spite of their own. There is no clean dichotomy between spirit and doppelganger, one representing good and one representing evil, as Orpheus Group would have had its operatives believe. During its research, Terrel & Squib determined that doppelgangers have personalities and motivations all their own, and that they are, first and foremost, Spectres, not marionette puppets waiting to be batted around on their strings. Doppelgangers are connected to their spirit counterparts however, that's an established fact, and T&S research has shown that as a spirit's Spite increases, so does the power that their doppelgangers possess. Why this has been the subject of much theorizing in the labs is still a mystery, but answers from the Management haven't exactly been forthcoming.

Spectre doppelgangers were never afforded much attention in previous Orpheus™ supplements. Although they are certainly not unique to a T&S campaign, we thought they deserved a mention, especially since many spirits "working" for T&S are broken ghosts whose low Willpower makes their doppelganger an even deadlier threat. To this end, we've developed some guidelines for building a doppelganger Spectre, and developed a number of special abilities to aid these bitter antagonists in their quests to destroy the characters' lives.

Building a Doppelganger

As dark reflections of characters, some attention should be paid to how the Storyteller can construct a

doppelganger that will make a memorable recurring threat to the crucible. As they are reflections of the character in question, they share many of the same traits, but for the sake of a more dynamic approach (fighting a mirror image of the character can be a fright-show once, but after the third time it loses something) we assume some major divergences. A doppelganger shouldn't just be a reflection of a character... it should be a reflection that embodies what characters hate most about themselves.

In building a doppelganger, begin with the spirit character's stats, and modify them according to the following guidelines:

Attributes: While it is tempting to leave the doppelganger's Attributes identical to those of the spirit, not all reflections have the same proportions as the original. You may wish the doppelganger to be stronger or weaker, more or less attractive, or a good deal more cunning than the character it is a reflection of. Something that the character consistently fails at, the doppelganger is a champion in, whereas the character's strongest virtue find no reflection within its Spectral double. This is entirely up to the Storyteller's interpretation of what the doppelganger represents. Re-arranging Attribute dots can be done within Attribute categories (Physical, Social, and Mental) or as a free-for-all. If you are looking to create a truly dark reflection, swapping categories and therefore strengths, can be extremely effective.

Abilities: As with Attributes, any changes to the spirit character's base Abilities when translating them to the doppelganger should be carefully thought out. It's easiest to let the Abilities remain the same, so that no matter how much they diverge, the doppelganger bears at least a passing resemblance to the character in what it can do.

Backgrounds: These are mostly removed. Spectres do not have any real ties to the world, and as such most Backgrounds are fairly worthless to them (there are exceptions, such as the Artifact Background). However, you can always exchange a spirit's Background dots for experience or freebie points for the doppelganger. If you choose to do this, then each dot in a Background translates to either three experience points or one freebie point. Spend them wisely.

Vitality: As a Spectre, the doppelganger has no use for Vitality. However, the amount of permanent Vitality a spirit has is the same as the Spite rating for the doppelganger.

Willpower: A doppelganger's Willpower is generally the same as the spirit's, at least initially. The doppelganger lives a separate "life" now and can grow from its own experiences.



Spite: A spirit's Spite does not translate to anything directly on the doppelganger's sheet, although when a spirit reaches 10 Spite, it physically merges with (and consumes) its doppelganger as the final step in becoming a Spectre. The doppelganger cannot resist this, but wouldn't want to even if it could.

Stains: As a general rule, a doppelganger's Stains are always active, requiring no Spite or Vitality to maintain. Exceptions can be made, and the doppelganger may be able to voluntarily repress Stains with a particularly inhibiting disadvantage, but calling upon them again is a free action.

Horrors: A doppelganger possesses all of the Horrors that the spirit does when it is first created. After that, most doppelgangers continue to mirror the Horrors of their counterpart, automatically gaining new powers as its twin spirit gains them. These Horrors are in addition to Spectral and Doppelganger Horrors that the doppelganger can purchase with experience points.

Experience: If the doppelganger's power doesn't grow along with that of the spirit (and the spirit's crucible) then it will quickly fade into obscurity, becoming more of a nuisance than a real antagonist. While some Storytellers may be content to let the doppelganger eventually take a backseat to the real threats in the *Orpheus*[™] storyline, there should still be options for allowing the doppelganger to improve itself. It's in the game for the long haul, as there's really no killing a doppelganger short of the character becoming a Spectre. Giving the Spectral twin experience points is one way to maintain it as a threat to the crucible. A rule of thumb is that for every act the doppelganger commits that saddles its counterpart with a point of Spite (see the *Orpheus*[™] corebook, p. 97), the doppelganger gains five experience points. Although the Storyteller can arbitrarily increase the Spectre's strength as well, this ensures that the doppelganger grows in relation to the success it has in ruining the character's old life.

The Shadow Ascendant

As spirit characters gain Spite, their darker halves feed upon it and savor the taste of a corrupted soul. When a spirit character reaches certain levels of Spite, the Storyteller has the option of allowing the doppelganger to increase in power to represent the strength Oblivion gains from the spirit's collapse. This makes for truly terrifying, potent enemies. Should it please the Storyteller, doppelgangers (and only doppelgangers) are free to spend experience points on any of these Spectral

Horrors and Thorns. Thorns can be acquired for 10 XP each, while Horrors are at the standard 15 XP. Presented below are two additional offensive abilities, available only to doppelganger Spectres.

Enjoin (Horror): This Horror allows doppelgangers to exert some limited psychic control over their spirit counterparts. The doppelganger must be within sight of its double in order for any of this Horror's effects to take place. The effects of Enjoin can be opposed by the spirit counterpart if — and only if — the spirit is aware that its doppelganger is nearby and attempting to exert control over it. If the spirit is aware, then it can attempt to negate it with an opposed Willpower roll (difficulty 6 for the doppelganger, difficulty 8 for the spirit).

When successful, the effects of this Horror last for one scene. By tapping three Spite points, the doppelganger can exert minor control over the spirit from a distance, equivalent to the zero-Vitality use of the Puppetry Horror (see *Orpheus*[™] corebook, page 110), allowing for quick, almost unconscious actions. By tapping four Spite points the doppelganger can force the spirit to "use" any of the spirit's Horrors (one- or two-Vitality power only), which extends to using any ranged-attack Horrors (Wail, Witch's Nimbus, etc.) to target nearby bystanders. Alternatively, it can force the spirit to manifest. By tapping five Spite points, the doppelganger can launch a full-fledged psychic takeover of its spirit double (the spirit can oppose this attempt whether it sees it coming or not), temporarily merging their gauze together. This allows a degree of control over the spirit equivalent to a two-Vitality use of the Puppetry Horror, but the doppelganger can access all of the spirit's Horrors (although it has to tap additional Spite to use them).

When the doppelganger takes over in this fashion, the spirit immediately manifests all of its Stains for the duration of the scene (this does not tap additional Spite). The doppelganger cannot access the spirit's memories or thoughts, and the spirit remains conscious of what is going on, but the doppelganger has full "physical" control over the spirit's gauze and actions.

Wretched Entente (Horror): To use this Horror, the doppelganger must be in close physical proximity to the spirit character (within one mile), but they do not have to see or hear one another. When the spirit is in serious trouble (down to less than half Vitality and Willpower) the doppelganger automatically knows, and can offer power and aid... for a price. The doppelganger can telepathically offer to assist the spirit, and can subtract anywhere between one and five dice from its own dice pools and allow the spirit to add them to its dice pool for the duration of the scene. This transaction



must be voluntary on the part of both parties, and the cost is significant. For every die accepted by the spirit, the character automatically gains one point of Spite. Furthermore, the doppelganger gains a benefit as well... every time it “aids” the spirit in this fashion, it gains five experience points, as it has furthered its task of ruining the spirit’s old life.

OTHER ANTAGONISTS

ADVENT - THE BROKEN SPECTRE

There are few beings who hate Terrel & Squib with the same dark passion as Advent. Once the most powerful and high-Vitality ghost ever broken by T&S parapsychologists, Advent managed to break her conditioning and flee. After being recaptured and pushed over the edge by a vengeful ghostbreaker, Advent slipped into Spectrehood, merging with her Spectre doppelganger — a creature that called itself Charnel, whom T&S had been hunting for months — in an incident that claimed several more lives. Since then, Advent has apparently dedicated herself to the annihilation of Terrel & Squib, and has

attacked several Investigation teams with lethal results. She has also broken all precedent by taking captives — the bodies of two Norms were found mutilated almost beyond recognition, while a broken spirit was recovered shortly thereafter, its mind snapped beyond repair, drained of virtually all Vitality and existing in a vegetative state. Advent also does not seem to have much to do with other Spectres, and rarely keeps their company. Some have theorized that she is not connected to the Hive-Mind at all...

Advent is a paradox in her appearance, which is that of a beautiful young woman with an angel’s wings and a radiant aura surrounding her. The tips of each feather are black, however, and constantly drip a vile substance that seems to be a combination of blood and motor oil.

Nature: Monster

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4.

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Intimidation 3, Intuition 3, Subterfuge 4, Enigmas 2, Occult 3

Willpower: 10

Spite: 8

Offensive Abilities: Carapace, Claws, Flight, Lifeblock, Speed of Oblivion

The IPHIGENEIA CONVENT

The ghostbreaking process has plenty of flaws. Terrel & Squib “quotas” on broken ghosts need to be met, so the process is sometimes rushed as the ‘breaker is pressured to wrap up and shatter a new spook. This means that with some ghosts (usually the particularly stubborn ones whom the ghostbreakers go over “deadline” in breaking in the first place), T&S’s hold on them is incomplete at best. It doesn’t happen often, but occasionally a ghost will throw off its programming. Most are destroyed shortly thereafter, but a few fortunate spooks manage to escape.

The Iphigeneia “Convent” is a gathering of escaped T&S ghosts who have thrown off their ghostbreakers’ less-than-thorough programming. The Convent is named after the daughter of Agamemnon from Greek mythology who was sacrificed to the goddess Artemis at the beginning of the Trojan War so that the Greek fleet could set sail. Unsurprisingly, the members of the Convent identify themselves with poor Iphigeneia, sacrificed to further the cause of bloodshed. Their quarters, an abandoned basement in a Spectre-infested part of





town, is a powerful Haunt, serving as a sanctuary for all of their lonely, broken kind.

The Convent isn't just a support group for the ghostbroken, though some of its members jest about that incessantly. It actively seeks the liberation (literally and figuratively) of Terrel & Squib's broken ghosts, the murder of their black-hearted ghostbreakers, and... well, they wouldn't be caught shedding any tears if the company itself collapsed in violent ruin. The Convent works feverishly to help broken ghosts throw off their programming and escape, and has at least one "agent" inside the company still posing as a broken ghost, arranging for others to be smuggled out.

All members of the Iphigeneia Convent are former broken ghosts who have managed to restore themselves to the status of "Wild" spirits and hues (see "Breaking Ghosts" in this chapter). While they maintain some contact and even amiability toward other groups, such as Lazarus Redux, the only ones they allow into their ranks are former broken ghosts.

One of the key advantages held by the Iphigeneia Convent is that their shared experiences have allowed them to fathom the secrets of the mighty Crucible Horrors (see **The Orphan-Grinders**), which they can use to make up for their limited numbers.

Sample Iphigeneia Convent "Sister": Kestrel

Kestrel served Terrel & Squib for almost a year as a broken ghost, demonstrating a knack for survival that made her a statistical improbability amongst her kind. Her programming was thrown off, however, when she was ordered to fumigate a child's ghost rather than waste time and energy trying to help it transcend. The act snapped something deep and maternal inside of her, and she fled the scene of the operation, managing to evade the agents sent after her and eventually finding the Iphigeneia Convent.

Kestrel isn't her real name, obviously, and like almost all broken ghosts she retains no real memory of her old life or identity, only occasional flashes in her mind and a sharp, almost overpowering sense of loss.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 1, Awareness 3, Empathy 4, Intuition 3, Subterfuge 2, Meditation 2, Melee 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3, Academics 1, Enigmas 2, Investigation 1

Backgrounds: Allies (Iphigeneia Convent) 3, Flashbacks 2

Classification: Banshee-class wild spirit

Nature: Wretch

Willpower: 5

Vitality: 8

Spite: 6

Offensive Abilities: Wail, Forbode, Unearthly Repose, Storm-Gloom (Crucible Horror)

VIRTUE

Virtue is a Messiah to the broken ghosts created by Terrel & Squib. She claims to have been sent by "a higher power" to redress the company's grievous wrong in enslaving souls, and her magnificent, deadly abilities lend credence to those claims. Virtue works endlessly toward freeing those spirits and hues broken and enslaved by Terrel & Squib, allying herself closely with the Iphigeneia Convent but expressing a desire to work with anyone who will help her in her monumental task. Terrel & Squib have offered a reward of almost \$200,000 to the projector (in-company or not) who brings evidence of Virtue's permanent destruction.

Virtue is a soft-spoken leader. She would never have to scream or even raise her voice to command attention, and so she speaks instead in low, intense tones meant to conjure rage and grief as she testifies to the suffering of the broken ghosts. Virtue is immensely beautiful by every conceivable standard, with flowing golden-brown hair down to her waist and a radiant face. Her gauze is stronger and contains more Vitality than that of most ghosts (reflected in her 15 Vitality), causing her to glow perpetually. She usually dresses plainly.

One of the scenarios for the destruction of Terrel & Squib (Scenario #3 - The Second Coming) presented later in this chapter features Virtue, and a Storyteller looking for ways to use her in a chronicle is advised to read through this scenario for inspiration.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6, Charisma 5, Manipulation 3, Appearance 6, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Awareness 5, Brawl 3, Empathy 5, Enigmas 3, Etiquette 3, Expression 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 5, Linguistics 5, Meditation 5, Melee 5, Occult 3

Classification: Unknown (probable Wild Spirit)

Nature: Unknown

Demeanor: Defender

Willpower: 10

Vitality: 15

Spite: 5

Offensive Abilities: Vector (as the Orphan-Grinder Horror), Wail, Inhabit, Witch's Nimbus, Forebode,



Liberation (see below).

Liberation: Virtue can “free” a broken ghost of all its T&S programming and conditioning with a single touch (see “Former Broken Ghosts” above). Although this does not restore that ghost’s identity or memories, it does release them from all T&S mental control and programming. This process requires the expenditure of one Vitality point per broken ghost liberated for Virtue. This is a unique ability for Storyteller use only.

Artifacts: Unlike the angels of myth, Virtue has cast aside archaic weaponry in favor of more modern tools. She possesses an artifact Colt M-16 assault rifle (she claims the “original” was destroyed in Vietnam decades ago) that fires a deadly stream of gauze bullets. Use the stats for the assault rifle in the **Orpheus™** corebook (page 235). Surprisingly, this particular rifle has a gauze bayonet fixed onto its undercarriage, which inflicts Strength + 2 lethal damage and has reach in combat.

Sotryteller Notes: Virtue is an incredibly strong opponent and shouldn’t be underestimated, or used lightly in a chronicle. She is one of the most powerful ghosts that Terrel & Squib has ever faced, and is also one of the most immediate threats to the company. Once they learn of her existence, T&S will expend as much energy, money, and manpower as necessary to bring her down.

THE ORPHEUS GROUP

Orpheus Group is the eldest sibling of the projection firms, and knows it. They have the best agents, the best techniques, and, ultimately, the most success in the field — which places them squarely in the public eye. T&S was always runner-up in the paranormal investigations industry, at least until **Crusade of Ashes**, and that was a bitter pill for some to have to swallow. Terrel & Squib was Orpheus Group’s biggest competitor, and a relentless state of low-level war existed between them.

When time allowed, T&S agents would sabotage Orpheus Group missions, while Orpheus Group crucibles fought hard to make sure its rival stayed a distant second, once going as far as to destroy a secret T&S sleeper agent development project.

Until it is destroyed (if it is destroyed in your chronicle at all), the Orpheus Group is the primary nemesis for Terrel & Squib, Inc. The companies champion wholly different operational doctrines and give no quarter in showing the other one up. Although they have been known to cooperate on occasion “for the public good,” they only ever do so when they can gain far more working together than they could separately.

Keep in mind, though, that this is a corporate war,

and that both sides are trying to fight each other within the constraints of the law and maintain a good PR image. Of course, the existence of projectors, ghosts, and other beings of dubious legal definition grant them some flexibility in their squabbling, and the companies can attack one another far more directly and callously than most corporate rivals would be able to. As the Storyteller, you can choose to play up or dismiss this continuing source of conflict as you see fit.

After the Orpheus Group falls, all bets are off. Terrel & Squib isn’t particularly interested in hunting down the survivors — most individuals within the company aren’t that evil, and Malevoy really has other things to distract its mind. Of course, there may exist T&S field coordinators with a grudge against the Orpheus Group, men and women who wouldn’t mind cashing in on the FBI’s proffered reward by hunting down some dangerous fugitives using their own tactics.

NEXTWORLD, INC.

Where to start...?

NextWorld, the militant arm of the projection industry, doesn’t play well with Terrel & Squib, Inc. T&S has the numbers, the money, the top clients, and the technology to make it all go round. NextWorld has people who are trained in the ancient profession of bringing the lives of other people to an abrupt, unpleasant end. While NextWorld agents never got along well with those from the Orpheus Group — even before **Crusade of Ashes** — they were constantly engaged in a game of high-level industrial espionage against Terrel & Squib. That ghostshot ammunition NextWorld goons carry? Stolen from raids on T&S caches. Those Kirlian goggles they wear? Didn’t come out of any NextWorld lab. The drugs they sometimes use to project? Forget about it.

What, you thought the soldier-boys built their own toys?

At the higher levels, Terrel & Squib has at least one thing in common with NextWorld — Uriah Bishop. The badass Flatliner is not only Malevoy’s ally, but in the wake of **Crusade of Ashes** remains NextWorld’s chief employer, and the instigator of the strike against the Orpheus Group. Whatever ill-will may come between them in the future, Malevoy and Bishop have a long-standing working arrangement, and throughout the first half of the Orpheus™ saga they need one another. Bishop wouldn’t authorize or arrange a strike against Malevoy unless he decided to start playing a different game.

While NextWorld does attack Terrel & Squib immediately after its attack on Orpheus Group, this strike was paid for by Lionel Squib and arranged by Arthur Barclay,



T&S's Head of Internal Security. The attack wipes out the better part of the Operations department but leaves the company infrastructure wholly intact, making it seem like the victim while allowing it to purge its ranks of up-and-coming power brokers within the company. NextWorld "sloppily" fails to follow up on the attack and T&S, Inc. miraculously survives, just as planned.

So while there's no love lost between their respective grunts on the ground, NextWorld and Terrel & Squib don't circle one another on the big corporate scale... both of them have better things to do and more important enemies to seek out. Of course, after NextWorld starts to dissolve in **Shades of Gray**, it's more likely to lash out at anyone it can reach, and the crusade against rival projectors launched by NextWorld in its waning days may well target Terrel & Squib, Inc. after all.

DEATH KNELLS: DOOMSDAY SCENARIOS FOR TERREL and SQUIB

Terrel & Squib was conceived as a bad guy in the Orpheus™ series, and a temporary one at that. After **Shadow Games**, it is assumed that the company has, one way or another, been eliminated as an entity. This Terrel & Squib Sourcebook that you're reading can explore the dark side of corporate projecting that the company represents, either as a protagonist or as an antagonist.

This is, of course, your game, and you can keep T&S around to stir up trouble for as long as you'd like... perhaps they're still competitors when Lazarus Redux comes on the scene, but there may still come a time when you, as the Storyteller, want to lay waste to the company in order to move the plot forward.

Given how the Orpheus™ metaplot has been set up, the fall of the big projecting firms, whether to internal corruption, federal investigation, or Spectral violence, seems to possess a slow inevitability. So to help facilitate this, we've provided five scenarios that can be used, abused, or expanded upon to help bring about a satisfying terminal end to Terrel & Squib, Inc.

Shades of Gray gives some good guidelines for axing Terrel & Squib, with the assumption that if the company falls, it will be because of the actions of the Orpheus Group-aligned PCs. Decapitating the company's executive (figuratively and literally), calling in the DEA, or organizing several coordinated strikes on T&S pigment facilities are all generic methods by which the players can destroy the company.

These scenarios explore more colorful options, and can be used to build the fall of T&S into a major plot

hook for a chronicle rather than just an end achieved by the players. As has been stressed before, these scenarios are entirely optional.

Scenario # 1: An Iron Cross To Hang On

Description: Mankind has a senseless gift for filling up open space, and into those frontiers it always brings one thing: war. T&S's dark secrets begin to seep out; from the pigment trade to the Broken Ghosts to the presence of a Spectre in the top levels of management. Raids, skirmishes, and pitched battles rock the streets as a war amongst projectors sweeps over the city. Terrel & Squib gears to meet this challenge and stomp it out, while rogue projectors and spooks across the city unite to topple the company through violence.

This scenario is a fitting end for a Terrel & Squib game with the underlying Vietnam theme. The company goes down in a blaze of meaningless violence, as those who ought to be fighting the Spectres and other threats turn on one another. It's about heroism and loss in the face of futility, as well as the horrors of a war that nobody can see. It's also best-suited for more militant players.

Hooks: This scenario works well for any chronicle related to Terrel & Squib, Inc. Characters can take leading roles in the crusade against the company, or take up arms to defend it in what will prove to be its terminal hour.

Grace Ishida, a former T&S employee and now the





companion of Terrence Green, is one of the proponents behind the war against Terrel & Squib. She pushes for a unified attack on the company to try and topple it, and if you aren't playing a T&S chronicle, then she approaches the players' characters to enlist their aid almost immediately. Radio Free Death is more conservative, feeling that a crusade is the last thing they need with the Spectres and the Flatliners still at the door, but he also recognizes the threat Terrel & Squib poses to their world. He will support the attack indirectly, and may approach the characters by asking to "get involved" at his behest, just to support Grace's efforts. Of course, the ultimate Storyteller payoff is if the characters themselves choose to orchestrate the war against T&S.

For T&S chronicles, war is thrust upon them, probably unwanted, probably catching them unprepared.

Events: Attacking Terrel & Squib is an initiative taken by small clusters of "renegade" projectors and spooks: independent crucibles, former Orpheus Group agents, NextWorld defectors, and the Iphigeneia "Convent" of escaped broken ghosts. As the scope of T&S's depravities becomes clear, many spooks come to the (possibly erroneous) conclusion that they are the source of all misery in the afterlife. They make pigment, they torture ghosts, they hire rabid junkies as employees, they're run by a Spectre... what's not to hate?

Ultimately it won't take much to rally the ghost community against Terrel & Squib. At first Malevoy and the T&S board of directors doesn't take the threat seriously, but this failure means that they severely underestimate the powers that they're dealing with. Their company has numbers, money, and weapons on its side, but the independent projectors are often significantly more powerful and flexible than T&S agents (with some exceptions).

The independent projectors organize quickly (exact numbers are left up to the Storyteller). Grace Ishida is their default leader and rallying point, although if the player characters are involved it is possible that they could provide leadership instead... Grace willingly follows anyone with a better plan. Their plan of attack is to hit T&S hard and fast, crippling its capabilities — especially pigment and Eidolon production. Grace hopes that they can take out enough infrastructure to cause the company to collapse; sadly, she's laboring under some misconceptions about the strength of her own forces, too.

Attack: The initial attack is damaging, but ultimately fails. T&S Internal Security has been preparing for threats from the spook community for long enough to counter Grace's coup de grace, so to speak. The pivotal stage of the battle takes place at the Crown facility

which deals with all of the sensitive final-stage pigment production.

Grace uses Bedlam to spectacular effect as a decoy, allowing projectors to swoop in for the kill and seriously disrupt the pigment production lines. Unfortunately for the attackers, the Internal Security division and Operations division personnel put aside their differences long enough to defend against the worst of the attack. Damage is done, but not nearly to the extent the attackers were hoping for. This initial battle is an excellent place to insert the characters, on one side or the other, and the scope of the damage should rest upon the actions they take.

Counterattack: Whatever damage was done, Grace miscalculated, and now Terrel & Squib retaliates in force. Lincoln Del Cote deploys a massive Operations force on a "bug hunt" reminiscent of Vietnam, as armed reconnaissance patrols scour the city with overwhelming firepower to root out their attackers. Although initially successful, Del Cote quickly finds his forces bogged down as Grace and her companions turn to guerrilla warfare.

Insurgency: Realizing that the war can't be won overnight, the spooks start fighting dirty with ambushes, traps, and uprisings amongst T&S's broken ghosts. They conduct hit-and-run raids on key Terrel & Squib facilities and personnel, and the Operations division of the company finds itself facing a critical manpower shortage from their losses. T&S players find themselves living in fear and uncertainty — they may be strong, but the enemy is proving itself to be stronger where it counts.

Consolidation: A stab in the back for Terrel & Squib, Arthur Barclay and his Internal Security force makes its move against the Operations division. Two days of vicious political fighting, minor skirmishes and a few choice assassinations ensue as the Investigations and Internal Security divisions fall upon one another. Not even the frantic ravings of Lionel Squib can separate the two.

In a Terrel & Squib chronicle, the outcome of the political maneuverings can be largely determined by which side the players support (and, of course, by their actions). If T&S is an antagonist in your chronicle, assume that Barclay's Internal Security force, with surprise and strength on its side, manages to triumph, subsuming the Operations division entirely and consolidating its position within the company.

Finale: Grace is quick to take advantage of the inter-company chaos. Although Barclay has assigned a contingency force just in case, the renegades have been gaining strength, and in a final concerted push they succeed in catching Terrel & Squib largely off-guard.



The final battlefield can be T&S headquarters or one of the regional pigment distribution nodes.

Possible Outcomes: The result of the final confrontation is best left to the Storyteller, although Terrel & Squib is, at this point, on the verge of collapse from constant harassment and an internal war. Knowing about Malevoy, Grace's primary objective is taking down the Reaper. One-on-one, Malevoy will massacre Grace, but if she has help then she has a chance of winning, if not surviving (the death of an important ally can really punctuate the enormity of what has happened).

It is also possible that, with its company collapsing around it, Malevoy pulls out its final trump card and summons Spectres to fight on the side of T&S. While this might turn the tide against Grace and her allies, doing so alienates the vast majority of Terrel & Squib operatives, who realize that if they're fighting beside Spectres, then they're fighting on the wrong side. Many defect as a result.

Terrel & Squib is largely finished at that point, even if Grace is killed. The independent spooks shred the company's infrastructure, first slowly, then building up speed until the final strike hits like a freight train. Unfortunately, this scenario results in a major defeat for everyone. For while Terrel & Squib has been destroyed, the spook community has been decimated by the war, and the Spectres — the real threat of the Orpheus™ cycle — have had a chance to quietly build up their strength. Dark times are both behind and ahead of any survivors of this fiasco.

Scenario # 2: Justice is Served

Description: Terrel & Squib's dominant role in the international pigment trade comes to light. Led by the DEA in this case, the general public and powers that be turn on the company in a masterstroke PR move reminiscent of **Crusade of Ashes**.

Hooks: Again, this scenario is a plot hook in itself for characters working for (or strongly associated with) Terrel & Squib. It holds some special ironies for any Orpheus Group survivors who went over to T&S looking for protection from the authorities.

Those on the outside watching T&S disintegrate are presented with a number of options. If the player characters were involved with pointing the DEA at Terrel & Squib, Inc. in the first place, they probably won't be too inclined to help out any survivors.

One plot hook that works for almost any group of

characters is to have a T&S executive (probably Rayna Almonte, head of Pharmaceuticals) approach them in a panic just as the shit is hitting the fan. She needs to get out of the country, and she has the money to do it, but first she needs protection and a hiding place. She can offer money, drugs, contacts... just about anything, but that doesn't diminish the fact that her name is at the top of the DEA's list of those responsible for the pigment trade, and players who discover this will have to choose whether they're best served by harboring a fugitive or by turning her in.

Events: How the company's key involvement with the pigment trade comes to light is up to the Storyteller, though the actions of the player characters (whichever side they're on) should have something to do with it. Once it does, however, the government acts quickly and decisively, eager to bring down the last big projecting company and knock out a cornerstone in the pigment trade. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) leads the charge against Terrel & Squib where the FBI led the crusade against the Orpheus Group, and is even more relentless in their pursuit of T&S fugitives.

Everyone in the company gets hit. The pigment barons, Terrel & Squib's inner circle (the people who, as per **Shades of Gray** had found out the truth and since they didn't blanch had been promoted instead of assassinated) and especially John Terrel and Lionel Squib themselves, are dethroned and sent into hiding or slapped with centuries-long sentences.

Due to the general vindictiveness of the public and law enforcement agencies, as well Terrel & Squib's well-constructed webs of internal deception and intrigue making it almost impossible to properly assign blame. All company personnel are declared suspect and ordered to surrender themselves to the authorities. Not surprisingly, large numbers of people from Operations, Security, Finance and especially the guilty Pharmaceuticals subsidiary (which the DEA hunts down with a special relentlessness) find themselves on the run.

Terrel & Squib, Inc. was a criminal enterprise. It may seem pathetic for T&S players to be brought down by the "authorities" after the wild ride they've been through with the company, but tell that to the judge and jury. The players have almost certainly done something illegal (or at the least, suspicious) during their time with T&S, and when the hammer falls they will probably join the ranks of those who go underground to avoid paying the piper



for their part in the company's thousands-strong sins.

The name of the game is **Crusade of Ashes**, modified for the elements and themes unique to Terrel & Squib. Characters (players or NPC) are on the run, but they're being portrayed as mobsters, drug dealers, and corrupters of the American way of life rather than terrorists. There's also no devastating initial attack on Terrel & Squib to decimate its ranks, just the DEA showing up in force to begin the seizure, confiscation, and mass arrests, so there will be many more "survivors" from Terrel & Squib who become fugitives than there ever were from the Orpheus Group. They're still being hunted, although it's primarily the DEA that hounds them rather than the federal police.

They may also be in the sad situation of living a fugitive lifestyle after the events of **Crusade of Ashes**. The underground culture of ghosts and projectors that may have been sympathetic to Orpheus Group survivors harbor nothing but a desire for vengeance against the fugitive T&S agents.

Possible Outcomes: Terrel & Squib is gone. The company had the power and the money to withstand Senate committee investigations into the projection industry, and its hand in pigment was well-concealed, but when the DEA hits T&S in force, it crumbles like a house of cards. The company's upper management is either captured or shot while attempting to resist and its deep pockets are emptied to the last cent.

Those who don't turn themselves in flee into the streets, although the sheer number of former T&S fugitives now on the run means that they're easier to catch than any of the Orpheus Group survivors.

The Spectre Malevoy is problematic. The feds can't kill it, although once it's certain that the jig is up and the company is finished, the Reaper abandons the body of Lionel Squib and kills the scientist. If left unchecked, Malevoy will get away easily and attempt to find a new host around whom to rebuild its pigment empire... patience is one of Malevoy's few virtues.

This new organization can be built up from T&S survivors or can use the existing infrastructure of another group, such as NextWorld, or even (if the Storyteller is feeling especially nasty) Lazarus Redux.

It should also be noted that most of the seized T&S assets are quietly "lost" by the DEA, and quickly reappear in the hands of the U.S. military's PROJECT: BLACK MERCURY.

Scenario # 3: The Second Coming

Description: The coming of a ghostly Messiah amongst Terrel & Squib's Broken Ghost population is a catalyst for pandemonium within the company. Overnight, the spirit of rebellion is energized among the broken, and ghostbreakers wage a desperate war to keep their slaves in check while agents deploy to neutralize this messianic figure.

Hooks: Those Storytelling a Terrel & Squib chronicle won't have any difficulty tying their players' characters into the events of this scenario. The rise of the broken ghosts' messiah, a creature calling herself Virtue (see "Other Antagonists" for her stats), attracts a great deal of attention inside the company in a remarkably short amount of time. Characters can get involved in trying to keep the Broken Ghosts locked down, or they can be assigned to track down and destroy Virtue. It is also possible that the characters, who are perhaps not as immoral as the company they work for, help the broken ghosts and turn against their employers.

If T&S is run as an antagonist, then word of Virtue quickly spreads among the ghost community, and the savior of the Broken Ghosts will find a great deal of support from most Orpheus Group survivors. Players can quickly find roles for their characters in outside efforts to support Virtue. Or, if the Storyteller feels nasty, the darker side of this affair can be played up, with the characters' suspicions being aroused as to Virtue's true goals and motivations. An investigation might well be in order...

Events:

Day One - The first significant rebellion of broken ghosts happens at the Valhalla T&S Re-Education Center, but is quickly put down by ghostbreakers and Internal Security personnel.

Day Three - A subsequent rebellion is stirred at the Elysium Re-Education Center, and the first reported sighting of Virtue is recorded in company logs. The rebellion is quashed again, although Management begins taking a more active interest.

Day Five - Additional rebellions at the Elysium and Heaven Re-Education Centers. Heaven, one of T&S's largest Re-Education facilities, is overwhelmed by the broken ghosts despite extra security precautions. Few ghostbreakers survive, and many of the enslaved ghosts escape.

Day Six - Dr. Squib orders an investigation into the seemingly spontaneous, widespread failures of ghost-breaker programming.



Day Seven - Virtue unveils herself as the power behind the rebellions, appearing at Terrel & Squib Headquarters and claiming privilege as a representative of a higher power who will no longer sit idle as the company desecrates human souls. She has the power to free broken ghosts from T&S conditioning and mental programming, and directly challenges Lionel Squib, demanding that he free the broken ghosts.

When Squib smugly refuses, a riot begins as Virtue frees a half-dozen broken ghosts before the eyes of the T&S executive body, and manages to disappear into the chaos. Reports come in from the Valhalla and Celestia Re-Education Centers of further rebellion, but supposed sightings of Virtue at both facilities at the exact same time are dismissed as fabrications. Rioting effectively destroys the Valhalla Re-Education Center.

Day Eight - T&S redoubles security around the broken ghost penitentiaries and recalls key Investigations personnel from regular assignments. They are re-assigned the task of seeking out and destroying Virtue. Meanwhile, Virtue approaches the Iphigeneia Convent (see "Other Antagonists" above) for assistance in her crusade. They welcome her as their leader and savior.

Days Nine through Fifteen - Virtue wages a campaign against the remaining T&S Re-Education Centers, with the help of the Iphigeneia Convent and a handful of volunteers from independent projecting agencies and Orpheus Group survivors. Despite precautions, Terrel & Squib facilities are systematically mauled and gutted by Virtue's followers, and any Broken Ghosts sent into battle against them are almost immediately freed of their programming and join the aggressors.

Day Sixteen - Terrified by the swelling ranks of the enemy, Lionel Squib enacts his own version of the Final Solution: every Broken Ghost currently held by Terrel & Squib is to be destroyed immediately to keep Virtue's followers from gaining additional strength. Although many Broken Ghosts are slaughtered, any ghostbreakers with a shred of humanity left in them refuse the order.

From this point on, events are free flowing. Terrel & Squib, Inc. falls apart as ghostbreakers are ordered to destroy ghosts, and Internal Security personnel are ordered to kill ghostbreakers who didn't carry out their duty. Malevoy woefully miscalculated, forgetting that for all its immorality, Terrel & Squib was a fundamentally human organization, not a Spectre hierarchy that can be ordered to carry out malicious deeds without a second thought.

As the company crumbles, the Broken Ghosts and their allies step up the assaults, expanding their attacks to the pharmaceutical plants where pigment is produced. With Internal Security in chaos, these plants fall with

impressive ease and, within a few days, a cornerstone of the pigment trade is gone.

Virtue herself has holed up with the Iphigeneia Convent in their safe haven, having infused several of her "lieutenants" with the power to free other broken ghosts. She is conserving energy for what she claims will be the "final battle" against Terrel & Squib and the Spectre Malevoy (yes, she knows... it could be one final chance for the players to find out just why Squib's eye twitch was so unnerving before the company goes down in flames).

Although she is strong, she is not invulnerable and may well fall to the characters should they hunt her down like Squib intended. If that is the case, Terrel & Squib still falls due to the infighting and the damage already done by Virtue's allies — but it falls in a less spectacular fashion than if Virtue survives long enough.

Possible Outcomes: We leave it up to the Storyteller to determine what Virtue's origins are. Here, however, are two suggestions:

Virtue could be precisely what she claims to be: a Messiah sent by a greater power to break the vulgar, unnatural bondage in which T&S has been holding its Broken Ghosts. Her precise origins, at that point, should be either left to speculation or decided upon by the Storyteller. As Terrel & Squib's extended facilities lie in ruins, she leads a direct attack on the Headquarters, tearing it to shreds and destroying the Spectre Malevoy in hand-to-hand combat. The broken ghosts freed and her mission complete, Virtue either Transcends or quietly disappears amidst the smoking ruins of the company.

Alternatively, Virtue could be something much darker: an emissary of the Malfeans (see **The Orphan-Grinders**) dedicated to the thwarting of Grandmother's plans. Although not exactly a Spectre, Virtue is serving as the Malfeans' avatar in the living realms for just long enough to topple one of Grandmother's most instrumental servants, Malevoy. She doesn't really give a shit about the Broken Ghosts: it's Malevoy she's after, and it's the Spectre-built pigment empire that she really wants to tear apart. When the final battle takes place, Virtue brings all of the Broken Ghosts she has freed along with her for the attack on T&S Headquarters. The great irony is that the supposed messiah of the Broken Ghosts is going to use them the same way T&S did: as cannon fodder.

At the critical moment, probably once Virtue has confronted Malevoy, she enacts her final power, a spiritual "bomb" of sorts that consumes her life energy and uses the surrounding Broken Ghosts as a catalyst for its reaction. The blast destroys T&S Headquarters both physically and spiritually, flattening the structure even



as it breaches the Stormwall, letting the Maelstrom pour in to finish off any survivors. Terrel & Squib — and all of the Broken Ghosts it created — is gone for good.

Scenario #4: COVENANT Ascendant

Description: Terrel & Squib's COVENANT project has gone out of control. By tapping the comatose minds of his fellow COVENANT patients and forcibly extending his will through the Stormwall, Kenton Whitaker (see page 84) has succeeded in bringing into existence an artificial Hive-Mind, using his own consciousness as the seed, literally *becoming* the Hive-Mind. Unfortunately for his creators, he's powerful to the point of instability. COVENANT, an insane fusion of several tortured human minds, lashes out in a furious battle for its own existence against both Terrel & Squib and the Spectre hordes.

Hooks: Hooks are less of an issue when COVENANT finally comes to "life" and goes apeshit. Like the attack on Orpheus Group, there aren't many ways to sweep this incident under the rug. When the insane Hive-Mind makes its push to wipe out those who made it, it isn't at all subtle.

In a T&S chronicle the hooks are obvious — the characters can find themselves directly in the line of fire, or perhaps recalled to base by a panicked controller while out on an operation or while enjoying some downtime. COVENANT's uprising is as sudden as the attack that destroys Orpheus Group in **Crusade of Ashes**, although hardly as organized, and as such quickly sweeps through the Headquarters like a wildfire.

If T&S is being run as an antagonist in your chronicle, then word can quickly spread to the player characters through alternate avenues. If the characters have contacts within T&S, they receive a terrified transmission from their contact saying that something is killing them all (most T&S personnel know nothing about COVENANT). Alternately, money can always be waved in front of them... frightened T&S managers or curious Lazarus Redux partners will want to know what's going on immediately, and the players can serve as welcome eyes and ears. COVENANT is a tremendous threat, and virtually everyone wants it either subdued or destroyed.

Events: Exactly how long COVENANT was conscious prior to "the incident" is a matter of conjecture. It could have been minutes, or it could have been months. Kenton Whitaker — the seed of the Hive-Mind — managed to enjoin his consciousness to those of his fellow COVENANT patients, using the intangible but all-

pervasive Stormwall as a transmission medium for them. It could have remained in this state for months without anyone knowing about it, subtly joined on a subconscious level: Terrel & Squib scientists were inventive and thorough, but they were asking the wrong questions. Had they bothered to correlate the monitored brainwave patterns of the various patients, they would have realized much sooner that they had, in fact, successfully created a Hive-Mind.

The breaking point came when T&S Management, demanding results from the project, ordered the plug to be pulled on one of the "vegetable" test subjects so as to make room for a fresh one. When the scientists pulled the cord on the life-support equipment keeping subject #5 (Bernadette Phillips) alive, it tore her consciousness out of the Hive-Mind as painfully as a knife through exposed flesh.

It could have been that the pain served as a catalyst for the COVENANT entity to push its will that much further, or it could be that the power had already been there, dormant within the docile, content entity. Either way, the pain of having part of its small collective consciousness removed drove the Hive-Mind insane in the space of about thirty seconds. Worse than that, it kicked the oldest instinctive self-defense mechanisms into effect, and the creature lashed out with its formidable mental powers.

Ironically, COVENANT, in lashing out, did precisely what Terrel & Squib had designed it to do. Stretching its will out through the Stormwall, COVENANT found receptacles through which to manifest itself in the form of Terrel & Squib spooks. Broken Ghosts were the first and easiest ones to take control of, and it quickly overrode the willpower of all the broken ones in the T&S headquarters where it was kept.

They served as the first wave, abandoning their tasks and responding to the call of their new master. The scientists, still obliviously unplugging Bernadette Phillips from the machinery, were slaughtered in horribly creative fashions. Then came the adjoining research labs; by the time Internal Security forces responded, half the Paranormal Research division had been literally shredded.

With its immediate vicinity secured, COVENANT reached out the tendrils of its consciousness even further, this time prying into the essences of the high-Vitality "long knife" ghosts and projectors who were rushing to the aid of Internal Security. This take-over is best simulated by an opposed Willpower roll (difficulty 7) between each T&S spook and COVENANT (assume that COVENANT has an effective Willpower of 12 for these rolls). It isn't complete mind-control, but, like Spectres,



those affected by COVENANT suddenly come under “new management” and willingly obey the Hive-Mind’s wishes. Unless you want to roll for each NPC projector involved, assume that about 2/3 of the long knives sent to back up Internal Security fall to COVENANT and turn on their former allies.

COVENANT continues to expand and absorb more minds into itself. Spurred on as much by self-preservation as by maliciousness, it now seeks out the source of the little gnats trying to attack it and takes the offensive. Within hours, T&S Headquarters is a slaughterhouse. Only a fortunate few escape, and even they might not live to enjoy their good fortune.

At this point, however, COVENANT has doomed itself. In its curiosity, it begins to mentally probe the realms beyond the Stormwall, only to encounter the massive, overpowering ego that is Grandmother, the goddess of the Spectres. Grandmother recognizes another hive-mind, but when she tries to access it and fails — something totally unknown in her experiences — she interprets COVENANT as a threat to her own “children” — the Spectres — and responds accordingly in a massive assault.

This is where the players can make a true difference. After COVENANT takes over T&S Headquarters with its minions, there is roughly one day before the Spectral hordes descend upon the fledgling Hive-Mind. If the Spectres attack, then everyone loses. Wave after wave of frenzied shadows converge on the city and begin to descend on the main complex. If COVENANT can be destroyed before the Spectres get there, then the surrounding area might be spared the devastation that a full Spectre attack would entail. The characters might find an unlikely ally in the form of the Reaper Malevoy, if the creature survives COVENANT’s seizure of T&S Headquarters. Malevoy has lost a great deal to COVENANT, but it knows that the Spectre attack is coming and that if it hits, then everything it worked to build through Terrel & Squib, Inc. is going to be annihilated. Therefore, it will help the characters in every possible way — short of sacrificing its own existence — should they attempt to destroy COVENANT. It isn’t disobeying Grandmother, after all; it’s just going about its orders in its own fashion.

Destroying COVENANT is no easy task, but it *is* possible. It requires killing or sneaking past the Hive-Mind’s enthralled spooks, resisting COVENANT’s mental control, and then killing all of the living test subjects (especially Kenton Whitaker). Doing this will destroy the COVENANT Hive-Mind and free all of the enthralled spooks from the creature’s influence, which Grandmother immediately senses. The Spectre attack is called off and the assembling hordes dissolve as the individual

monsters go back to their own small existences.

Possible Outcomes: COVENANT is strong, make no mistake, but in the end the cards are stacked against it to the point where its destruction is almost inevitable. It can dismantle T&S down to the last brick, but it is nowhere near strong enough to pit itself against Grandmother’s will — which is precisely what it does simply by its own existence.

If the players don’t destroy COVENANT, then the Spectres take care of the job in a near-apocalyptic battle. There isn’t any way that COVENANT can win a battle against Grandmother, as it has drawn attention to itself far in excess of the amount of power it possesses. If the players fail to destroy COVENANT however, then there’s going to be widespread devastation as Spectres begin manifesting in order to overpower COVENANT’s mortal agents. T&S’s main office is obliterated beyond recognition, but the fighting manages to spread into the surrounding neighborhoods, killing hundreds, (possibly) including the players’ allies and loved ones.

Scenario #5: Terrel and Squib “Survives”

Of course, it is entirely possible that you don’t want to destroy Terrel & Squib at the “appropriate” time. Perhaps you as the Storyteller believe, as we do, that the company provides a rich venue of story and game options that you want to explore further. Or perhaps your players have fallen in love with the idea of the company, and you don’t feel like destroying it and losing that connection just yet.

For whatever reason, it is entirely possible that Terrel & Squib could survive the events of **Shades of Gray** and exist throughout the Orpheus™ plotline. This could be difficult to pull off. Despite precautions, T&S’s production of pigment cannot go unnoticed forever, and if that knowledge ever comes to light, the Feds will be on the company like a bulldog.

Perhaps in your game the company’s pigment production is shut down in a quieter fashion without attracting unnecessary attention, or perhaps the production continues on with redoubled security and secrecy, particularly after the rise of Bishop’s pigment cults in **Shadow Games**. Pigment is T&S’s Achilles’ Heel, but if they can somehow quietly cease or conceal production, then the chances of the company surviving public scrutiny increase exponentially.

If it does pull through, then Terrel & Squib Investigations will be the most powerful projector



firm left standing. The Orpheus Group is long gone, NextWorld quickly spirals down into violent self-destruction after the attacks, and no other projection agency — not even Lazarus Redux — can match T&S in size or funding until the military launches PROJECT: BLACK MERCURY.

Even with independent projectors coming out of the woodwork, Terrel & Squib, Inc. will command a dominant share of the market should it emerge relatively unscathed from **Shades of Gray**, and thus will be in a position of both power and immense danger. The question, of course, is where the company goes from there, and the answer to that lies in where it has already been. Here are two of the best scenarios Terrel & Squib, Inc. can face if it survives beyond its untimely death:

The Spectral Menace: Malevoy survives. Perhaps John Terrel and Lionel Squib remain at the helm of the company, perhaps not. Either way, the Spectre Malevoy, the driving force behind T&S, has either survived in its original host or found another one of power and influence within the company to take up the torch. With Malevoy still at the helm, the company proceeds apace, with its operations continuing much as normal, and with its pigment fabrication and distribution restarting or increasing in scope as quickly as possible.

The Reaper sponsors Eidolon and pigment addiction amongst its employees as never before, going so far as to lace the food and drink of non-addicted personnel. From there, it slowly starts to replace its weakest-willed operatives with loyal Spectres, turning many Terrel & Squib agents into Jasons, biding their time before the hammer falls. By the time of the hive-blossoming in **The Orphan-Grinders**, almost a third of T&S's active personnel have been possessed by Spectres.

Once the hives blossom, Malevoy's use for the company is at an end, and the Jasons fall upon their former companions in a ruthless, unexpected slaughter; a sacrifice of projectors and ghosts for the greater glory of Grandmother. This creates some wonderful opportunities to tell tales of trust and betrayal, and dropping hints for the characters well in advance will provide the ultimate pay-off when the Jasons turn on them. In the end, Malevoy cares nothing for the humans working under it. They served their purpose, and now they are meat and gauze for the sacrificial altar of its reverence.

The Straight and Narrow: If Malevoy has been destroyed (along with both John Terrel and Lionel Squib), but the company's infrastructure remains intact, one of the executive members of the T&S board of directors quickly steps in to take control. In all likelihood this would be Arthur Barclay, the Head of Internal Security. In this case, the company continues on a strong

paranormal investigations footing, shedding much or all of its pigment creation enterprise in the process. Barclay would encourage former Orpheus Group, T&S, and NextWorld employees to join or rejoin his venture, and a series of internal reforms and purges could clean up the company's act enough to present a more credible, respectable face to the public. However, Terrel & Squib, Inc. would still be ostracized for its mistreatment of ghosts (and the stigma still surrounding the company), and will find a bitter and constant enemy in Lazarus Redux.

When the hives blossom in **The Orphan-Grinders** and the war really begins, T&S is one of the first targets, which can make for some great stories of gritty terror and a short life in the trenches. Unlike Lazarus Redux, Terrel & Squib has multiple facilities and has not taken anywhere near the same security precautions at all of them, having learned little or nothing from Orpheus Group's fall. Internal Security does its best, fighting a running battle against a literally endless horde of Spectres. But Grandmother is relentless in "reclaiming" Malevoy's twisted creation. Lazarus Redux, because of its small area and strong defenders, has a chance of holding out. Terrel & Squib, Inc. doesn't. It is attacked and systematically overwhelmed, and within three days of the blossoming, T&S is no longer recognizable as a company. Any survivors scatter — some to Lazarus Redux, others just away — and all the old T&S facilities are seemingly abandoned and vandalized overnight. It's a sad end, one punctuated by horror and profound loss for anyone associated with the company... but if nothing else, it is a poetic end for Malevoy's creation.

Terrel & Squib

CHAPTER : 04

Terrel & Squib Agents of Note

At least we didn't get all dressed up for nothing.

— Braveheart

Sweat poured down Javier's face as he ducked into the utility room, a small briefcase tucked under his arm. He paused, panting, taking in the room to make sure that no sleepy janitor was catching a surreptitious nap here. Satisfied that he was alone, he turned around, closing and locking the door behind him. He didn't dare risk discovery, but he couldn't wait any longer.

With trembling hands, Javier opened the briefcase, quickly pulling out the things he needed. Latex band... alcohol... gauze... syringe. And... the tiny vial. *Oh, yes.* Javier stared at it for a moment, holding it up to the light, exulting in his successful theft. There was enough Eidolon in the case for at least four good hits. *That's a week's worth, easy, even without operation issue, he thought. If I ration it out, I can make last almost a month.*

But the hunger was impatient, and did not wait for him to savor his victory. With practiced movements, Javier swiftly bound his arm, tugging the latex band into place with hand and teeth. His fingers shook as he loaded the syringe, tapping out the air bubbles. With haste born of need, the young man thrust the needle into his arm, depressing the plunger as quickly as he dared.

Cold fire surged through Javier's veins, and the tension flowed out of his limbs. He leaned heavily against the wall, slowly sliding to a sitting position. He closed his eyes and smiled as the drug worked its magic. For the first time in days, the beast was satiated, and Javier rolled with the sensation.

Somewhere within the haze of pleasure that slowly filled his mind, a small voice asked how long this would last, and how long he could endure till his next hit. Eidolon was better than pot, better than coke, hell, even better than pigment. But T&S only authorized it for operations, and the slap-patches they gave the Norms just didn't cut it. *This isn't right,* the voice insisted. *They're poisoning you, this is no better than pigment, it's just stronger junk now.* But Javier brushed it aside. T&S was a pharmaceuticals firm... surely they wouldn't give their employees anything dangerous when they were on the job. And so what if the side effects were nice? Ghost-hunting was hard work, he told himself; a little extra Eidolon on the side was only fair, since

he couldn't project on his own like Lance could. Why should the skimmers have all the fun?

Slowly, Javier felt his mind disassociate from his body. His limbs felt distant now; the drug in his veins was a dim sensation, at once within him and somewhere else. Opening his eyes, he found himself standing in front of his body, which lay motionless save for a slow breath that might as well have been drawn by a stranger. He stretched his gauze, watching the afterimages of his movements strobing through the clouds of color in the air. Was it like this for natural projectors, too, or was the secret in the Eidolon? Javier didn't know, and decided that he didn't care. Right now, everything was right in the world.

Drifting in the euphoria of freedom from his flesh, Javier realized that the arousal brought on by both pigment and Eidolon had carried over to the gauze. *Maybe I'll slip into the ladies' locker room, he thought to himself. Just a quick peek... Angela's been giving me looks all month. Maybe she won't mind if I just happen to pass through the wall into the shower...*

And then he heard the buzz.

It started at the edge of his awareness, barely perceptible, like television static heard two rooms away. Javier tried to ignore it, but it only got louder, more insistent. Slowly, the white noise began to resolve itself into voices... soft, rasping whispers that echoed inside his head...

Why just look when you can touch? Go solid and have your way with her...

Touch her, bite her, take her, use her, kill her...

Come with us, come see what we can give to you...

"No," Javier whispered, as the voices continued, their obscene suggestions assailing his consciousness. He didn't want this, not now... the voices had saved his life on missions when he heard the Spectres coming, had saved his friends when he knew the monsters' plans before they could act... but for them to rise unbidden like this was a nightmare made real.

"No!" he cried, clutching at his head. "Shut up! Shut up!" The cacophony of dark suggestions grew louder, more insistent, and

among them Javier recognized a voice that was all too familiar, urging him to give in, *sink deeper into your mind, join them, share their power, you want to... I want to...*

Javier threw back his head and screamed, gathering all his will to drown out the siren call of the Spectral hive-mind and the renegade urgings of his own subconscious. A massive jolting sense of solidity filled him; he had unconsciously ripcorded back to his body, and the high was fading. Cold sweat covered him, and his skin was clammy and pale. Javier rolled over on his side, hugging himself and trembling violently, as the colors faded and the plain, gray world returned. The last echoes of the Spectres sounded in his mind before fading into nothingness, replaced by the hum of the overhead light and the pounding of his heart in his ears.

"No more," Javier whispered. "No more. Only for operations." He sat up slowly, and reached out, fingers closing around the vial of Eidolon. He stared at it for a long moment, set his jaw, and drew his arm back, ready to dash it against the wall.

But something made him hesitate. He willed himself to act, and his body ignored the order. The hunger was coming back.

Javier stared at the wall for a long time, poised to throw, his lower lip trembling. Finally, screwing his eyes tightly shut, he lowered his arm, shoulders sagging in defeat. Silent tears slid down his cheeks as he tucked the bottle of Eidolon into his pocket. *I'll just finish this vial, he told himself. Take it slow, wean myself off it, tinier hits each time. One more month, and I'll never touch it again. Maybe I can even learn to project without it. Yeah. This'll be the end. I'll be rid of the voices forever. I don't need this shit, anyway.*

By the time he'd packed up his kit and left the utility room, he almost had himself convinced... but the voices knew better. They always knew what Javier really wanted.

A DANGEROUS WORLD

The world, whether or not it likes it, is at war. The hordes of Spectres ravaging the hereafter grow every month, often spilling over into the land of the living to spread death and misery. Unscrupulous ghosts rob banks and pick thralls off the street, making them dance like marionettes on strings. Companies like NextWorld strike freely and easily against competitors without fear of retribution by the authorities. Projector technology has opened up a whole new world, and from the top down it looks as though humanity may well use that knowledge to speed up its self-immolation.

That's why Terrel & Squib, Inc. tells itself that it exists. They are the best-equipped agency to deal with the myriad threats from the spirit realm. They have the numbers, the capital, and the technology to combat the horrors of other side. Of course, there are sacrifices that need to be made, but it's all for the greater good of mankind, and it doesn't hurt that the company can make some money doing what it does best.

That Terrel & Squib is as much the problem as it is the solution is not something that most individuals within the company know, or even suspect. Most know nothing of the pigment that is mass-manufactured by the company's pharmaceutical branch. Everyone knows about the broken ghosts, but very few eyes see what the ghostbreakers have to do in order to cut to the quick of a ghost's essence.

Terrel & Squib, Inc. is a paradox... a company whose pieces see themselves working for the good of humanity, while on the whole, the company is a sharpened instrument stabbing into the heart of the living world. Nowhere is this more clear than in an assessment of the company's personnel files. People in T&S — good-hearted people — fight Spectres in the streets while their very own executives make plans to distribute pigment on those same streets, creating even more food for Oblivion.

No matter how much success they have in the field, every victory only makes Terrel & Squib a greater menace to the world. And most agents will die (or be killed off) long before realizing the truth about the company they gave their lives for. That's life. And for those scouting the hereafter, that's death, too.

The characters presented in this chapter are NPCs and T&S signature characters coming from all walks of life, and can be used either as helpful allies or bitter antagonists, depending upon the nature of your Orpheus™ chronicle. But remember that not every T&S

operative is the pigment-doped, amoral goon that the Orpheus Group would have you believe they all are... and none of them are faceless.

THE "RANK AND FILE" DOSSIER

Terrel & Squib, Inc. values its many field agents and spook operatives; at least that's what they're told. Those on the bottom of the pile feel differently.

Terrel & Squib agents, the rank-and-file who conduct the day-to-day operations, are the nucleus of the company's paranormal services department. They are the spooks and the long-knives, the bluelegs and the shrinks. They routinely work without reliable intelligence, doing The Management's legwork with improvised plans for each new threat that is discovered.

They are the ones who catch the shit in the field, and they have to be able to respond quickly and skilfully on assignment if they hope to achieve their objectives... and stay alive. Outside of work, their personal lives follow no particular pattern, but they are anything but normal. Many agents, especially Arc-Lights, battle Eidolon addiction on a daily basis, or in worse cases, addiction to street-born pigment. While many T&S operatives are projectors or ghosts, the company hires a substantial number of "meat" operatives as well, security personnel who operate in the field without the benefit of intangibility or Horrors, and schisms in the lower ranks of the company have been forming for a long time. The omnipresent Broken Ghosts that have been enslaved by Terrel & Squib adds to the inter-department tensions, and more than one agent faces a moral dilemma with regards to these enslaved souls.

All these conflicts are frequently laid aside though, because those at the bottom of the corporate ladder have to watch out for one another. A rough camaraderie has formed among those on the low rungs, and they are often united more by interpersonal fellowship than company loyalty.

Some of them still believe that they are fighting the good fight. Sure, they fight it for people with nearly bottomless pocketbooks, but they're still fighting against the darkness that everyone witnesses when they project or tap a slap-patch. Presented here are a few characters from the company's rank-and-file that can serve as Terrel & Squib NPCs, whether as allies of the players or as agents of the distinguished opposition.

SORCHA ROSS

Sorcha was a starving artist who dropped out of college one semester before completing her degree in Art History, citing her belief that nothing important is ever really finished. Having set up shop in a small studio in the city's Bohemian neighborhood, Sorcha's life after college was little different than that during her studies: a happy drift from one project to another, an irregular schedule in which she was as likely to eat breakfast at sundown as she was at dawn, and a series of brief relationships with whatever man or woman caught her fancy that month.

Sorcha eked out a meager living selling her paintings and sculptures, and a few of her pieces found their way into local galleries, bringing her recognition in the local artistic scene. Her friends exhorted her to focus her energies and reach further, but she was too undisciplined to apply herself, and professed contentment with her unambitious lifestyle.

One of Sorcha's chief inspirations was the afterlife. A firm believer in the spirit world, Sorcha frequently used motifs of ghosts and underworld myths in her work. Her wild lifestyle included indulgences in numerous drugs, and she had over-dosed at least twice while binging, bringing her to the brink of death. She emerged from these experiences convinced that she had seen something, especially after the night her best friend scored some black heroin and she shot a little too much. She dabbled in mysticism and meditation, but just as with else in her life, she never focused sufficiently to make any great strides.

When Orpheus Group made ghosts a public issue, Sorcha was overjoyed; inspired by the sudden attention to the occult, she began selling more paintings, drawing upon a series of ghost-filled dreams. One of her works, a dark piece she fatefully named "Spectres in the Cornfields," drew the attention of a T&S recruiter. She jumped at the opportunity to work for the company, and while she never mastered Skimming without the aid of pigment or Eidolon, her creative uses of Bedlam made her a valuable addition to her investigative team.

Tragedy struck when Sorcha's team was sent on OPERATION: WHITEOUT, an investigation of a haunted house where two small children had been found frozen to death in mid-July. The culprit turned out to be a breed of Spectre with powers over ice and cold (see the write-up for Jack Frosts in Chapter 3). Sorcha came in the meat and projected on arrival at the site. This turned out to be a fatal error in judgment; during the ensuing battle, the Spectre dislodged a mass of icicles from a



ceiling, and Sorcha was powerless to do anything but watch in horror as her helpless body was impaled. High on Eidolon, she became a Hue.

Since her death, Sorcha has become somewhat more focused. She sees her fate as an opportunity to learn more about the ghostly condition firsthand and as a source of fresh inspiration, but she keenly feels the loss of her body and is learning to skinride so she can enjoy the pleasures of the flesh again. She's remained with T&S (who is compensating her by paying for her apartment, giving her a place to manifest occasionally and continue working on some posthumous paintings), but is growing suspicious of the number of her colleagues who die on missions and end up as Hues, especially those she knows are against pigment use.

She's begun to wonder if her employers are entirely on the level with her, and is keeping a close eye on goings-on at the company. She has not yet made the connection between Eidolon and pigment, but is beginning to put the pieces together.

Description: Sorcha appears much as she did in life: a short, slender Caucasian woman in her mid-20s, pale of complexion, with honey-blond hair pulled back in a ponytail, delicate features, a small nose, and sharp blue eyes framed by black plastic glasses. Unless disguised by Bedlam, she wears a long peasant skirt with floral patterns, a green T-shirt with a low scooped neck, several strings of wooden and ceramic beads, and one gold earring shaped like a butterfly.

Her voice is soft and pleasant, and she smiles easily, even at strangers; death has not yet crushed her spirit, even with the flickering weakness of a Hue. She is easily distracted and has a habit of tapping her foot to music only she can hear when she isn't focused on a specific task.

Nature: Celebrant

Classification: Phantasm Hue

Role: Bohemian artist

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 1, Awareness 2, Empathy 2, Expression (pre-specialty painting) 3, Intrigue 1, Intuition 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2, Crafts 3, Drive 1, Etiquette 1, Melee 1, Performance 2, Academics 2, Computer 1, Enigmas 1, Investigation 2, Occult (pre-specialty afterlife beliefs) 3, Science 1

Backgrounds: Artifact 2 (see below), Haunt, 1 Memorial 2, Passion 1

Horrors: Bedlam, Sandman, Unearthly Repose, Wail

Stains: Blackfire Speech, Claws, Compound Eyes. Sorcha's Stains represent corruptions of her artistic nature. Her blackfire speech poisons her glib words. Sharp, gnashing claws replace her nimble painter's fingers, and compound eyes distort her unique inner vision, mocking her ability to see multiple points of view.

Vitality: 7

Willpower: 4

Spite: 3

Merits: People Person

Flaws: Phobia (Jack Frost spectres)

Notes: Sorcha's Artifact Background takes the form of a sculptor's knife, which she uses to defend herself in battle (Strength +1 damage); when in hand, the blade adds one die to Expression and Perception rolls made for creative purposes. Her Memorial Background comes from a room dedicated to her works by a local art gallery after her passing; if she ever completes her posthumous paintings and arranges for their "discovery," this Background will increase to 3. She is in the process of learning Puppetry from a living Skinrider, Lance Shomaker, on her investigative team (see below).

JAVIER GONZALES

Javier's parents snuck across the US-Mexico border when his mother was eight months pregnant, granting him — but not them — US citizenship upon his birth. He grew up among the Hispanic slums of southern California, jumping from gang to gang as his family moved regularly in search of work. Never a leader, he lived for the thrill of manipulating the other gang members without their ever realizing it. This, combined with the normal hazards of gang life, gave him more than his fair share of close calls throughout his teenage years. But when a knife wound at the age of seventeen left him bedridden for a month with nothing to do but think about his life, he decided it was time for a change. He started going to school again and picked up a part-time job, spending less and less time with his gang. Until they introduced him to pigment, that is.

No other drug had hit him like this; it actually did feel like it was expanding his mind. Javier nearly overdosed on it several times, and just when relations with his parents were about to go critical, a T&S recruiting agent showed up on the doorstep. Tests showed that Javier had projector potential, and within a month he'd moved out and started work in T&S's paranormal division. He sends most of the money back home to support his family (father, mother, and two younger sisters), and only goes in for the occasional



pigment hit anymore (much to the relief of his parents). Of course, that's only because Eidolon does things that makes pigment look tame.

If Javier ever found out how T&S found him, it could be... messy. His near-suicidal plunge into pigment quickly developed the taint on his soul, and he began sending out echoes through the hive-mind every time he used it, like off-key notes in a symphony orchestra. A Friendly Angel traced the discord back to Javier, and posed as a T&S recruiter to get him into the company. Now Javier is under surreptitious Spectral observation to determine the origin of his taint, and, more importantly, how to duplicate it.

Description: Javier stands 5'6" tall with medium-brown skin, short black hair, and dark brown eyes. When projecting, he usually appears in the faded jeans and T-shirts of his gang years, oftentimes with a bit of gang insignia (though which gang and where it appears vary). He is T&S's youngest employee, having just turned eighteen a few months ago.

Javier is of average intelligence, but his quick thinking — honed by years of dancing the razor's edge in his gangs — more than makes up for it. He is charming and an incurable flirt, and always has a quip on his tongue. His humor tends to be a bit dark, but he can usually get a smile out of anyone. He's been getting quieter and more morose recently, probably due to his newfound ability to tap into the Spectral hive-mind.

Nature: Socialite

Demeanor: Thrill-Seeker

Classification: Wisp Arc-Light

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Intuition 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3, Melee 1, Security 3, Stealth 4, Investigation 3, Linguistics 1 (Spanish)

Backgrounds: Tainted 1, Contacts 3, Allies 1

Horrors: Hive-Mind (see Tainted background), Storm-Wending, Unearthly Repose

Stains: Dagger Tongue, Leper, Shifting Identity. Javier's Stains represent the darker sides of his outgoing, manipulative personality; Dagger Tongue shows that his words have power, Leper represents his fears of alienation, and Shifting Identity distorts his vibrant sense of his own identity.

Vitality: 7

Willpower: 6

Spite: 4



DAVID STEVENS

The story of Dave Stevens' early life was predictable, mundane and would have made for a boring read: born and raised in the suburbs of the American Midwest, tennis in high school, almost died when one of his friends decided to ignore the warnings about drinking and driving... the whole nine yards.

The only truly unusual experience of his life came when he was thirteen, and on a dare braved a haunted house at night. The experience instilled in him a respect for the dead and some new mysteries about "the Other Side" that he could never quite articulate. He graduated surrounded by friends and classmates, all of whom moved on to college, set on becoming business execs, lawyers, veterinarians, or other productive members of society. Except for one.

Unlike the millions of people of whom the exact same story could be told, Dave knew intimately that words like "boring," "secure," and even "family" were a blessing that millions were never granted. He felt he owed people he'd never met for the happiness he'd been raised with, even if everyone around him seemed to get along just fine ignoring the injustices of the world. So he tried and failed at a stint in police academy, then did volunteer work and odd jobs on the side while applying to become a fireman. All in all, he just tried to do some good with his life.

The good do indeed die young. In Dave's case, all it took was an addict who was in a bad way from the pain of withdrawal, induced by a chronic shortness of cash. However, this was not the end of the story. Dave's attachment to this life in all of its various walks helped to bind his spirit to the mortal plane.

Feeling disoriented as a spirit, Dave turned to Terrel & Squib, a name that he had heard many times on late-night TV in recent weeks. Being hard-pressed for strong ghosts at the time, the HR department decided to forego the breaking process and hire him as a long-knife. While his nature made him ill-suited to policing and enforcing the company's broken ghosts, Operations found that he made a solid tracker, stalking and incapacitating hostile spirits.

For the most part, David has accepted his role in Terrel & Squib, making the best of a bad situation. He's taken the "dead man's watch" that God handed him, and believes it to be a noble calling. While T&S's cavalier treatment of ghosts is worrisome, right now they seem like the only ones willing to take a stand against the unknown horrors spilling from the other side.

Description: On an average day, David could fade into the background like any other blip. When's he on an operation though, David is a long rubber-band twined to its breaking point. While relatively small at only 5' 8", he knows just where (and how) to hit someone in order to get his point across.

Nature: Martyr

Classification: Poltergeist Spirit

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Empathy 4, Leadership 2, Crafts 1, Firearms 1, Melee 2, Security 1, Stealth 3, Survival 1, Academics 1, Law 1, Linguistics 1 (French), Science 1

Backgrounds: Passion 2, Memorial 1, Artifact 1

Horrors: Helter-Skelter, Puppetry, Wail

Stains: Clingy, Foaming, Withered

Vitality: 7

Willpower: 7

Spite: 3

Merits: N/A

Flaws: Bad Rap (2 pts.).

Notes: David's Artifact is a pitch-black nightstick (Strength +2 bashing damage) that he recovered after his second operation with T&S. The 'breaker last seen using a similar artifact to discipline his "projects" is still considered MIA.

JURAJ STOSKOPF

The man who now calls himself Juraj Stoskopf was born in the Balkans, in Yugoslavia, before the entire region became man's re-enactment of Hell. He had the good fortune to be born into the Serbian majority of his region, but by the time he had come of age, the country had shattered, and its fragments were plunged into a vicious ethnic war.

When the fighting started, Juraj joined almost immediately, eager to stomp down the people he had been taught his entire life to detest. As the fighting continued and the viciousness escalated, his enthusiasm declined as the horrors of war became more and more evident. In the field, he did many things that he wasn't proud of. He also did some things that he still has nightmares about... things that he was usually — but not always — ordered to do by his superiors. By the time other nations stepped in to end the fighting, Juraj was empty inside. His superiors called it a great victory, but he could taste only ashes in his mouth. He returned to his hometown, now empty of those he had fought to rid it of... only to remember where he had buried all their bodies.

Then the world took notice. Atrocities had occurred, and those responsible would pay with more blood. The world went after his country's leaders first, bringing them to justice before the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague. During the trials, no one was



spared. The leaders revealed the roles of their underlings, and one by one Juraj's superiors were captured or quietly "taken care of." And through it all, Juraj held his breath, knowing that he was on somebody's list, and that he was going to be called into judgement before God and man for what he had done.

That was when Juraj Stoskopf was approached by a foreigner in a three-piece suit, a rare sight in the streets of his tattered city. The man said that the company he worked for had found Juraj just ahead of the authorities, and that they were looking for men of his talents for an enterprise they were undertaking. They would take him away to a distant country and build a new identity and life for him... provided that he would work for them faithfully.

Now Juraj finds that he is repeating much of what he did in the dark days of the war, but now he does it to the dead. Terrel & Squib introduced him to a whole other world beyond the grave, and they use him to enforce order amongst conscripted low-Vitality ghosts. Sometimes this means torture. Sometimes this means destruction. But he's up to the task, because he knows that the alternative is unthinkable.

Description: Juraj stands 6'3" tall, a big man with a dark Slavic complexion and fierce brown eyes. He prefers to shave his head and beard... there are photographs of him with his ragged goatee that have been circulating with INTERPOL for some time now. He is in his mid-30s, but looks significantly older. He presents a cold, malicious shoulder to the world most of the time, a survival mechanism that he developed a long time ago. Few have trouble believing that he is capable of torture, but far fewer would believe that he sleeps with a copy of the Marcus Aurelius' Meditations by his pillow.

Juraj isn't liked by many, especially among Terrel & Squib's ghost population, as he has a reputation for excessive brutality in keeping the broken spooks in line on missions. Although he isn't a ghostbreaker himself, the 'breakers sometimes use him when a little physical coercion is needed. Sometimes he can't sleep at night, dreaming of the Balkan winter when the fighting and the ethnic cleansing were at their worst, and some of the things he did then will haunt him for the rest of his life. Juraj continually has to force himself to push past it. He knows where that path leads.

Nature: Survivor

Demeanor: Monster

Classification: Skinrider Arc-Light

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception

2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Empathy 2, Firearms 3, Intimidation 5, Investigation 2, Leadership 3, Linguistics 1 (Serbian), Meditation 2, Melee 1, Politics 1, Security 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Arsenal 3, Parasynthetic Tolerance 2

Horrors: Puppetry, Juggernaut.

Stains: Claws, Heart of Stone, Masquerade. Juraj's Stains represent his darkest fear: that he'll become the monster he once was again. His Claws are short, notched knife blades extending out of his fingers, stained with the blood of those he killed long ago. Masquerade exemplifies how he lives his life, behind someone else's name and ID card for protection. Heart of Stone is self-explanatory, and Juraj seems to be slipping a little closer to this cold, emotionless Stain every day.

Vitality: 8

Willpower: 8

Spite: 6

Equipment: Juraj brought a significant personal arsenal out of the Balkans with him, including some military-grade weapons, making him as deadly in the meat as he is when projected. Some of his prominent weapons include: modified AK-47 assault rifle (+1 attack), Kevlar body armor (Class Three), and at least two Uzi 9mm SMGs (+1 attack each).

IMAMU

Imamu was born under the African stars with an auspicious name, meaning "spiritual leader." He truly *was* destined for greatness, but his real strength didn't come until death claimed Imamu as one of its own.

He was raised in Somalia, where violence was not only the norm, it was venerated. Imamu was practically birthed with a gun in his hand, into a society ravaged by endless war, where the strong survive by taking what scraps remain from the weak... and he was never weak.

At the age of eight he was taught to fire Soviet rifles, and by the age of eleven he had killed his first man, an enemy clansman from the hills. Not long after, he was taking part in raids against the enemies of his warlord, and eventually orchestrated his own. There was never enough food to go around, but Imamu ate well, sustained by the spoils taken from his enemies. He almost died at least twice while still in his teens, but Imamu was always strong enough to overcome the grave to fire his weapon once more.



Then, when he was on the verge of adulthood, the Westerners came, with their blue berets and trucks full of supplies. They promised to bring peace and prosperity for the Somali people, but their words were a shield for inaction, and whatever aid they brought was always given to the rival warlords and enemy clans.

After his third raid on the U.N. supply convoy, more Westerners arrived, with helicopters, missiles and soldiers at their command. He remembers fighting them in the ruined streets of his home city amidst the bodies of friends and boon companions, shooting round after round into the circling helicopters until they descended in flames into the streets. Then the stream of bullets tore through his guts, and he died, still clasping his rifle defiantly.

To his surprise, he found out that it didn't end there.

He wandered the land as a spirit for a time, first avenging himself upon his living enemies and then setting out to explore this bizarre new world of the dead. Driven by a newfound curiosity, he travelled far, across rivers and deserts and seas, as though driven by the whispers of some unseen mouth. After some months he was found stumbling into a pigment field in Turkey that was overseen by Terrel & Squib. After Imamu bested one of the resident Spectres in single combat, a T&S Arc-Light who witnessed the encounter recognized his skill as a warrior and made an offer for him to join their ranks of ghostly operatives. Impressed

by the organization and finally offered some direction in the hereafter, Imamu agreed.

Now Imamu leads T&S long knives into battle. He is a lone warrior, brought up in a proud culture where war is as much art and sport as it is science, but he knows how to drive his fellow ghosts into action.

He has been known to disappear for days at a time stalking Spectres through the urban jungles, but has also been known to creep into a building ahead of a team and take down a Spectre or an angry blip single-handedly. While Terrel & Squib has had trouble restraining him in the past, it rightly views his talents as a unique asset.

Description: Imamu is an unbroken spirit standing 5'8" tall, but is usually found crouching like a predator, even when in a safe haven. A native Somalian, his skin is black and his hair is kept long braids reaching down to his waist. Although he is not a particularly high-Vitality ghost, he is almost freakishly strong and durable, as he was in life.

Imamu is highly skilled in the art of combat, having been raised with it since birth, but he is no soldier... he is a warrior, a predator, a killer. Now, working for T&S, he will show this Western world of neon lights and decadent brothels what it means to be a warrior... and what it means to be dead. Woe to the poor ghost-breaker placed on Imamu's case after his useful as a Wild Spirit is over.

Nature: Barbarian

Classification: Hunter-class Wild Spirit

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3.

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Firearms 4, Intimidation 2, Leadership 2, Linguistics 1 (Somali), Melee 3, Occult 2, Politics 1, Stealth 3, Survival 4.

Backgrounds: Artifact 3, Destiny 1, Status 1

Horrors: Inhabit, Witch's Nimbus

Stains: Yellowbelly, Man-of-War, Withered.

Imamu's Stains represent what he secretly fears he might be — soft and weak, like those he laughed at and stole from all his life. Yellowbelly is his own dread fear of being a coward, Man-of-War is the manifestation of his repugnance of all things soft, and Withered is a reflection of those he bullied and stole from in Somalia — weak, brittle and malnourished.

Vitality: 8

Willpower: 6

Spite: 4

Notes: Imamu's Artifact Background takes the

form of a battered old AK-47 rifle that fires gauze bullets (but does not allow for full-automatic fire). His Status Background reflects that he has some degree of standing and independence within the company — while he is hardly at the top of the ladder, those in charge know enough to let him have his way when he demands it. Most of the time.

"REECE"

Reece was a British Royal Marine, killed in Iraq during a joint operation with British and American troops. His body (and ghost) took the long route home on an American transport plane via an air base in Utah, where a T&S Clean Sweep team picked him up. Reece now "works" for T&S as a Broken Ghost; while he doesn't enjoy being forced to follow orders, he enjoys the "life" that the company offers him. He does miss a good shot of Jack Daniels, though.

Like all Broken Ghosts, Reece remembers almost nothing of his past life, and his sense of self has been severely eroded. "Reece" may not even be his real name, for all he can recall at this point. Still, Reece is stronger than most Broken Ghosts, and the ghost-breaker who shredded his mind was not as thorough as she could have been. Small rays of true self-awareness and a handful of broken memories peer through the T&S programming quite frequently...

From the time he was a very young boy, Reece knew he wanted to be a Marine, just like his dad, and his dad's dad. He was strong even as a boy, and was always getting into trouble. He was very slow to learn, however, suffering from dyslexia. This, coupled with his large physique, caused people to label him as stupid and discount the possibility that he would ever amount to anything. This drove him to work that much harder, and he surprised everyone by passing his exams and becoming a Marine cadet.

He excelled at his training, and several years later passed with the King's Badge. Since then, he soaked up skills like a dry sponge, learning everything the forces could throw at him: subterfuge, camouflage, mechanics, photography, and even some sniper training. He made several tours in various hot spots across the world, and was one of the few Marines ever to volunteer for a second tour in Northern Ireland. None of this matched up to actual engagement with the enemy, though, and when the war against terrorism flared up, he was out there on the frontiers of the allied lines, gathering intelligence and fighting the enemy.

Now he is dead, one of the many "friendly fire"

casualties from the Iraqi War. Reece works for Terrel & Squib now, following orders as best he can from his state of forced servitude. No amount of T&S programming could override years of hard military training though, and he feels, if not at home, then more adjusted to his present situation than most Broken Ghosts.

There are orders that come from above, after all, and whether you're a soldier in Iraq or a ghost facing down a Spectre, those orders demand compliance.

Description: Reece is an imposing man, large in physique as well as personality. At 6'3" and over 210 pounds, that's telling on both accounts. He can be overbearing and would be a bully if his T&S programming didn't repress that particular personality trait.

Nonetheless, he has more Vitality than most Broken Ghosts and demonstrates some degree of autonomy. Reece is a no-nonsense man who is slow to understand complex plots and ideas — so he usually doesn't bother with them.

Nature: Bumpkin

Classification: Skinrider Broken Spirit

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 1.

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 3, Intuition 2, Streetwise 1, Drive 2, Firearms 4, Melee 1, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Linguistics 1 (Arabic), Medicine 2, Politics 1



Backgrounds: Memorial 3, Flashbacks 2

Horrors: Puppetry, Juggernaut

Stains: Blood Socket, Raging Monster, Brute. Reece's Stains are clues to the secret fears he held in life. Brute shows his secret fear of his own physical strength. The Raging Monster Stain is an internalization of the horrors and brutalities that he witnessed throughout his career in the military. And the Blood Socket Stain is his fear of death (and final death), as it is a remnant of the bullet that took his life.

Vitality: 6

Willpower: 4

Spite: 5

Merits: Acute Hearing, Cool Head, Daredevil

Flaws: One Eye, Stubborn

Notes: The British Forces have built a memorial garden to all of the servicemen who died in Iraq — each one has had a tree planted in their honor. While Reece is unaware of this, it does provide him with a steady stream of Vitality as people visit and mourn his passing.

BRETT ANDREWSON

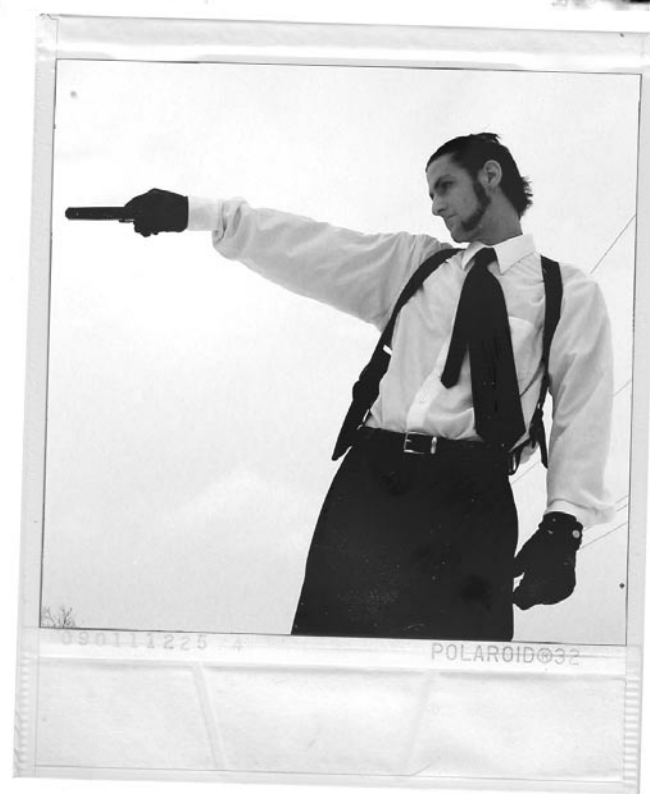
Being raised on the right side of the track certainly has its advantages: fast cars, a big house, lots of disposable cash and parents that never seem to care what you do, as long as you don't embarrass them.

Never one to stick with the rest of the high school heard, Brett did his best to find his way on top of the pile. He had a crush on acting at first, but then varsity sports grabbed the spotlight. After awhile, though, even the standards — football, baseball, wrestling — seemed boring. Not content to sit still, Brett threw himself into the extreme sports fad with both feet. Between Daddy's credit card and a mountain of airline miles, he spent the next 3 years finding the best places to ride, climb, and jump off the world.

Brett was happy; he was followed around by a small clique of fellow sports groupies, he had everything he wanted and everything was in the right place. This rich boy was living in the fast lane, and nothing could slow him down. That is, until he set his sights on his best friend's girl.

Sure, Brett and Heather hooked up a couple of times behind Michael's back, but when Brett finally wanted to "seal the deal," Heather went cold. Not one to let something like "feelings" get in the way, Brett forced his way onto her and everything slid downhill from there.

Amidst the screaming and failed violence, Heather



took her chance to run, but Brett was right behind her... and when he pushed her down, she fell hard.

When the reality of the situation finally hit Brett a minute later, the memory just sat there rolling through his head like a spent bullet casing. "She slipped and fell," he told the police, and he "did *everything* he could to save her, but it just hadn't been enough." The police came and went and, for about two months, that's the way his story sat.

When Brett came home after his "accident" with Heather, that's when the real accidents began.

At first, minor things disappeared from around the house, but it wasn't too long until random fires began sprouting up in the worst places. Maybe it was a guilty conscience that wanted this ghost put to rest or maybe it was simply a chance to see some action, but either way it happened Brett picked up his phone and dialed Terrel & Squib.

Since the Halloween episode of *The Real House*, T&S's phone number had been popping up on MTV between every video. Of course, he didn't know what to expect, but he did know that *something* had to be done about Heather.

Five hours, an outrageous lump sum of cash and a lightshow later, the T&S operatives had successfully "cleaned" Brett's house of all supernatural entities. To his surprise, they even found ghosts that he didn't even know were in there. Amazed at what just happened,

Brett wanted in. That high he got when Heather fell off the cliff was coming back again.

Two months later, Brett was assigned to a full operative position within Terrel & Squib. The training was a breeze and the tech almost operated itself. Just point the dangerous looking end at the spooks and pull the trigger. That's all there is to it.

In the field, Brett has fallen into a rough situation or two, but he always plays the part of the square-jawed, front-man for the team. After all, danger is just part of the job, right?

Description: Brett is a male Caucasian standing just under six feet tall with shaggy brown hair and trendy sideburns. His build is solid and his blue-grey eyes are narrow and suspicious, constantly looking for ways to turn a situation to his advantage. Normally, Brett is the first to arrive on-scene, taking point as "the face" of T&S.

Nature: Thrill-Seeker

Demeanor: Autocrat

Classification: Norm (potential Haunter)

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3.

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Brawl 1, Intimidation 2, Computer 2, Drive 3, Etiquette 3, Firearms 2, Investigation 1, Leadership 2, Performance 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 4, Technology 2

Backgrounds: Fame 2, Resources 3, Stash 2

Horrors: N/A (Inhabit - were he to die or project)

Stains: N/A (Bat's Ears, Leper, Pseudopods - were he to die or project)

Vitality: N/A (8 - were he to die or project)

Willpower: 6

Spite: N/A (4 - were he to die or project)

LANCE SHOMAKER

Lance grew up in eastern Oregon, third son in a family of farmers. He joined the Air Force back in 1989 to earn money for college, but his plans for that got a major detour when Operation Desert Storm came around.

He was shipped out to the Middle East as a desk jockey, one of the guys who ran things behind the scenes while the pilots got all the glory. After returning stateside, he ended his time with the Air Force and went back to school, eventually becoming a risk-management consultant for an engineering firm.

Unfortunately, he was never totally satisfied with his job; it just lacked meaning. He was seriously considering applying to T&S's engineering division when the company opened up its paranormal investigations. Seeing his record (several NDEs due to his rock-climbing hobby), T&S tested him out for projector potential and hit paydirt. He was immediately drafted as one of T&S's first projectors. He is also currently the oldest, having seen far too many comrades go AWOL or simply never come back.

Lance lives his life by the rule that "knowledge is power." He is frequently put in charge of coordinating operations in the field, and even though they sometimes take twice as long as normal, he has the lowest loss rate (in both equipment and personnel) of any T&S employee. "You can never be too cautious," is his common rebuttal against impatient superiors.

Despite his gruff demeanor, Lance is generally friendly and has a handshake that can break bones. He is usually the one put in charge of training new employees (the living ones, at least). Even though the process can be a bit traumatic for the trainee (Lance specifically tries to "scare the Hell out of them" on the first operation), the results speak for themselves: although they're initially a bit shell-shocked, the trainees are never caught off guard again.

Lance has a firm sense of what is right and what is wrong, and he sticks by it, despite T&S policies that force him into moral gray areas. He openly distrusts the Management, but so far can't claim anything more



than shoddy policies against them. Still, his criticism is probably what has kept him down in the rank and file, instead of being promoted. When the NextWorld attack in **Crusade of Ashes** comes, you can bet he'll be on the front lines. If you're playing a T&S chronicle, the players' actions will determine whether he lives or dies. He can be a valuable ally or a powerful enemy, depending on which side he sees the players as being on. If he ever gets word of T&S's truly darker side (involving pigment and Spectres), he'll turn wholly against the company and probably lead a defection or rebellion against it.

Description: Lance stands 5'11" tall, and has a classic farmer's build, with broad shoulders and strong arms. He has light brown hair and eyes, and his face carries a near-permanent tan from rock climbing.

He's in his mid-thirties, and just the slightest touch of gray is beginning to eat away the brown at his temples. When projecting, he usually appears in a pair of patched khakis and a nondescript T-shirt.

Nature: Mentor

Demeanor: Defender

Classification: Skinrider Skimmer

Role: Field Coordinator

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4.

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Intimidation 2, Leadership 4, Firearms 2, Melee 2, Investigation 4.

Backgrounds: Influence 3, Status 3, Resources 2.

Horrors: Inhabit, Juggernaut, Puppetry, Wail, Witch's Nimbus

Stains: Compound Eye, Hammerfists, Spider's Bristles. Compound Eye reflects his not-quite-compulsive information-gathering, while Spider's Bristles actually stem from his rock-climbing hobby that combined with his latent frustration (especially after leaving the Air Force but before joining T&S) to make him take near-suicidal risks. Hammerfists comes from the rare occasions when he loses his temper, which he usually keeps under a tight rein. Even when he's in the flesh, you don't want him mad at you. When he's in the gauze, he can be downright terrifying (and his subconscious use of Wail doesn't help matters).

Vitality: 8

Willpower: 10

Spite: 4

Merits: Cool Head, Commanding Presence, Iron Will, Natural Leader

Flaws: Suspicion, Nightmares

ANGELA DAWSON

Born to career-military parents on an American base in Germany, Angela Dawson grew up as the consummate Army brat. Her upbringing was spent moving from base to base in Europe and the U.S., but her parents doted on her, striving to make sure she had the best education, clothes, and luxuries to compensate for a lack of stability in other areas of life. A pretty and precocious child, little Angela quickly realized she could wrap her parents around her finger, and milked it for all she could.

As she grew up, Angela breezed through school, scoring high marks with no apparent effort, and toyed with the affections of every boy who took an interest in her without letting any get too close. She reserved her true passion for technology... she seemed to have an innate talent for computers and all other things electrical, and her father made sure his little girl always had the best systems an officer's salary could buy.

To everyone's surprise, Angela did not even apply for college... she realized that her talents could assure her a much more comfortable living than any degree. She settled in the U.S., and went into business for herself at the age of 19, designing Web sites for companies in both Germany and America. But this was a cover for her real job... she'd discovered network-



cracking a few years before, and knew it was a far more lucrative prospect than Web design. Angela's manipulative nature extended into the back-networks and protected systems that are normally kept behind the curtain, and she soon built a comfortable nest egg, quietly channeling funds from one account to another and eventually to her own.

Scientific and skeptical, Angela never even considered ghosts worthy of a second thought until late one night, when she nearly electrocuted herself while rewiring a network server for a friend. While she was in the hospital, she saw a dead man being wheeled away on a gurney... and his confused-looking spirit following behind. Rather than rejecting what she saw out of hand, Angela reasoned that some sort of bio-energy must linger after death, and that her accident had somehow tuned her into its frequencies. Eager to explore the possibilities of this newfound talent, she researched the burgeoning projection firms, and learned that Terrel and Squib was known for its impressive ghost-hunting technology. It seemed a perfect match, and once her abilities had been adequately demonstrated, her application was graciously accepted.

Angela's mastery of gadgets and ability to see spooks without Kirlian goggles have made her an invaluable asset to her team, and she even found a practical use for her father's old rifle lessons when she was introduced to ghostshot ammo. She affects the image of the sexy-but-alooof tech girl, flirting shamelessly with the men on her investigative team even as she pretends not to notice their advances.

She's fascinated with all aspects of paratech, and stays cool even when facing down the most hideous spirits... she believes them to be nothing more than a form of residual electromagnetic energy after all, so what's to be afraid of?

Description: Angela is a small, but buxom woman in her early 20s, standing less than five-and-a-half feet tall. Her skin is pale from long periods indoors, and she keeps her black hair trimmed in a shoulder length fall; she's cultivated the habit of letting a strand of it fall over one eye when conversing with interested men. She smiles easily, and tends to look at people over the top of her light, but strong, silver-rimmed glasses.

At any given time she has at least half a dozen gadgets on her person... calculator watches, PDAs, cell phones, and pagers compete for space with Vitality scanners and Kirlian cameras when she's on assign-

ment.

She affects a sloppy-but-sexy style of dress, running to loose low-necked shirts and worn cargo pants with multiple pockets for her technological toys. Angela's voice is high and upbeat, and she tends to speak quickly, using technical terminology as easily as some use slang, and with no apparent regard for whether others understand what she's talking about.

She strings along any man who catches her fancy, but keeps them at arm's length... whether she's playing hard to get or simply enjoying the game is anyone's guess.

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Scientist

Classification: Norm (potential Phantasm)

Role: Field investigator and paratechnician

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Expression 2, Intuition 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Crafts 2, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Security 3, Technology 4, Bureaucracy 1, Computer 4, Enigmas 2, Finance 2, Linguistics 1 (German), Science 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Personal Equipment 3, Resources 2, Library 2

Horrors: N/A

Stains: N/A

Vitality: N/A (7 if she were to die or project)

Willpower: 4

Spite: N/A (3 if she were to die or project)

Merits: Dual Nationality (German / American), Intuitive Programmer, Metagnome, Sexy

Flaws: Bad Sight

THE EXECUTIVE DOSSIER

Better a thousand enemies outside the house than one inside.

Terrel & Squib, Incorporated is built as much on deceit and dark motivations as it is on venture capital and the corporate ethos. While it fights hard for public attention, sympathy, and funding, it's also the company behind the creation and distribution of pigment. Few of the field-level agents know anything about the dark corners of the company. Those responsible for engineering pigment, the NextWorld attack on the rank-

and-file, and the acquisition of Broken Ghosts are the company's executives. While John Terrel and Lionel Squib are the driving force behind everything that has been accomplished by their creation, they wouldn't be half as successful as they are without accomplices, lackeys, and co-conspirators to help preserve the infrastructure of their schemes. These individuals form the executive core of Terrel & Squib, Inc.

Few of them are pleasant to be around. Few of them like one another. But a pervasive fear of the two founding partners keeps them, for the most part, in line.

None of the executives aside from the two founders know all of the company's darkest secrets: diversification of assets and information, after all, is a successful business practice. Few even suspect that Lionel Squib is possessed by a Spectre, and while it is known that the pharmaceutical division produces Eidolon, the company's approved pigment derivative, their cornerstone involvement in the international pigment trade is a well-kept secret.

Between them, these individuals form the T&S board of directors, although the board is run in a despotic fashion by the founding partners (particularly Lionel Squib).

LIONEL SQUIB, P.H.D.

FOUNDING PARTNER AND
HEAD OF RESEARCH and
DEVELOPMENT

Terrel & Squib, Inc. is a labyrinth of deception, and at the center of that web sits Doctor Lionel Squib, PhD. His force of will alone changed the company's direction from a respectable pharmaceutical manufacturer to a risky paranormal investigations venture, and gave birth to the illegal pigment trade that enriches the company's black-market coffers more for every life — and death — that it destroys.

Perhaps most dangerous of all, Dr. Squib is possessed by the worst kind of Spectre... the kind with a plan. The Reaper Malevoy is no mindless Fetch. It has always had a ruthless agenda, and the entire company is its tool in realizing those ambitions.

What are its plans? Its overriding goal is to attain the favor of Grandmother, the power behind the Spectres. Its secondary goals vary over time. Prior to **Crusade of Ashes** the Spectre possessing Squib is merely solidifying its power in the company, in the investigations industry, and in the blossoming pigment trade. Following the attack, it becomes increasingly

wary of its clandestine partner, Uriah Bishop, whose attempts to curry favor with Grandmother threaten to eclipse Malevoy's own. By the events of **Shades of Gray**, the Spectre has resolved to eliminate him, preferring to hoard Grandmother's glory for itself. Fortunately, in the company it built, Malevoy has all the right weapons to wage its shadow war on Bishop right in its claws...

For now, Squib is feared primarily within the company's walls. None among the T&S executive branch know the full truth about the possession, although Arthur Barclay is closest in his beliefs. He has proven that he is not above physical violence as a tool of coercion, and Internal Security serves as Squib's unofficial arm. The Spectre has acquired a long reach, and is not about to allow anyone, within the company or outside of it, to interfere with its plans.

Bishop

Terrel & Squib's relationship with the Flatliner Uriah Bishop and his network of pigment cults and True Believers is complicated, and changes over time.

At first Bishop and the Spectre Malevoy were fast allies, co-engineering the international pigment trade. Although Terrel & Squib's pigment fields in Turkey and Myanmar produced over 70% of the pigment imported to the United States, Bishop's distribution network was far better-connected on the streets, and the two lapsed into a pattern of mutual dependence.

By the time the events of **Shades of Gray** occur, however, their alliance is coming to a swift end. Bishop, whose South American pigment operations are slowly expanding, has less use for T&S, Inc. than before, and the Spectre Malevoy is becoming increasingly jealous of the favor Bishop is currying with Grandmother. It would sooner have him eliminated and his pigment distribution organization subsumed into Terrel & Squib's than maintain the status quo.

Is war brewing? Possibly, if that suits your plans as the Storyteller. It wouldn't take much for Malevoy/Squib to launch his company into a jihad against Bishop's pigment cults... a little information slipped on the side and most T&S operatives would, ironically, be more than willing to take down such a cornerstone in the pigment market. However, Bishop's organization might prove impossibly strong even for Terrel & Squib. Bishop has the authority to command Spectres at his disposal (remember **Crusade of Ashes**?) and a powerful, decentralized network of agents loyal to him. There is nothing to assure an easy T&S victory, and although Malevoy doesn't know it, the odds would be against his company.

JOHN TERREL

FOUNDING PARTNER AND
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Some men sell their souls to the devil in crass Faustian rituals in exchange for money or power. John Terrel has done nothing so direct. The devil on his back has him so terrified that he simply allows it to direct both his life and his life's work, but he can see that what the devil is doing is highly profitable, and that is more than enough incentive for him to follow.

John Terrel is the financial genius who keeps the books and adds up the columns for T&S. As one of the owners and founding partners exercises, theoretically, he has almost total control over the firm. In addition to holding a controlling share in the company, Terrel also acts as its Chief Financial Officer, partly because he doesn't want anyone else probing the company's secrets, but mostly because he doesn't trust anyone else to do it correctly.

ARTHUR BARCLAY

HEAD OF INTERNAL SECURITY

Arthur Barclay joined the company when it was still T&S Pharmaceuticals. He tried out (and failed to make muster) for T&S Investigations when the branch was founded. Looking at the average turnover rate of people who work with the spooks, he's come to count his blessings that he never got on that particular train-wreck. Instead, Barclay's rise to prominence began with the Smithville fiasco.

He was instrumental in hunting down the intruder while upper management was roasting the factory security chief over a slow fire. Rising to supplant his unfortunate former superior, Barclay found himself in a position where his ruthlessness and thorough approach to information leaks earned him the notice of those on high. He has since become instrumental in running the



Terrel & Squib Internal Security, and is responsible for overseeing, defending, and maintaining the integrity of vital T&S facilities as well as the intellectual property (and secrets) of the company.

Del Cote and Barclay exist in a state of barely controlled animosity. The Head of Operations constantly tries to upstage the Security forces, “whose only job is to sit on their asses, munch on donuts and watch TV.” Barclay in turn acts like an Internal Investigations nightmare, loudly pointing out the number of failures, traitors and AWOL personnel among the operatives in the field. Despite the patently unequal working conditions imposed on the two branches, Barclay retains an upper hand due to Dr. Squib’s continuing faith in his abilities to keep T&S safe from illicit elements.

During the events of **Crusade of Ashes** and the attack on the Orpheus Group, Barclay, operating under Squib’s orders, personally arranges the NextWorld attack on Terrel & Squib. The hammer falls squarely on Lincoln Del Cote and the Operations branch of the company, and many of the company’s best projectors and field agents are killed in the attack. Del Cote himself is badly wounded, and barely manages to survive. Barclay’s Internal Security division, however, is barely touched by the NextWorld attack, maintaining the company’s integrity while gaining dominance and authority over the Operations branch. To the victor go the spoils.

LENORE CARPENTER, P.H.D. HEAD PARAPSYCHOLOGIST AND GHOSTBREAKER

Dr. Lenore Carpenter, age 45, is not a pleasant woman to be around. Once a successful psychologist with her own thriving suburban practice, she gave up everything to come on board with T&S, fascinated by the proof of ghosts — beings made up of nothing but the psyche — that they offered. Her early theorizing and observations were groundbreaking in developing ways to psychologically break low-Vitality ghosts. Although each ghostbreaking is different, her general techniques have met with broad success. She fought her way up to the top of the fledgling Parapsychology division of Terrel & Squib, Inc., and has remained on top, the brooding queen of ghostbreakers. Lenore has become shrill, pushy, and short-tempered, abandoning

her mortal clientele base to devote herself fully to the invasive exploration of the minds of ghosts.

There are many in her department who fear that Lenore’s mind is starting to twist. A recent mission captured a Spectre that identifies itself as “Shroudember” (see sidebar below). Although Spectres are notoriously difficult to hold successfully, Shroudember has proved to be relatively placid in captivity, and Lenore has been spending more and more of her time in seclusion with the Spectre.

According to her, she’s breaking the Spectre, charting new psychological ground by breaking the

SHROUDEMBER

Shroudember is one of the few Spectres kept in bondage at Terrel & Squib’s Heaven Re-education Facility, and is the pet project of Lenore Carpenter. She wants to break this Spectre just as she has broken the minds of dozens of ghosts, thereby opening the way to as-of-yet-unplumbed depths of parapsychology. What she finds every time she looks into the abyss, however, is a horror beyond imagining... much of which comes from what she finds herself doing in the presence of the Spectre.

Shroudember has the rare ability to manifest, and Lenore finds herself drawn to the monster despite the knowledge of what it is, and frequently has sex with the caged beast.

Shroudember is a powerful Spectre, with strength well beyond what Lenore and her fellow researchers have assessed. It appears as a young, physically attractive human male dressed entirely in gray, with empty black eyesockets where its eyes should be.

It exists primarily for its own pleasure and amusement, and has found a great deal of both in the custody of Terrel & Squib. Shroudember is a master seducer, and though the Spectre could escape, it has never tried to do so.

It sees its “work” with Miss Carpenter as being far more important.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Abilities: Awareness 4, Brawl 2, Empathy 4, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Intuition 3, Subterfuge 4, Etiquette 2, Enigmas 3

Nature: Bon Vivant

Spite: 9

Willpower: 9

Offensive Abilities: Hive-Mind, Lifeblock, Manifest, Contamination, Virus

will of a creature psychically bound to Oblivion. Those who are close to her, however, have noticed the marked change in her personality and her sallow, sickly appearance, and are beginning to wonder whether the opposite may in fact be true.

A secretary in Lenore's office-block recently heard the Head Parapsychologist express fears that she may be pregnant. While this is making the current rounds at the water cooler, no one has ever heard anything about Lenore being married, or even having a significant other of any kind.

LINCOLN DEL COTE

HEAD OF OPERATIONS

Lincoln Del Cote acts as head of Terrel & Squib's paramilitary forces, and theoretically has authority over the conduct of all field operations and all operatives — living, dead, and projected — who take part in them. This has brought him into jurisdictional conflicts with Arthur Barclay, and the two men hate one another intensely. Del Cote is, alternately, a career military man; a strategist, a con man, and a gifted performer all in one. And all of these traits come in handy for the job he does. Unlike Barclay, however, he is a projector (Arc-Light), and has a least-common-denominator understanding of the afterlife and its dangers. His drug problem, however, has begun to seriously spiral out of



control, and while he has a plentiful supply of Eidolon, his physical cravings are beginning to interfere with his work.

As per instructions handed down by the founding partners, Del Cote has kept his branch's intelligence-gathering capabilities at a minimum. He does this with a clear conscience, believing that — despite the casualties — Terrel & Squib, Inc. has the initiative in taming the here-after, and that until they know more about what they're dealing with, field research borders on irrelevant.

KUMAR MUNOZ

HEAD OF ENGINEERING AND PARATECHNOLOGY

A graduate from the University of Calcutta in India, Kumar Munoz received his Master's in engineering at the Michigan Institute of Technology on a full scholarship. He is a certified genius, and following his graduation, was heavily involved in research and development in the United States military-industrial complex. His innovations and numerous technology patents led to great acclaim and permanent U.S. citizenship. Munoz's career, already bright, looked as though it was on the verge of taking off toward even greater heights.

And then, two and half years ago, Kumar Munoz was killed crossing the street outside of his house.

It was no surprise that his ghost, still clinging to the world as a result of such promise left unfulfilled, was located by Terrel & Squib agents and returned to the Heaven facility. Rather than being broken, his spirit was elevated in Vitality and offered a chance to continue the work that he had left unaccomplished in life. Munoz happily agreed, and, following an acclimatization period in which he learned the limits and strengths of his new state of being, took over as one of the under-managers of the company's Engineering division.

As T&S, Inc. expanded into the realm of paratechnology, the necessity of having personnel on hand who could manipulate the ferroanimus material that was the active structural "ingredient" in paratech became evident. Munoz became particularly adept at this, and almost single-handedly pioneered the efficient mass-production methods that Terrel & Squib's Engineering department uses to create ghostshot ammunition. Almost overnight, Munoz became the most important component of the company's engineering of ghost-matter technology.

The two founding partners quickly had him elevated



to head of Paratechnology, and from there it was a short step to control of the entire Engineering division. Not all of the employees working under him know that Munoz is a ghost, although many suspect. He spends a great deal of time manifested, working among them, and behind his business facade secretly enjoys giving them a scare. Munoz rarely appears at meetings of the T&S executive, preferring to send a briefed underling as his representative.

There is a lingering tragedy to Kumar, however. His constant exposure to ferroanimus material — the blood of Spectres — has taken a toll on his soul. Although he was a spirit, exposure to the ichor has since turned him into a hue, something almost unprecedented in T&S's exploration of the hereafter. Munoz, always a driven man, has fought back against the dimming he feels in his soul, and has been known to tirelessly bury himself in his work for weeks at a time in order to recapture something of his old self. Whether or not this is helping (or harming him even further) remains to be seen.

NEIL ELLINGWOOD

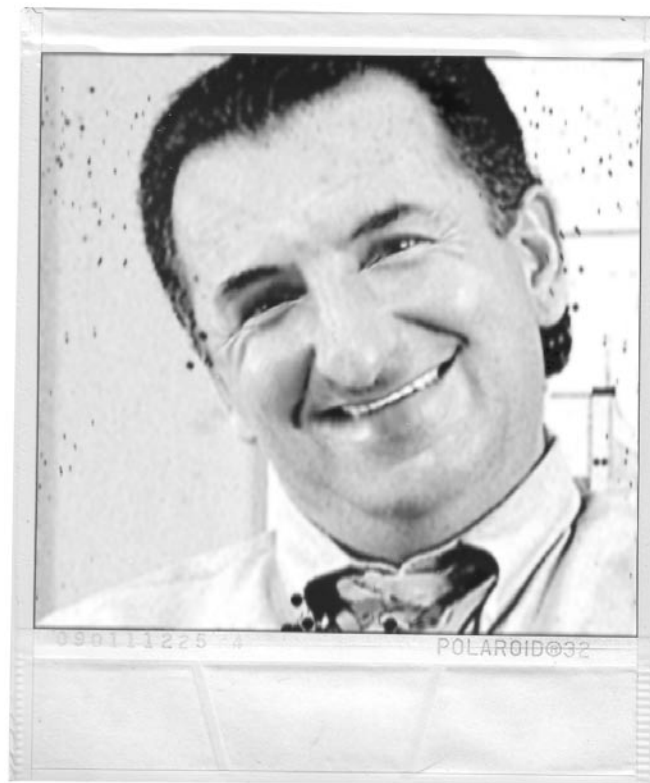
HEAD OF MARKETING
AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

More than anything else, Terrel & Squib relies upon good publicity in order to keep its Paranormal Investigations division alive. Word of mouth amongst

the rich and beautiful, names and suggestions slipped into a corporate dossier, thirty-second advertisement spots taken out on late-night TV — all of these require a master PR spin doctor to organize and conceptualize, and for T&S, Neil Ellingwood is that man. A graduate from Harvard with a master's degree in Business, Ellingwood had a longstanding and profitable relationship with financial wizard John Terrel years before Terrel asked him to head up the Marketing and PR department of T&S.

Ellingwood is damned good at his job, and as a dedicated workaholic has spent many fevered nights in his office attempting to polish the company's "no questions asked" policy. He has a close working relationship with the Head of Operations, Lincoln Del Cote, and is in fact the brains behind many of T&S's client-oriented field policies, which are based upon putting forward "the most credible image possible." Much of the scientific "process" that the field agents are supposed to follow, such as soil sampling and temperature readings, have in fact been devised by Terrel & Squib's Marketing division.

Recently, however, Ellingwood has begun to have second thoughts. Dr. Squib has always terrified him, but what scares him now is seeing what his old friend John Terrel is starting to turn into under Squib's influence. He's beginning to question the morality of



his organization, and his work is beginning to suffer at a time when Terrel & Squib, Inc. needs positive publicity more than ever before. It is clear that John Terrel and Lionel Squib won't let their company's PR image take such a dive... but what isn't clear is what they are going to do about Neil Ellingwood.

RAYNA ALMONTE

ASSISTANT-IN-CHARGE,
PHARMACEUTICALS

Rayna Almonte holds a disproportionate amount of power for someone of her standing in the company. Hand-picked by Lionel Squib to manage and oversee the company's pharmaceutical production after their initial shift into paranormal investigations, Almonte has kept the medicinal manufacturing lines flowing smoothly since that time. As legitimate, over-the-counter pharmaceutical products still account for some 32% of the company's profit margins, her successes — and therefore effectiveness — are obvious to everyone. She has a very hands-on approach to management, and makes frequent business trips to the Third World to talk to suppliers and growers.

As the Assistant-in-Charge of Terrel & Squib Pharmaceuticals, Almonte also has another responsibility: she manages, directs, and coordinates the

company's pigment production. Many of her trips are made to Turkey and Myanmar, where the *Kakos stromithicarum* plants employed by Terrel & Squib are grown. She likewise juggles the underground contacts that help get pigment out of the processing labs and onto the streets of North America. While the company's pigment production is strictly compartmentalized for security reasons, Rayna Almonte is one of the few who is entirely in the know, and she is the force that brings unity and efficiency to Terrel & Squib's manufacturing of black heroin.

Although outwardly friendly and sporting a great sense of humor, Almonte is entirely amoral at heart and is not afraid to have employees terminated should they learn too much about the project they're working on. Her job has made her rich, and she fears Squib enough to never betray the company's dark secrets.

One interesting feature is that, while Rayna Almonte has never shown any signs of spiritual possession, she does not show up properly on Kirlian footage. When caught on a Kirlian camera, her features are blurred beyond recognition. She appears normal on standard film and other media, and she's smiling in all of the company pictures. This disturbing feature has led many of her underlings to quietly give her the nickname "Seven Days."

Local Protest Turns Violent

By Scott Katinger

Associated Press Writer

BROOKLYN, NY — Two people are dead and at least fifteen remain hospitalized after a mass protest at a Brooklyn industrial complex turned violent. The protest, organized by a student Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), took place outside a facility owned by Terrel & Squib Investigations, in protest of that company's "projector" technology and supposed unethical treatment of the souls of the deceased.

The protest, which began peacefully yesterday at 3:00pm, turned violent in less than twenty minutes.

"I don't know what happened," said Doreen Katchmar, 22, of Fordham

University, one of the protest's organizers, who sustained minor injuries during the clash. "One minute we were chanting, then some people started throwing things, then they fired on us and it turned into a stampede."

Terrel & Squib security guards opened fire on the student protestors with rubber bullets after they began hurling rocks and bottles and attempted to storm the building.

Two students from Rockefeller University, whose names have not been released, were shot at point-blank range while attempting to rush T&S security personnel and died from their injuries shortly thereafter.

Terrel & Squib, Inc., which operates a paranormal investigations agency

based upon "projection science" which theoretically allows people to interact with spirits and ghosts, has come under recent public scrutiny with the revelation of its apparent enslavement and mistreatment of dead souls. Documents retrieved by Amnesty International detail company plans for an extensive program of "ghost-breaking" to deprive spirits of their free will.

The company's owners and founding partners, John Terrel and Lionel Squib, issued a joint statement today expressing regret at the loss of life that resulted from the "childlike recklessness" of the protestors, but defended their company's right to safeguard "dangerous materials" in its possession with force.

CHAPTER : 05

Terrel & Squib Operations

How do you think we fund this little operation?
We're not exactly the March of Dimes.

— Blade

"This is complete fuckin' bollocks! I am not going to say this! No way! Fuck! Off!" Reece enunciated the last two words with extra clarity as he swept the paper off the desk onto the floor.

Smoothly, Huntingdon swept the script up and laid it flat in front of Reece, who was now scowling with his arms crossed. "Listen, you are going to say this, because I'm *telling* you that you will. Two lines — that's all; say two lines and then you can fade away through a wall. And you get two days off. You can't lose. Okay, so it's a bit hokey, but..."

"A *bit* hokey!" interrupted Reece, struggling against the in-built obedience that months of programming had instilled. He leaned over the offending paper, reading, "You are meddling with things beyond your comprehension. Turn back before it's too late..." "It's like some wanky late-night, made-for-TV horror story! Nobody — I don't care what kind of pampered rich-kid tosser they are — is going to be scared by that!"

Huntingdon sighed. "Look, Dominic Tracey is paying a lot of money to be scared witless — and to bag himself a ghost. Now, as you know, there isn't going to be an actual 'bagged ghost' here; we wouldn't want to lose an important asset on an operation like this, would we? No, we're going to give Tracey normal ammunition, tell him its ghostshot, and let him loose. He'll track and shoot his spook, and the 'tech boys will provide the camera shots showing his target get wiped out. You don't have to worry — Greggs is the target for this one, he'll take the rounds. All you have to do is scare the bejeezus out of him, and give him the right impression. He *will* be scared — if you put the right feeling behind it... and look the part, of course..."

"Oh yeah — and that's another thing." Reece said stubbornly. "You want me to be manifesting — wassit called — stigmata? How are we going to pull that off? We can do ghostly ketchup now?"

"Uh, well, the SFX guys have come up with a Gauze Dye they think will work..."

Reece threw up his hands. "I swear — why do I get all these fuckin' babysitting jobs? Put me on a clean sweep, or even a bug hunt. I don't care! But don't ask me to do this. I. Won't. Do it." This last bit he said with convincing finality, but his programming told him otherwise...

Dominic Tracey, lead singer for The New Recruits, gripped his assault rifle tightly with sweaty palms, stalking noisily through

the abandoned power plant. Water dripped from the rusty girders, and pools had gathered on the floor around the disused machinery. "This is fucking great!" he thought. "Wait'll the guys hear about this!"



Half a block away from the power plant, five Asian men in dark clothing checked and re-checked their weapons. Two had Uzis for suppressive fire, two had automatic pistols, and the last had an assault rifle. He also wore a pair of what resembled night-vision goggles, pushed up on his forehead.

"Now remember," said the man with the goggles, "we need to move quickly. We get in there, kill any people we see, grab the tech, and get out, avoiding any spooks we come across. Clear?"

The group had gone over and over the drill many times over the last two days — ever since they had heard of this operation in such a remote location. An operation involving a small team of T&S agents, some retarded pop-singer, and a great deal of tech that could prove useful to their boss, Li-Hen. The T&S informant had proved very useful so far...



SFX Tech Abbot sat hidden in an old office, surrounded by his circuit boards and a bank of carefully labelled switches. A dozen video monitors were stacked nearby, showing the locations of the four-strong team in pre-defined locations throughout the plant. One screen showed Reece sitting glumly, awaiting his cue. "Poor schmuck," thought Abbot. "Dies in some war nobody wanted, and then gets press-ganged into performing for a dick with more money than sense. Kinda makes me glad to be alive..."

Abbot watched Tracey's slow and noisy progress through the darkness. As the rock star reached a pre-defined point between two large machines on the shop floor, Abbot flicked a switch on his console, and an echoing clank rang through the large open space around Tracey.



"Fuck!" shouted Tracey, swinging his gun around left and right, the light attached to the barrel sending a beam of light dancing across the machinery surrounding him. "Must be close now," he thought. "Come on!" he sang under his breath.

Ahead of Tracey, an apparition rose, seemingly out of a huge capacitor lying dormant at one end of the room. The singer watched in awe, completely forgetting the gun in his hands. Glowing strands grew out of thin air, forming a translucent humanoid shape — with red blotches on its hands and feet.

As Reece pulled the threads into a loose approximation of his usual solid gauze appearance, he glanced to one side at the words helpfully stuck to the back of a pillar out of Tracey's sight. Turning to the quivering rock star, Reece spoke in a hollow, disinterested voice: "You are meddling with things that..."

He didn't get any more out before the huge loading door behind Tracey began rumbling to one side. "What the fuck?" He thought, "This wasn't in the script..." His eyes widened as five men scrambled through the door when the gap was big enough, one of them letting loose a spray of automatic fire toward Reece and Tracey.

Tracey, hearing the loud rumble behind him, had half-turned — not wanting to let the ghost ahead of him out of his sight — just in time to take two 9mm bullets through the chest. He dropped to the ground with a grunt and began the laborious task of trying to keep his lungs full of air.

Looking up and seeing a ghost hovering near to the body of Dominic Tracey, the leader shouted a warning in Mandarin to the other attackers before leading the group off to one side, heading for the tech booth manned by Abbot.



Seeing the client brought down in a hail of gunfire, Abbot panicked momentarily about insurance bills, legal costs, and all manner of lawsuits being brought against T&S. He was briefly comforted when he remembered the massive pile of waivers that Tracey had signed, before remembering the five-strong assault team that were making their way through the plant toward him. He began to wish that ghosts could wear headset communicators...

"These chinks chose the wrong spook to mess around with," thought Reece. He knew that the others on his team would be making their way toward the commotion, but spread out as they were in this labyrinthine construction, it would be at least a minute before his closest ally would be any help at all. So it was up to him.

Pushing his being forward into the material world, Reece felt air resistance, and his running footsteps threw up dust and water as his now-solid body raced toward the attackers. Anger welled up inside him, and he felt his arms bulge and swell as he called upon his rage to boost his physical strength. His empty eye socket began spouting blood, and he felt the worm-like tentacle feel its way out, testing the air as it emerged.

Now over eight feet tall, monstrously built, and horribly, horrendously solid, Reece was the last ghost in the world that any assault force would want to encounter in a dark power plant at night. He rounded the corner to see the five attackers racing through a clear area toward a set of stairs. "Hey, fuckers!" Reece shouted, startling the attackers. "Come an' 'ave a go, if ya fink yer 'ard enough!"

The gunmen regarded him with stark terror, and, high on anger, Reece charged...





TERREL and SQUIB OPERATIONS

This chapter provides some sample operations for the Storyteller to use in his Terrel & Squib campaign. Also described are various types of operations that can serve as models for your own stories.

Entries are formatted such that the player-specific information is first, and then one (and sometimes two) possible explanation follows to kick-start the Storyteller's imagination.

The operation information that is provided to the players is intentionally limited and vague, as T&S does its best to cut costs and research time by sending a team in "blind." Only the most basic information is provided to the team — essentially a boiled-down transcript of the information provided by the client in the first place. The team is expected to complete their operation objectives as quickly as possible, with the minimum of fuss and expense.

With little information, each team is required to provide a professional service and be on their best behaviour at all times. The T&S clientele are usually very visible to the media, and it is not unusual for a TV crew to get wind of that fact that T&S has been recruited for a job, and turn up at the most inopportune moments. Just in case there are reporters or cameras nearby, all teams are required to act professionally and (if possible) carry out their duties with an impressive flourish.

The Secondary Objectives for each operation (if any) are usually kept within the company. The clients aren't made aware of the Secondary Objectives — which in some cases override the stated Mission. If a Secondary Objective contradicts the Mission briefing, the Secondary perversely take priority...

While the company provides very little information to the teams, they do supply equipment, personnel, and other resources.

OPERATION: BRIGHT LIGHT

TEAM BRIEFING

Target: Mayfair DeLaney

Location: Beverly Hills

Mission: Exorcise the DeLaney child of the ghost that is currently making her behave strangely.

Available Resources: Mobile Command Unit, parapsychologist, Kirlian goggles, Labyrinth Cage

Secondary Objectives: Capture and return with the ghost(s) responsible. Ensure that the DeLaneys mention

Terrel & Squib, Inc. in any subsequent interviews with the media.

Storyteller Information: Mayfair is a fourteen-year-old girl with rich parents that provide for her every material need, but neglect her emotional ones. She has recently started smoking and experimenting with drugs, has been caught shoplifting several times, and has several boyfriends at any one time. Mayfair is always being sent home from school for unruly behavior, and is almost constantly grounded by her parents. She flaunts and ignores this confinement as best she can, using the tree outside her third floor window to climb down and escape.

Her parents are actors Enrique DeLaney, a little-known action star (his best-known movie is the totally obscure all-action flick "Fast Target" with Chuck Norris), and Katherine Powell, who is mostly famous for her willingness to disrobe if the role demands it. They are both unwilling to believe that their little angel could be behaving badly because she is unhappy or has been badly raised. Therefore, they accept Mayfair's supernatural excuse for her behavior hook, line and sinker and immediately call in Terrel & Squib.

Mundane Scenario: Mayfair is just a belligerent teenager that is making trouble for her parents by pretending to be possessed in order to get away with being horrible and naughty. Exorcising the girl in this





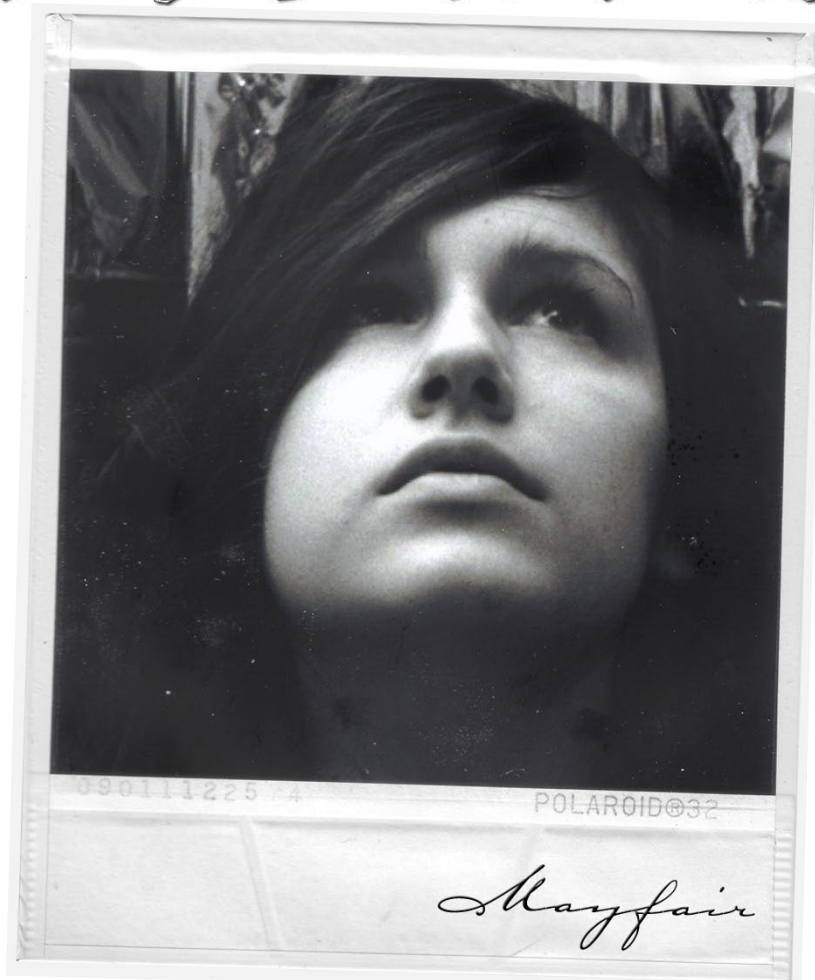
situation will cause her psychological damage; she will become incredibly confused about whether or not she is still pretending, and eventually develop a split personality. The players should become aware of this, although T&S will demand that they carry on and make it at least look like they have exorcised her; the fee is only payable once the exorcism is completed.

Paranormal Scenario: Joseph Wellington, an ex-teacher who died after throwing himself off the roof of the main building of Mayfair's school, is haunting her. Mayfair accused Wellington of sexually abusing her (all he did was tell her off for wearing revealing low-cut tops at school — this was taken by the board to mean that he was constantly staring at her). He lost his job, the respect of his colleagues and his wife over the whole affair. Decimated by the accusation, he tried to end it all... but it didn't end. He found that he was still aware of being at the school, and that he could enter the bodies of whomever he wanted. He isn't totally aware of why and how he can do this, and doesn't have the wherewithal to question it too closely. All he knows is that he can now make the little bitch pay.

Wellington is currently turning Mayfair into the slut he believes her to be, forcing her to interact with boys in ways she wasn't before (although he is finding that he doesn't have to try that hard to get her to do these things). He has also been making her shoplift, and take up smoking and drugs. He is clever enough to

make sure that she always gets caught at these activities.

While the Storyteller is free to create whatever tethers best fit the campaign (providing, of course, that the players attempt to sever Wellington's tethers), one of them should certainly involve clearing his name.



Joseph Wellington: Echo-class ghost

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Leadership 3, Subterfuge 2, Drive 1, Etiquette 1, Firearms 2, Academics 3, Computer 2, Linguistics 1, Politics 1, Science 1

Shade: Skinrider

Lament: Spirit

Nature: Pedagogue

Willpower: 6 (8 with all tethers resolved)

Vitality: 4 (6 with all tethers resolved)

Spite: 4

Offensive Abilities: Puppetry, Claws, Man-of-War, Martyred



OPERATION: MACBETH

Team Briefing

Target: “Jonesy”

Location: LaGrange Country Home

Mission: Find the ghost of one “Jonesy,” a recently deceased Great Dane, and send him on to his Final Reward.

Available Resources: Mobile Command Unit, parapsychologist, Kirlian goggles, Mobile Containment Cage

Secondary Objectives: Tell the client that the mission is complete, and return the canine ghost to HQ for further research. Ghosts of animals that remain in the here-after for extended periods of time are still a rarity, and could possibly be broken into excellent trackers.

Storyteller Information: Jonesy had a terrible hit-and-run encounter with a grounds-cart on the estate of the latest “Bright Young Thing,” Ophelia Swails. Jonesy was the dog that she grew up with all her life, and she loved him dearly. After his death (caused by her less-than-attentive and very drunk father), she was devastated. When strange things began happening around the home, she was convinced that Jonesy had come back to look after and protect her. But when her nephew, Fogway — a two-year-old toddler — was frightened after loud barking was heard in the hallway, and ran away only to fall down a flight of stairs, it was decided that something had to be done. (Little Fogway was fine, just shaken up mightily by the whole thing.) Terrell & Squib Investigations was called in to deal with the beloved pet’s residual presence.

Ophelia will be away for the duration of the operation — she is on tour, promoting her latest single “When You Give Everything.” It is set to be next week’s No.1.

Mundane Scenario: One of the household staff has been stealing small knick-knacks from the home to sell on the “Ophelia Mementos” black-market. Small things have gone missing, and strange noises at night are all her doing. She was caught pocketing a statuette by little Fogway, and knowing about Ophelia’s belief in Jonesy’s ghost, barked loudly at the toddler to frighten him off.

Paranormal scenario: Jonesy is an over-protective guardian spirit who follows Ophelia wherever she goes within the house. He is afraid of the outdoors (remembering the pain of being run over), and remains behind wailing mournfully when she leaves (Jonesy is the animal equivalent of a Banshee). Jonesy pads around the house after his mistress, always ready to fight off any attackers (precious few of whom are actually present).

Little Fogway was the victim of a cruel practical joke by one of the household staff, who had been scaring

“Jonesy”

Blip-class animal ghost

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Empathy 3, Intimidation 2

Nature: Defender

Shade: Banshee

Lament: Spirit

Willpower: 5

Vitality: 3

Spite: 0

Offensive Abilities: Wail (Jonesy instinctively uses up to two-Vitality manifestations to soothe Ophelia or savagely bark at those who might harm her), bite for 5 dice lethal damage

him with stories about ghost dogs, and leapt out from behind a door to scare the living daylights out of him at one point, causing his accident.

Jonesy himself is harmless unless Ophelia is in danger. Since his death, he has simply become sad and lonely. Should the players wish to defy the orders of the higher-ups at T&S, they should do their utmost to show Jonesy that they are protecting his mistress in his stead, thus removing his only reason to remain.

OPERATION: UNBINDING

Team Briefing

Target: Varies

Location: Varies

Mission: Varies.

Available Resources: None.

Secondary Objectives: Keep activities away from the eyes of the media.

Storyteller Information: The Unbinding operations are basically secondary operations handed out to teams (or individuals within a team) when they are traveling. Typically, an Unbinding operation involves a simple task that may not make much sense to the T&S employee, and almost always has to do with breaking the tethers of a captured ghost, in order to increase the Vitality (and thus power and abilities) of the ghost. T&S uses these missions to achieve goals that don’t warrant sending an entire team out to complete.

Below are some examples of this type of operation (any missions longer or more involved than these quick



and easy “vignettes” are worthy of their own unique operation code):

- Travel to the Boulevard Cemetery in San Francisco, and bring back to HQ a photograph of the headstone of Harold Greyjoy.
- Visit 1642 Ash & Newbury, and tell Mrs. Sandra Johanssen that her husband is dead.
- Return the last will and testament of Bernard Gregory to HQ. It is held in a safe in the offices of Hammond, Jungen & York, Attorneys at Law.
- Go to 765 Germaine Street, and kill the pet cat.
- Locate Francis Reading on the local university campus, and ensure that he attends his mother’s 60th birthday celebration.
- Ensure that the house at 1923 Newbury Heights is declared derelict.
- Prevent flight 564J bound for Cleveland from taking off.

OPERATION: SPOTLIGHT

Team Briefing

Target: Varies

Location: Varies

Mission: Varies.

Available Resources: Usually none

Secondary Objectives: Mention Terrel & Squib’s contact details as often as possible.

Storyteller Information: The Spotlight series of operations all involve the media. Whether the operation at hand involves the press and their local celebrities, the big name talk shows, or simply a horror movie looking for a special effect that their SFX guys can’t produce cheaply, then a Spotlight operation is called for. When the Spotlight is on, the most photogenic team is sent out to deal with it.

Spotlight operations are all about presence, and making T&S look as good as possible to as many people as possible. Operatives who are coarse, disheveled, or (after a particularly harrowing mission) covered in blood with ripped and torn clothing are generally told to stay away from cameras. Some teams have a “publicity officer” (usually the team’s front man) whose job is to deal with the media. The front man is usually the most charismatic and best-looking member, although they are not always the operation’s leader for the team.

The standing orders for any Spotlight are to mention the T&S web-site address at minimum, and any other T&S contact details, in hopes of gaining free publicity.

Here are a few sample Spotlight Operations:

- After a successful operation involving just about any celebrity, the media are bound to get involved. A Spotlight is usually assigned to a team dealing with the rich and famous, just to cover the eventuality.
- The Industrial Luminescence special effects firm needs a quick fix for a problem with controlling an animatronic puppet. A team with a Poltergeist or Haunter is needed to move the puppet in a realistic fashion. Ensure that Terrel & Squib, Inc. is mentioned in the film’s final credits.
- “The Tonite! Tonite! Show”, hosted by Todd Cole (see **Shadow Games**, page 49), is after a “team’s eye view” of this new ghost-busting phenomenon. This is an excellent opportunity to get prime-time coverage. An Orpheus Group crucible may also be in attendance.
- A new TV show, “Modern Ghostbusters” wants to send a reporter to tag along with a team while they are out on operations. The reporter is to be looked after and babysat while the team performs its other duties. Needless to say, no failures or mistakes will be tolerated in front of the reporter.
- As thanks for T&S’s aid in OPERATION: JUMPING JACK, a famous celebrity has invited the team to one of his high-brow parties. This is a chance to get noticed by other famous celebrities and agents, making potential contacts for future work. The team must be on their best behavior.

OPERATION: CLEAN SWEEP

Team Briefing

Target: Residual Ghosts

Location: Seven Pines Community Care Home

Mission: Capture any ghosts at the location and return to main HQ.

Available Resources: Small, handheld research units only. Absolutely no firearms.

Secondary Objectives: Remain unseen by all officials and bystanders; no manifested personnel or obvious equipment.

Storyteller Information: The Clean Sweep operations are fairly standard practice for T&S; the only thing that changes is the location. After any tragedy in which several people have died quickly (or, if things have been quiet at the office, the local hospital’s emergency ward), a team is sent in to remove any residual ghosts and return them to HQ for breaking (although, depending on their moral outlook, the team may not be told what will happen



to the ghosts once they are returned). These are routine operations, and usually turn up one or two (if any) spirits who have yet to pass on. The ghosts generally don't make much of a fuss, being confused and disorientated from having recently died, and these are easy missions to lull the players into a false sense of security.

This operation is different, however. Storytellers may want to run one or two of the basic Clean Sweep missions before springing this one on the hapless players:

- A few hours ago, a small fire at the Seven Pines Community Care Home caused eleven of the residents to die of smoke inhalation. The fire caused very little actual damage, but the smoke spread throughout the upper floor, and many of the elderly people there succumbed to the fumes.

All of the deceased residents have become hues, due to large amounts of pigment in their bloodstreams (see below). Since their deaths, a Spectre (or several, whatever is necessary to give the players a challenge) has discovered the ghosts and carted off two of them for its own purposes. The remaining ghosts are in hiding — afraid for their “lives” and completely confused by what has happened (even while alive, they wouldn't be considered very “corpus mentus”).

The players face several challenges: getting the old ghosts to come with them (the dead residents will not want to leave their homes, even when they are convinced that they are actually dead — they want to remain among their friends); beating the residents into submission if they can't convince them to leave willingly; fending off the Spectre(s), who want to keep hold of this contained little feast; and accomplish all of this without alerting the living world that anything is amiss.

In order to make the operation even more challenging, the storyteller could throw in an Orpheus Group crucible who have been sent to find Grandpa Bill Wellesley, one of the decedents, and learn where he kept his life savings before sending him on to his final reward...

There is also the mystery of why all of these hues have all been created at the same time. Answer: The residents of the care home have all been drugged with pigment. A rogue Spectre is embarking on an early Pale Rider endeavor (see **Shades of Gray**) and is attempting to harvest enough souls to form a small hive of its own. To this end, it has possessed a careworker at the facility and forced her to feed pigment to the residents (in their food and medication) before setting the building on fire.

This Spectre should be created by the Storyteller to give the players a challenge, or utilize a long-standing nemesis if the players have such a Spectral enemy.

OPERATION: FLASH BANG

Team Briefing

Target: Varies

Location: Varies

Mission: Convince everyone present (home owners and the media) that the location is haunted.

Available Resources: Mobile Command Unit, SFX Gear, Broken Ghosts

Secondary Objectives: Ensure that no harm comes to the client or their guests.

Storyteller Information: The Flash Bang series of operations is T&S's answer to false alarms and staged events. A team is called in to convince onlookers and bystanders that the location specified in the mission briefing is haunted. There are many reasons why someone might want this to happen — from giving a really convincing Halloween party, to raising money from amateur ghost busters who want to stay at your “haunted hotel.” Essentially, the team is called in to project and use their ghostly powers to give a good show to the client's guests.

The standard “package” includes making sure that no one present is injured during the ghostly light show. Other than that, the client is free to suggest various ways that the team's Horrors might be used (during the team consultation prior to the event). T&S operatives are brought in to speak with the client, and to work as closely as possible with them in order to provide the best “haunting” available. The package covers a single night, beyond which the client must pay extra.

Of course, many complications could arise:

- The overall Horror usage, even though the “show” consists primarily of low-Vitality expenditures, attracts the attention of a nearby Spectre.

- A weak-hearted guest suffers a stroke during a particularly convincing display, possibly becoming a ghost or hue if they die.

- Some of the paratech malfunctions, injuring or killing one or more witnesses.

- NextWorld has been hired to assassinate one of the guests at the event.

- Orpheus Group has been hired by one of the guests to prove or disprove the client's claims.

- T&S has been hired to haunt or simply sabotage a location in order to shut it down (for safety reasons of course). Orpheus Group is called in to “exorcise” the T&S ghosts.



OPERATION: MOST DANGEROUS GAME

T e a m B r i e f i n g

Target: Varies

Location: T&S secured location.

Mission: Guide and protect client(s) while they track and “kill” a “rogue” spirit.

Available Resources: Kirlian Cameras, Kirlian Goggles, Ghost-shot ammo, SFX Gear

Secondary Objectives: Put on a good show for the client. Make them believe that they are in real danger. Ensure that no permanent harm comes to the client.

Storyteller Information: The Most Dangerous Game operations are generally considered the lowest of the low for any team. T&S employees lovingly refer to them “Babysitting Detail.”

MDG operations occur when a well paying client has requested to take part in a “ghost hunt.” Terrel & Squib, Inc. arms the client, turns him loose in a “haunted” environment with a small team including at least one ghost (depending on how much the client is paying), and provides “clean-up duties” afterward.

Most of the time, the “ghostshot ammo” given to the client is made of black rubber, and the “ghost” is one of the team members, who pretends to be destroyed by the bullets (generally by going incorporeal) after being stalked by the client.

Sometimes, however, if the client is particularly important or knowledgeable, T&S will provide a broken ghost, a (weak) trapped Spectre, or a blip or drone to let the client loose on. The team’s function is to give the client the experience he has paid for, and ensure his relative safety. Small injuries are fine, and all add to the

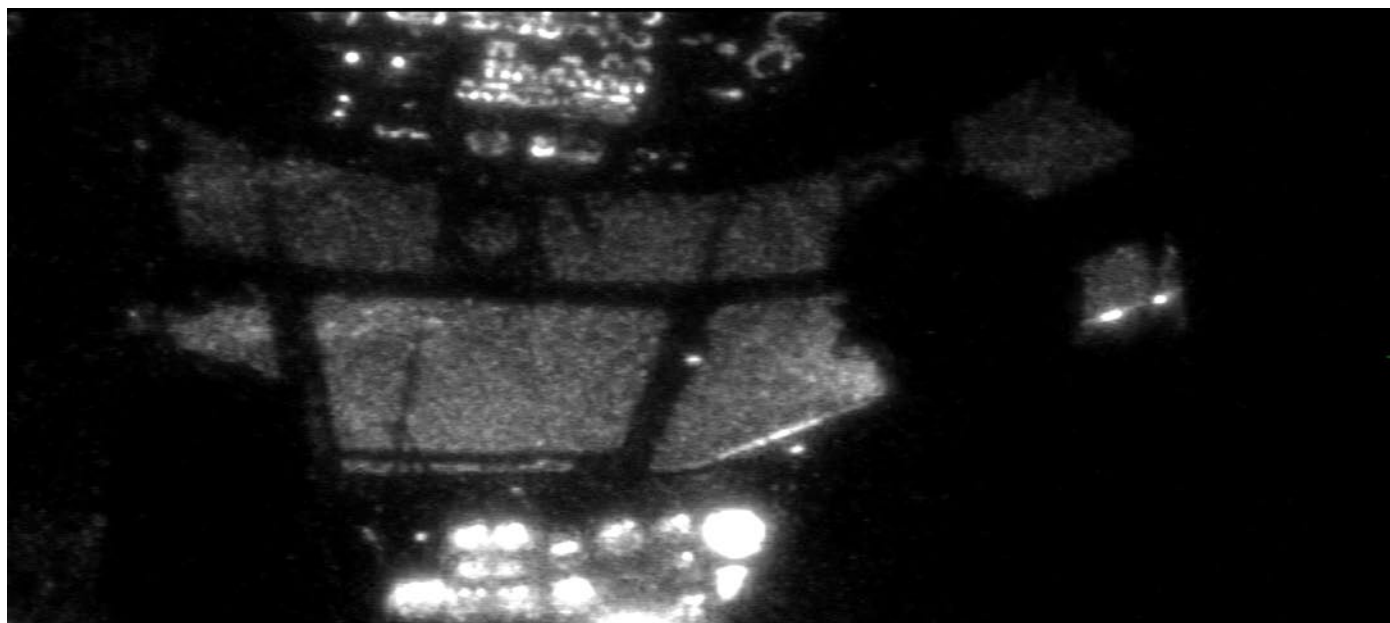
experience, but death or dismemberment is a definite no-no.

Part of this operation might well include rounding up a weak ghost or two for destruction in the first place. An SFX team will be assigned to the operation to make things look good for the client, and provide the “complete ghost-hunting experience” (blood dripping off walls, cold spots in the “arena,” ghostly voices moaning from all directions, and similar pop-culture ghost phenomena). The “arena” will be wired well in advance to produce these effects. The SFX team also films the experience in its entirety; a DVD recording (edited to hide any evidence of duplicity) is provided to the client as a standard part of the package.

Clients come from all walks of life, and might include:

- A celebrity shock-rocker, pop idol, or actor-of-the-moment;
- Extreme sports personalities looking for the next-big-thrill;
- Journalists seeking a new scoop for a Features piece or a series on ghost phenomena;
- Eccentric businessman hoping for an interesting story to tell at the next cocktail party;
- Independent ghost-hunters seeking to steal T&S technology or learn their methods.

Many complications can arise to make the team’s job that much more difficult, such as a Broken Ghost overcoming his programming and attacking the team or SFX personnel; a captured Spectre sending a distress call via the Hive-Mind, leading to a multi-Spectre attack, in which the team needs to hold out for reinforcements while protecting their client; or the client himself turning on the team (for example, a NextWorld operative after T&S technology).



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