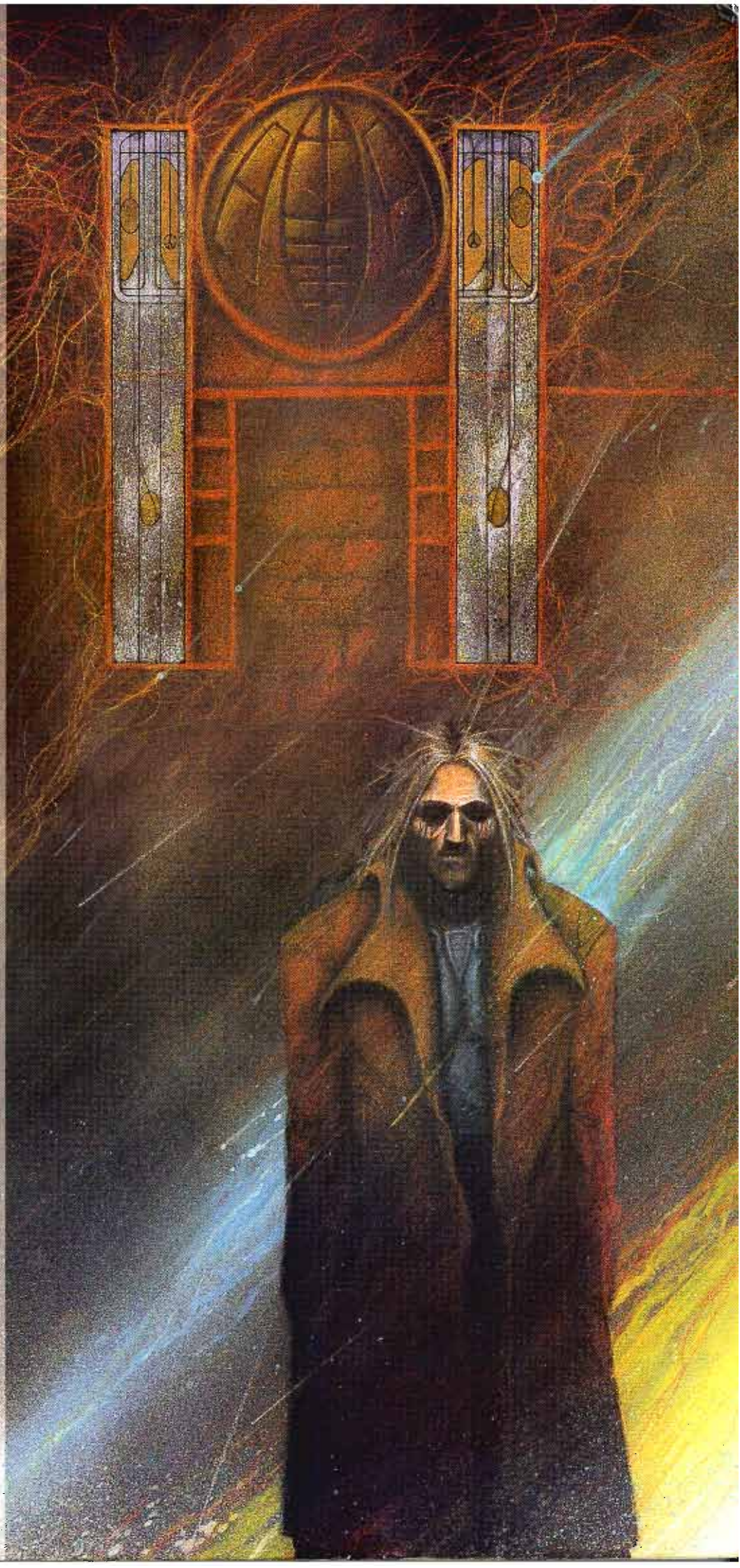
S·L·A

INDUSTRIES



NIGHTFALL GAMES

The rain wept sorrowfully on the empty streets, thrown down by the dark brows of sudden storm clouds. Rain drops gathered on the ground like a sea of tears, so tranquil until thrown apart by stumbling boots. Rain mixed with the tears of terror.

Why here? Why now? The girl strung her thoughts on fragile threads of consciousness, her legs giving way to fatigue. One more hopeless breath before retiring to a nearby alleyway.

The rain trickled into the narrow space. Drenched and shivering, the girl huddled between clusters of overflowing bins.

As sudden as the turn of events, panic struck her again. Does it have to end like this? The girl's heart gave out and crying was her only saviour, her hands covering her face, anything to take this place away.

"You knew I'd come..."

"No." she whispered, her eyes whipped to the end of the alleyway. The figure stood, drenched in rain, his coat dragged down, oblivious to the pelting shower from the open street.

"... you've known it all along."

Gradually the rain sliding down his face turned red as blood filled tears fell from cold white eyes.

The girl began to scream as he walked into the cover of her shelter and knelt before her.

"Please don't cry. This... shall be a mercy killing. Not even all the bitterness in this world... is enough for your eyes." His hand caressed her head.

Then they were gone.

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NIGHTFALL GAMES

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Second Printing

DISCLAIMER

SLA Industries is a game of horror in the World of Progress. Some of the concepts introduced in this game are not recommended for young people. We make no attempt to water down the horror inherent in this setting and recommend this game for mature gamers. Nightfall Games cannot be held responsible for anyone who plays this game in a dangerous manner and causes harm to themselves or others. Remember that this is only a game. Views portrayed in this game do not necessarily correspond with the views of Nightfall Games.

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S·L·A INDUSTRIES

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C O M P R E H E N S I O N

"What is SLA Industries? The World of Progress? Well, that all depends on what I say and what I'm allowed to say. If you've been an operative as long as I have then you'd have seen a lot of horrible and questionable things in your time. When you join SLA, you are naive, you've watched the television and you think it's all gonna be great. That's right, it's all gonna be fine, you'll just do your job, get paid, get rich then retire. That's what I thought all those years ago. I was so wrong, I didn't know what I'd bargained for. You've gotta work hard in SLA Industries, believe it or not you've gotta risk your life if you want to get ahead. When you're working for SLA Industries, you're in with the monsters, all kinds of humans, Stormers, you name it, you're working with it and just sometimes you're killin' it. Well, that's the way I see it. I wouldn't really advise anyone to join SLA Industries, but they still do, by the thousands.

"Listen, the World of Progress is a ruthless place and everyone's poor and expendable. I've been workin' for SLA Industries for 30 years and I still haven't enough credit to retire.

"I love this job."

Cobalt Ebon Investigator (Cloak Division), S.C.L. 2A, Age 52.

"Yeah, I suppose SLA Industries is alright, y'know, I mean their TeeVee's great y'know. I think they're like, really big, I mean, they own everything, right? Yeah, everything, especially all the TeeVee stations I watch. It's great, they never end, ever. I'd never get a job, even if you paid me, I'd miss all my favourite programmes. Besides, it's safer at home in front of the TeeVee watchin' Slaughterhouse Six, Alien Sex Channel an' Captain Contract insteada out there on the street where it's really happenin'.

"I mean, who needs it apart from the viewer?"

Jack Peters (24) Downtown Mort Civilian (Unemployed).

"I don't care what kinda hype SLA Industries has filled you with. It's all crap, right? They're all mad, twisted bastards. All these poor citizens you see around are all deceived. All the unemployment, violence and pollution in the World of Progress is caused by SLA Industries. They're not saving us, they're killing us. Why can't people see that? It's all that mind washing propaganda crap on television, people can't think straight and the poor suckers go nuts and start killing each other like the TeeVee stars, I gotta bust the saps.

"Yeah, like thanks SLA Industries."

Todd Halbrook (23) Monarch Law Officer, Downtown Sector 3.

"I do a job like any other Joe. sure, the World of Progress is messed up an' stuff, who cares? The only thing you can do is use it for your own purposes. Don't be fooled by all that Downtown Phoenix crap, just go with the flow man. Be a SLA operative and forget your fellow man 'cause he's probably already forgotten you."

'Sneaky Pete' (22) Human Scout, D.R. Squad, S.C.L. 9A.

"There is too much truth in the World of Progress to be ignored. The truth that SLA Industries hides so well is the source of great knowledge and advancement. I sense that such information I seek is the key to unlock the misery that has grasped the last 900 years of our existence. With cunning, secrecy and enough foresight, I can discover the very essence of my life, without risking it from SLA Industries itself."

'Shine' (21) Ebon Scout, S.C.L. 9.

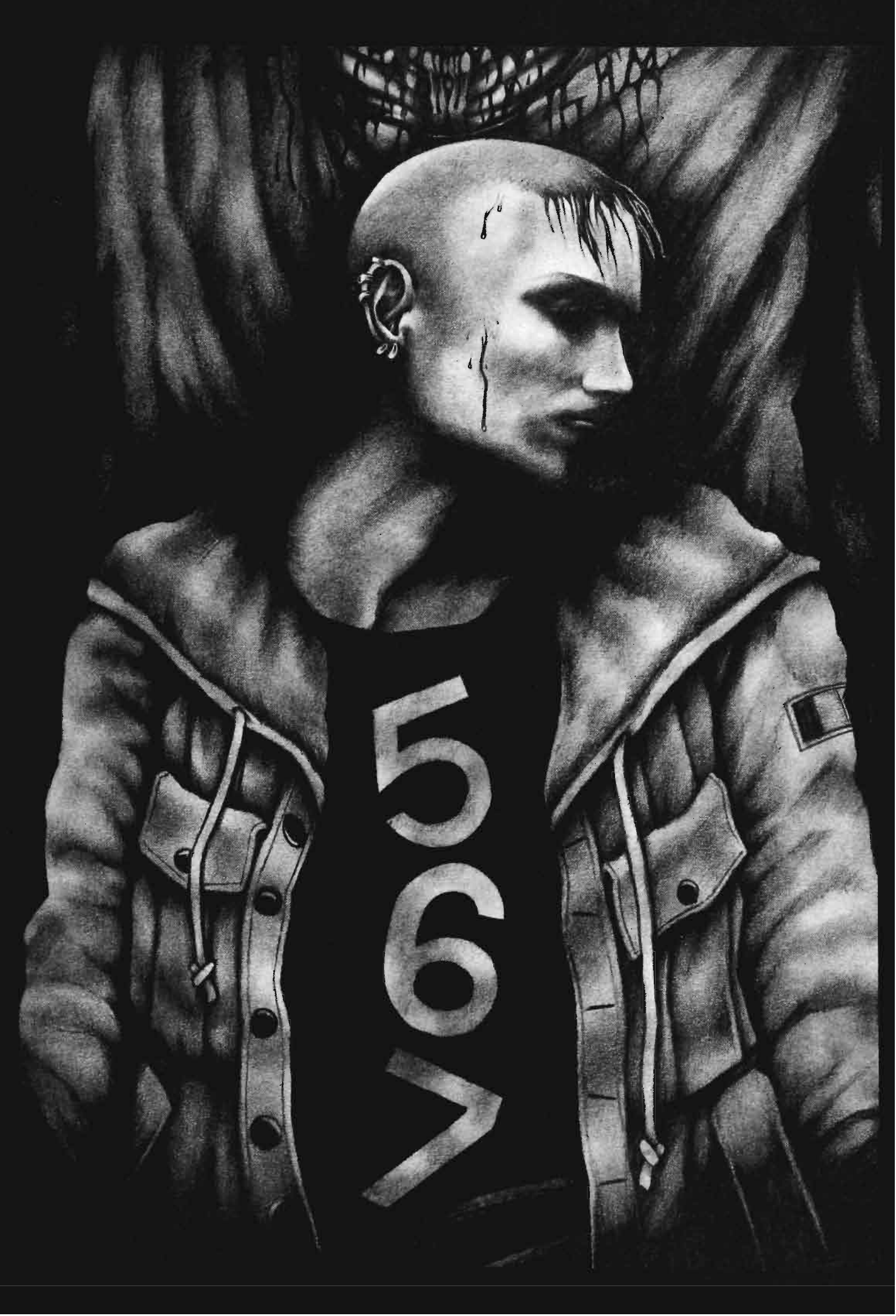
There are many differing philosophies in SLA Industries. What you believe is very important to your survival. In the World of Progress, SLA Industries has put the lid on a great many mysteries. Some are dangerous and unpleasant, others are enlightening and educational.

Then there are some that are maddening. This is the truth and essence of SLA Industries itself. It is a universe of tension, trauma and teetering on the brink of explosion. Some inquisitive individuals have come close to this great and powerful discovery, many of them have died without reason and a few, disappeared without trace, though all are gone before the truth can be broadcast to the World of Progress. SLA Industries has made sure of that.

SLA Industries wants to last forever.

With such a strange and unusual background, many horrors and dark misgivings of human natures evolve into this twisted and nihilistic society. We have found that this game works best to stage horrors of a depth that is new to role–playing. The planet Mort is an infallible setting for show–casing some of the darker sides (not necessarily aggressive) of our own human natures.

SLA Industries immerses characters in a world that enhances emotions of all kinds, hopes, dreams and nightmares, to build and destroy. SLA Industries is of personal experiences, it is a dark, deep pool that reflects the things that are with us all the way to our death –maybe even after that– and in this, it can be an almost unparalleled and atmospheric horror game.


V65

T E R M I N O L O G Y

T H E W O R L D O F P R O G R E S S

SLA Industries is progress personified. A ruthless company that will use any means within it's grasp to remain the supreme power and corporation in the World of Progress. SLA Industries is a society unto itself, it sells everything from militarised armament to civilian foodstuffs, but most importantly, SLA Industries sells lifestyles, it teaches the public what to do and think under an overwhelming barrage of never ending T.V. media hype that spans the length and breadth of the World of Progress. The oppressive regime of a company is owned and headed by the ultimate businessman, Mr. Slayer.

M R . S L A Y E R

The key figure and idol of the World of Progress, Mr. Slayer is the powerful and eternal head of SLA Industries. A man of brutal actions and subtle intentions. He is the merciless and deceptive overseer that all corporate businessmen strive to be. Mr. Slayer never rests from the unceasing progression of his encompassing organisation. The World of Progress regards him as the ultimate driving force of Industry.

T H E O P P O S I T I O N

SLA Industries is constantly threatened by the upsurge of corporate rivals and political subversives that aim to overthrow SLA Industries from it's pedestal of power so as they might take the position of the Suppressor Power. There are two major companies that pose a dangerous threat to SLA Industries existence, the unseen and terrorist enemy Dark Night Industries and the brutal savage Powersuit force, Thresher Incorporated.

M O R T

SLA Industries' main industrial world, a seething mass of overpopulated cities, overspilling production factories, frantic and furious media channels and a deluge of deception, glamour, youth culture and corruption. A frightening and futuristic society, unnerving like our own.

SLA INDUSTRIES IS A PROMISING NIGHTMARE...

MORT – FATHER FIGURE TO THE WORLD OF PROGRESS

People once said that clouds had a silver lining, but here on our industrial Utopia we call Mort, as aptly as it is called, has clouds with filthy linings draped upon the sky by SLA Industries' industrial waste facilities. Perhaps they intend to build us a better future, perhaps they think they know our humble needs and how to satisfy them.

Perhaps SLA Industries thinks we're masochists, since we ask for such punishment. From days of darkness into nights of darker darkness, Downtown's eyes and hearts go square in front of television screens, silver buckets filled with visual trash for SLA Industries made-to-measure public.

Outside, rain pours constantly like tears from a sorrowful god and, as his sadness reaches the gangplanks of our seedy doorsteps, it stinks from the sweaty collars of corporates coming home from a long day at hell's own office and the cruel blessing of bloodshed of media Contract Killers for the needs of an unsatiable and uncaring audience.

Far from the shelter of our 'protected' environment, the devil has sold out and the deep blue sea reduced to toxicated canals and sewers while between, the souls of fallen minds feed on the bodies of the weak in unexplained Cannibal Sectors.

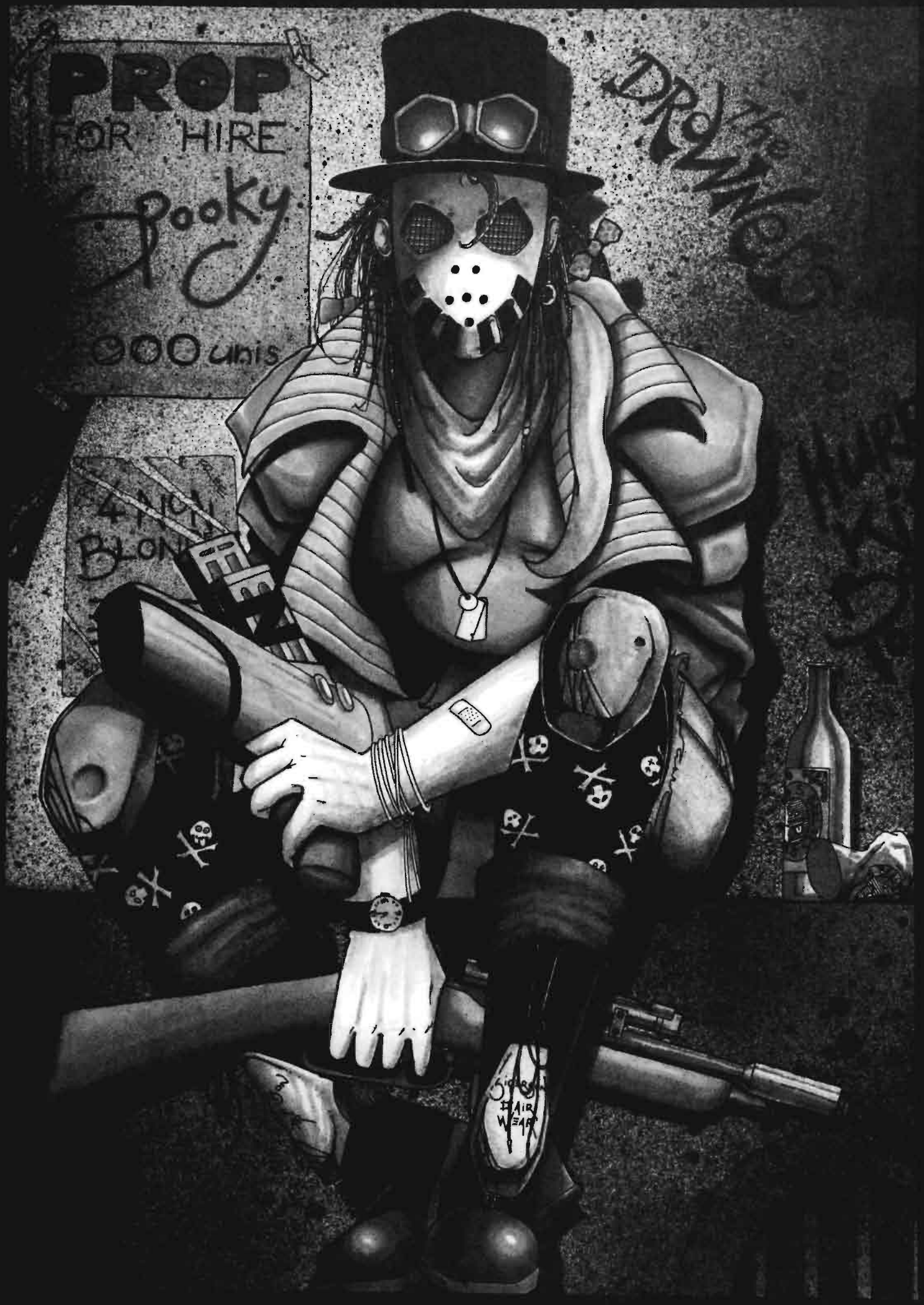
Mort is a place where questions are killed by answers, a world made of unnatural mountains, the source of accidental molehills that have caused bereavement, pain and sorrow to many thousands, the mistakes then sealed over, covered up and forgotten about. Those with good memories suffer unfortunate and accidental deaths in the home of sinister hills.

We do what we're told and ask no questions. SLA Industries tells us 'don't rock the boat' but then who'd want to drown in a sea of pollution and deception such as this? A mad world, where the sane are committed and the insane walk free and govern our lives.

Though in all of SLA Industries cruelty, it protects us from one true terror.

The terror of the truth.

Wave Lindsay, Downtown Phoenix 893


PROP
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HAIR
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to SLA Industries (pronounced Slay Industries). This book contains all the information necessary for you to create your own characters and live their lives in the World of Progress as employees of the largest suppressor power; SLA Industries. Apart from this book, all you need is 2 or more players (4 to 6 being optimum), some ten-sided dice (available where you got this game), some paper, pens, pencils and, most importantly, your imagination.

WHAT IS ROLE-PLAYING?

Have you ever read a book or seen a film about which you said "If that were me, I'd do that differently"? Fantasy role-playing allows you to do just that. The best way to describe role-playing is as an action-adventure soap drama in which the players participate with their imaginations under the watchful eye of a Games Master. The difference between reading a book and playing a role-playing game is that, instead of reading about characters doing certain activities, the players decide what they are doing and participate in a story that is unravelling as the players progress. As a player, you will create your own Player Character (PC) and act and react with the other characters and try to stay alive and improve in an unforgiving universe where a mistake will cost your character their life.

The Games Master's job is to set the scene and control all of the other characters not controlled by players (Non-Player Characters). A Games Master is not trying to beat the players but to set them challenges and be neutral and arbitrary and telling them whether or not a Player Character may succeed at a certain activity.

Wherever there is an element of chance in whether or not a character may succeed at something, a system of rolling dice is used. Instead of requiring a veritable plethora of dice, like certain other role-playing games, SLA Industries uses just two ten-sided dice.

Most ten-sided dice are not actually ten-sided at all but have twenty sides numbered from 0 to 9 where 0 is read as 10. In SLA Industries, you roll two ten-sided dice (known in the hobby as d10s) or 2d10 and add them together with the lowest being 2 (double 1) and the highest being 20 (double 0). If the roll is 11 or higher, the character has succeeded. There are modifications to be made to the roll but these are explained in the rules following. Here follows an example of a game to give an idea of how a game is played.

EXAMPLE

The scene so far: the 4 Player Characters are Sam, playing Arama -a Wraith Raider Scout, Chris, playing Frank -a Human Pilot, Kelly, playing Nitro -an Ebon Investigator, and Ciaran, playing Ms. Clark -a Human Corporate. The Games Master, Martin, has just dropped them into a potentially sticky situation with a street gang vastly outnumbering them in the heart of Downtown during an investigation.

GM: So, you are all in plain sight of the gang except Arama. What are you going to do?

Sam: Stay out of sight with my Cami-Sneak on and activate my climbing kit to fire a line into the wall and winch myself up in to a good vantage point.

Chris: Frank moves closer to Clark, in case shooting starts, and discreetly reaches for his gun without pulling it out.

Kelly: Try to find out which gang they are. They could be useful to our investigation.

Ciaran: Clark is going to turn her headset to stealth mode and alert any nearby Shivers or media. If there is to be a fight, I want out or media coverage.

GM: OK. Sam, roll your Sneak and Hide.

Sam: (rolls 13 and adds Sneak Rank of 6 and Hide Rank of 5 getting 19 and 18) Made both of them with room to spare and then some!

GM: Well done, you had minuses on those rolls but you still came through. Chris, (checks Frank's DEX) that presents no problems for Frank as far as you can tell. Kelly, with your Streetwise (Rank 7, passive skill use) you know that this is the Kiestas (K'eestass), a Downtown gang with no qualms about wasting SLA Ops. Ciaran, no-one replies just yet. Well, what next?

Sam: Aim. Lots. At the leader's head using my FEN 30-30 with hollow-point 8mm long rounds using full scout helmet optics, laser painting, telescopic sights and...

GM: I get the picture, It's not hard for you. Between the eyes close enough?

Chris: Wait.

Kelly: Ciaran, why don't you negotiate and try to get some information? I'm making sure my shades are on so they don't recognise me as an Ebon.

GM: Isn't the DeathSuit enough of a giveaway?

Kelly: Oh, yeah...

Ciaran: Right, step towards them and say "Any chance of a hand?"

GM: (In an appalling attempt at a Hispanic accent to visible cringes from the players) "Youse SLA peep-oles don't wanna be standeen' in kiesta territorees no?" Says the leader whilst pulling a... (Checks the squads' SLA Info skills) ...Bully Boy shotgun at hip level and starts to wave it about in a vaguely threatening manner.



Sam: Plug 'im. How many aims did I get? Remember I have Marksman Skill.

GM: Er... 9.

Sam: Right. +9 for my aims, –4 for the head, +8 for my Rifle Skill, +1 for the Laser Painting and... Any more?

GM: +8 for your aims. The first one doesn't count, remember. –2 for the dark, no range modifiers. Roll it.

Sam: No darkness modifiers, either. My helmet has Nightsights. I roll 11. With my +13, that makes 24! BANG!!! Right between the eyes! Check it out sucker! Etc.

GM: I think he's dead...

Sam: Damn right! 16 points to his head! Etc.

GM: Ouch. Calm down, Sam, It's only a game. I hate snipers. (Martin makes a note to include a DarkNight sniper in the next game to give them a taste of their own medicine.) I think that counts as starting combat. Can we start a new round and declare movement, please? (The GM checks the Keistas' DEX of 5 allowing them to act in phases 2 and 4).

Sam: My DEX is 15 letting me act in every phase. Staying stationary.

Chris: My DEX is 9. Phases 1,3 and 5. Walking.

Kelly: DEX of 8, Phases 1,3 and 5. Standing.

Ciaran: DEX of 3, I act in phase 3. Running for cover.

GM: Phase one. Sam.

Sam: Aim... Er I mean reload. Damn.

Chris: Pull my Blitzer.

Kelly: Draw my FEN AR and...

GM: ...And nothing phase 3. Phase 2? The Keistas start drawing weapons.

Sam: ...Reload...

GM: Phase 3.

Sam: Aim.

Chris: Aim at the one nearest Clark.

Kelly: Spray fire. No aims, just let them know we mean business.

Ciaran: Stand behind Frank.

GM: Kelly, Work it out and roll.

Kelly: No aims: –3, Spray fire: +3, no range modifiers, Rifle Skill of 4, Auto/Support Skill of 3. I rolled 11 on the nail. I hit 3 Keistas wild. Three guys take 8 each.

GM: (The Keistas have 9 Hit Points each) Three guys look pretty bad but not down. Lucky they aren't wearing armour. Phase 4 and the Keistas act. "Hey, SLA doodes. Calmeet down. Stop." Say several of them. Phase 5?

Sam: Aim in 4 and 5.

Kelly: Cover them. Aim.

Chris: Aim.

Ciaran: "OK, guys. Hands in the air. No sudden movements or were looking at corpses. Kelly, patch up the wounded guys. Which of you punks is in charge now your boss 'dude' is seeping brains?"

GM: (Checking Clark's Charisma of 8) They do as you say. "Hey, lady. We donna wanta no trouble." Oops, that was Italian. (General smirks from all round. The GM blushes.)

Kelly: Tend to my three victims' wounds.

GM: They don't complain.

Ciaran: "Were looking for a guy named Assaggi. He's very distinctive. He wears Crackshot and has sponsorship deals with 'Rawford Baby Foods' and 'Landshark Custom Ammunition'. He was last seen in this area. Tell me what you know."

GM: "We seen the dude last week but my memory is rusty..."

Chris: Point my Blitzer at his head and move it down to his groin twitching my finger saying "So's my aim. Talk or die."

GM: They all shuffle tentatively but the new leader motions them to stay still. "All right, big guy. He went to the bar on the corner of Southside called 'Hellraisers' with a couple of KT."

Ciaran: KT?

Kelly: Krosstown Traffic. Remember that gang at Heartland?

Ciaran: "Thank you. You may leave. NOW."

GM: They do so but not without a few sneers. Oh, the Shivers reply.

Ciaran: "Forget it. You were too late."

GM: They sign off. What now? Had enough of picking on kids?

Sam: Don't forget the Bully Boy.

Chris: Frank picks up the 10–10.

GM: Well remembered, Sam. (He too had forgotten about it...)

Kelly: Are we off down to 'Hellraisers'?



In SLA Industries, a player character can range from a cerebral investigator to a corporate controlled madman: The only restrictions are your imagination and your intrepidity.

Ciaran: Why not. We're fresh out of other leads. (Nods from the other two.)

GM: The journey there is normal for Downtown: Sneers and cheers in an almost equal proportion. There are a lot of horrible things running about but most of them are on your side. Needless to say, you get there. It is a dingy-looking bar with old neon lights that flash H-E-L-L-RAISERS and flicker intermittently. Several tramps are hanging around. One of them nods and Arama notices him discreetly flashing an SCL badge at you. (Passive detect: Arama has Detect Rank 7 and a scout helmet) He disappears into the shadows and leaves you well alone.

Kelly: He must be working. We leave him alone.

Chris: "Well, I don't know about anyone else but I could do with a drink."

Ciaran: "Me too." We head into the bar.

GM: A whiff of cigarette smoke greets you as you enter a dark bar with several people sitting at tables drinking out of smeared plastic glasses. A few people glance in your direction but know better than to mess with armed SLA Ops. Those who know no better or are equipped enough to play are too busy relaxing to want any hassle.

Chris: My kind of place... Head to the bar and order a pint of Heavy.

GM: "Two UNIs, sir. Nice gun," he says looking at your BLA holster and hands you a clean plastic full of your usual.

Ciaran: I want a drink, too. "G and T, my good man."

GM: "3ū," he replies, sombrely.

Ciaran: I'll pay for both drinks and look for a table.

GM: There is a spare table at the far side.

Sam: I'll go and sit down. Are you all coming? (Nods all round.)

Kelly: Any Ebons?

GM: None you can feel but there is a nauseating after-image of a Necanthrope lingering in the air.

Kelly: Recent?

GM: Probably not but who can tell... The atmosphere in the bar is one of potential hostility but I wouldn't have thought you had anything to panic about.

Sam: Stay alert, anyway.

Ciaran: I'm keeping my eyes open for any Krosstown Traffic gang members.

Kelly: Me too.

GM: Good. There are a couple of people wearing KT gang colours on a nearby table, laughing and talking with a couple of Johannas guys.

Chris: I'll go over. Anyone coming? (Nods from all round.)

GM: They turn serious when you approach. (Checks Sam's Detect.) The Johannas appear to be hiding something. They turn to face and go silent.

Chris: "Don't worry, guys. This isn't a bust. Were looking for someone."

GM: One of the KTs says "Why should we know of anybody you want to find?"

Kelly: "He's one of ours. He was seen here with some guys with your colours."

GM: "Sit down but no funny stuff. We've got props kicking around here so you could be in for a surprise if you play up."

Ciaran: "We've no intentions of causing trouble." I sit down.

Kelly: Me too.

Sam: Frank and I will stay standing. (Chris nods.)

GM: "As a token of goodwill from ourselves, we will listen to your requests. Make it short, though, we have business to attend to," he says, looking towards the Johannas.

Kelly: "We're looking for an operative called Assaggi, He's about 6' 2..."

GM: "I know who you mean. He was last seen double crossing Brent Hurrel, our leader. If he's still alive, he's in trouble. He sold Hurrel out to DarkNight. You've got a traitor on your side."

Kelly: "Can you substantiate this claim?"

GM: "No problem. We'll see what we can do. If Hurrel gets him we want no retribution. OK?"

Ciaran: "We will see what we can do. A traitor, you say?"

GM: At this point, there is a call on your headsets from Shivers. They've found a corpse. It's Assaggi.

Ciaran: "Shivers, have you any idea who killed him?"

GM: "Hello? Ms Clark? We have witnesses."

Ciaran: "Was it a gang killing or DarkNight?"

GM: "Neither. It was a known serial killer. Abandon. Do you want to see the corpse?"

Ciaran: "We're on our way." I turn to the KT guy and say "We'll meet you here tomorrow at 5. OK?"

GM: "Make it worth my while and I'll be here."

The squad rush off to see their corpse and the GM smiles to himself, knowing that they won't make their

appointment tomorrow. The bar is going to have a DarkNight terrorist bomb tomorrow just before they arrive. He has successfully drawn them into a world of traitors, gangs, terrorists, rivals and serial killers.

As can be seen, all of the action takes place on paper and in the imagination of the players. Sometimes miniature models are used to show where players are in relation to each other but, if necessary, the Games Master can draw a map and have players place bits of paper representing their Player Characters to show where they are and where they move to in a tactical situation. This stops arguments like "but he can't have shot me. I was over behind her..." and allows players to visualize a situation.



GAME AIDS

Apart from this book, players will need 2d10 (two ten-sided dice) each, although players may share, and paper, pencils and pens. Other items that may be useful are miniatures and pre-drawn maps but these can be improvised. Refreshments may well be needed as time flies past in a role-playing session so have drinks and nibbles at the ready. Don't forget to bring your individuality and imagination to the game.

PLAYING THE GAME

The first step in playing a game is to create a Player Character. The details on how to do this are in the Character Generation section. You will then want to equip the Player Character and a visit to the Hardware section should give you enough to choose from, for instance in the uncertain world of SLA Industries, a gun will more than likely save your life so choose one from between the CAF range of cheap firearms and the Blitzer pistol, an awesome 12.7mm hand cannon. It is useful to read the entire book but it is not necessary unless you intend to be the Games Master. Even the Games Master can get away without reading everything but it helps to know more than your players.

GLOSSARY

Player Character (PC): A character controlled by a player.

Non-Player Character (NPC): A character controlled by the Games Master be it a street punk, high ranking corporate or a shop-keeper.

Player: Anybody participating in a game except the Games Master.

Games Master: The arbitrator and story teller whose job it is to control the world around the Player Characters.

D10: Ten- or Twenty-sided dice numbered from 1 to 10.

2d10: Two dice numbered from 1 to 10, rolled and added together to give a number from 2 to 20.

Campaign: A series of adventures, linked together like a series of books.

Scenario: A single adventure. The example above was part of a scenario.

THE WORLD OF PROGRESS

THE FORM OF FINANCE

The World of Progress, it is said, is powered by a particular driving force which keeps it healthy and alive. The driving force is greed, in every shape and form. The shape of knowledge and the form of finance.The finance in our World of Progress is simple. It is lust, desire, accepted, without question, by most. The Major Powers of today rely on this.

However, to some, the form of finance is not enough. The pulsing heart of knowledge is their quest, the very unknown of the World of Progress is their driving force. . .

THE HISTORY OF SLA INDUSTRIES

900 YEARS OF DECEPTION

This year, the World of Progress celebrates its 900th birthday with SLA Industries at the helm. For all these centuries, SLA has remained the prime ruler of this capitalistic society, observing its growth and expansion, an industrial cloak of power that spreads across the World of Progress, a vast universe of assiduity and advancement.

The World of Progress is an open market whose customers are numerous planets and solar systems trading goods and vital materials, guided by the watchful eye of their master, Slayer –the soul owner of SLA Industries.

SLA is the dominant body in the World of Progress. It is the grand trader since it out sells and out purchases any other company. It has a controlling interest in all the public's needs –the necessities that make society's existence seem worthwhile.

Every whim, every fantasy, every object of desire, is accounted for by SLA –as well as important factors such as weapons and armaments for those who feel the need for protection. The barriers between pleasure and pain are very thin in the World of Progress and the differences between destruction and desire are subtle, made complex and confusing by SLA Industries' media channels: The all–pervading drug, television.



SLA Industries has successfully concealed the cruel and shadowy past from the naïve inhabitants of today's environment, it conveniently forgets the violence, confusion and betrayal that created the circumstances of the present day. The population has succumbed to SLA Industries' colourful and vibrant lifestyle and is deceived by a perception of liberty but this society is the most suppressed and restrained in known history. It is all crafted by one man who controls the machineries of progress and lifestyle: Slayer.

However, the past is never lost forever. There are always an inquisitive few who strive to discover their true origins and the historical symptoms that built the World of Progress over these 900 years of deception.

Even now, after silent research from within the system, many quiet speculations but very few hard facts are known of SLA Industries' history. Obtaining such knowledge is dangerous. History is past and must be forgotten. SLA Industries aims to build a brighter future and it will destroy anyone who tries to tarnish its hopes and aspirations with the flawed dreams and misfortunes of its past. SLA Industries has created certain divisions to protect and guard hidden facts, to uncover individuals too hungry for truth.

There is much confusion concerning the 'real' facts of the World of Progress' roots. In such a deceptive maze of facts and fantasy, lies and myths are rife. Despite this, to gather gain an insight into SLA's origins one must first observe their track record and deduce the reasons for their obvious external success:

Ruthlessness, Control and Ambition.

THE CONFLICT WARS

Before the birth of SLA Industries and the World of Progress, the Known Universe, as it was then called, had suffered a history of war that seemed to last forever and a day. Countless warring races battled constantly for supremacy, dominance and other reasons long since forgotten.

The universe was caught in a spiral of moral decay that, within 150 years, would have caused total extinction of all life in every Conflict Society, including races and planets who remained passive in the thick of the unceasing battle. The war spread like a cancer across every corner of the Known Universe creating a sea of devastation. Interstellar warfare infected or destroyed every society. Only a minuscule number of backwater planets, husks of bygone, once proud, civilisations, remained in the aftermath.

As the fighting rumbled on the Conflict Worlds, on the hostile planet, White Earth, in a distant corner of the Known Universe, a terrible storm raged across its pale surface. So aggressive was the outburst, that the entire Known Universe took notice. At a distance they watched the planet scream in rage for three days, then fall silent.

As suddenly as the storm ended on White Earth, a tall man appeared in Conflict Society. While others lumbered around in powered armour for protection, Slayer walked gracefully and regally in a sharp black suit. He was a business man, not a warrior and if protection were absolutely necessary, he always had the Kilneck at his side. Seemingly ageless, these men and women were Slayer's personal bodyguard, feared by many Conflict races since they were powerful and verging on indestructible as if their very will to live sustained them –truly immortal. This bizarre company was joined by a strange, dark woman called Senti who was proficient in the art called Deathwake.

Slayer and his company had come to the Conflict Planets to trade to sell a totally new range in advanced arms and equipment. Goods to increase combat efficiency –essential to survival in a Conflict War environment. Slayer's proposals became a reality as the various societies accepted his offers of advancement. Henceforth, a mammoth company was established called 'SLA Industries' (pronounced 'slay') owned by Slayer himself, who would manage and oversee the cogs of progress in motion as the mega corporation began to trade with the Conflict Planets.

Alongside SLA Industries business dealings, Slayer's Kilneck guard were hired out as mercenaries to the highest bidder. Billions were offered and billions were accepted as Intruder, leader of the Kilneck, lead his ancient brothers and sisters out of SLA Industries' realm and into the thick of harsh warfare. So while the Kilneck battled endlessly, on numerous sides and races, all financial proceeds went to the expansion of SLA Industries and to Senti's dark project, biogenetics, the concept of life generation.

GOD OF BIOGENETICS

Senti's proposals for the production of Biogenetics were complex and diverse and many events took place during the project's birth. In the initial stages of planning, SLA Industries increased its combat forces and hired its own mercenary army called 'The House of the Black Church'. It was a truly malignant legion of troops renowned throughout the Known Universe for their ruthlessness in battle. They were also respected by the Conflict Societies for their leader, Cadavar, as a ruthless battle commander and military


BUG EYE MONSTER INC.

scientist. Cadavar and his army joined Slayer's business for a variety of reasons: SLA Industries' reputation as a high technology arms dealer being one and their sheer effect on the Known Universe, but most importantly, Cadavar overheard the talk of biogenetic production.

All of Cadavar's previous attempts at living Biogenetics had proved unsuccessful. The most he had accomplished were biogenetic enhancements and implants to improve the natural physique. Nobody, to date, had mastered the concept of life generation, pure living, breathing, thinking biogenetic life forms and it seemed that SLA Industries was about to unlock the great mystery.



Before Senti could begin production, she required Intruder's services. He was to be placed under scientific analysis as the perfect specimen. Senti and her bio–chemists had to probe Intruder's mind –to explore his centuries of experience, a complex structure of thoughts and emotions, so old yet so young, so confused. Senti needed to get inside his head, to discover the mystery behind such an enigmatic 'young' man. The very essence of his being would be grafted into the material cast of biogenetic tissue, raw emotions into DNA strands, then mass produced.

Mass production was the business element of Senti's venture, the concept to sell to Slayer. Senti would take the violence, the insight and the graceful insanity that made up Intruder and shape it into a biogenetic form. In theory, it was to be the perfect warrior –as efficient as its original father. An unnaturally born killer conceived by SLA Industries' biogenetic department, 'The Karma Facility'. The plan to graft emotional elements from Intruder's mind and recreate them in a biogenetic form was called the 'Stormer Project'. 'Stormer' was to be the name of the biogenetic creations. They would take DNA from the initial form and reproduce the specimen to create thousands of Stormers to sell to the Conflict organisations as the ultimate, and ultimately controllable, warrior. During the negotiations, Cadavar intervened offering to supply various implant options for the project if –in return for House of the Black Church supplies– he could replace Intruder as the test subject. Senti was outraged –she saw Cadavar as little more than a hulking, brutish warmonger with no more subtlety or intricacy than a piece of mobile artillery. Animosity grew inside of SLA Industries as Intruder and his force struggled to keep control in a society on the brink of self–destruction. He could sense the distant taint of bitterness in SLA Industries.

Slayer, finally offered an unquestionable compromise –Senti would have Intruder as her test subject and Cadavar would take his forces and join with the Kilneck on the Conflict Planets. In return, he would receive the second opportunity for testing. Senti could feel Cadavar's hatred for the decision and made alterations to her biogenetic procedure, removing the vital element for success:– an ability taught to her many centuries ago; the power of Deathwake, something Cadavar could never achieve.

As Slayer turned to a private project called 'the Big Picture', Cadavar prepared to depart for the Conflict Societies. He had no plans to return and secretly he hacked into Senti's database and stole her 'amended' plans and then, nonchalantly took the House of the Black Church away from SLA Industries.

Senti watched him go but turned a blind eye on his future plans that would inevitably, in her opinion, result in failure as he lacked the power of the Deathwake. Cadavar was an insipid fool –he could do nothing compared to what she could gain and achieve with Intruder –the corrupted angel, SLA Industries' clockwork killer. Now, finally, she was ready to drain him.

The shadowy misgivings of Senti's plans lingered in the back of Intruder's mind as he returned to SLA Industries. Deep down he knew what Senti intended to create and how he cursed himself for teaching her Deathwake. Also there was the thought of how Slayer would punish him for his lack of vigilance towards Senti. Deathwake was something that should have

remained pure to the Kilneck sect and Senti, although great in power, was not Kilneck. She was the only outsider to have this ability. Despite this, Intruder kept her powerful ingredient secret from Slayer. The fury and madness Slayer would unleash onto all would be unparalleled if he were to know the blasphemy that was about to take place in the very heart of SLA Industries.

For the safety of his own kind from the wrath of Slayer, Intruder disbanded the Kilneck. Although he could save Senti from Slayer, he would not risk the biogenetic abuse of the Kilneck. That fate was his alone. Reluctantly the Kilneck took flight from Conflict Society to the unchartered territory beyond the terrifying world White Earth, never to be seen again.

Cadavar and his force also disappeared into the unknown. Senti never discovered the result of Cadavar's hopes and activities in successful biogenetics. Slayer seemed strangely unperturbed by Cadavar's disappearance, more anger over the fact that his greatest assets –the Kilneck– had fled into the void without reason. Regardless of this, the Big Picture still seemed to consume Slayer's life, he neglected his love. This displeased Senti no end.

The only optimistic aspects of Intruder's return were the reports of his financial success for SLA Industries. He was ready and prepared for the biogenetic screening. More importantly, however, during his travels he had discovered a race of gifted humans known as Ebons. However, they were feral mystics, gifted with the principals of the Ebb, latent and untrained but the potential was there. The Ebons were inhabitants of the planet 'Static' which was unpleasantly close to White Earth, yet Slayer appreciated the business potential of Ebon society. They were desperate for knowledge –they needed to know who they were and what they could do. Intruder offered to teach them how to utilise their powers and abilities which were similar to those of Intruder and Slayer. Intruder's hopes were that he could create a race with scope beyond the banal and tiresome of the spiritless Conflict Societies. A race of emotion, knowledge and wisdom whom Intruder would guide and protect like the Kilneck before them. He knew only too well how dangerously influential Slayer could be towards those weaker than he, and now Slayer seemed like the most powerful being alive. Even the Conflict Planets were starting to bow down before Slayer. This made Intruder afraid as he knew Slayer





better than anyone did, even Senti. They could not conceive how manipulative and destructive he could be. Senti was, nonetheless, still influenced by him. She had once called him 'cruelly charismatic'. He had smiled at her flattery. She was unaware of just how true her words were...

ANGEL AND MALICE

Once Intruder had arrived at the Karma biogenetic laboratories, he was subject to several tests and a psychological evaluation that lasted a further three months. Everything had to be perfect: The slightest wave of unease could create insanity in a biogenetic form. Senti desired a creation that could be controlled and harnessed. Intruder was still a risky and dangerous subject to use with so many years of chaos and violence all wrapped up in a strangely introverted man. One had to dig deep into Intruder's soul to unveil the rage lying in wait, sheltered by a polite, gentlemanly exterior. Once Senti had control of this deeper emotion, she began the experiment.

Intruder was first placed in suspended animation, his heartbeat was taken down to one beat a minute. His mind rested in Senti's trust as she probed the positive and negative aspects of his being, grasping the emotional requirements and injecting them with the Deathwake principal. As Intruder's heart began to race once more, the biogenetic concept had been fully realised –it lived.

The result was an unnerving replica of Intruder, identical in almost every way:– athletic, waif–like, angelic. However, in spite of extensive research and preparation, there was something wrong. The creation's eyes were cruel in the centre, asocial, inhumanly evil, uncompromisingly bitter.

It was a wolf in sheep's clothing and although it was perfect for Slayer's requirements as an uncaring and unquestioning killer, Senti was vaguely displeased by the result as it somehow lacked Intruder's vigour. What Senti did not realise was that no theorising and foresight could prepare her for the results of her actions. Some things just cannot be controlled. There is no creation without destruction.

The destructive creation was simply called 'Angel'.

When Intruder was shown the result of so many months of confinement, he was terrified. He saw himself standing before him, everything Slayer had



ever wanted from Intruder; a brutal sadistic killer with no respect or compassion for life. There was no mercy and sympathy in Angel's eyes, no life.

In combat, Angel matched Intruder's potential but only temporarily lacked his 'father's' experience. What Intruder also despised was Angel's dearth of psychic power, he was unpleasantly empty. Since Angel's creation, Intruder and his Biogenetic have never accepted one another's presence. Although visually both look identical, their emotions and outlooks are worlds apart.

Once the controversy of Senti's Biogenetic prototype had blown over, she embarked upon the next biogenetic project which was to be mass produced and sold to Conflict buyers. However, Intruder's confidence in Senti's capabilities had taken a harsh blow and he resented the lack of authority given to him in such matters since Slayer had turned away from the whole concept in favour of his current plan: 'The Big Picture'.

As Intruder prepared for suspended animation once more, his faith dwindled away sorrowfully. Animosity filled the gap between trust and resentment and as he slipped into unconsciousness, his last waking thought was malice.

Angel's sequel was no less shocking, the latest prodigy of Intruder's mind was the embodiment of this malice. It was a million miles away from Intruder's subtle delicacies. The shape that lumbered from the tank was a seven foot monster, a beast bred for rigorous combat under the heaviest of conditions. Whilst Angel captured an uncanny likeness, the 'Malice 313 Stormer' concept was truly the opposite; it was a muscular entity, ugly and menacing.

Despite the Malice's aggressive appearance and ham-fisted approach to combat, Intruder accepted the presence of the new Stormer. It wasn't deceptive like Angel, it was like a loyal son to him. This warrior giant was a part of him, so different yet so alike. It also contained variations on Intruder's emotions and it understood the extent of Intruder's pain. It was responsible, trustworthy and protective. Over the years, Intruder became a brother to the first initial Stormer, there was so much of Intruder's thoughts and emotions in his biogenetic 'son'. In the countless centuries that passed, he became a part of the family, like Slayer, Intruder and Senti. Both Intruder and his Stormer came through many events that have shaken the history of SLA Industries, they were like a stained and darkened royalty. Intruder called his Stormer friend 'Taarnish' and made him promise that as long as SLA Industries existed, Taarnish and he would fight true to their beliefs and knowledge, secret to so many. Since the creation of Taarnish, all '313' Stormers have been based on his image.

THE BIG PICTURE

After the Stormer concepts went into mass production, Intruder went on to teach the Ebon race how to utilise and enhance their abilities. Like their teacher, the Ebons were an extremely emotional race and appreciated Intruder's sensitive approach to their training. He taught them never to suppress their feelings, to express their emotions through the power of the mind and 'The Principal Formula', that it is the sole purpose of their existence. To the Ebons, Intruder was a godsend and even today he is regarded a Messiah, a father figure who raised the Ebons to highly respected members of society. However, their race is slowly being corrupted by a shadowy evolutionary step within their environment, which suppresses and controls them -a dividing race known as the Necanthropes. The Necanthropes have always played a strong and shady part in Slayer's advancement as dominator and power-monger.

When Intruder had taught the Ebons knowledge from his personal experience, Slayer was ready to unleash 'The Big Picture' upon the Conflict Planets. With their petty quarrels and narrow-minded outlooks, it was time for change and, more importantly, progress.

Back in the realms of war, the Conflict Societies had almost fought each other to a standstill though there seemed to be no sign of halting the continuous shelling. By this time, SLA Industries had sold millions of Stormers. The '313's' were a staggering success and the Conflict Planets were in favour of anything SLA Industries was willing to sell. Most of their previous supplies had been dumped in favour of SLA Industries' superior quality combat products.

Slayer had been silently and secretly preparing a conquering army all along to seize and destroy the warring planets in the name of the advancement of SLA Industries. The arms and equipment carried by the secret army were newly updated supplies, far superior to the weapons the Conflict Societies had previously purchased from SLA. Slayer informed Intruder of his plans at the last moment, explaining that within one year SLA Industries would have extinguished all warring forces in the Known Universe. An entirely new society and regime wholly owned and created by Slayer and his massive corporation, this company orientated environment would be called 'The World of Progress', a universe of advancement and capitalist undertakings.

All products and biogenetic creations sold to the

Conflict races were rigged. Guns and other highly technological equipment were plagued with technical viruses, ready to shutdown and disarm at a moment's notice. The Conflict Planets would be dragged down under an all-encompassing power-cut in an environment whose sole purpose was power.

The Stormers, too, were not without sinister preparation. At an appointed time, the millions of Stormers purchased by the Conflict Planets were to turn on their conflicting owners and wipe out their immobilised and non-functioning armies before they could perceive what was happening or even realise that they were truly doomed.

To Slayer, an end to the Conflict races was inevitable, it was time for a winner, a ruler: SLA Industries. The Big Picture would be quick and merciless and although Intruder despised the limited vision and self-destructive side of the Conflict Planets, it was savage to destroy so many countless races almost instantaneously, despite their selfish views and lifestyles.

Slayer was expecting an unfaithful reaction, so he warned Intruder that if he did not remain true to Slayer and his plans, he would destroy the Ebon race alongside the rest of the Conflict Society in the wake of 'The Big Picture'. Slayer knew Intruder could not go against the race that he had made his own children.

Intruder unwillingly made an oath to stay at Slayer's side on the condition that Slayer accepted the Ebon race as part of the new society that he had planned, making them part of SLA Industries and granting them a new life.

Intruder also informed Senti of the Big Picture, and during the immense destruction that took place throughout the Conflict Society, Intruder and Senti were only able to save two races from extinction. While Slayer watched his secret army mop up the last of the devastation and dying worlds, fallen in the path of the rampaging, hired Stormers, the two remaining alien races were introduced into the fledgling World of Progress.

Intruder brought forward a warrior race who believed in the art and traditions of war and combat. A species called the Shaktars, a red-skinned breed of fighter raised with honour, pride and valour.

Senti saved a distant arctic race from the cold Ice Worlds called the Wraith Raider, a hardy and determined species who had spent their entire lives surviving in the harshest conditions of the cold, determined for a lasting existence.

The two alien races were rescued just as the Conflict Society released its last breath of life, before falling on its sword. A sword bought from SLA Industries.

Slayer's words of domination rang true, the Conflict Planets ceased to exist within the space of a year, and from the ashes of fallen empires rose the World of Progress, a new system devoted to commerce was born.

THE BIRTH OF SLA INDUSTRIES

During the early years of corporate growth, SLA Industries set up its main headquarters on the planet Mort. Mort was originally designated a resource world, whose purpose would be obtaining vital raw materials for production however, within the space of a few months, SLA Industries had stripped the planet of its natural resources. Reports from space had returned saying that a 'gap' had appeared on Mort's surface, a blinding white light. Ebons also reported that 'the white' exuded vast amounts of flux, raw psychic energy. There was much hesitation to explore this white void, rumours had repeatedly stated 'whispering voices' crept from the white, many called the white something of an 'ethereal presence' on Mort.

Slayer saw 'the white' as an invaluable asset for channelling Ebon flux, to feed the power of the mind. In close proximity of the blinding light, Ebons were filled with enough emotional energy to unleash their maximum potential. No matter how much energy the white emitted, no one dared to walk its ethereal path, all past attempts had been rumoured as fatal. Anyone who had entered the light had never returned. Intruder presumed the adventurous explorers had passed on to a place beyond the white; the afterlife.

From Intruder's extensive training of the Ebon race, three pupils excelled beyond the rest of their kind, the two boys were called Mandrake and Dürer, the girl was Draco.

The three would aspire to high positions in SLA, their records proved this, their aptitude to learn and obtain knowledge was the source of their success.

Mandrake was bold, strong and impetuous, like a warrior, brave as the Conflict War kind. Dürer was pale and placid, he was philosophical and poetic, Dürer had listened intently to Intruder's tutoring, he knew the ways of the Ebon nature, unlike Mandrake whose views were headstrong and true to Slayer's progressive regime; the harsh and brutal side of SLA Industries that remained in the World of Progress even after the days of the Conflict Wars.



To fill the gap of emotions between Mandrake and Dürer was Draco. She was a pretty girl and had stolen both their hearts since childhood. Draco was a blend of characters, an assortment of emotions that both Mandrake and Dürer could respond to. In Mandrake's eyes, Draco was boisterous and bold, courageous like Mandrake, however Dürer could only see desirable aspects, her heart and kindness, her love for the Ebon race.

Between this difference of emotions, hatred and jealousy grew between the once caring friends. Both Mandrake and Dürer had fallen in love with Draco for completely different reasons. The all consuming desires were reducing the three Ebons' efficiency as employees for SLA Industries. Slayer was furious. Love was an unprofessional response in the World of Progress and he ordered Intruder to make them suppress their feelings that they had for one another. This, however, seemed like a paradox to Intruder considering what he had taught them. The Ebons had been raised to believe that expressing one's emotions was the most important part of their lives, asking them to hide their tender thoughts made Intruder a hypocrite. Slayer, on the other hand, had a point. His three best pupils and greatest hopes were in decline, the raw emotions of love, lust and desire were tearing their friendship, and each other, apart. The extreme tension of the situation was the Ebon philosophy incarnate:

Expression, destruction and emotion.

The biogenetic division of SLA Industries, Karma, scoffed at the Ebon's misconduct, letting emotions stand in the way of progress and advancement. Karma's views were now purely productive and scientific, totally alien to Ebon beliefs, henceforth, a wall of animosity and viewpoint rose between the two beliefs as the Ebon race set up its own subdivision to compete with Karma and cater for the growing needs of the Ebon society. The subdivision was called Dark Lament, and it took much advice and inspiration from Intruder and Slayer. Their first creation and

product was based on the armour worn by Slayer, Senti and Intruder: the DeathSuit, a vessel for generating the flux created by 'The White'. Since the establishment of this Ebon supplier, Dark Lament and Karma have always argued over whose input into SLA was more of a necessity, a war fought upon a political level.

At the height of tension within the love triangle, Intruder intervened with an ultimatum; Draco must choose one lover between the two or break up the entire friendship and part company, forever. A decision had to be reached now, Intruder warned them, before the matter was taken out of his hands and into the claws of Slayer, who would show them no mercy.

Draco's heart was split down the centre, she loved each of them as much as the other and simply couldn't take the guilt of having broken one of their hearts. Draco could never decide between her two loves. On the verge of their friendships' disintegration, Dürer grieved that he could not live without Draco and that he would rather walk into the white than leave her. All of this time Dürer seemed more desperate for her company but still Draco could not choose, even in her tears of sorrow.

Then, finally Slayer entered the traumatic scene and ordered Dürer and Mandrake to leave Mort on the battleship, 'Yung', and explore the unknown territory of space beyond White Earth, where Cadavar and countless others had fled to escape Slayer and the World of Progress, a society more advanced than the simple, naivety of war.

Dürer was hysterical, he couldn't bear the decision and threw himself into the white before anyone could stop him. Mandrake turned to Draco and demanded to know why Dürer had taken his own life. Even in such circumstances, suicide was against Ebon principles. Dürer had always believed in life, hopes and optimism, and now he was gone.

During graduation in Meny, SLA Industries' training facility, Draco and Dürer had slept together and Draco was pregnant. They had been drunk and had not taken precautions. All along, Draco was just buying time, to let Mandrake find out for himself, unfortunately Slayer's orders were final and the battleship Yung was not returning. Dürer would never see his child. Dürer couldn't bear to tell Mandrake.

'Yung' was an Ebon battle craft, a huge black monstrosity created by Dark Lament, designed to withstand the dark visions exuded by White Earth on their passing. The Yung voyage required the loyal, brave and foolhardy. In this case, it also took the heartbroken. Mandrake left without a word, he had lost everything; his faith, his love, but most importantly, Mandrake had lost his best friend, Dürer, in foolish desires. Everything was ruined.

Yung folded space and disappeared with Mandrake, never to be seen again.

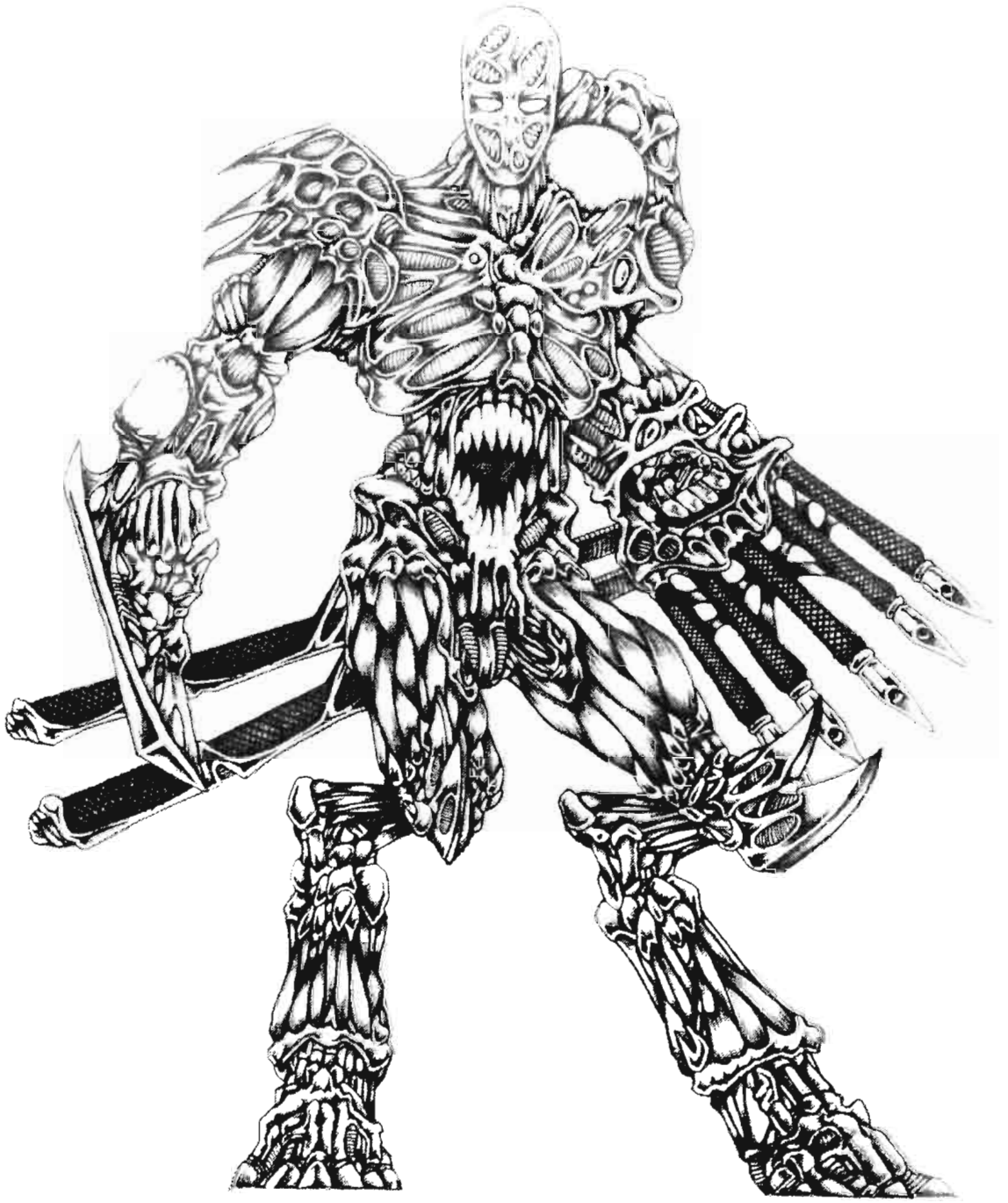
After Mandrake's departure, Draco had a nervous breakdown. Now she had lost both her friends through her indecision and hesitation. Draco wanted to die with her child. Nothing mattered any more, she was pointless without Dürer. She needed him, the father of her unborn child.

Then news came back –her wish had been granted. Dürer had returned from the white –the first ever survivor. Draco was overjoyed by the message, her husband–to–be was alive and her depression lifted instantly. Upon arriving at the shining gates of the white's entrance, Intruder stopped her. He brought grave news, Draco had only received half of the message, Dürer had returned but not as the kind, caring Ebon she once knew. What had crawled from the blinding light was not Ebon, or even remotely human. Its huge black hide was a vicious array of razor sharp teeth, it stood over ten feet tall, its legs bent and twisted at awkward angles, but most horrifically, the creature exuded nauseating, bitter–tasting flux, a deadly energy to unleash unforeseen, dark powers, unique abilities that could only be mastered by what Slayer called a Necanthrope, the final stage of Ebon being, the darkest element of their nature.

The creature was no longer called Dürer, he was now simply called 'Teeth'. He was the first Necanthrope to appear or be conceived in the World of Progress. For his bravery upon entering the white, Slayer awarded Teeth the honourary position of Preceptor of the Ebon race and head of Dark Lament. Many others at Dürer's stage of learning would follow Teeth's path. From this day on, many more Necanthropes would evolve. The Ebon race was in dismay, a dark regime was forming.

Teeth had little memory of Draco. She was someone in Dürer's past, the pathetic whimsical Ebon boy who risked his worthless life for the whim of a girl. The emotion and purity of the story made Teeth sick over the weakness of his lessors so he banished Draco from the Ebon race and kept her child, an abhorrent baby born with charred eyelids. He was the first born Ebon Warrior in the World of Progress, a Brain Waster called Albrecht Dürer.

Outside of the Ebon involvement, dissension began to appear in the World of Progress. SLA Indus-



tries' control over the young society had had an adverse accomplishment. Many small minor companies were growing and thriving over the surface of capitalism, all set to compete with and conquer the industrial giant as rivals: Soft companies, thirsty for success. Many of its employees were ex-SLA Industries who had left or escaped from Mort to lead shadowy lives as political subversives.

The wars of the Known Universe are over, the Conflict Society is dead. The World of Progress is a battle for individualism and media hype, murder is a profitable income.

Wars are confined to sanctioned planets, whilst on Mort's surface, battles are fought for power and public recognition, between individuals raised in a society who praises the blind and destroys the enlightened.

In the World of Progress, the war is now in the name of advancement and greed.

DIGGING UP THE DIRT

In Uptown where people hide from the darkness of Mort, where they sell their souls to Slayer's eyes, where you can pretend the nightmares will never walk again, there was a party..

The Ebon sat at the far edge of the room and examined his flute sadly. Nicki, already high, flopped down on the over filled sofa and curled around him like a playful kitten. She tugged his long blonde hair, her bright blue eyes sparkling up into his pure white ones.

"It still sounds the same, Merion."

The Ebon slithered several arpeggios over each other in one cool silver stream. Another flake of gold fell off.

"Its useless," sighed Merion, "and I'll never be able to afford better than this."

"Merion, you've got a gold DeathSuit, gold shades, even gold gloves, what is this hang–up? The whole universe won't be destroyed because the gold plate is coming off your flute."

The Ebon's eyes filled with light–bright tears. "Gold is my spiritual signature."

"That's a load of crap, Merion. You're ruining the only decent party I've been invited to for months. At least dance with me. I miss this world."

"I'm sorry Nicki. You should have come alone."

"Fine, Merion. You just sit here and mope. I'll go and see about raising the cash to get you your gold flute. Sheesh, you call me materialistic!"

And she flounced off into the party. Merion watched her tearfully. Maybe his Ebon brothers were right, you can't show a human how to reach into their soul, how to express...everything. He turned the feeling into a melody. Merion lost himself in his music. He left the Uptown party far behind, all those flashing cameras, social conversations and political manoeuvres far below..Nicki and her human cousin.

"Merion Lane?"

The voice was pleasant enough, but something deep inside Merion triggered an alarm. He opened his eyes to see Nicki draped over the arm of a seven foot tall human, with waist length red hair. Merion avoided the media barrage as much as possible, but even he recognised Sour Blood. He was the up and coming Contract Killer of Channel 69.

"Merion Lane? You on this planet, man?"

Merion flashed his silver smile and turned his Ebon charm on full.

"I am this planet, Blood. But I am no man. I may call you Blood? Or is it just Sour?"

"The lady says you're looking to make some cash, Lane and that you know people."

"Maybe."

"Ahh, Merion don't be so modest. He knows loads of people Sour Blood. He's been everywhere. He is Downtown. He mixes with all the tribes. Merion's even been into the Cannibal Sectors."

"Nicki, shut up!"

"That's no way to talk to a lady, Lane. Or maybe your kind do it differently.. I've heard what happens to Intruder's lady–friends. . . maybe you're both into dominance. . . I don't care, but I need someone to do some research for me. I want someone the media doesn't follow and who is desperate for cash. From what Nicki says that describes you perfectly."

"Maybe."

"You're really ticking me off, you know that Ebon? Well, that's another reason to give you the job. I wouldn't ask my worst enemy to do this, but you Merion, I ain't got no qualms over. This is the deal; find me Digger."

Merion dropped his flute from suddenly cold fingers. It clattered off the black glass table, scattering flakes of gold and rolled under the sofa. Merion didn't move.

"Good. You've heard of him. I'll give you three days. If I haven't heard anything by then I'll interest Channel 69 in a little Ebon chasing."

"Wonderful Nicki, wonderful. I'm under contract to a killer to track down the worst nightmare Mort has produced in over 900 years. Such smart work girl. Come on, you can walk. I haven't the money to pay for a cab."

"Merion I'm tired. I want to go home."

"We are going home. You live with me now, remember?"

The girl sat down in the gutter and wept.

"I hate the rain. I hate getting wet." She plucked hopelessly at her tangled hair. "It ruins everything. I hate it.. I hate it. I want to die."

The Ebon crouched down beside her and put his arm round her waist.

"Honey, its always rained. It will always be raining. Come on, Nicki, lean on me. This isn't you. Its just the drugs talking. I'll get us a cab. Maybe

they'll drive us home for a song, or maybe the driver'll have a bad back."

The morning came grey and cold and windy and raining; it was a fine morning for Mort. Merion woke up slowly. As last night's events came back to him he seriously thought about burying his head under the pillow and giving up the world. Going into the white couldn't be much worse than this.

Nicki crept in with a tray of coffee and hot rolls, she looked very scared.

"M–m–merion?"

The Ebon sat up, his long hair wild and held his arms out. The girl dumped the tray and threw herself into his arms, sobbing like a frightened child. Although he knew he had ever right to be furious, Merion was incapable of being angry with anyone in such distress, so he held her and told her it would be alright, even though he knew it couldn't be. And when she asked him how, he silenced her with soft and gentle kisses.

Later they hit the street. It was very quiet. Downtown didn't wake up until nightfall. With Mort's constant grey light, it was almost impossible for the human eye to see when evening began, but Downtown always knew. It lit up like a faded Christmas tree.

Merion and Nicki splashed along the wet street, heading through the trash–filled, twisty back streets towards The Strip. It was hard walking against the wind. Mort's terrain was far from flat. Every time a building fell through decay or in battle, it was built over. Memories buried, slumbering deep, only a layer of dirt away.

"Where are we going Merion?"

"The Strip. The Cafe Royale."

Nicki skipped ahead of him, rain–coat flapping in the wind. She was wearing cut off pink boots. She grinned at him trustingly. "Who's hang–out is that, super–sleuth?"

"Johannas," said Merion shortly.

"Who they?"

The Ebon grabbed her wrist. "Calm down, Nicki. This isn't some kind of game. These people live on the edge. If we're lucky they'll talk to us. If they're having a bad day they'll just kill us."

"Merion!"

"Shut up, we're here."

Merion pulled her into a dark doorway. The air was filled with sweet smelling smoke.

"What's that?" whispered Nicki.

"A drug you would consider too mild to use," hissed Merion.

Part of the wall moved, a skeleton loomed out of the haze towards them. Merion clapped his hand over Nicki's mouth before she could scream.

"And what'de yer be awanting here, healer–man?"

The man before him was over six feet tall. He was dressed in black, over which he had painted the outline of a skeleton in white. There was a bone collar around his neck. Hanging from his right hand was a burning point of orange. The man lifted it to his face and inhaled.

"Ah said, what yer be awanting here healer–man and why you bring the poor ittle rich girl with yer?"

Merion took a deep breath and coughed hard. The Johannas laughed.

"Hey man, take a drag. Accustom yer lungs to the sweet smelling air of the brothers kingdom."

Reluctantly Merion took the "cigarette" off him and drew. He closed his eyes and let the colours settle, then he took another draw and passed it back.

"Good man, that's some of de finest black yer'll ever taste this side of the next world."

Merion smiled weakly. "I need to see Prince Jasper."

"Do yer now and why should he be wanting to see yous?"

Merion licked his lips. The large knife glittering inside the doorman's bone lined waistcoat had not escaped him.

"Yer a company man, healer. Why should we waste any time on you?"

"Then you have a remarkably short memory," said Merion harshly. Nicki flinched.

"Maybe so. Remind me, man."

"I patch up your people pretty often. I may deal with SLA Industries, but I'm no chipper as you well know. I've never asked for an audience before. I've never asked you for anything. I'm worth far more to you alive. And if I don't get the information I need, I'm not going to be around for much longer."

"Yer got heat on yer tail, man?"

"No, I'm clean. I just have to deliver."

The doorman lent back against the wall. Merion dragged Nicki through.

"Be seeing you man."

Merion waved cheerfully. "I hope so," he said and grinned.

The passageway ahead was still very dark, smoky and it lead down. The Ebon pulled out his flute and began to play.

"Are you mad?" hissed Nicki.

Merion nodded, then whispered, "Face matters a lot with these people so try not to look so much like a scared mouse."

Finally the passageway opened up into a bar that did a good job of pretending to be a large cavern. There were bodies everywhere, but none of them were dead. Orange points of light hovered over them all. As Merion's and Nicki's eyes grew more accustomed to the gloom they became aware of a throne at the far end of the room. It was built from mismatched dark shadows, boxes, planks of wood and bone. There was a flare of light as the figure on the throne lit several candles with a single shot from a hand-held flame-thrower. And they saw Prince Jasper.

Jet black skin, wild dread-locks, chain upon chain of gold on his naked chest, fingers obscured by gem-encrusted rings and feral amber eyes, Prince Jasper was perhaps thirty years old. He smiled. Merion knelt. Nicki crouched down into a small ball and tried to hide in the shadows.

"So Healer-man, my people tell me of you.. They say you be a good man.. is it so?"

"I try not to cause anyone any trouble, your highness."

"And you heal my people?"

"I have done so Prince Jasper."

"And this gives you the right to be asking favours of me? Or perhaps you bring the white girl for us?"

Several hands reached out of the darkness to Nicki, fingering her hair, her cloak, her face. The girl screamed and threw herself against Merion. There was a low rumble of laughter. A striking woman, wearing scarlet face paint, a leather and bone waist coat and little else, stepped into the circle of light.

"Why der yer waste your time with this washed-out timid thing, man? When you could be having a real woman?"

She reached out her arms to Merion, who ignored her.

"Your Highness it is true I have helped your people in the past and I would like to be able to do so in the future. But unless I find the information I seek I will shortly not be in a state to help anyone. I would not ask this of you, Prince Jasper, but I believe you are the only one with the wisdom and knowledge to help me."

Jasper lent back in his throne and gestured with his hand for Merion to tell him more.

"I need to find Digger."

The Prince laughed loudly and harshly.

"Then it matters not if I aid you, Healer-man. If you find that which you seek you will die as surely as if I tell you nothing. Perhaps we should save you the journey and kill you now."

Nicki whimpered into Merion's coat. The Ebon stood up.

"Fine, get on with it then."

Nicki screamed. Jasper laughed.

"You got balls man. I'll give you that. I don't think I would like to see you die. Go to the rich kids' church nightclub and ask for Alice."

"Thank you, your Highness. I hope to see you again."

"Watch out for that girl, healer-man. She's trouble. We should leave the gods alone."

The night club was on the more civilised side of Downtown- if Downtown could be said to have a civilized side. It was the place all the kids of SLA Industries more prominent workers hung out. They could get Downtown mud on their boots, dance the night away with dark characters from the shadier side of life, who were really only other rich kids at play. It was a world of shadow and pretence, where very occasionally the real Downtowners came to laugh. It was where Merion had picked up Nicki.

The girl was still shaken, but within minutes of entering the pseudo Gothic gloom of the 'Dead and Buried' she was herself again, dancing with all the people she'd left behind for Merion. The Ebon watched Nicki twirl under the neon lights with an Uptowner, all of eighteen years old, dressed in a designer black suit, with a few chicken bones tacked on the jacket pockets. Sometimes he forgot where she came from and that she was only sixteen years old.

In a corner under a crumbling arch sat another girl. She was hardly older than Nicki, but her eyes had seen Bitterness. She dressed like the Johannas, but instead of their face paint, she had ringed her eyes with dark circles. She looked straight at the Ebon.

"You looking for me, Merion Lane?"

THE WORLD OF PROGRESS

900 years on from the eradication of the Conflict Society, the present environment and social climate has changed considerably from its harsh and violent past. Since then, this change has taken many forms. Today, war is an unfashionable event which nobody wants to watch. Anything combat-related larger than skirmishes are confined to far off War Worlds, where Suppressor Powers such as SLA Industries and Thresher Incorporated settle any serious disputes quietly and efficiently.

This is mainly due to corporate preparation and the intervention of media and commercialism through SLA Industries. Combat, violence and other social interests and activities are now spectator sports for innumerable civilian masses who live the way of SLA Industries.

In these new times, anything you could ever want or need can be bought from SLA Industries, anyone can be employed by SLA Industries as long as they have the potential to make the company money in whatever way they can. This can be achieved in either a brutal or a business-like manner. A few enlist in SLA Industries' corporate sector and climb the company departmental ladder as a Corporate Climber. The harder individuals can enter as operatives or employees, handling hazardous combat situations and dangerous investigations in the name of SLA Industries and prosper as the World of Progress watches on, through Television.

However, underneath the thick and seemingly impenetrable layers of glamour, franchise and fame there is a cavern of ancient deception.

This potentially lethal area of deceit invokes two philosophies, two opinions the operatives and employees of SLA Industries live by, Truth and Loyalty.

There are those who seek the truth behind SLA Industries' dark and deceptive past. They are curious about the growth of corruption within the system and the population it created. They are a silent secretive minority that wear the cloak of commercialism and work their way up through the Security Clearance Levels to quietly search for knowledge and discover the truth between the lines of villainy, at any cost.

On one side of the fence are the blindly loyal to SLA Industries. They are aware that SLA Industries has caused and suffered many disasters, but even though these facts are more often true, the accepting majority regard them as rumours created by Rival Companies and subversives aiming to overthrow. The blind



population are really afraid to live without the rules and laws laid down by SLA Industries. They have no wish for change or truth and as SLA helps them live their lives and tells them what to do, they will ask no questions that may cause waves. They know it may cost them their lives.

Between these two channels of thought, SLA Industries destroys the inquisitive and rewards the blind as the World of Progress has so much to hide. SLA Industries employs innumerable loyal employees who know the truth and are determined to keep a lid on it.

Everyone who works for SLA Industries, whether they are a highly esteemed Contract Killer, Necanthrope, or even a simple factory worker knows the one golden rule to live by in the World of Progress.

Don't rock the boat.

THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF SLA INDUSTRIES

From the time you were born in the World of Progress, you were taught that employment in SLA Industries is the most important thing in everybody's lives. This is mainly due to SLA Industries' teaching the public what to think. Then again, the public cannot escape or even avert their eyes from SLA Industries; the food they eat, the water they drink, the cars they drive and the housing they accommodate is all made, marketed and sold by SLA Industries, throughout the World of Progress. Every planet is in its grasp.

Since the early years, SLA Industries has become more of a universal state rather than a mega–corporation, such is the size, power and influence of SLA Industries. Despite the vile suppression of the masses inside of the World of Progress, few people can see through the blinding light of media and TV commercialism. From the vast sea of youth culture, style battles and fashion clashes rise talented and up–to–the–minute minions whom SLA Industries employ –special cases and individuals the public will respond to and remember, operatives and employees with the edge. Recognition and individualism is the key to success in SLA Industries.

Although, SLA Industries has a strong interest in the operative's style and approach, it also requires reliability under pressure, brave individuals who are prepared to take risks and risk their lives for SLA. If they can do that and work hard while they are at it, they will go far.

The main functions SLA Industries' requires from its operatives and employees are to aid and to uphold SLA Industries as the supreme before any other rivals, no matter how powerful or dangerous they may be.

The four primary functions to succeed and advance in SLA Industries are as follows: Suppress the Rivals, Control the Media, Serve the Company and, most importantly, Be Productive.

THE NEGLECT FOR SLA INDUSTRIES' ENVIRONMENT

SLA Industries is an ever rising and ever falling empire, economically and ecologically. In spite of its financial well–being and ever prospering society, it still suffers underlying negative environmental conditions; the fatal down side to such great industrial advancement. For every step forward SLA Industries makes, its natural environment takes three steps back.

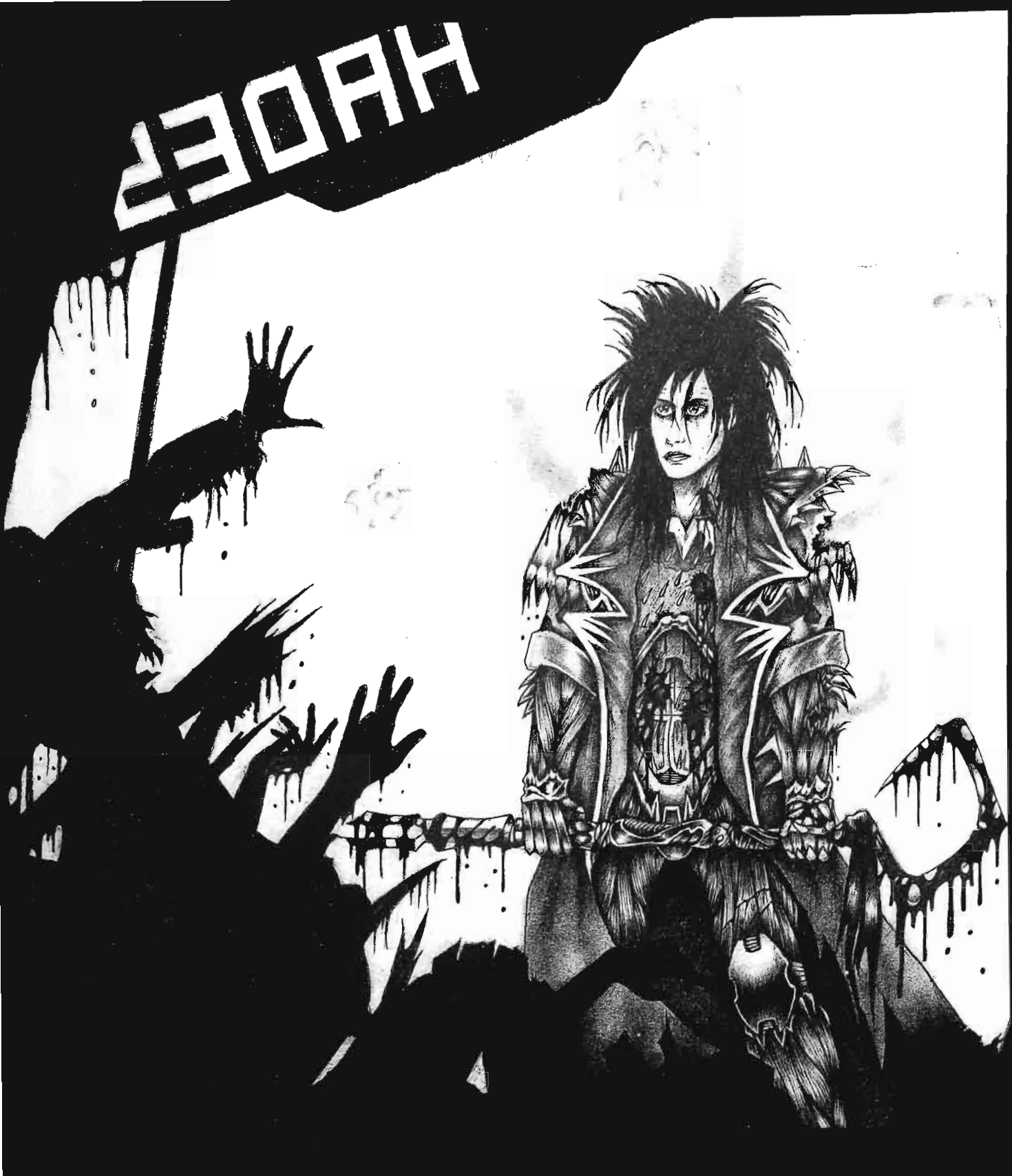
The majority of SLA Industries' planets are Industrial Worlds similar in shape, structure and purpose to its main Industrial World, Mort, home of the SLA head office. Industrial Worlds are sprawling masses of Industrial production facilities, massive cityscapes, home to millions of civilians that inhabit the high heights of Uptown's skyscrapers to the very depths of claustrophobic passageways and gangplanks of Downtown.

Such planets are stripped of their forests, plant life and natural life in the name of progress. SLA Industries' cities stretch out across their surfaces, reaching towards the skies and digging deep into their fragile earth. When the Three Ps contract is signed on untainted worlds to SLA, the planet dies. The seas are usually first to go as the marine life falls extinct to Industrial waste and other lethal pollutants, blue oceans rapidly reduce into ugly sewage swamps and watery wells of toxic nightmares. A great many seas are covered by factory structures turning them into underground canals and reservoirs, held in storage for various precious occasions.

Planet domination takes next to no time, SLA Industries is well trained in quick and effective destruction of environmental protests. Once–flourishing nature reserves are capsized by massive SLA–built cities and factories that infect society with frustration, boredom and insanity.

Not only are Industrial Worlds environmentally unsound, they also breed poverty and over population in a filthy world of architecturally unstable buildings in countless millions.

Industrial Worlds are a nightmare to behold.



THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

This is Third Eye News reporter Julia June reporting from the edge of Eastsector Downtown. Since the beginning of my career at Third Eye, I have been following a great deal of Contract Killers from all round The Circuit but today's slaughter, here at Polsun Avenue, is the most bloodthirsty encounter I have ever seen. Two weeks ago, 'Wide Boy' soft–company 'The Reevo Gang' decided to push SLA Industries and, as you can see, SLA pushed back –in the most horrific manner. All I can see is bloody and outstretched arms pleaing for mercy from beyond the grave. 40 lost souls chopped down by Intruder.

Gorezone reports that he has taken damage in several unsurvivable manners: They quoted 17mm HEAP to vital organs, 12.7 HEAP to his head and other forms of ballistic damage too numerous and gory to reveal in a news report. As the blood settles and reason prevails, Intruder weeps as onlookers, both civilians and SLA ops alike, are nausiated in the face of such carnage.

My only report is this: If you are as young as the kids who died here today, save Intruder his tears and join SLA Industries.

"The civilians of Mort are unnecessary victims of SLA Industries' belligerent suppression. Poverty stricken classes, used and abused by multi-corporations wait patiently for pennies from heaven. But SLA Industries' high class gentry are all sewn up in credit cards. Our fated populace are lucky if a solitary UNI will fall down to our humble gang planks. However, the filthy, grimy rain that has ran the length of the upper classes, falls through the walk-ways to reach Downtown, in abundance.

"We live off the dirt and sweat of SLA Industries."

Downtown Phoenix 895

Mort's civilian population are blind to many truths not in SLA Industries' favour, since they have been thrown into a vicious circle of deceit. Mort's population suffers a high illiteracy rate. The only option left open to the bored and restless civilian is to watch television, where SLA Industries' feeds the public with hype, lies and propaganda. Join SLA Industries, for a better, safer future.

SLA Industries also states how all fighting, combat and major company disputes are settled upon the Suppressor Power War Worlds, planets torn apart by militarised corporation wars, from standard Company Militia all the way up to Powersuit combat.

However, the battles still rage on Industrial Worlds in the subdued form of small skirmishes. Televised combat between Contract Killers, complete with sponsor ratings, gangland warfare and operative suppression of city vermin -such as the rabid and cannibalistic Carriens, a seemingly uncontrollable epidemic on Mort- compete for ratings on the ubiquitous television.

With so much violence and corruption for the civilian to watch on television, the public steadily becomes idle. With no prospects available to them, many become involved in criminal organisations, leading lives of armed robbery and theft.

There is no creativity in the World of Progress. Only the talented and enlightened can work for and be a success to SLA Industries, where they are taught to suppress the civilian environments where they were raised.

NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS

'No news is good news' is a common philosophy in the World of Progress. A subdued mixture of silence and uproar exists on SLA Industries' Industrial Worlds, home to the restless sea of the unemployed. A civilisation unaware that it is living a lie.

The public only hear and view on Third Eye News (SLA's most foremost news station) what they can see and hear with their eyes and ears. The information that they receive is cossetting and trivial, "off-world" news of other SLA owned planets is kept to the bare minimum. Each planet in the World of Progress keeps its current affairs to itself. SLA Industries only informs the public of useful information when it is doing well.

Only when it is absolutely necessary will SLA Industries broadcast bad news, such as industrial disasters and rival infiltration soon to become apparent to the civilian population. If they are not informed previous to hazardous events, the public may be misguided or betrayed.

On the other hand, SLA Industries can exercise and manipulate bad news to make the public believe that SLA are working for their best interests. They can, and do, bend the truth to suit SLA's own needs.

SLA Industries relies heavily on the Third Eye News channels to teach the public biased opinions against SLA's opposition, worldwide suppression through fear. The need for protection, only provided by SLA Industries.

Despite the pretence of hype and glamour SLA Industries portrays to the World of Progress, in reality SLA Industries is really deadly, ruthless and deceptive. It is a massive governing corporation that sells everything imaginable and practices uncompromising and relentless progress with little concern of who gets or tries to get in its way.

SLA Industries always covers its tracks, it has a multitude of evils to hide, tracks of murder, treachery, incompetence and sheer inhumanity. It is the master of deception and only an observant few have solved its sinister clues and cover-ups which are the very truth of SLA, the unsteady foundations that hold it together, its cruel, misleading and unlikely history.

In 895, an article destined to rock the entire World of Progress was written by Downtown Phoenix's Wave Lindsay. SLA Industries had had a history of trouble and strife with Downtown Phoenix since its main aim was to inform the World of Progress of SLA Industries' transgressions. The article was called 'Integration Twenty' and it told of what the World of Progress really was and what it stood for. Slayer knew how dangerous the article was and what a revolutionary effect its truth would have on the populace. It was terrifying.

Integration Twenty would change the World of Progress.

The devastating article was short but to the point and its content was said to be maddening. For those



who sought the truth, and made it the purpose of their life, Integration Twenty would be the pinnacle of one's career.

Wave Lindsay was a genius, ahead of his time, he did not sway to SLA Industries brutal nature or sheltering propaganda. To SLA Industries, Wave Lindsay was a very dangerous and influential man who the public, their public, was starting to listen to. He had written some very hard-hitting news articles in his own paper, Downtown Phoenix. In previous cases, SLA Industries had persuaded the masses that Lindsay was 'scaremongering' and was to be ignored.

However, when Wave Lindsay wrote and aimed to print Integration Twenty, it was the last straw and the Department of Internal Affairs were called in.

The night before Downtown Phoenix went into distribution around Mort, there was a fire, all the staff were killed, burnt to death and all the latest issues of Downtown Phoenix containing Integration Twenty were incinerated in the flames. It seemed the great and inspirational Phoenix had died in its own ashes. The only person not found in its charred ruins was Wave Lindsay who has never been seen or heard of since.

As for 'Integration Twenty', only three copies of the article remain in existence, small news clippings that are worth an absolute fortune on the black market of Mort. Apparently, they are scattered around the depths of Downtown waiting for the inquisitive and the brave to find. Rumour has it that SLA Industries are terrified at the consequences of its discovery. Even if such speculations are true, anyone found even looking for the article is killed on sight by Cloak Division. Friends and families will almost certainly suffer the same consequences as SLA Industries is obsessively thorough.

Integration Twenty must never be found.

Monstrous threats like Wave Lindsay's influential article are covered with heavy layers of media and commercialism. It is surprising how quickly civilisation forgets traumatic circumstances, television is such a powerful narcotic, especially when incorporated with violence and destruction.

The intensity of murder and conflict is regarded as artistic and sophisticated in the World of Progress, especially when they are amplified by injections of SLA combat drugs such as Rush and the lethal Ultra-Violence. With so many years of massacre on televi-

sion (especially on SIC network), the public has become addicted and dedicated to the cause.

Analyzing death and horror has become the civilian hobby, a national pastime, and SLA Industries complies with the public's needs, creating franchise and media coverage for their hired Contract Killers. The clothes the civilians wear and the food they eat are produced by sub-companies who sometimes sponsor combat operatives and always Contract Killers.

In the World of Progress, people cash in on violence and suppression.

THREE PS CONTRACT

SLA Industries stretches out over the World of Progress, planets and solar systems in their entirety are caught in its dark shadow. Thousands of systems sell their societies into this vast and growing corporation every year and become completely dependant upon the company for their world's survival.

Once SLA has asserted itself upon a planet, it makes an offer the planet's governments and states cannot (and dare not) refuse. Protection from rival companies, DarkNight, the Thresher and other warring races, their opportunity to place their humble environment in the arms of the World of Progress' ruler, to become part of SLA Industries, to relinquish control so that all civilisation and ruling factors, the planet itself becomes SLA Industries.

Inhabitants with potential for growth and mental development can gain employment as an operative or an employee. Others of more humble hopes may join the corporation as simple factory workers, cogs in the great machine Progress. The planets are then injected with the hyped television and its massive franchise. Once society sells its soul to the media, it is lost in the claws of SLA. The Progress now never ends in this world.

Failure to accept such proposals results in destruction, more often than not at the hands of SLA. Usually, SLA Industries freely advertises on Third Eye News that the planet's 'Progress Control' (as it is known) is under negotiation and this is seen by the whole of the World of Progress. Word gets to the rival companies quickly and they wait to seize their chance. If the planet refuses to join SLA Industries then SLA apologize and leave. The planet is now vulnerable and thanks to the media controlled by SLA, everybody knows it and the unseen enemy (usually DarkNight) attacks and destroys the planet, steals its resources, levels its governments and converts a stable environment into a War World, where a multitude of Soft Companies fight for the scraps of a fallen civilisation.

A prime example of a society which rejected SLA's advances is the War World, "Cross". At the beginning of the year 756, SLA offered Cross 'Progress Control' and denoted them the standard 'Three Ps Contract' (Progress, Prospects and Prosperity) however, Cross refused Progress Control on account of receiving a better offer from DarkNight Industries. Two months after SLA departed from Cross, DarkNight cheerfully called off their contract with Cross and pulled out leaving them to the fast approaching Thresher Incorporated employees following up Third Eye News' accusations of Cross' refusal to join SLA. Cross went into conflict with Thresher and within three weeks, Cross' society was annihilated and the planet disintegrated into a burning War World. No world has considered a DarkNight growth contract since their treachery on Cross. Meanwhile, SLA rested on its laurels whilst its communication networks were inundated with calls and pleas from the planetary systems desperate to join SLA Industries. The World of Progress grew.

This procedure is now commonplace and after the first spate of stubbornness from worlds now blackened and charred , SLA-fearing solar systems have woken up to the World of Progress and readily accept the opportunity to prosper under SLA Industries' prospects.

800 years on, unenlightened societies have an entire era of success and power to consider. It is impossible to deny SLA Industries' supremacy. After 900 years, it still remains above all rival companies. The Shaktar and Wraith Raider races were both far sighted enough to see the massive potential and options available to their race, and, as yet, neither have had reason to complain. Planets who are offered 'Progress Control' have a 95% success rate and SLA Industries has been able to lower unemployment figures and double working potential on each planet (statistics provided by media surveys).

SLA also believes that it can obtain the richest resources from the most fragile planets. The World of Progress is not choosy over what planets it has, just as long as they are part of SLA Industries.

Many poor worlds fear that they are ineffectual to the growth of SLA. However the company stresses that SLA Industries does not intend to take what little they have, but to give them what they don't have. SLA has no wish to make strong systems into weak systems, but to make the weak into strong, and the strong, stronger still.

Although SLA spreads through, and controls, many solar systems, it is not a fascist dictatorship that they maintain on every planet. Freedom of the press

and freedom of choice is still in existence even on SLA owned planets, so claim the media. There is no conscription into the service of SLA Industries, though due to the lack of choice before the arrival of SLA (the Conflict Wars) the safer than safe option to work for the biggest company in the World of Progress was irresistible.

Employment is not the only resource SLA Industries offers and receives from its planets and worlds. Sheer manpower is required to obtain raw materials such as metals, water, minerals and oil that can be drawn and mined from the planet's natural resources, hence many worlds are designated as little more than providers of natural minerals. Even livestock can be required for the higher classes.

Under the Three Ps Contract, SLA Industries owns 95% of all the planets in the World of Progress. A useful technique that has enabled SLA Industries to grow enormously over the space of its 900 years of existence. Over the period of time, all of its planets are designated particular purposes due to their commodities that will last and help SLA Industries prosper. There are three separate types of functioning planets in the World of Progress:– Industrial Worlds, Resource Worlds and Labour Worlds.

Industrial Worlds

The Industrial Worlds are SLA Industries most important source of income, since this is where buying and selling societies come in the name of commerce. These are huge, sprawling morasses of factories, industrial facilities and densely populated cities. Upon these planets, operatives are required most. Industrial Worlds are the target for civil and rival uprisings, overrun with crime, subversion and mutation. The largest Industrial World in SLA's realm is Mort, its main headquarters, home to more operatives than anywhere else in the World of Progress. For adventure, commercialism and advancement, Industrial worlds are where it's at.

Resource Worlds

Whilst the World of Progress' ecological environments fall into a state beyond disintegration, SLA Industries struggles to keep its precious Resource Worlds untainted in the face of commerce. As the planets' names suggest, they are vitally necessary for their natural resources and, unlike many of SLA's Industrial and Labour Worlds where they rigorously mine or strip the planets environment, these planets are nurtured and, if not loved, at least well-treated. If SLA Industries takes raw materials from a Resource World, they allow the planet time for regrowth. Resource Worlds are used for studying purposes, water supplies and secret storage facilities undetected by Rival Companies who rely on privacy in order to prosper like Thresher Incorporated.

Labour Worlds

Labour Worlds are pure production and manufacture plants and little else. They are barren, secluded wastelands peppered with industrial complexes. The harsh environment and dangerous conditions define these planets and the workers are usually convicts or down and out financiers hoping to stake their claim in an inhospitable landscape. This is where the greatest amount of sheer productivity occurs. These facilities mass-produce mostly mundane items. However, in some cases they are testing grounds for military hardware and weapons.

UPTOWN CHRONICLE

REPORT BY LEONIE HARTSURE

Mr Slayer and Mort: A Profile

Some know all too well Mr Slayer's appearance. Others have to make do with the fleeting shots shown by the big screen media. But when you stand opposite the man it isn't his height of 9'3" which strikes you, nor his compelling yellow feral-cat eyes. His is an unusual appearance; his face has no proper nose, instead it has an opening like a skull, a constant reminder of the death that lurks in wait for us all. His teeth are as sharp as a shark's and his hands end not in fingers, but long, lethal talons, which he moves more fluidly than any musician I have ever known. Yet what struck me most about Mr Slayer was his hair; his long black hair, shot through with a single white streak, which foams to his waist suggesting all the power of a waterfall beating down on the rocks below.

From Mr Slayer exudes a tremendous feeling of power, which extends far beyond his control of any corporation. It is the power of a being who has mastered death, who has lived longer than some civilisations have endured; it is the power of a being so completely, so utterly different from the human, or even Ebon, condition.

I looked up into Mr Slayer's eyes and the thought that echoed loudly in mind was why are you here? If there are such things as Angels who fall to the state of man, then this would be one. But the people of Mort don't believe in Gods or Angels, Devils or Demons. The only way we have to deal with one of Mr Slayer's kind is to ask him what he plans for our (or his?) world and hope that from wherever his power and influ-

ence springs, it is benevolent, at least to us, the loyal followers of SLA Industries.

I asked him if our world will ever improve, if the constant rainfall will ever stop, if one day they may be something we could seriously call an environment and protect. He told me:

"This planet is a dead planet. In order to make life we have to take life. This planet was already in a state of destruction from the Conflict Wars, we took from it the few resources which were left. Mort is dead now."

And then he smiled,

"But the rainfall will stop some day. Water is a form of heat sink; people don't get so hot under the collar when it rains."

This is how Mr Slayer talked to me for the whole half hour interview. He said nothing, but at the same everything I needed to know. I asked him what will happen, and as I did so I felt as if I was a woman out of legend consulting an Oracle, half expecting to be struck down at any moment.

"There will always be changes. The future was yesterday. We just keep up the progress. People will see changes within their lifetime, but they will be changes in their way of thinking rather than in their way of living. Everything SLA does protects society. What you need to know we will tell you. Several of Intruder's children have shown an unfortunate curiosity about our plans. My advice to them is to wear very dark glasses. It can be unpleasant to find things out –even bad for the health."

Protection or control? That is the question most of us ask in our heart of hearts even if we do not have the courage to voice our concern. But if SLA is the big, bad corporation some very brave and some very stupid people suggest, why do they not chip everyone? I asked Mr Slayer this.

He said, "We look for the ingenious, those who know how to be innovative without breaking the rules. They can serve a purpose, they can even be our rottweilers," (and he indicated a Dark Finder in the corner).

"They protect the state, a state some people wish to corrupt. We can see loyalty without the chip. Even black card agents are of use to the corporation. Their determination to survive is admirable. Contrary to the opinions of an ill– informed minority, we don't seek to condemn those who have a mind of their own."

When Mr Slayer says we he means SLA Industries. But who are SLA Industries? Him? Intruder? Senti? In the common media the most frequent image of SLA is the Contract Killers, but who designed this system, who is behind it all? Slayer. And where does Mr Slayer come from? Not from Mort. And where does he believe his destiny lies? In his own words:

"The planet I came from has vanished. It was a puerile, infantile civilisation not worthy of redemption. Age is nothing to us –Senti, Intruder and I. Once mortality is mastered the years of vanity are nothing. This will always be OUR AGE."

But what is this age? We live in a desperate society. The lines of the old song "You can run, but you can never hide" have never been truer. You can stay safe in Uptown, work away at your office job and ignore the rest of the world, but Downtown, the Cannibal Sectors and other things, which are so much worse their names are no longer spoken, are still here. This is the reality of Mort, the reality of our world.

Mr Slayer has a singular view of Downtown and the darker areas of Mort, "Downtown is a mousetrap for very stupid rodents. There are five abscesses on the face of the Mort –the Cannibal Sectors. These are difficult to remove without destroying the body.

"Once there was Salvation Tower, but it collapsed. Now we work on a much smaller scale. We have found that the excrement of society gathers large and unpleasant flies– this means that we will always know where to look for them. I would also remind you that Downtown is a breeding ground for very talented people.

"If we change the atmosphere people could not survive. We would create a vacuum. And we couldn't take away the lives of all those innocent people, now could we? Remember we don't sell products, we sell a lifestyle. Read, watch television, work for us and you will be safe, contented and well."

So when you look out of your office window onto the rainy streets, remember this is Utopia. SLA Industries have the power to give you just about everything you could desire, as long as you play by the rules, which are, after all, only here for your own protection and the protection of the state.

If you accept this, live the corporation lifestyle, it is easy to forget that not everything is quite how it seems. Mort is a world that can suddenly throw up the strangest phenomena –more things than are conceived of in Horatio's office, as it were. The most recent rumour is of "White Earth". Mr Slayer did not deny it existed.

He explained, "When you speak of White Earth in an Ebon's presence, you will see his eyes twitch. When you speak of it before a Dark Finder you will



MR SLAYER

HEAD OF SLA INDUSTRIES

see beads of sweat appear on his helmet.

"White Earth is something we aim to conceal for the good of the public. There is a very ugly form of pollution on Mort, which may sometimes seep into our society...

"However White Earth is very far away. As long as you read books, watch films, go to the Pit, there should be no need to think of White Earth. Unless you would like to visit it. It can be an enlightening experience.

"We save experience of White Earth for smart people. If White Earth needs you, you will see it."

I, for one, will take care never to give SLA Industries cause to doubt my loyalty as a dutiful, responsible member of Mort's society. I'd advise you to do the same.

LEONIE HARTSURE

OPERATIVE SOCIETY WITHIN SLA INDUSTRIES

The life of an operative is greatly removed from normal civilian life. To most, it is an enviable position of fame, excitement and high adventure, though the television viewing inhabitants of Mort are misled by the biased media channels. In truth, the operative's existence is dangerously short and the payment and promise can hold them together in the face of crisis.

Outside of deadly combat, sinister investigation and high risk corporate wars, the operatives 'off-duty' social life is very rich. They have access to bars, nightclubs and pleasure centres that are lavish and prestigious, as well as off-limits to the public.

It is a strange culture shock to the starting operative in SLA Industries. One minute, he is in the strangled neck of Downtown, duelling with a vicious breed of Carriens, the next getting quietly inebriated in 'The Pit', a massive bar/nightclub designed especially to cater for every operative's pleasures and needs.

Operatives live in a world of passion, power and progress. An unlikely mixture that Slayer has chained together with the links of society. It is getting to a point where operatives have to differentiate which is which, humanity and inhumanity -two subjects that are unpleasantly close together. It is an environment where states of mind are confused, asocial behaviour and psychoses have become popular.

Thousands of operatives struggle relentlessly to clutch onto their sanity and continue to climb the ladder of power and success, SLA Industries' Security Clearance Levels. The SCL status is vital to an operative as it separates them from civilian purpose and allows them to buy and use sophisticated company hardware. Everyone who works for SLA Industries has an SCL and always start at 10 and have to work their way up to SCL 1, the highest position attainable.

In order to sustain faith and loyalty within SLA Industries trust, many operatives are fitted with a Finance Chip to prove their dedication and fear of betrayal. The Finance Chip is inserted into the operatives head allowing SLA to watch them and, in turn, watch other operatives through the chipped person's eyes.

Operatives are hired primarily to suppress rival company activity particularly on Industrial Worlds such as Mort. Protection is required in every circumstance, on the street, beneath the gangplanks of Downtown -even on Mort's television channels, operatives must seek out and stop the vindicating corporate opposition. Operatives are paid for their work which is depicted in the form of Blueprint News Files. These are essentially assignment cards issued out by the Corporate Sector at Head Office, Mort Central.

Payment for the starting operative is rewarded in SCL and credits as the standard currency. However, often at later levels of Security Clearance, respected and experienced operatives can be tempted with offers and favours of a personal nature. Wishes can be granted by SLA Industries at the price of a tough BPN.

THE STRUCTURE OF SLA INDUSTRIES

It is hard to imagine the mammoth size and scale of SLA Industries and how it completely controls the innumerable planets contained within the World of Progress. The workload created from such an industrial expanse is simply immense. In order to control the workforce and burden, SLA Industries has split itself into various departments and divisions encompassing the World of Progress. These departments in turn are controlled and supervised by SLA Industries' Corporate Sector. The Corporate Sector is completely devoted to organisation, commerce and business administration.

The Corporate Sector is the civil service of SLA Industries, controlling the many departments of this almost governmental company. With so many semi-independent departments vying for a controlling position, the Corporate Sector channels funds, bonds, stocks and shares to these departments, maintaining SLA Industries stranglehold on potentially wayward and overly ambitious departments. The need for a

"This image, to me, represents all that is the corporate structure of SLA Industries. If you will note the subtle contrast of youth and efficiency, the juxtaposition of style and the unorthodox and the chiaroscuro of the suit and the blanched face. The tones in this image are a testament to the efficiency of the magazine 'Sector' with their designers striving to achieve humour within a very tight brief.

"The media, in particular Third Eye, have a policy of employing youthful designers and writers to retain the edge over the complacency inherent within the corporate structure. The conservatism and status quo maintained by the average department is shattered in one fell swoop with this image. What we have here is the original relief plate used to generate the magazine cover. Shall we start the bidding at 45 000 UNIs?"

Antoine Cholo, Relief Plate Auction 900, NEW PARIS.



plethora of departments headed by Machiavellian dictators may seem strange, yet when one remembers that their ability to earn and spend money is controlled by a senior department outside their sphere of control, one can see wisdom in Mr. Slayer's policy. One thing departments do is to issue Blueprint News Files hiring operatives to do a multitude of "odd jobs", providing they have the funds to pay for them. With so many projects happening throughout the World of Progress, it is difficult to keep track of who is doing what and to whom, but one can be certain that each department knows exactly what is going on in their field of operations. Individual operatives, however, will often be working on a job for a department with no idea of the outcome of their actions. To them, it is simply a way of paying the bills. All in all, the system works with each department handling their own responsibilities without any single department being capable of making a play for supremacy. Mr. Slayer is in charge –always has been, always will be– with his Corporate Climbers pulling the strings and calling the shots within the departments.

SLA Industries finds the most ambitious of individuals and channels their energies in whatever direction they see fit. The Corporate Climber is the epitome of the World of Progress. They too are a product of SLA policy and their drive and efficiency is a credit to the organisation that spawned them.

"Hello, Department of Investigation? How can I help you?"

"Er, hi. I've just picked up a BPN that said 'Department of Investigation' and I was wondering... "

"What is the serial number please?"

"Erm, EH532 Squiggle... Ah, it's a B."

"Yes. May I take your name and Security Clearance?"

"John Milktree, SCL 8C"

"Voice Identification confirmed Mr. Milktree. We would like you and your squad to investigate the disappearance of a certain individual."

"Who?"

"Would you like to come to the department to finalise the details?"

If, for example, the Department of Investigation has work that needs doing –be it bodyguards, assassinations or investigations– they do not use people from their department to do the work. They use the pool of operatives at their disposal by issuing BPNs (See 'Blueprint News Files' in the 'Operative Hours' chapter). This concept of operatives acting as agents for department works surprisingly well –and cheaply. Almost every department uses operatives in this way, issuing vast amounts of BPNs daily. These departmental BPNs are identical to all the other BPNs available in Slayer's Crib, a BPN waiting hall.

FINANCIERS

"I can tell you why I became a so called 'Corporate Climber'. My family history is one of loyalty to SLA Industries and it was obvious from early days that I would be working for the company as an operative. My physique and history of poor health cut off several of my options. To cut a long, and personal, story short, I studied Business Administration at the Meny University and realised money was to be made at the risk of other operatives. Jeff Moreau, a Contract Killer in my employ, has several sponsorship contracts –for instance Manta Ray Security and Coffin Cigarettes– and exemplifies the image of a killer on the television screens of potential customers. He does his normal operative duties whilst being hounded by the popular press. I got him these sponsorship deals –I made him a contract killer. He earns a flat rate from his sponsorship and I get a cut. A few phone calls and I have an income. That is the beauty of being a financier. I could, also, do duties for a squad of operatives and be a 'ten percenter', taking a cut of everything they earn but, at present, my other duties and projects don't leave me enough time. Yes, it is true: I am a veteran of two black ops. You don't reap rewards without risk. Does that answer your question?"

Cherry Hinton A.K.A. Cerise, Financier and member of 'GBH' squad, speaking to Third Eye News. She earned 250₤ for mentioning, by name, a Contract Killer and his sponsors during a financial report program. Jeff Moreau received two death threats.

The job of financiers, or corporate operatives, is multi–facetted. On the one hand there are squad members (or in some cases solos) who do all of the regular operative duties and on the other hand there are administrators –organising squads, doing paperwork, publicity, management and the like. The typical financier is called a 'ten–percenter' who organises a squad, finds them BPNs or other means of earning money, negotiates for good rates of pay and is available for advice. This service costs the squad 10% of their earnings. This may seem expensive to the squad but when one considers that the financier may find them jobs at prime rates, it is usually worth it.

DEPARTMENTAL CHAIN OF CONTROL

"I wanted some information. I went to the Department of Tourism. They sent me to the Department of Enquiries. I went to the Department of Enquiries. They sent me to the Department of Forms to 'requisition a piece of information'. The form was a requisition form. I filled it out and handed it in, personally, to the Department of Requisitions. They said –and I quote– 'Not our department, my good chap' and sent me here. How the hell do I get a train timetable round here!"

Popular comedy sketch from Happy Half Hour, the SLA Industries operatives' comedy programme.

The corporate structure in SLA Industries is commonly believed to be this bureaucratic but is, in actual fact, much more complicated, with a glut of departments unwilling to intercommunicate making the hapless operative quite tangled in the red–tape. This is rumoured to have been intentional, but is actually this way because of the way SLA Industries grew and metamorphosed from a military group through arms and armaments to the leviathan of corporate excess we all know. The departments are arranged in whatever order they grew in with nobody willing to risk a breakdown by instigating major change. The structure literally evolved with Head Office obviously at the top and Enquiries at the bottom. The other departments all have a line of communication through intermediate departments to Head office. The structure is arranged as a flow chart which is shown within these pages.

Most of the departments in SLA Industries' operate in a similar and basic fashion. They are there to maintain and organise lifestyles and general economics for the entire World of Progress and the operatives and employees that it hires and holds. In spite of this organised mayhem, there are several departments within the corporate structure whose jurisdiction reaches out a great deal further than simple management and administration.

Internal Affairs and Cloak Division are the law and order of SLA Industries and the World of Progress. If anyone or anything threatens the running or the livelihood of the company, the two unsparing departments will solve or destroy the problem without any interference or disturbance. Everyone in SLA Industries lives in fear of Internal Affairs and Cloak Division.

"Ms. Hinton? I'm Joa Bakera from Third Eye News. I was wondering if you could give the viewers a few words about your work in Cloak Division?"

"Of course not... but I could give you an insight into the future."

"Yes, please."

"You don't have one unless you move. Jeff? Target her head..."

The department simply called 'Stigmartyr' holds the most mystery within the Corporate structure. It is a faceless operation without any form, purpose or benefit to SLA Industries –or so operatives and outsiders believe. Rumour has it that Stigmartyr is a special branch of Internal Affairs headed and run by Necanthropes and the pick of the best Internal agents. Nobody is sure of what this department is or what effect it will have on the future. All that is known is that it is only accessible to a select few people with an SCL 2F, and that they do exist. Stigmartyr have already openly taken the lives of three Ebons, all at SCL 2A.

"I've just tried to access an SCL 8 file and my terminal lit up with more D notices than I've ever seen. Paul, you're SCL 5. See if you can access it."

"Ok, I'll have a go."

< Voice Identification>

"Paul Fabarotti, SCL 5B."

< Retina Scan – Open right eye.>

< Identification Positive – Proceed.>

"Access file on Nikita Oblong. Corporate Militia Operative SCL 8"

< Access denied. Please read Data Protection Section D>

"D notice! Damn. This isn't right. Ok, hacking time."

"Paul, are you sure you know what you are doing?"

"Yeah, I'm in. Could you get the door?"

"Paul, it's a man from Stigmartyr, he says..."

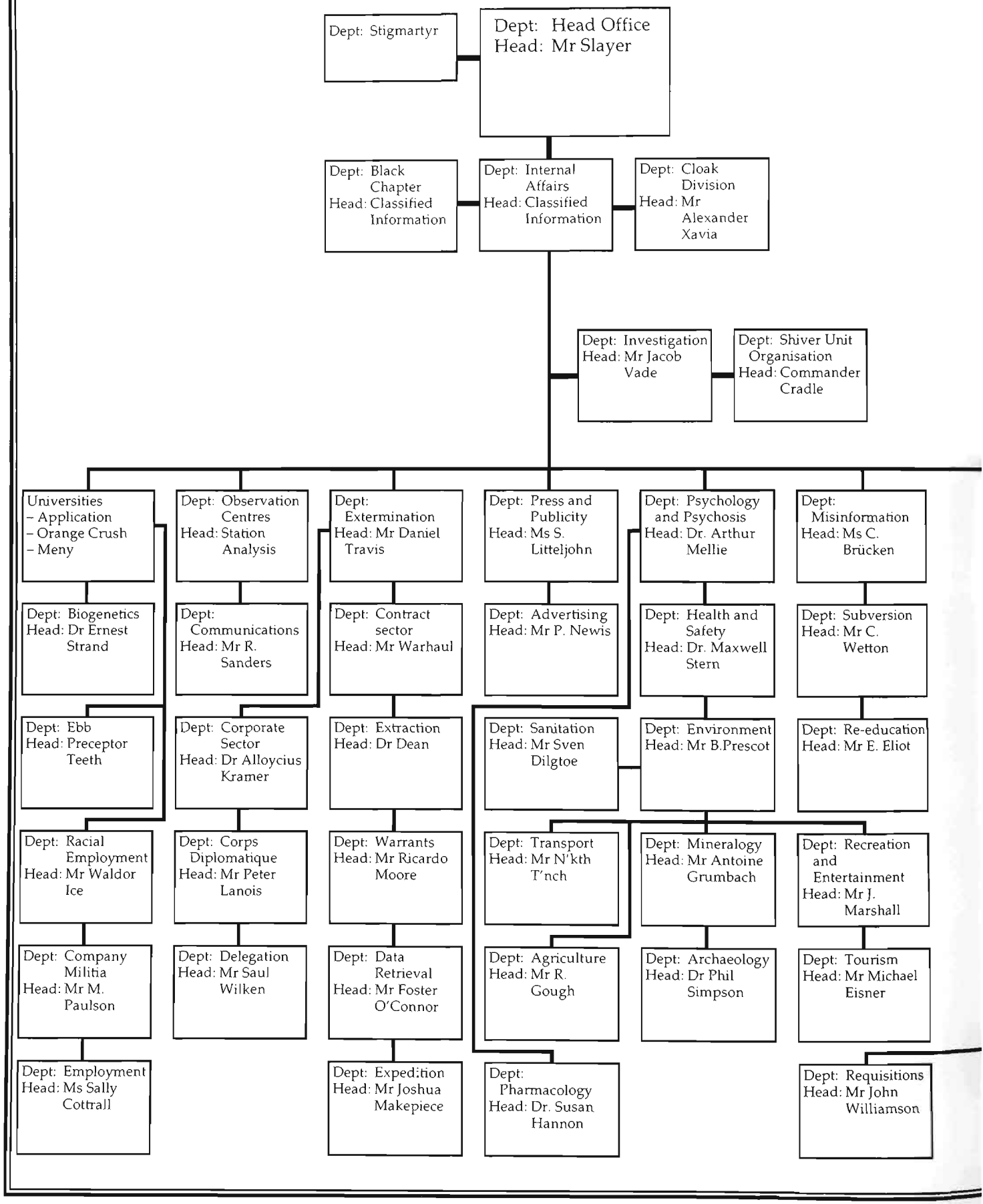
–Blam–Blam–Blam–

"Paul Fabarotti? Micha Andalucia from Stigmartyr. I have here a termination warrant. Would you be so kind as to bleed?"

–Blam–Blam–Blam–

"Thank you."

SLA INDUSTRIES



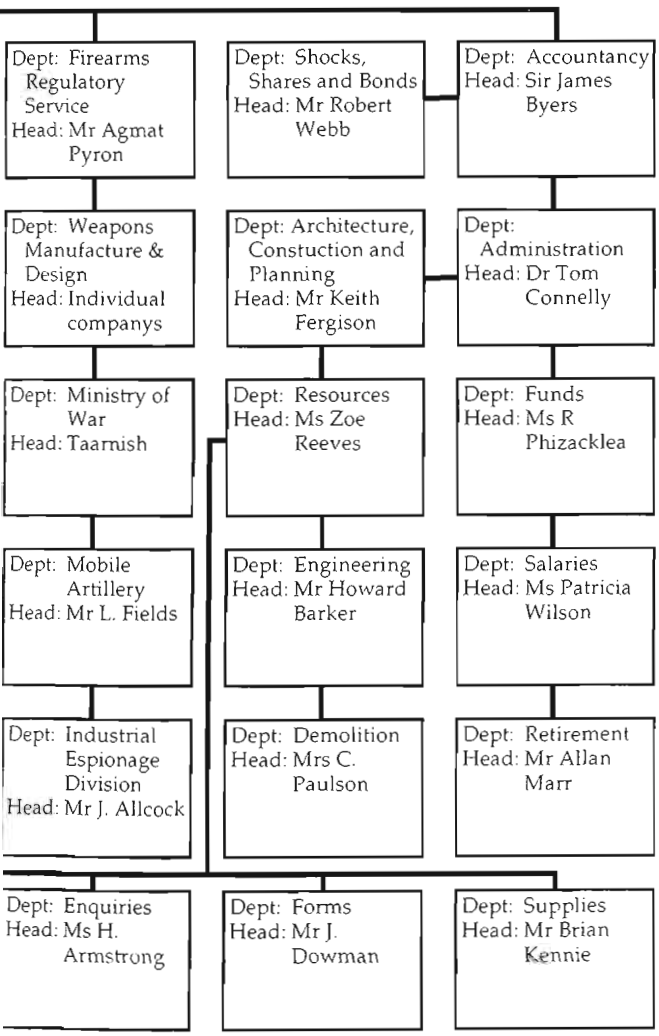
Another uncommon and unfamiliar structure in the World of Progress is the infamous and highly trained 'Black Chapter'. The Black Chapter employs the most worthy and trusted operatives of SLA Industries. These men, women and otherwise are experts in their chosen field and because of their unique proficiency at particular abilities, they act as personal bodyguards to Mr. Slayer, Intruder and Senti as well as on rare occasions when members of the Black Chapter will act as security for heads of departments, high ranking operatives and corporates, even suspects for trial.

To enter the Black Chapter it is of little relevance what species or breed you are –all that matters to the Black Chapter is that you are a master in your chosen field, completely loyal to SLA Industries and you are capable of protecting the figureheads of SLA, particularly Mr. Slayer, against anything.

All the members of the Black Chapter are fanatically loyal to Mr. Slayer and none are below SCL 2A. At the head of SLA Industries' entirety sits its ruthless owner Mr. Slayer, one man in the whole of the World of Progress whom nobody controls or could ever hope to. Mr. Slayer is of massive intellect and power, even the Preceptor Teeth feels lowly in his presence.

Mr. Slayer is a man without compassion, love or mercy, he is the embodiment of the perfect businessman. Mr. Slayer is the dominating clenched fist of commerce and industry whom all inhabitants of the World of Progress pass beneath.

Mr. Slayer has always headed SLA Industries and the World of Progress, and always will, supposing it costs all the souls of reality.



SOCIETY AND OPERATIVES

"SLA Ops? I think they are a waste of good air, not that we have any good air left. They parade around with guns and attitudes that nobody deserves to put up with. They make my life difficult and yours short. They promote drug abuse and rile kids into frenzied behaviour that I have to clean up. Nothing a good napalm cannon can't cure, that's what I say."

Sergeant Wallis, Monarch Law Enforcement, Downtown Eastside.

"I love SLA Ops, especially Massacre. He's a dream boat. He can rescue me from the clutches of Thresher, anyday... Please?"

Julie Masterson, Age 14, Civilian.

"One of them shot me in the leg once. I deserved it, of course. I called her 'cute' in front of her friends so she, quite rightly, shot me. Do you want to see the scar?"

Mike Sidcup, Barman, The Haunt.

SLA Industries has operatives all around Mort. The public has mixed views on them ranging from fear and hatred to total admiration. Society in the World of Progress needs operatives to maintain the carefully and perilously balanced status quo it currently holds. SLA Industries intends the current state of affairs to remain and so they promote their operatives as champions, like knights of old, inviting all–comers to try their hand at toppling their pride of place as the most opulent heroes company society has to offer. Gunslingers from Rival Companies throughout the World of Progress are openly invited to try their hand.

An operative has rights described in the 'Opera-

tive's Handbook'. These rights are given to them by SLA Industries and they hold true as long as SLA is in control. SLA gives them rights and, in return, the operatives maintain SLA's stronghold over society to the best of their ability. The citizenry of Mort, for example, either has to put up with operatives or stand in the way of progress. SLA's progress.

The populace will, in general, not hinder an operative 'acting in the course of duty' but there have been many, poorly publicised, stances taken and vocalised by civilians asking where are 'our rights'. Wave Lindsay was one of the most public advocates of freedom and many rumours have been bandied about regarding his disappearance –most involve 'operative activity'.

The media, on the other hand, promotes the operative as 'the hero' in scenarios including terrorists, invaders and public safety. The public take these images to their hearts and and make them their own. The operative replaces the media idol creating a desire. The desire to be an operative. The desire to work for SLA Industries.

"Mister Ebon, Sir? Can I have your autograph?"

"Sure kid, what's your name?"

"Billy Veritas, sir."

"Good name, kid. Very honest. Here you go, Billy."

"What does that say?"

"It says 'to Billy Veritas, may you find the truth in more than your name' and then it says 'Silkwing' which is my name. See? It's on my SCL badge. Do you want to work for SLA, Billy?"

"'Course. I want a gun just like yours. It's a BLA 046 M Blitzer with full recoil baffling, CAF laser painting and custom digital optics scopes, isn't it?"

A HISTORY OF PROGRESS

The advances in technology since the incept of SLA Industries' 'Big Picture' have been exponential. The military and medical implications of such a wide ranging view are impressive, if a touch obvious, but the advances in business administration tools would have to be put forward as the most surprising benefactor of the resources made available. The Finance Chip is the first, most obvious, advance but this in turn owes its existence to the advance of the colour codex bitstream analogue processing system and the advent of true biogenetics.

The colour codex system of data processing was developed by SLA Industries' 'Chronos Laboratories, Research and Development Division' who developed the concept of true analogue computing transmittable down the already available fibre–optic cables that spanned the many technological planets in the then young World of Progress.

The principal spawned by the huge research funds presented at the time was that of a true analogue computer that was implicitly interfacable to the plethora of existing digital data network matrices operating on a nodal pretext of asynchronous communications. The main systems operating at the time of the release of the Faith, the first successful implementation of the theory, were the standard multifaceted parallel processors of the superconductor age.

Faith competed against the fastest available machines in a great public exhibition and showed its true colours as the next step forward, with its reality enhancing interface having an intuitive feeling and an invisible operating system. The cost of Faith was rumoured to be eighty–five times the cost of the most expensive superconductor based machine but the running costs were much lower as cryogenic cooling systems were not necessary. The superconductors used in the then industry standard machines only worked at a cat's whisker away from absolute zero and, as such, required high–cost negative–thermal induction systems that decimated available power resources. The cost of Faith, and all the subsets produced in conjunction, dropped rapidly and Faith took over as the common application cruncher of the World of Progress. The Succubus and Incubus colour codex desktop machines took their place in history as the first cheaply available bitstream analogue machines and many home offices still sport recent models.

The interface between man and machine became as simple as the standard interface between man and man. Succubus understood human speech and writing as easily as a twelve year old child and learned faster. Sketches could be drawn in fresh air with the 'reality overlay' glasses, or the headset for true stereoscopic placement of sight and sound, as the full body of the user could be tracked in real time. The only thing missing from Succubus was haptic response: The sense of touch. Incubus, on the other hand, was the same as Succubus only larger and had an immersion system where the hands, and even whole body in some cases, could be given the impression of a tactile environment.

Dildonics was the most successful application of both these systems as Succubus came with a haptic suit named the Second Skin to enable total immersion in a world that superseded the previous digital worlds but the escape from the world was as short

lived as it had been when it was first introduced on the old superconductor free–running VISC machines. The major advance of the analogue machines was that it allowed untrained individuals to operate machines by talking to them and thus alleviating the trauma of the technophobe having to operate machines.

Computers became colleagues as opposed to tools and could actually train individuals in tasks. Reality Overlay became a means of enhancing the intelligence of the wearer by 'dropping hints' about the task at hand for instance a mechanic repairing a vehicle could have the first bolt to be loosened highlighted with a sound mapped over reality that could follow the bolt through the Reality Overlay as the mechanic's head moved through space. The bolt would appear to be 'Pinging' and flashing to the mechanic. The visual and audio cues placed over the two senses of the mechanic would enhance the normal perceived reality with relation to the task at hand. The ultimate training aid available to the mechanic would be a Reality Overlay based system with a little cartoon–style character, known as a 'Sprite', running over the vehicle pointing out the different parts needing removing in order to reach a defective part. The computer could not diagnose the problem, but it could aid the mechanic in speedily finding it by showing the quickest route to the defective parts.

The common use for computers in the World of Progress is as general data management systems i.e. personal organisers, text processors, databases etc. The standard text processor is easy to use as the user just talks to the machine and the machine does all the hard work and replaces a secretary. No experience is necessary to operate the most sophisticated computer for producing, say, a letter as almost anyone can talk their ideas into a microphone and describe how they want their letter to look. The Incubus offers designers the option of designing a fork or spoon in a modelled 3D world and handle it as they would a real object. A gun designer equipped with a high–SCL, full haptic response system, can test the amount of recoil and the 'feel' of their new design. The dangers inherent in such a system are not to be ignored but are rarely used to their full danger levels.

The advances in the top–flight systems used by the highest echelons of business and design are passed to the consumer market within five years and need constant updating and upgrading to stay close to the competitors. The top SLA computer manufacturers are Chronos, Guava–Half, Wakisashi, Tangential Systems and Beyond The Pale.

"The Incubus is regarded as Beyond The Pale's finest design and who am I to disagree. Yet, for sheer processing power, I would not ignore the Tangential Systems Bird of Prey series. These, in my humble opinion, are the most economical machines available this week.

"Only time can tell, and if Guava–Half have their Grimoire Magnificum 1ns upgrade card ready next week, both BTP and TS will have a fight on their hands. Both Chronos and Wakisashi have a quiet week ahead of them, according to release schedules and will both have to do well in the following week if they wish to be in the number one spot and not the number four spot.

"So what will the G–H Grimoire card mean to you and me? Well, it means we can finally have a GIPS station on our desktops for less than an average month's salary. We have several machines claiming near–GIPS performances but one is finally available that matches the claims at a price that takes it out of the offices and into the homes."

The finance chip is the most successful and famous example of biogenetics and computer systems working together and may possibly be the first organic processor. When the chip is inserted into the skull, it positions itself using a limited power supply, to the base of the hypothalamus. When it arrives there, it latches onto a vein or artery and attaches a form of dynamo into the flowing blood so it may power itself. The built–in power supply breaks down and is absorbed into the blood stream. The antennae by which it transmits information received to the observation centres, start to unfurl and probe into any available recesses. The antennae will, eventually, extend to 8". This process takes little over one hour. During this time, the chip has developed other organs to process the blood and starts using the energy and material to grow the receptor tendrils that 'read' the brain. The translator organs also start growing as do the clock and visual overlay organs.

The whole finance chip now takes up 6 square inches of the skull interior and is latched on to the brain as a parasite. The host brain suffers no ill effects as the finance chip uses what appears to be glandular secretions to trick the immune system into thinking it should have always been present. After the hour it takes to seat in, the chip is fully functioning and transmitting the host's sight and hearing to the observation centres and receiving their credit information and placing it on the visual overlay so it appears to float in front of their field of vision. SLA Industries can see your every action and keep your finances up to date with the fastest credit system available.

"Finance chip? Love it! So I lose a bit of privacy but, hey, what do I have to hide from SLA? I never need a watch and always know how much credit I have. That to me is dead useful and... I get 200¢ a month extra! Great. Smashing. Super."

James Bowness, Firefly Squad, SCL 9B.

"Is my urine meant to be blue?"

"It's a side effect of the chip. The power supply is dissolved..."

"Will it stay this colour?"

"No, it's only temporary."

"Shame. It's a nice colour..."

Discussion between James Bowness and Dr Huffarr following chip fitting.

"What time is it?"

"6.42."

"How did you know? You don't have a watch. You're chipped aren't you?"

A SLA Op on undercover, blowing their cover.

BIOGENETICS

Genetic engineering in its early days was probing and fumbling in the dark for answers to questions that were being asked incorrectly:

"Can we create people from strands of DNA?" – Yes but they are dead, devoid of the elusive spark of life.

"Can we clone people?" – Yes but you cannot clone a soul.

"Can we create a new form of life?" – A new form, yes. Life, no.

Theological discussions were rife during the early days with religious magnates all trying to become the new priests of biogenetics. The religious arguments were not so much "are we playing God" but "how in heaven does he do it". It wasn't until the intervention of Cadavar, Intruder and Senti under the watchful eye of Slayer that biogenetics were seeded. It was not by a mistake that Cadavar called his biogenetically enhanced army 'The House of the Black Church". He intended to be the God of biogenetics. He had, with his team of genetic engineers, made more advances in the field of biogenetics than any other person. He had created a process of growing muscle tissue and grafting it onto humans. He wore his enhancements with a religious pride yet even he could not create life. The missing link was the art of Deathwake practised by the dark witch Senti. She had grasped the elusive missing link from the chain of life creation. Her magic, as it was known, provided Slayer's team with a soul creation device, or at least that is how it seemed. The quotes from the archives of SLA Industries tell some of the story and other parts have been told elsewhere.

Extracts from the diary of Alan Filjoshu, Karma Technician, Pre–World of Progress. Reproduced from handwritten text currently in the Archives of Scientific Research, Alexandria Library, Mort. We apologise, in advance, for the learned doctor's bigoted attitudes.

02–1

"We started work, at last. We have several labs at our disposal and funding from this guy known only as Slayer. Strange names are in evidence, here at project Storm. We've got a Cadavar and an Intruder. It must be a craze, or something.

"Work started as soon as we had settled down. I said something like 'We could do with a larger autoclave' or something. Within fifteen minutes, we had two. Someone has money. My bet's on the suit, Slayer."

04–3

"Funding is not a problem. This Cadavar guy is something special. His research papers are very legible, written in the style of a military man, yet highly technical, demanding no skill to read but lots to understand. He has working examples of biogenetic enhancement tissues. He's wearing them. He is huge, powerful looking and has a certain charisma that belies his stature but he looks at me strangely. Intruder, on the other hand is a weird, elfin guy with no meat on his bones and spiky hair. He can be trusted, I think.

"Oh, yeah. Another member of the odd–name–gang is due to arrive soon. She's called Senti and she's supposed to be a witch. A real one."

04–6

"I've just found out the pedigree of this team. Intruder and Cadavar are military men. Cadavar I guessed was military but Intruder? He doesn't look the type but apparently he is one of the best warriors around. Looks can be deceiving, I suppose.

"Senti arrived today. I hope she is as useful as everyone suggests. This project is going nowhere. We make great corpses but no Biogenetics that live. Mary, my wife, says we need a woman on the team to create life because men can't do it."

04–19

"I'm worried about Cadavar. I think he has some pent up sexual problems, the way he acts. He tries to

look like the ultimate man but wants to make babies in tanks and throws tantrums when his experiments don't work. He's uncomfortable in the presence of Senti and some of the women here are spreading rumours about him. I don't know what but there is something odd going on."

05–15

"We've got a nickname now. Intruder said that he did not want to be used for the experiments. He said 'You don't understand. You don't want my Karma to live.' We're nicknamed 'The Karma Mob' by the other research teams. It sounds cute."

06–30

"Life! Call it what you want, I'll call it life! She did it! That eldritch witch did it. I don't know how but she did it. She calls it Deathwake but it sounds like hocus–pocus to me. I haven't seen the Storm thing yet. I'm off to get very drunk."

07–1

"I have seen it. It looks like Intruder, only meaner. Slayer took it away because Intruder was threatening to kill it. He looked furious. What do you expect from a clone? They are working on number 2, the three–hundred and thirteenth attempt, if you include Cadavar's experiments. Speaking of Cadavar, he's nowhere to be seen. There are rumours of a scandal involving Frank, the reprographics trainee but that's gossip for you. He just upped and left. Good riddance.

"We hope to finish this project and get on with production soon as possible. We need loyal, or should I say expendable, soldiers. The price is right and orders are being placed. It's like working to a deadline. Or rather a lifeline."

07–8

"It's been made, grown or whatever. It is one ugly brute! We definitely had a phobic scatological theme in the office. We weren't sure what to make of him (it's a boy, for those interested) but Slayer just smiled and said research was over and that we were looking at the soldier of the future. I hope the 313s finish the war because they are getting me down and I want my son to survive to my age."

07–20

"My wife was right. A woman's touch was needed, bless her superstitious heart. Are we gods? I doubt it. We are, however, damn good scientists. Sod the religious implications, I got my bonus. Healthy bonus."

07–25

"While wrapping up, I saw the Deathwake device. It ripped my arm off! Do you know what we did? We made me a new arm! Can you believe it? My left arm has no hair on it but I still have an arm. Mary didn't even notice! I'm off out to get horrendously drunk and seduce my secretary."

Whether or not Senti created souls doesn't matter, the fact that she solved the problem was enough. She still hasn't told anybody how it works and nobody cares. It works in spite of the Deathwake device no longer being in the possession of Karma. Karma do not complain, however, as stormers still come off the production line with little or no faults.

With the current trend in biogenetics taking a new turn, Cadavar's lost techniques of personal enhancement have nearly been replicated. The fact that this is taking place 900 years after he left with his plans and techniques is a testament to the ability of the arch–traitor. A Karma department named Nuke Tendon have promised to show their findings within five years of the 900th celebration. The other new advances are the department named Doppelganger's researches into two lines: a new toy and a top–secret project.

Biogenetics have since been integrated into everyday life with DNA Hallmarks outgrowing the popularity of the traditional tattoo in spite of the higher cost and the medical advances alone are enough to fill several weighty tomes. The Karma Facility has become so inundated with work and research projects that it has had to start several break–away factions and sub–departments. With biogenetic clothes and furniture available to anyone with the funds and meat being grown by the slab, replacing the need for agriculture or imports on a resource stripped planet like Mort, biogenetics has become as much a part of life as the cold fusion engine. You can buy a Stormer cat, dog, bird or any animal you choose. In fact, if you see a real cat, you are hallucinating. Furniture is also grown, with self–cleaning sofas, regenerating futons and all the other designs, you have the widest choice of living furniture short of living in a tree house.

With the new design Stormers presently undergoing tests and the other advances currently under way, biogenetics is here to stay.

"I bought my coat at the same time as my DNA Hallmark. My next of kin will not get this piece of bioengineering off my back. I am going to be buried in it. They will however inherit my Hallmark through my genetic code. It says 'Ebons are crap'..."

A Karma aficionado.

OPERATIVE HOURS

"Yeah, it can be really hard to get ahead in SLA Industries once you're in as an operative. The first month of employment was the worst for me. When you start out you're a dime a dozen, you're a nobody, so you've got to get noticed: That's the key. SLA Industries always starts you on a 'blue' –a street maintenance BPN. Don't be fooled by the monotony, it's one of the best chances you'll get at being seen by the media, press and stuff. They're the guys in SLA who make or break you so don't be stupid and mess them about. Be smart and use them. They want to be used –everything you do on the street is worth money to them.

"If you do well and promote SLA, you could have sponsors like Karma or Dark Lament knocking at your door, SLA Industries is full of operatives but you've got to be better than good to get sponsors. They won't put their name to any old crap.

"My three tips to you are these: get noticed, stick with SLA Industries and, most importantly, don't mess with Mr Slayer or you'll wind up dead."

'Amber' –Human Operative SCL 8A

SLA Operative: A freelance piece worker that provides SLA Industries with a variety of services. SLA operatives have a broad spectrum of functions and labels within the progressive structure, many act as internal investigators and combat operatives while others enlist as counter–espionage agents and corporate administrators. Operatives are paid generously for their efforts to maintain SLA Industries as the prime Suppressor Power.

The SLA operative lives an enterprising and adventurous life –a dangerous and often quite violent existence of advancement in SLA Industries' totalitarian society. To the SLA operative, the World of Progress is an insane swirling mass of media hypnosis and television addiction that gives and takes daily from the operative structure. An operative is destined to face a selection of hardships and unnerving horrors before receiving their heart's desire, the power that sustains them. The operative must be willing to take big risks and be bold in the face of his superiors.

SLA Industries has unlimited resources to reward those who work hard within the structure. If you work within the rules, you can't go far wrong. SLA Industries favours the disciplined member of its progressive regime. If you have a goal or a need, or even just want protection from a harsh environment, come and work for SLA Industries. They shall grant your wishes in return for your effort to retain SLA Industries as the World of Progress' true leader and protector.


BPN FOR MC BRAZIL
ROSES PRESENTED BY KARMA
GLO
GOOD
CIGARETTES
SMOKE THEM A
SMILE! 70
「月」の称号を与えられたロブスピラヴィーは指先が王な武器である掌から発するビーム兵士の上位を占める者は
NO SMOKING 70
MIND THE STEP



In order to progress within SLA Industries, operatives have to climb the Security Clearance Ladder by obtaining information, accepting and completing Blueprint News Files, suppressing rival companies that threaten SLA and gradually receiving media and public recognition. Some, however, still wish to live a relaxed and carefree lifestyle and remain in the shadow of public opinion, leading private lives. SLA Industries accepts this without question as long as they can keep their record clean and don't abuse the power SLA gives them as operatives.

Although SLA Industries employs a vast number of operatives to do its bidding, they employ a massive workforce that deal with day to day tasks –mundane labour duties such as production and administration. These employees take up the majority of SLA Industries' staff. Despite operatives and employees working under a united autocracy, there is a dividing line between the two that must never be crossed. While employees deal with mundane tasks and repetitive jobs, the operative's lifestyle is a great deal more hazardous and risky. SLA Industries teaches its operatives to face and become murderers on a daily basis.

With such a dangerous and often short–lived existence, operatives have a free reign to do as they please –within reason. Operatives are the exception to society, they are specials, trained to expert status in their chosen fields. SLA Industries will not accept anything less than professionalism.

Operatives dislike being termed as 'mercenaries'. That is the name given to the members of the resistance corporation DarkNight, a terrorist movement that gladly enlists true mercenaries willing to erode SLA Industries by whatever means possible. Operatives are freelancers who do not desire the confines created by becoming one of SLA Industries' employees. Operatives usually wish to remain independent in the World of Progress. However, SLA Industries offers the best rates and has the most power available; no one has ever usurped SLA from its ruling position –it is an industrial giant that controls the totalitarian state and every operative knows what Cloak Division does to 'turncoats'.

Previously, many operatives took a lethal gamble by leaving SLA Industries and joining DarkNight due to 'better offers', so SLA sent out agents from Cloak Division (SLA's internal police force) to hunt them down. The departed ex–operatives knew too much so Cloak Division had them terminated on sight: quietly and, of course, out of view from the public eye.

SLA Industries had tried to offer its operatives promises of wealth and achievement which will, more often then not, be honoured as long as the operatives remain faithful and work hard against the likes of DarkNight and Thresher, so much so that it would appear that young hopefuls would be fools not to work for SLA.

SLA Industries owns everything. It controls entire television networks, makes the best guns, armour and equipment, it offers the best Ebb training for the Ebon race and has signed binding alliances with both of the predominant, intelligent alien races –Shaktars and Wraith Raiders. Most importantly though, SLA Industries has the ultimate reputation, it protects and owns the World of Progress that all inhabit.

Millions of credits and the World of Progress' youth population is raked in every day to be absorbed by SLA Industries. So much so that most children growing up in the World of Progress believe that they were born simply to join SLA. This is because of SLA's control on society. Most of the SLA worshipping children have grown up in the industry and taught their children the same philosophy –and their chil-

Standard operative's contract of employment

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Between Department of Employment,
Located at SLA Industries
Headquarters,
Mort Central.

And _____
residing at _____
_____
_____

Whereas the second party has agreed to undertake employment offered by the first party as an operative, THEREFORE the parties AGREE:

1.On behalf of and as instructed by SLA Industries (hereinafter referred to as "the Employer"), we hereby offer _____ (hereinafter referred to as "the Operative") a place of employment within the said company.

2.The contract shall be held to have commenced on _____ and, subject to the provisions hereof, shall continue until _____ and from year to year thereafter dissolved by written notice given by the Employer not less than 30 minutes prior to termination or retirement.

3.The Operative shall be entitled to information within the company, SLA Industries, respective of his or her Security Clearance Level to be able to undertake his work successfully.

4.The Operative shall be entitled to the option of a finance chip when they enter the company. If he/she chooses the finance chip option, he will be entitled to a 200₢/month salary as well as Observation Centre assistance for no less than 80% of the time spent with the company.

5.The Operative shall be entitled to accommodation offered by the Employer and shall be held to be responsible for the rent and other charges accumulated during his/her stay. The accommodation shall be maintained to a certain order as shall be mutually agreed by both parties thereof.

6.A personal accident insurance policy shall be established by the Health and Safety department of the Employer for the benefit of the Operative and his/her dependants in terms to be agreed by both parties.

7.The Operative shall devote sufficient time and attention to the Employer's work subject to the provisions thereof.

8.No Operative shall, without the express consent of the Employer, do any of the following acts:

a) work with, converse with, make contracts or agreements with or correspond with rival company operatives or subversives out with the normal course of his work; or

b) endorse any bill of exchange or promissory note, or contract any debt, on account of the Employer, or in any manner pledge it's credit or employ it's funds; or

c) as an individual, enter into any speculative transactions other than by way of investment; or

d) knowingly do or permit anything to be done whereby the company property may be subjected to diligence of any kind; or

e) act in such a way as to bring his name or the reputation of the Employer into disrepute; or

f) grossly neglect the work of his Employer; or

g) take any steps by way of control or conduct of the company business which are not in accordance with policy laid down by the Employer; or

h) act in any respect contrary to the provisions of this Contract or to good faith between the parties; or

i) use any type of pharmaceutical product without medical authorization (See sub-clause No. 37 of the Operative handbook); or

j) take any steps hostile towards the Employer or any departments thereof including media departments (See sub-clause No. 49 of the Operative handbook)

If any Operative shall do any of the above acts, then in any of these events, the Employer may terminate, retire or expell the Operative concerned with the effect from such date as shall be specified in a written notice given by or on behalf of the Employer to the Operative concerned who shall be deemed to have ceased to be an Operative on such a date.

9. a) Any Operative may retire from the company on giving not less than one months' notice in writing to the Employer and will be subject to a complete de-brief and final evaluation.

b) If the Operative i)becomes of unsound mind, as evidenced by a medical certificate ii) becomes in reasonable opinion of the Employer incapable of contributing efficiently to the company or iii) is absent from the company without the consent of the Employer for a continuous period of four months or an aggregate of 220 days in any period of two consecutive years, he shall be deemed to have retired from the company on the expiry period of 30 minutes written notice given tohim by the Employer.

10.Interpretation in this Contract

a) words importing the singular shall include the plural, and vice versa;

b) words importing the male gender shall include the female gender.

11.If during the continuance of this Contract agreement or after its termination any disrepute, question or difference shall arise between the parties or Trustee of any party or any of them, the division of which is not otherwise hereinbefore specially provided for, as to the meaning, intent or construction of these presents or the transactions of the agreement, the expulsion, termination or retirement of any party, the dissolution or winding up of the agreement, or any valuation herein provided or the rights or liabilities of any party or the Trustee of any party hereunder, or otherwise in relation to the agreement, the same shall be referred to an Arbiter to be mutually chosen by the parties to any such dispute, question or difference or, failing agreement to be appointed on the application of such party by the Sheriff Principal of Central Mort; such Arbiter shall have power to assess and award damages and the decree or decrees arbitral of such Arbiter, interim or final, shall be conclusive and binding on all concerned and the application of section 5923 of the Administration of Justice (Mort) Act 753 is expressly excluded.

12. The parties consent to registration hereof and of any decree arbitral to follow hereon for preservation and execution:

SUBSCRIBED by us the said _____ (the Operative) and _____ (the Employee), a representative of the Department of Employment, SLA Industries on _____ before these witnesses:-

_____ _____
(signature of first party) (signature of second party)

Witness _____ Witness _____ Witness _____
Address _____ Address _____ Address _____
_____ _____ _____
Occupation _____ Occupation _____ Occupation _____



dren's children follow suit.

Everybody wants to work for SLA Industries.

SLA Industries' operatives vary widely due to the introduction of racial integration and the advent of Biogenetics. The Operative Structure is broken down into four categories of classification to enlist in SLA Industries. These classifications help with the bureaucracy inherent in the amount of applications received.

HUMAN RACE

The Human Race is the oldest and most widespread race in the World of Progress. A large percentage of the Human Race are employed as Militia troops for War Worlds and Shiver Units on Industrial Worlds due to the massive human population on these worlds. The media have had most success with humans because of their intelligence and versatility.

EBON RACE

The Ebon Race have proved a staggering success in the World of Progress. Ebons have a special gift –Ebb– which some might refer to as psychic ability however that is a broad and ill–educated analysis. The Ebon race is an emotional and inquisitive species who always aim to expand their mind and many follow the path of Necanthropes, the next evolutionary step.

BIOGENETICS

This is an up–to–the–minute, ever–evolving and expanding race of genetically created beings that founded a large part of the World of Progress in which we live today. The Stormers are a SLA designed species that improve and advance with each new biogenetic and scientific breakthrough.

ALIEN RACES

The Shaktar Race and Wraith Raiders come from distant and foreign environments very different to the multitude of Industrial Worlds where they operate alongside Human and Ebon operatives. Both these races have presented SLA Industries foremost, with the great strength of the Shaktar warrior race and Wraith Raiders' determined attitude, resilience and speed.

Even within the realm of television viewing, SLA Industries is at war with Rival Companies, in spite of Third Eye News and SIC Broadcast control of the network, subversive pirate channels –Channel Resistance, to name but one– constantly raid the air waves or underground cables.

Most pirate channels are devised by DarkNight Industries, their aim is to infiltrate SLA Industries' peak viewing hours with broadcasts that lasts seconds but with the potential to last a lifetime since their programmes contain little more than scenes recorded on the streets with SLA operatives being massacred by DarkNight mercenaries. Channel Resistance is one of SLA's most dangerous television adversaries since it states its aims are to show SLA Industries' corruption and cover-ups, all in the public's best interests.

SLA Industries still has the public on its side and they can see how SLA has the manpower and force to crush DarkNight but SLA is vulnerable on television, it is easy to influence viewers with spectacles of brutality and conquering rival forces against SLA Industries. This is a successful option for skilled and tough operatives wanting power and public recognition: Everybody loves a hero, especially if they work for SLA.

Contract Killers –sponsored operatives– have made this their career and constantly compete against DarkNight and Thresher in the public eye. They portray themselves as an image or an idol that the public can respond to. The bigger the ratings they give a station, the more money and recognition the Contract Killer receives.

The Contract Circuit is a career option open only to the foolhardy and the reckless. Contract Killers make a name for themselves and it is common to suffer the onslaught of rival snipers and assassins. The bigger the name, the bigger the personal health risk.

Media acknowledgement is, nonetheless, open to all operatives in SLA, even short public speeches in favour of SLA Industries can gain the well versed, high steps on the SCL ladder –but don't expect miracles.

SLA Industries controls a great many sub-companies that sell to the entire World of Progress. These minor corporations range from gun manufacturers like FEN and BLA (Berenyi Light Arms) all the way to everyday goods manufacturers such as Sigerson Airware and Feelgood cigarettes.

Operatives see sub-companies not just as goods manufacturers to the World of Progress, but also talent scouts: potential sponsors. SLA operatives' sponsors come in all shapes and sizes, from the serious to the sublime, the most prestigious of which are the vital backbone of SLA's production, Karma (Biogenetics) and Dark Lament (Ebon suppliers).

When a sub-company wishes to sponsor an operative, they are approached by the company with a

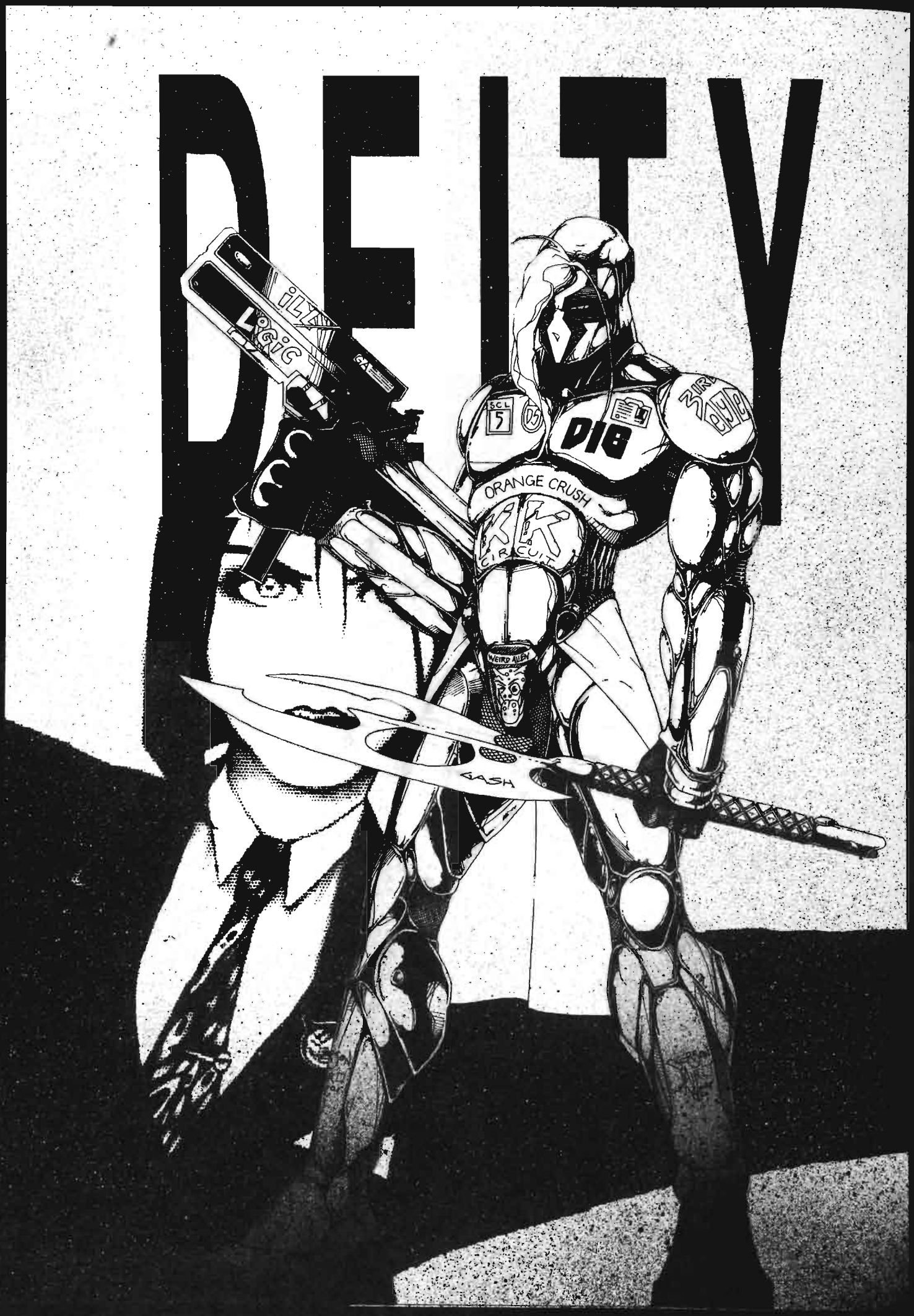


Sponsorship Agreement. If the operative accepts the sponsorship proposals they wear or carry the sub-company's logo on their armour and other equipment. When the operative is seen or captured on Third Eye News or some other such SLA channel, he will be subconsciously advertising his sponsor to the World of Progress. As the operative, or preferably Contract Killer, progresses in SLA Industries, they will receive more money as well as bigger and better SLA sponsors. The sponsored operative can also sign a Franchise Deal, where he can put his name to certain products the sponsor manufactures and acquire various reductions and privileges offered by the sub-company.

Combat Operatives and Contract Killers from the Contract Circuit will always attain more sponsors simply because the Contract Killers are more fashionable and attract more violence.

> "Hello, Deity? I'm Jorgen, an investigator, SCL 7B. I have just come to the end of an investigation and realise that the level of aggression required to wrap it up is beyond my means. We are looking at large potential media coverage and was wondering if, for a fee payable to myself, of course, you would be willing to assist me. I was looking at 50% of your on-air fee and associated sponsorships. Yes, that is after your financier's cut. Third Eye are waiting in the wings. Are you interested? Good."

Working within the Contract Circuit, the media becomes your life –it alone can sustain you. To enter the Contract Circuit, the operative must have an


DEITY
ILL
LOGIC
GAL
SCL
5
D5
D18
ORANGE CRUSH
CIRCUIT
WEIRD ALIEN
SLASH

Exemption Certificate (dispensation from Psychological Evaluations) and a track record of at least four sponsors from SLA Industries. Once inside the Contract Circuit, the operative is a fully fledged Contract Killer that can obtain high paying Extermination Warrants and Copyright Agreements for their specialised and customised weapons providing them with protection from plagiarism of their image.

BLUEPRINT NEWS FILES

Blueprint News Files (BPN's) are the lifeblood and saviour of new, fresh operatives. These are missions and assignments issued by the varying heads of departments within the corporate structure of SLA Industries.

A BPN File is a small blue card that reads the basic objective of the mission, the SCL requirement, the experience and training packages required from the applying operative and the consolidated payment offered upon completion of the BPN.

Starting operatives at SCL 10 have to collect their own BPN's (see article 1.9 of The Operative's Handbook). Only through a higher SCL and reputation are operatives given or offered a BPN. It is all a matter of working hard, acting smart and getting noticed. The problem is, nobody notices SCL 10 operatives so they have to join the massive queues in the Blueprint News Hall (nicknamed 'Slayer's Crib') and pick up their standard BPN's such as sewer clean-up and street maintenance. Everybody hates the Blueprint News Hall, because it takes hours to get a simple BPN. When you enter, you have to register (this takes approx. one hour) then you are told to take a seat in the 500 metres square waiting room. This is a truly aggravating and mind-numbingly boring experience that can last anything up to three hours. If you even leave to get a packet of cigarettes, you'll probably lose your appointment and have to start all over again so stock up on consumables and go to the toilet before you queue.

The best option for a starting operative is to play safe and ask for a code Blue BPN when they sign the initial contract. Blue BPNs are mostly street maintenance and essentially this means operatives are likely to be keeping the Uptown streets clean from tramps, the homeless and disreputable Downtown gang members, sometimes eradicating Carriens which have penetrated Mort Central's perimeter.

Blue BPNs are paid on a daily basis and the operatives are not expected to face too much trouble, however they are expected to act accordingly if real conflict occurs, or if something needs covering up...

Receiving and successfully completing BPNs is the best source of income open to the operative, and BPN objectives and assignments vary in purpose. The missions operatives undertake from BPNs are colour coded to specify the task in hand.



To date there are ten colour code variants which are as follows:

BLUE -Street Maintenance: Suppressing urban and civilian disturbances, sewer clean-up and extermination of Carriens vermin. City control in its broadest terms.

WHITE -Investigation: Following up enquiries, investigating murder cases and serial killers. Analysis and observation of Downtown society and proceedings.

YELLOW -Retrieval: Investigate and recover stolen and missing SLA Industries property. Also comprises of the retrieval and restoration of present and ancient artifacts.

GREEN -Expeditionary: Mainly out of Mort Central -expedition into the furthest regions of Mort's Cannibal Sectors. Rarely operatives may be offered off-world assignments and explorations.

RED -Emergency: Commonly known as 'Red Alerts'. These are up to the minute combat situations that need to be dealt with immediately i.e. DarkNight raids on Mort Central.

GREY -Cloak/Internal: BPNs designated solely to the uncovering and termination of operatives and employees who are traitorous or subversive towards the SLA regime: Perpetrators who have

breached contract.

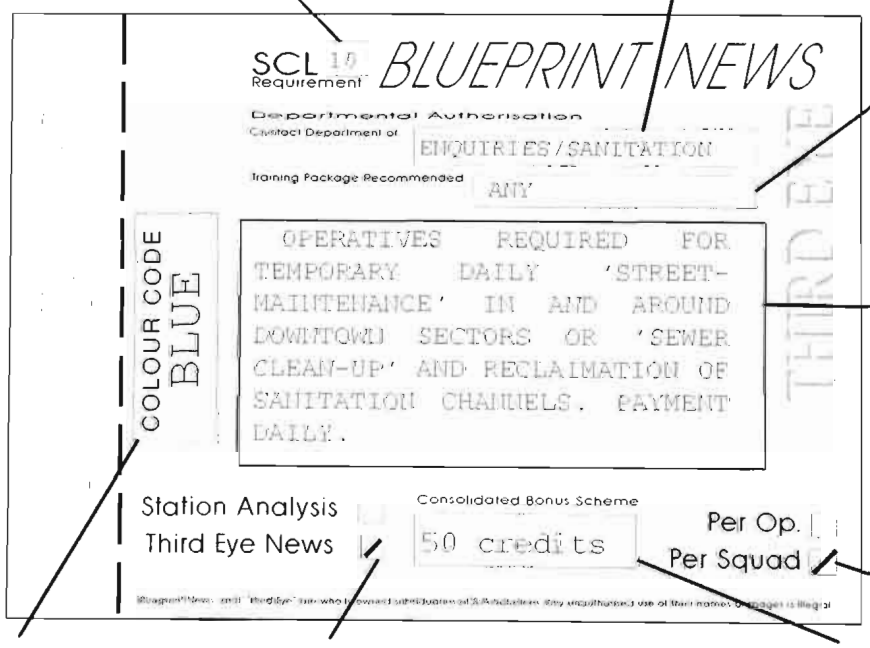
JADE –Ebon Related: These are SLA assignments of a purely Ebon nature. Such missions can involve tracking traitors and feral Ebons with little more than an Ebon sense as the single clue. Jade BPNs require at least one Ebon in each group taking the file.

BLACK –Suicide Operations: 'Black Operations' are among the most well paid and well televised assignments available. They are also the most fatal. Basically the operatives' application for a Black operation places them in a suicidal predicament that, to an outsider, seems completely insane and impossible to survive or complete. The operatives are outmanned, outgunned and sometimes even outclassed. They can be thrown up against Rival Powersuits like the Thresher 'Sarge', sometimes entire Downtown gangs or even renegade Necanthropes, but if the operatives can survive the unreasonable odds and look good on camera, they are as good as made.

SILVER –Media: Silver BPNs encompass the media side of things and can comprise of public speeches or promotion. Caution must be taken when pursuing Silver BPNs as failure to meet their requirements for completion and success can cost the operative(s), and to some degree SLA Industries, dearly. Operatives must have smart wits and talk fast to succeed in a Silver BPN since the public is so impressionable, especially regarding mistakes.

PLATINUM –Head Office: Operatives cannot ask for Platinum BPNs –they can only be given to those whose experience, skill and reputation deserve it. These are the highest attainable BPNs as well as the most prestigious. Platinum BPNs are issued by Mr. Slayer personally and, as one can imagine, Mr. Slayer's wishes cannot be refused. Platinum assignments are usually secret missions of an obscure and/or mysterious nature. Some operatives have left Platinum BPNs mentally scarred and unstable from history and information previously kept under wraps, even after success. Platinum missions are also very rare and are only open to those of an extremely high SCL. Certainly not for the faint hearted.

How to read a BPN





Naturally, SLA Industries has to protect its own interests, so many BPNs have no media viewing or undertaking, whatsoever. Such BPNs deal with SLA matters that 'wouldn't interest the public', like long winded investigations and retrievals or sometimes uncovering once loyal traitors or missions of such a dubious nature that they may be detrimental to SLA Industries' reputation.

There are two sub–companies that control and organize the issued BPNs for SLA Industries that deal with or without media response; Third Eye News and Station Analysis.

Third Eye News are contacted to give surveillance and media coverage that is as subtle or blatant as is required. Third Eye News, depending on how important the BPN is, are at the operatives disposal and will try to give them as much time and television footage as they can. Such operations will be covered by the media regardless of whether or not they are successful.

Station Analysis give the operative complete discretion and privacy as sometimes operative investigators and the like have no need or wish for media coverage. Being watched by Mort's millions can be quite off–putting. The last thing they need is the 'mass murderer' knowing the operatives are coming for him after watching the news or reading a newspaper. Station Analysis primarily work for the Department of Internal Affairs and sometimes Cloak Division or even the Investigation department where they can obtain countless BPNs of a businesslike and undercover nature.

All BPNs have to be commissioned by either of these two sub–companies before they can be obtained or received by SLA Industries operatives.

Upon accepting a BPN of any colour code (except Black, Red and Platinum), the operative(s) contact the department stated on the BPN in order to gain access to all the information required to undertake the assignment. Operatives can go personally to each department (occasionally this may be necessary) although it is quicker to use a telephone and fax. The operative simply states their identification and the BPN's serial number and the department will fax through a 'hard copy' of the assignment details and then the operative can follow up the case.

To undertake a Black operation, operatives can freely contact the Department of Extermination for a

suicide mission (combat operatives are preferable) and wait for the call.

When accepting 'Red Alerts', there are very few details other than the time (usually now) and a place. The operatives simply drive to the stated location and suppress whatever rivals or enemies that there are. Organising a Red Alert takes five minutes and they are as frequent as the rain on Mort.

The standard consolidated payment upon completion of a BPN is in credits, SLA Industries' own currency. The amount designated to each operative is stated at the bottom of the BPN card. The harder or more dangerous the assignment, the more credits the operative is likely to get paid. Operatives may also receive an SCL increase (a rise in their Security Clearance Level). Like credit payment, SCL raises depend on the difficulty of the BPN undertaken. For example, an operative taking a code blue is only likely to earn 50₢ or so a day and 0.1 of an SCL increase. While an operative undertaking a Black operation, upon completion will receive a minimum of 1000₢ and a whole number increase to their SCL (i.e. SCL 9 to SCL 8). In SLA Industries, being raised a whole number is quite a feat.

This way, through undertaking and completing BPNs, operatives can advance through the system and gain power and wealth. However, there are SLA Industries' select few who search for payment beyond the realms of capitalist undertakings. SLA Industries are also in the habit of granting wishes and favours, in conjunction with standard payment policies.

SLA Industries watches its operatives very carefully, it analyses their needs and desires. For many, advancement and gain are held under a completely different context to the normal.

"Hello, Mr. Geist? This is Third Eye News BPN department, my name is Ms. Sheven Fost. I've pulled your file and was wondering if you would like to undertake a colour code Jade BPN?"

"Oh... I, I'm not sure right now, Ms. Fost, I've be..."

"Please can you call me Sheven, Geist, can I call you Geist?"

"Eh... yes, of course... Sheven. Now, I'm really sorry to have wasted your time but I haven't..."

"Now, you don't need to say another word, Geist. We're not blind here at SLA Industries, we're not adult monsters, either. We know how hard it is growing up, especially with your background. I've read that you also work solo. Why is that, Geist, do you have trouble relating to your families and frie..., oh sorry, just friends. I've also read that you've had some emotional problems with your present girlfriend, Swan, isn't it? Geist, are you still with me?"

"..... yes?"

"Where was I? Yes, oh, by the way, I liked your photograph in Servitude Corporate Pleasures magazine, it caused quite a stir with some of the female corporates, you looked very sweet."

"Pardon?"

"Yes, an Ebon woman called Beast sent it in, she really liked the picture, but that's not surprising is it, do you know her, Geist?"

"Yes... I... Ms. Fost..."

"You've quite a reputation, haven't you Geist? When did you start dating Swan, when she was 23? I think you were 15 or 16 weren't you? By the way, how do you feel about Beast?"

"Look, I'm really sorry Ms. Fost, but I've got to go. I've been late every day this week meeting Swan. She starts to get suspicious."

"Really? What about?"

"Nothing! I mean, nothing, honest I've tried to explain to her that Beast is like that with everybody."

"Is she Geist?"

"I... I think so. I haven't done anything wrong."

"Oh, I know Geist. I mean, after all, what did it say in Servitude? Oh, yes, Beast said you were 'like a fallen angel', and she doesn't often lie, Geist, believe me we know here at SLA. We know everything, like how eager you are to prove yourself to the Preceptor Teeth, I believe you will, I have faith. I'm quite sure Preceptor Teeth wants the best from his Grandson."

"Yes... of course, I'd... do anything for the Preceptor."

"Even a Jade BPN? They all have to be passed by the Preceptor, you know?"

"No?...No, I... didn't know."

"Yeah, and if you really do well on this one, I'll see to it that you get a Servitude sponsorship. They really go for someone with your 'originality'. I can see it next month's sensual fashion article 'Beauty and the Beast' what do you say, angel boy?"

"..... Okay, I'll take the Jade."

Internal Affairs recording of Third Eye Pr. Sheven Fost and Ebon Scout Geist (17) Kick Murder.

This form of communication in SLA Industries is very common indeed and sometimes necessary when dealing with trained and experienced operatives

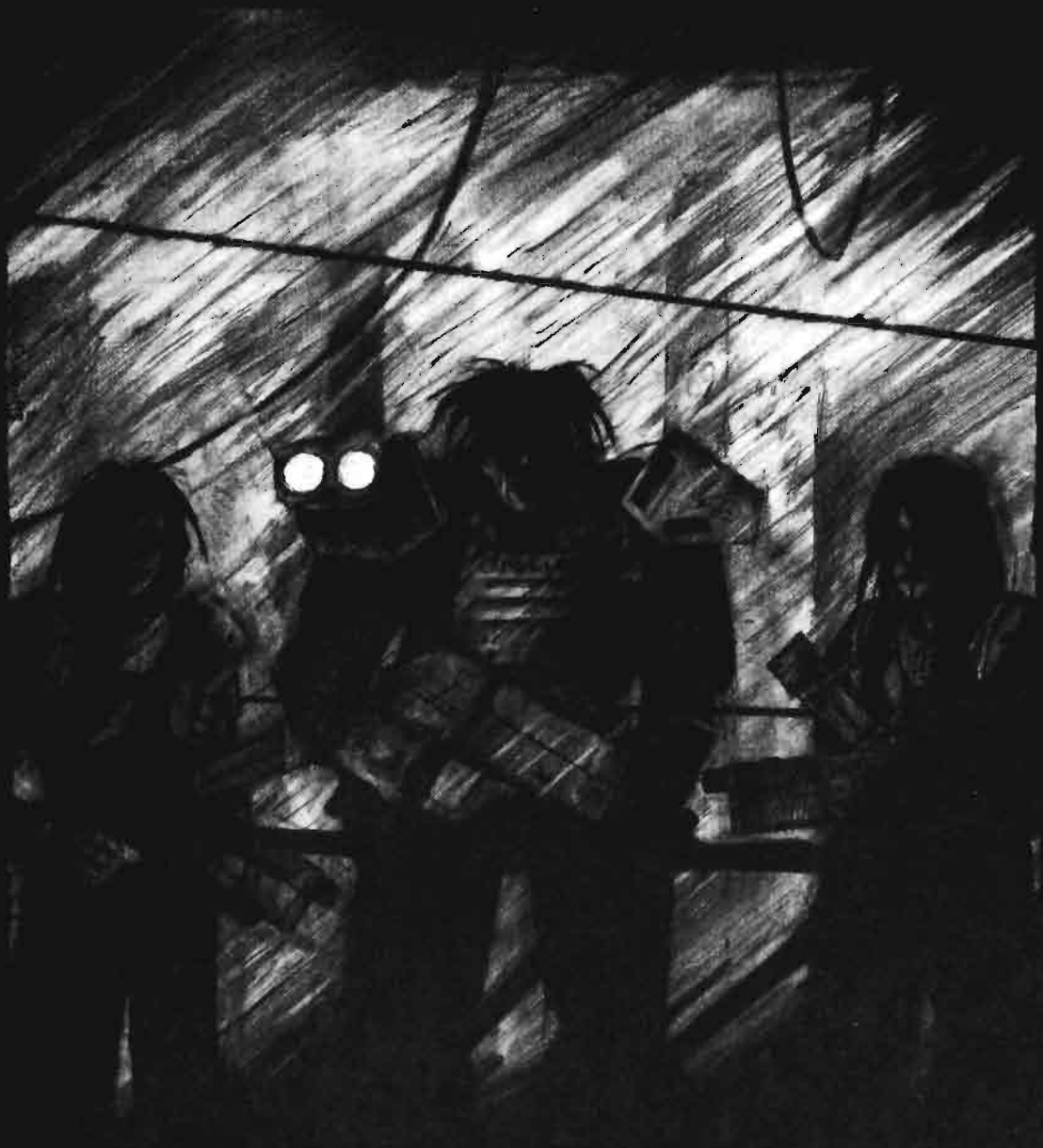
In the darkest regions of Downtown it's secluded alleyways and backstreets standing nervously on the edge of Cannibal Sectors the rain washes the blood out onto the open streets for reluctant Shiver Units to pick up the first horrific clue to another murder case.

When Carriens kill, it is usually for food and survival, they don't leave much trace of bodies, not like the serial killers whose soul purpose is the pleasure of violence and insanity, recognition and self satisfaction through bloodshed.

In this ghastly wake of reality, SLA Industries news channels grimly broadcast reports of articulated butchered bodies at the dawn of each new day. It seems that Mort's Shiver Units are the messengers of death as they scour the streets in search of massacred bodies from the night before. They bring home the horrors to the eyes and ears of Mort public and so to the operative and employees of SLA Industries.

DownTown is a sinister jungle to the murderers in their multitudes, each one as confused and misguided as the next, led to believe that genocide is the civilian dream by SLA Industries media channels. Believing themselves to live the lives of Contract Killers, the civilian based murders make the bodies pile up in terrifying and abstract manners, skinned, slashed, hammered and torn. Television publicity has created a great many social mutations, mad–men in masks striving for the public's admiration and love.

Once the Shiver have left the bloodstained scene of the crime and continue the endless trail of mutilation the operative investigators and squads come in and take on the gruesome task of tracking down the World of Progress' deadliest and most incessant psychopaths.



who have had their fair share of money and SCL increase.

These people need something more. SLA Industries can provide them with what money can't buy as long as they are willing to compromise. Internal Affairs deal with this area of analysing and rewarding. Certain BPNs require certain operatives –the departmental heads won't take anyone else– but sometimes the operatives have no wish to take the BPN, so SLA Industries has to make the payment irresistible. An offer the operative cannot refuse, even if his or her life depended on it.

Reward payment is very personal and precise. Internal Affairs watch the up and coming operatives very closely. Its secret agents tirelessly watch their lives, their actions and, most importantly, the operative's needs.

So, when the time comes, SLA Industries knows exactly what to offer the operative that will make him jump into the BPN, without an afterthought. Never wish for love nor money? In SLA Industries, this rule does not apply.

Despite the plentitude of wishes from the industrial genie, there are a large population of operatives who will settle for simple power through the advancement of Security Clearance Levels (SCLs).

When acquiring higher SCLs it's all a matter of what you know and who you know. The honourary position of SCL 1 is only achieved through respect, trust and long service.

Security Clearance Levels entitle operatives to information, recognition and power. The starting operatives always enter SLA Industries at SCL 10. This entitles operatives to certain rights and laws that do not apply to the general public.

The SCL 10 and 10A Operative has the right to:–

1) bear arms
2) information at their SCL level involving SLA Industries.
3) buy and sell stock, shares and bonds from SLA Industries.
4) apply for Blueprint News Files (excluding colour code: Platinum).
5) control and utilise Shiver Units (unless under corporate arrest)
6) enforce, search and seizure warrants (for civilian property).

Civilians on Mort have no such rights except the right to bear arms however, this only entitles them to carry CAF (Consolidated Arms Fabrication) arms in the interests of safety and home defence. CAF weapons are relatively cheap, low velocity and low calibre weapons with little hope of penetrating operative armour types.

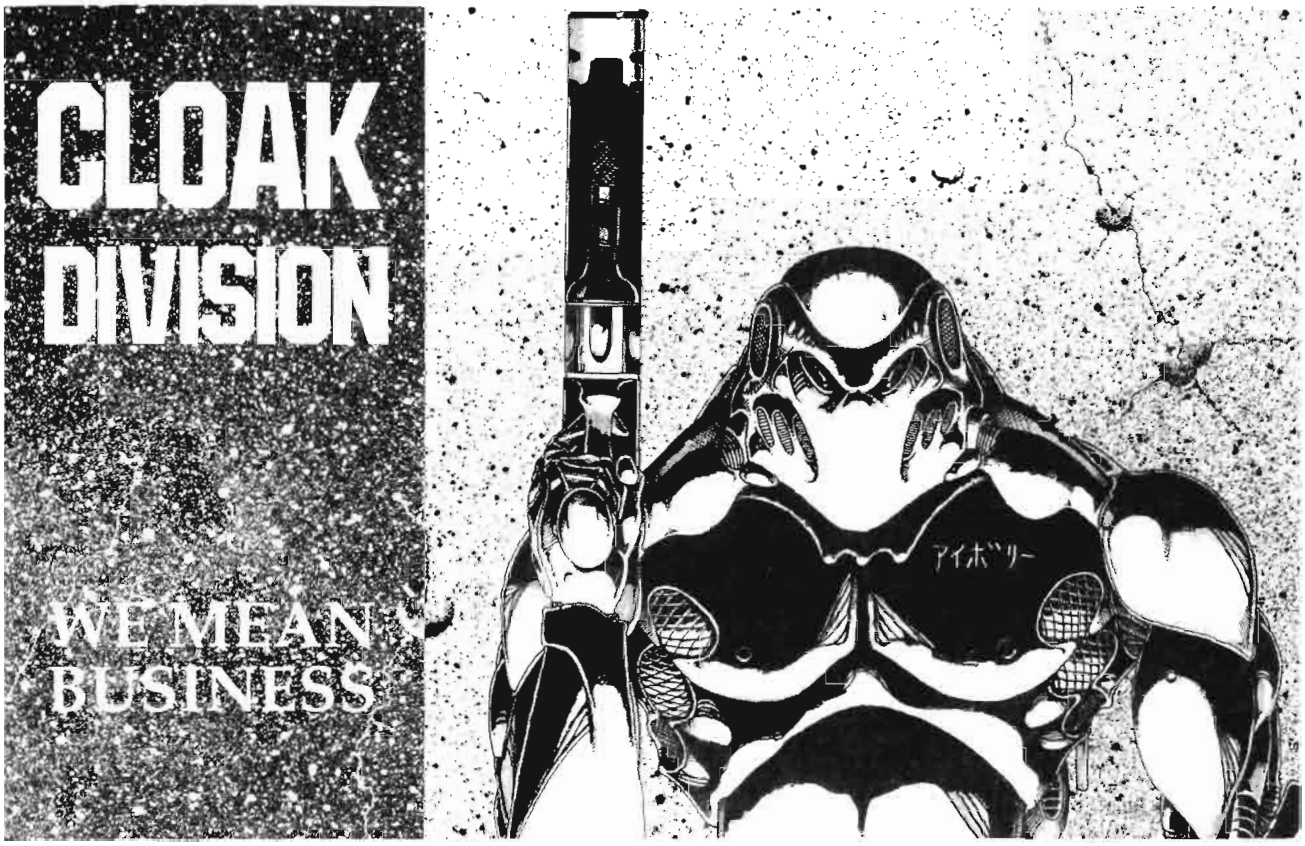
With so many individual freelance elements in SLA Industries, there have been created certain loyal and ruthless divisions to protect its interests against such crimes as treachery and subversion. In the World of Progress, operatives can live like kings and queens, laws have little hold over them, thanks to SCL, though in spite of this, operatives will always fear Mr. Slayers devoted sons, Cloak Division and Internal Affairs.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Internal Affairs is an undercover organisation that watches everybody, especially those suspected of subversion. Nobody is very sure of how many agents Internal Affairs employs, or even who they are. Internal Affairs, to most, is just a name, an organisation that never show its face –it can't afford to. SLA Industries is constantly informed of people's backgrounds and events, so there are no secrets in the World of Progress. No one can escape Internal Affairs, they are the eyes and ears of SLA Industries. Operatives fear the Internal Affairs agents because nobody knows who they are but it is commonly known that they are just there –unseen by the public, waiting for fatal mistakes to happen. Internal Affairs agents are exceedingly well trained, masters of disguise. For all the operative knows, their own mother could be one of the 'Internals' and they would never realise. Once the Internals suspect you, they never let go: they trust nobody.

CLOAK DIVISION

Cloak Division is the muscle of these two organisations. Cloak Division does not subscribe to Internal Affairs' secret and undercover methods. Their plans and actions are a great deal more brutal. It has been known for Cloak Division to issue Extermination Warrants on suspected operatives liberally. As far as Cloak Division is concerned, the only way to stop a subversion is to surgically remove the cause. Although primarily, Cloak Division 'retires' uncovered traitors to SLA (informed by Internal Affairs), they also make big mouths like journalists and private investigators disappear without trace. Operatives seeking great knowledge from the secret structure of SLA Industries must beware of Cloak Division who will not tolerate the inquisitive. SLA Industries informs Cloak Division of secrets to be hidden (such as unavoidable accidents like unsafe buildings and missing deadly toxins) from the public. Cloak Division hides it and protects it from the curious. When Cloak Division is involved, the prying eyes end up dead on Downtown street corners.



THE FINANCE CHIP

Many operatives feel deeply threatened and unnerved by the whole protective circumstances created by Internal Affairs and Cloak Division. SLA Industries has succeeded in teaching the World of Progress fear and even some of its toughest and bravest operatives are hesitant to break the order of SLA.

Hence, many operatives wish to prove their innocence and loyalty to SLA Industries by having a Finance Chip inserted.

The Finance Chip is a small bio–engineered device that, when implanted inside the head, will instantly fuse with the brain and remain there. This organism enables the Observation Centres to see and hear every movement of the operative's day to day life and, perhaps more importantly, the lives of the operatives around them.

Everything the operative says, hears, sees or does is watched and scrutinised by the Observation Centres. This way SLA Industries can see whether the operative's intentions are pure.

The Observation Centres are operated and controlled by the Internals, so few have ever seen an Observation Centre or any of its clandestine functions. The Finance Chip is also undetectable to the eye and even the prying minds of Ebons.

Operatives who have taken the Finance Chip option are hated by operatives who have no chip in spite of being highly favoured by SLA Industries itself. Chip–less operatives can't bear to be in the presence of chipped operatives for they know that anything that they say or do will be observed by SLA Industries, through the chipped operative.

For this reason, operatives taking the chip will accept it secretly and tell no one. Operatives who take the Finance Chip often join Cloak Division or on rare occasions, the Internals because the chip declares their faithfulness to SLA Industries.

Observation Centres watch the chipped operatives for 80% of the time, in the process, the operative will secretly receive their Undercover Bonus of 200₡ per month. The chipped operative will also be paid a substantial sum for uncovering subversive operatives within his squad.

The Finance Chip can also be used when dealing with the media. This is very convenient considering that Station Analysis owns and sponsors the Observation Centres. The public love to see combat and fashionable circumstances through the eyes of the suspecting (and sometimes unsuspecting) operative.

Chipped operatives can use stealth mode on their headset communicators and contact Station Analysis for basic information, for example, "Station, I'm lost. Where am I?"

DIGGING UP THE DIRT
PART TWO

I'm not as stupid as he thinks I am. I get high on drugs and I go crazy now and then– but even my parents do that. They say even Slayer himself gets out of his head. Me, I think he got out of it one dark night and never found his way back. Why else would he want to stick chips in people's heads and watch their lives. Seems kinda kooky to me.. kind of erotic too. I mean he'd be with you all the time.. all the time! Think about it! On the bus, on the loo, ..in bed. Wow freaks me out to think of it. Still he can't see you in Downtown, that's what they say. I hope they're right. God, I pray they're right. If they're not Merion's going to wring my neck. Nah, I'm only kidding my sweet Ebon–lover wouldn't hurt anyone, ever. He's never even raised his voice to me, not like my father.

Well here goes. She looks nice enough.

"Good Morning Miss McConnal. Have a seat. We just have a few preliminary questions to fill out before we enter you for Meny."

"I won't be away that long will I?"

"No, I don't think so. You said on the phone that you were interested in the financial sector? You wanted to be an office based operative, rather than in the field?"

"Yes, that's right."

She smiles in this really friendly way and I know everything's going to be alright. Sour Blood won't dare touch us now.

"I've had a look through your education file, Miss McConnal and your grades were very good. But you left home suddenly. Was there a disagreement with your parents? Your father didn't report anything unusual. He certainly didn't call in for treatment ...and your mother is still missing, isn't she?"

I swallow hard at that. No–one knows where my mother went. She had an appointment with Intruder. I remember she was so excited over it. We spent three hours working on her outfit. She never came back. We never said anything, my father and I. There wasn't anything to say. And my father, what can I say about him. His security level's gone up four ranks over the last year, I daren't say anything about him. I guess its time to play the giddy girl again. Surely they won't hold that against me? I am only sixteen.

"Yes, ma'am, my mother is still missing. My father is fine. I just.. well I just met this guy.. and you know."

Come on, damn it, blush girl! Think about your first night with Merion. You were so damn naive he had to show you what to do. Ah, that's better I can feel the heat in my face.

"Well dear, I'm sure we can forgive you one youthful indiscretion. We're all young once. Now if you're just sign this form we'll have your time booked at Meny by tomorrow. Do you have a contact number?"

I can't hold the pen my fingers are shaking so much. I feel as if I'm signing my life away. Do I really want to do this? I have to. I got Merion into this; I have to get him out. I love him so much I'd die for him. I just hope it isn't too painful.

"Thank you dear. We'll call you tomorrow. You can go now."

"When do I get my chip fitted?"

She looks at me horror–struck. Her face white, jaw slack, dribble at the sides of her mouth. What did I say?

"Your chip?"

She still looks as if I've slapped her in the face with a wet fish. I have this weird feeling like I'm in a dream or something. I even turn round to look at the sign on the wall. It still says "SLA Industries." Then this tall, suited guy comes over.

"Its alright Mrs Marshall. I'll take over here."

And he almost tips the woman out of her chair. Still he's good looking and obviously in control. I sit back down again. He takes out another form. This one is yellow.

"There seems to have been misunderstanding Miss McConnal. Mrs Marshall was under the impression you wanted to be an operative not an employee."

"I don't want to do anything dangerous. I just want an office job. I want to study business at Meny."

He smiles slightly. I don't find it very reassuring.

"My dear Miss McConnal, as an operative you only have the option of taking BPNs. You can sit at a desk all day if that is what you wish. I believe your father has SCL 4? Unless there has been a sudden change in his status I believe he is an operative. You must surely be aware of the manner in which SLA Industries functions. Until four months ago your registered address was his home."

"Yes, but I met someone."

He flicks through some papers.

"I see. Someone who lives in Downtown?"

For some reason I don't want to give him Merion's name.

"Yes."

"Miss McConnal, there is no reason why I should prevent you from being chipped. In fact considering your unusual circumstances and lack of openness, if we decide to employ you, I would recommend a chip. But my personal inclinations are not the be all and end all of SLA. You may appeal on my decision."

Is this a trick? He seems to be telling me I have to have what I want. Maybe this is some SLA intimidation technique. No, I'm definitely missing something.. But he knows who my father is, he won't harm me. Ohh, if I've learnt anything with Merion its not to trust anyone but him.

"Miss McConnal?"

I don't understand. Hell, I'm sixteen. How can he expect me to understand. I'll just have to play dumb. Who I am kidding play dumb. I wish Merion was here.. I wish...

"Miss McConnal? Your decision?"

"I am quite prepared to become an employee."

"Er, is this going to hurt Dr Stern? No–one has actually told me what will happen."

People in white coats always give me the creeps.

"No, not at all. I will give you a mild local anaesthetic, but you will conscious throughout the whole operation."

At least he's an Ebon, like Merion. And he doesn't have the scarred eyes, so he's not a waster. SCL 4? He must know my dad. I hope they get on well.

"If you'll take a seat Miss McConnal."

Somehow I don't think he'd appreciate the no thanks it wouldn't go with my apartment joke. Thing looks like a dentist's chair.

"And I think we're just close these now."

He closes these metal bands over my arms, my legs and Oh Christ he's put a vice round my head. He opens something behind me and wheels a trolley round. There are rows and rows of silver instruments. I can't turn my head. I can't see properly.

"I've been hearing from your father Nicki, that you have been behaving a little foolishly."

There's the sound of metal slotting into metal. I don't say anything my voice isn't working; someone's turned off the sound.

"Is that right Nicki? Made a few mistakes? We're all young once. An Ebon wasn't it? At least you've come back to the fold now."

And he jabs a needle suddenly, savagely under my skin. I flinch, but the restraints won't let me move. He moves round in front of me. There is a tiny drill in his hand. Below his red Ebon eyes, his thin lips smile at me. He wears his long hair just like Merion.

"This is a drill Nicki. To chip you I drill a tiny hole into your skull. Here, near the temple.."

He brushes back my hair. His touch is feather–light, almost lover–like. I become acutely aware of my immobility. He flicks a switch and the drill purrs softly, obscenely.

"Now, Nicki it's going to be fine. The injection will start to work soon."

Gently he moves my hair back with one cool hand. Then he lowers the drill to my temple. He pauses for a moment, then lets the bit bite into my skin. As the tiny trickle of hot blood slides down my face, I began to scream. He doesn't stop. The side of my face is vibrating as the bit goes into my skull. The loudest sound is my scream. The white clinical room, the white clinical drill are muted, subtle. He leans round the drill and looks into my eyes.

"Shh, Nicki you'll frighten the people waiting. Its almost there."

Out of the corner of my eyes I see his hand jerk. The bit has bored through my skull. He pulls it quickly away and smiles.

"That's always the trickiest part. After all a pretty girl like you doesn't really want a brain like Swiss cheese."

The blood is still trickling down my face. He swabs it, staunching the flow casually. A tiny spot has fallen on his left shoe. It shows on the white leather like some lost flower. He cleans it with a fresh swab, turns to the tray, then turns back again. Hot tears are streaming from my eyes, but it is as if someone else is crying. He stand before me, then bends over and cradles my face in his hands, his fingers smearing my tears, his long hair forward against my cheek.

"Nicki, Nicki," he whispers, "this is what you wanted child." He kisses my forehead.

Then he steps and picks up the chipper. I knew it was a bio–chip, but the sight of it squirming and wriggling and red makes me wretch. Maybe he takes pity on me– he reaches down quickly and I feel it slide free of the chipper. I feel it move inside

my skull and I KNOW this is something no–one should ever have to feel.

The room shimmers slightly. My credit balance and the time appear in green light on the door. It is so absurd, so unreal, for a moment I hope this is only a dream. Then I realize this is the heads–up display; that these lights will be with me for the rest of my life.

Dr Stern is behind me, clearing the trolley. I am still clamped in the restraints. The door opens.

There is this thing.. this beast...jaws foaming. Giant talons claw at the inside of the clean, white door–jam. A skeletal head, four times the size on mine, cranes into the room, slit amber eyes, flat and fish–like stare at me. I scream for Stern.

"Yes, Nicki?"

His voice is indistinct; I think he must be turned away to the wall.

"N–N–Nicki..." slobbers the creature; my bladder turns to ice and I almost wet myself.

Then it is gone. The door is shut. Only the scratches on the wall show it was ever here. Dr Stern undoes the clamps.

"Finished, Miss McConnal. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any problems with the display. But I don't think you will. It all went quite smoothly. See the desk on your way out for your travel documents and security pass. Good Day, Miss McConnal."

I can't get out of the room fast enough. I need Merion. Merion. Merion will know what to do.

RETIREMENT IN SLA INDUSTRIES

Every operative knows the score when working for SLA Industries. They don't want you to retire, ever, and they do a good job at stopping you. No dangerous threats needed.

In such an advanced day and age, SLA Industries has the ability to cease the ageing process if necessary. Few people want to die and thanks to biogenetic technology and the power of Ebb, society's members don't need to.

Extended lifespans, unfortunately, are confined to the rich operatives of SLA. No civilians, no matter how rich, can afford SLA Industries' rates. Operatives are invaluable to progress and retirement is not cost effective.

SLA Industries has an obscure effect on its operatives. Working for SLA Industries becomes their lives –it is like an addictive drug that hooks the operatives. It is a company with life itself to offer and it can account for all tastes. Some of SLA Industries' staff (including Mr. Slayer himself) are as old as the company itself, sometimes over 900 years old. There seems to be no limit to what SLA can offer, attain or achieve. It is the perfect example of a society that can accomplish anything.

However, in a society of eternal idols, death still occurs in waves of natural and unnatural causes. Few ever retire properly from SLA Industries, most save up enough for youth–sustaining biogenetic surgery or let themselves evolve into the immortal Necanthropes and succumb to Slayer's power, forever.

Most operatives are killed before their time, with little more than a place to remember them by. All operatives have to sign release forms (see section 1.8 of The Operative's Handbook) before joining SLA Industries. Everyone knows the giant and horrific risks faced by the hardened operatives but this doesn't seem to discourage the 254,000 young hopefuls who apply for the position everyday.

THE SCL LADDER

"Listen, the day your Security Clearance overtakes mine is the day you can tell me to do anything, pal. You ask and I decide if I want to do it. Downtown? I'll just check if I'm free. Putting you on hold.

"Pass me a cigarette, Kyle, I'm just letting this little upstart stew in his own juices. Is it dinner time? Good. I'm off to eat, Kyle. Don't touch my phone. I'm sure the caller can wait a few hours..."

Marta Ailles, SCL 4C.

The Security Clearance System within the framework of SLA Industries has been called many things over the years from "a paperwork nightmare" to "an indestructible chain of command and communication" and many other things in between, but without the SCL (Security Clearance Level) system, operatives can quickly find themselves without weapons, armour, equipment and, in some cases, without a home.

The structure of the system is simple. There are ten basic levels of clearance which are split into sub–sections and these are split again, for the purpose of advancement through the ranks.

THE STRUCTURE

The ten framework levels are numbered ranging from 10, the lowest SCL normally held by an operative, to 1. All operatives start as SCL 10 operatives or

'start-up op's'. From here, the operatives work the BPN circuit for their SCL increases. The increase that is received comes in the form of decimal fractions ranging from 0.1 to 0.9 when, for example, Angelica Foulds, an SCL 10 operative completes a BPN, she acquires a .2 SCL increase. She is now SCL 10.2. If she completes five of these BPNs, then she merits 1.0 worth of SCL increases, but she does not become SCL 9, instead she becomes SCL 10A. If she acquired a further 1.0 increase, she would then be SCL 9. Each framework number has its own set of letters so as to distinguish between levels. Here is a full list of framework numbers and their sub-section letters.

11	(Employee)					
10	10A	(Operative)				
9	9A	9B				
8	8A	8B	8C			
7	7A	7B	7C	7D		
6	6A	6B	6C	6D	6E	
5	5A	5B	5C	5D	5E	5F
4	4A	4B	4C	4D	4E	4F
3	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E	3F
2	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F
1						

Each sub-section requires 1.0 worth of fractional increases to reach the next letter. When the final letter has been reached at the framework e.g. SCL 8C, a further 1.0 increase is necessary to obtain the next framework number, which in this case would be SCL 7.

THE OPERATIVE'S HANDBOOK

SECTION ONE

"Know Your Rights"

The following is a step-by-step introduction to the inner workings of SLA Industries. It is imperative that all operatives read this handbook before undertaking their first Blueprint News operation.

1. Where you stand in SLA Industries.

"Authority over others is a gift, not a right. Like all gifts from SLA Industries, it can be taken away."

Mr. Slayer



1.1 Shiver Units –The Shiver Units that operate in and around Mort are, for all intents and purposes, at your disposal. This allows operatives a great deal of freedom. As Shiver Units are equipped to handle forensics, police actions, medical supervision and many other menial tasks which you, as an operative, may find slows down your work, or you/your squad lack the skills required, Shiver Units are at your disposal. Feel free to use them at will. You shall find in the long run that it will make you more efficient as an operative.

Warning:– The abuse and overuse of Shiver Unit operation time is disapproved and not advisable. Use Shivers for clean up/support actions.

1.2 Civilians and Civilian Organisations –The civilian population of Mort, in general, are helpful, kind and good humoured. You will find that interaction with them may aid investigations. After all, "the people that live in the sewer usually know what runs down it". If you find, however, that this is not the case, you may wish to exercise your SLA given rights and arrest/hold for questioning or issue yourself a search and seizure warrant for personal belongings and residence. All powers of law enforcement agents are granted to you. This does bring you, on occasion,

SEARCH & SEIZURE WARRANT

THE HOLDER OF THIS WARRANT HAS THE RIGHT TO SEARCH, AND IF NECESSARY, IMPOUND ANY MATERIAL THEY SEE FIT FROM THE PROPERTY/ PERSON NAMED BELOW.

NAME OF WARRANT HOLDER/S _____ SIGNATURE _____

_____ SIGNATURE _____

_____ SIGNATURE _____

_____ SIGNATURE _____

_____ SIGNATURE _____

ISSUED AGAINST: NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

REASON FOR OBTAINING WARRANT
(NO MORE THAN 50 WORDS) _____

BPN Nº _____

DATE OF ISSUE _____

WARRANT ISSUED BY _____ SIGNATURE _____

THIS FORM IS INVALID IF INCOMPLETE IN ANY WAY

INITIALS OF HOLDER _____

DATE _____

into conflict with the civilian police force (ref: Monarch Law Enforcement). If this should happen, identify yourself as a SLA operative and no further complications should arise. Search and Seizure warrants also extend to private land (not SLA owned), places of work and civilian government buildings.

Warning:- You will be held responsible for unnecessary deaths of civilians and agents of civilian organisations. Please be certain of your actions before instigating any form of suppression. SCL depreciation can be guaranteed.

1.3 Information Services –SLA Industries has, at its disposal, all information which is necessary for operatives to complete most operations. Due to the nature and content of some of this information, it has been deemed necessary that SLA Industries place Security Clearance Levels on this stored data. Most operatives should find no problems with the system as the bulk of the information stored (40%) is available to you upon entering employment with the company. A further 30% is cleared to you upon reaching SCL 5 and all other information is dealt with on an individual case system. All civilian information such as voter's rolls, accommodation registration and Monarch (See 1.2 Civilians and Civilian Organisations) files are all open to you for investigation from SCL 10.

Warning:– All information that is passed to you, the operative, is screened by the department of Internal Affairs. If evidence of abuse of information is present, your name will be passed on to the department of Extermination.

1.4 Purchase and Ownership –Whilst working for SLA Industries, you have almost unlimited access to the hardware, software and technology produced by



OPP/SQUAD INITIALS _____

SPONSOR INITIALS _____

SPONSORSHIP CONTRACT

NAME OF SPONSOR _____

NAME OF OPP/SQUAD UNDER AGREEMENT _____

DATE SPONSORSHIP COMMENCES _____

DATE SPONSORSHIP CLOSES _____

TYPE OF SPONSORSHIP _____

_____

_____

_____

OTHER AGREEMENTS _____

_____

_____

NAME OF REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPONSOR _____

SIGNATURE _____

NAME OF OPP/SQUAD _____

SIGNATURE _____

THE SPONSOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CANCEL THIS AGREEMENT AT ANY TIME THEY SEE FIT TO DO SO. ALL IMAGES ARE EXCLUSIVELY OWNED BY THE SPONSOR AND CAN IN NO WAY BE USED BY ANY ONE ELSE AS PER THE COPYRIGHT ACTS IN EXISTENCE ON THE DATE THIS DOCUMENT IS COMPLETED.

THIS FORM IS INVALID IF INCOMPLETE IN ANY WAY

the company. If for any reason you find yourself no longer in our employment, it is expected of you to return all equipment purchased during your employment before leaving. This also applies to any shares in the various sub-companies that you may have acquired during your term of employment although these shall be automatically returned to the S.S.B. (Stocks, Shares and Bonds Department) so any transactions will be made for you, without prior warning.

Warning:- If you are found to be abusing company funds/equipment, your name will be passed to the department of Extermination. Damage of SLA property without a release document will be deducted from your personal funds.

1.5 General Pecking Order -Within the company, the rank system works as follows; a direct order cannot be given unless the person ordering the subordinate has two clear framework numbers above that of their subordinate. The rules for command chains are as follows: To be of a higher rank, you must have a clear sub-section letter above the lower ranked subject. In both cases, fractional clearance numbers do not apply. (These rules do not apply to Section 1.1 Shiver Units.) If the operation you are on requires the investigation of employees of whom their SCL outranks yours in normal circumstances, please disregard this section, although a certain amount of respect should be considered, depending on the SCL of the subject.

Warning:- The SCL system has worked well in SLA Industries for many years now, but it has been found that from time to time, individuals abuse their power. This is not tolerated and can be detrimental towards your SCL if undertaken.

1.6 Use of Firearms

1.6.1 Urban -The use of weapons in and around civilian populated areas can be and is a dangerous business. The chances of collateral damage occurring is always high. It is always best to try and minimise the amount of weapon fire around civilians for two reasons: One, the amount of paperwork involved concerning 'accidental' deaths of Mort civilians is quite phenomenal and two, civilians have rights: see section 1.2 Civilians and Civilian Organisations: Warning.

1.6.2 Industrial -The factory complexes dotted about Mort are important centres of production and great care should be taken not to damage them in any way whatsoever, unless a release form has been acquired. (See section 1.8 Release from damages and/or incidents.)

Warning:- Any and all loss of life/damage to property can, and in most cases will, be reported to SLA Industries, be it civilian or operative owned. In the event of a legal battle, you will quite quickly find yourself with little, if any, legal aid from SLA Industries. SLA Industries does not give legal representation to operatives when dealing with the civilian sector. Think before you shoot.

1.7 Sponsorship -From time to time, operatives may find themselves in a position of 'media limelight' where the operative is approached by a company or organization with a view to a sponsorship deal. If the said organization is SLA owned then all contracts are standard and all you have to do is sign on the dotted line. If the sponsorship is outside SLA Industries, the contracts must be cleared by your department or direct superior. These contracts must not conflict with your Employment Contract with SLA Industries.

Warning:- SLA Industries can not be held responsible for failed sponsorship deals outside the company. If you do not fulfil any contract with SLA Industries then you will find yourself in deep water -probably in over your head. As SLA sponsorship deals are quite binding and final, be careful of your conduct and performance records while under sponsorship as it could jeopardize future sponsorship contracts and your employment with the company as an operative.

1.8 Release from damages and/or incidents -The release form appears as a standard format document in all departments of SLA Industries. This frees you from having to worry about causing damage to property or the taking the lives -after completion of a release form, SLA Industries is free from liability regarding any activity taken by you, the operative. No legal action may be taken against the company and SLA Industries will have no need to chastise you for your actions.

Warning:- Although a release form does give you, as an operative, a great deal of freedom to operate as you see fit, it is judged that if your actions extend past the working parameters of the release form, you may find the weight of SLA Industries falling on you from a great height.

1.9 BPN Information -The Blueprint News system is used for your benefit. To aid you in your term of employment with SLA Industries, BPNs are acquired from the Blueprint News halls which are scattered throughout Mort. These areas are the main 'mission' information access points for you as an operative. The procedure for collecting a BPN is as follows: Go to your nearest BPN hall -upon arrival you will be asked to 'sign in'. This registers you in the hall and

SLA INDUSTRIES RELEASE

(STANDARD FORMAT FOR ALL DEPARTMENTS)

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN
(NO MORE THAN 100 WORDS)

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY UNDERSTAND AND AGREE THAT ANY ACTIONS I UNDERTAKE ARE OF MY OWN FREE WILL AND THAT THE AGENTS AND EXECUTIVES OF SLA INDUSTRIES CAN IN NO WAY BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGE TO PROPERTY AND/OR LOSS OF LIFE, INCLUDING MY OWN, DUE TO MY EXECUTION OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED ACTIONS.

NAME / SQUAD _____ signature _____

START DATE _____
FINISH DATE _____

WITNESS _____ signature _____
WITNESS _____ signature _____

THIS FORM IS COMPLETE WHEN SIGNED BY OPP/SQUAD

notifies them of you willingness to take up a BPN operation. After signing in, you may have to wait a little before a BPN becomes available. On receipt of your BPN, you are required to leave. The BPN has all the contact data for you to find the appropriate department and acquire all relevant information for your mission. A phone/fax machine does speed up this process. (Also see section 2.2 BPN Colour System.)

Warning:– Incompletion of BPNs is considered unprofessional as accepting the BPN means that you,

as an operative, have the skills and knowledge to complete it. Failure to do so will result in SCL reduction.

2.0 Corporate Sector Affairs –If you have entered employment with the company under a business program and/or education, you may find that being at such a low SCL will somewhat stifle your corporate image and goals. This is only temporary and should be treated as a learning process. You should soon find yourself in a position where your skills and talents will work well within your squad or organization. The Corporate Sector agents have had somewhat of a bad reputation with the other operatives because of their limited combat and investigation capabilities. Do not let this deter you from your goals. Persistence will be rewarded.

Warning:– As a SLA executive, you are expected to act like one. You can and will, under certain circumstances, be held responsible for not only your own but also your squad's actions. Also, care must be taken not to take advantage of information services. Paperwork should be kept to a minimum for the sake of efficiency.

2.1 Reclamation of property –When an operative is in the field, from time to time pieces of equipment go astray. It is entirely up to the operative to reclaim any and all equipment lost while actively involved in an operation of any kind. Failure to do so can be punishable by SCL decrease and in extreme cases, expulsion from the company. If any equipment belonging to other operatives is found, then this should be returned in any way possible. Shiver Units will return equipment to the appropriate departments so as to save you 'down time' while on a mission. If the find is quite substantial and valued at 2000₢ or over, bonuses may be awarded.

Warning:– SLA property is solely owned by SLA Industries and is not to be resold or exchanged for goods. These practices are punishable by extermination or, in less serious cases, SCL decrease.

2.2 BPN Colour System –The colour code system used on BPNs is a quick and easy identification system that allows operatives, at a glance, to see what will be expected of them from their current mission objectives. During the course of your employment, you will come across the various colours used from Blue to Platinum. Most of these you will encounter on a regular basis but Red, Black and Platinum BPNs are special issue only:

2.2.1 Red BPNs –With the issue of such BPNs, immediate action must be undertaken by the operative as the 'Red Alert' BPN involves situations which are occurring at the time of the issue of the BPN. A quick response and good 'fire fight' capabilities are extremely important for completion of these BPNs.

2.2.2 Black BPNs –These BPNs are always voluntary because of the very dangerous nature of the missions involved. Black operations will be offered to you upon successfully reaching SCL 9A. the reason for this is that operatives with some mission experience under their belt have a better chance of survival on such 'suicide operations' rather than a fresh start-up operative who will have very little idea what to expect. Black BPNs have great financial awards upon completion.

2.2.3 Platinum –These very rare BPNs are head office issue only and are given to specific operatives rather than collected or issued from BPN halls. These BPNs are issued on merit only. Experience, abilities and reputation are all factors taken into consideration when a Head Office BPN completion is required. There are some rules that have to be observed. You cannot reject a Platinum BPN under any circumstances. Failure to complete the BPN has the usual decrease in SCL although depending on the operation, this may be increased. Upon accepting the BPN, you carry a great deal of responsibility. This should reflect in your actions and conduct.

Warning:– (See section 1.9 BPN Information)

2.3 Finance Chipped Operatives –Upon entering the service of the company, you have the option of having an audio/visual Station link implanted. This 'chip' gives SLA Industries the opportunity to watch the operatives 'in action'. It also gives the operative the added security of knowing that when in trouble or having difficulty, whilst actively on an operation, that Station can give them information which could be useful in whatever situation they find themselves. Please note that Station Analysis Observation is active only 80% of the average day. Do not rely on Station for every difficulty you come across. For the minor inconvenience of having a 'chip' fitted, SLA Industries will credit your account with 200₢/month. (See section 1.4 Purchase and Ownership)

2.3.1 Chip Operation –The Finance Chip has been tested to perfection and there are no detrimental effects from having the small biogenetic link implanted in your skull. You may find that the heads-up display in the top left hand side of your field of vision is a bit disorientating for a short period of time but will settle and soon you won't ever know it is there. The display on the chip is for your benefit. The display is as follows from top to bottom: Time –Mort Standard, Date, Credit Rating with SLA Industries, SCL, Name and Security Number.

Warning:– Any tampering with the Finance Chip will result in the destruction of areas of the brain vital to the survival of the owner.

2.4 Extermination Warrant Procedures –If and when an Extermination order is required, then you will be given a warrant from the department that ordered. These departments have clearance from the Department of Extermination. Please be careful when filling out an Extermination Warrant as all relevant information should be inserted in full. After completion of the warrant, tear off the bar code strip and give to the department issued. They will forward this to the Department of Extermination to register you as the holder of the warrant. After completion of the warrant, sign it and take the body or an identifiable part e.g. an eye for a retina scan or a hand for a palm print, to the department of issue and from there you will be given any payment due to you. You are then free to return to the BPN hall for your next assignment.

Warning:– Extermination Warrants involve the taking of a life and as such should be treated with the utmost care. Failure to complete a warrant form correctly results in the termination of the contract and no monies will be paid to you, even if you have proof of extermination.

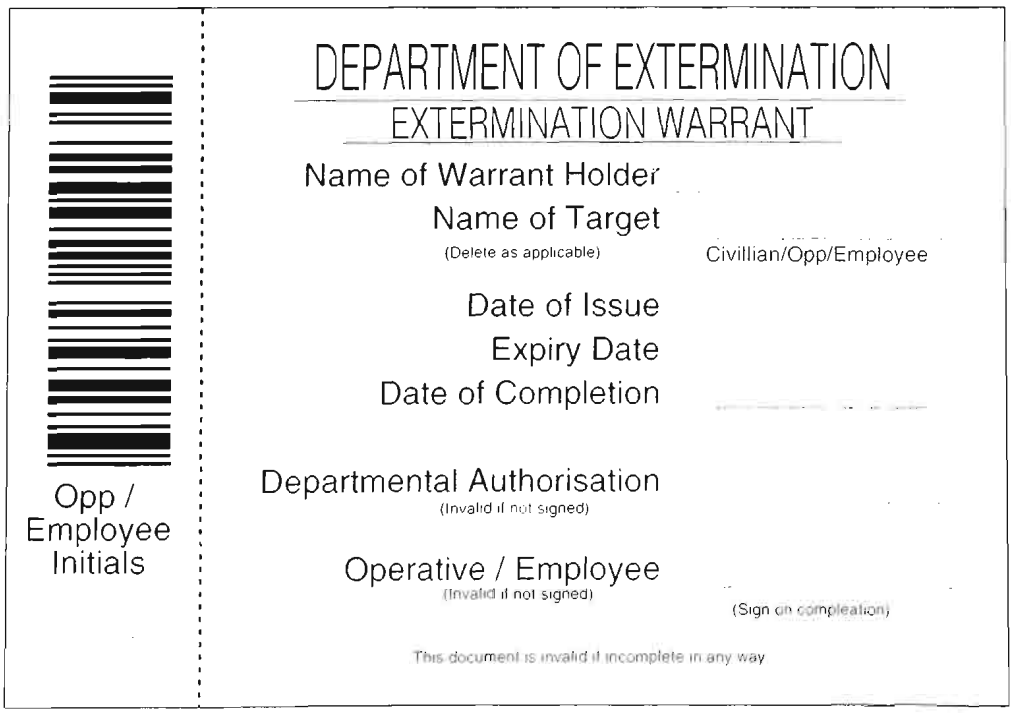
2.5 Search and Seizure Warrant Procedure –If it is necessary for you to use these types of investigative tactics, then do so freely. No official documentation is required unless it is SLA property which is to be searched. In this case, please contact the Department of Warrants to obtain your access form (Search and Seizure Warrant).

Warning:– Trespassing on SLA property without a warrant will result in expulsion from the said property and reports will be sent to your direct superior. Please be sure of your intentions and rights before entering premises.

2.6 Cash Flow Systems for Operatives –Upon entering employment with SLA Industries, a bank credit account is opened automatically for your use. SLA Industries also places 100₵ in this account to help you cover the first few weeks whilst you find your feet within the company. A Finance card is issued to you so as to make the money available to you as quick as possible. The Finance card is also the main, if not the only, thing you will use to purchase all goods whilst in SLA employment, although there is, for those that prefer, an exchange system in operation where your Finance card can be used at any cash point machine to draw civilian currency. One unit of credit in SLA Industries is equal to 10ū (UNIs: Universal Currency System). These bank notes are only valid in civilian areas and can not be used to purchase SLA produced hard/software and equipment that has been designated for operative use only.

Warning:– Credit fraud is a very serious offence. Please do not attempt to defraud SLA Industries as this is a direct breach of contract and results in your immediate expulsion from the company.

2.7 Rest and Relaxation –Within the structure of SLA Industries, ample provision is made for your recreational activities. The innumerable bars, clubs and restaurants that are owned by SLA Industries solely for operative use will surely leave you spoilt for choice. Most of these have adopted the 'one credit–


DEPARTMENT OF EXTERMINATION

EXTERMINATION WARRANT

Name of Warrant Holder

Name of Target

(Delete as applicable) Civillian/Opp/Employee

Date of Issue

Expiry Date

Date of Completion

Departmental Authorisation

(Invalid if not signed)

Operative / Employee

(Invalid if not signed) (Sign on completion)

This document is invalid if incomplete in any way

Opp / Employee Initials

one drink' policy of service which keeps all operatives happy. Certain clubs and restaurants are more expensive but these are very lavish and very prestigious establishments in which you are paying for quality rather than quantity. Payment within these premises is done via your Finance card. All tables in bars and restaurants are equipped with the Customer Recognition Advisory Payment System. These small monitors have access points for your Finance card. You place your card in the slot and speak your order into the audio pick-up. It is then transferred, with your table number, to the bar or kitchen and your order is made up and brought to your table. Most drinks ordered in nearly all bars take about one to two minutes to reach you. A meal should take fifteen minutes at the most. Bars have a maximum waiting time -usually if you have to wait more than six minutes for a drink, then you are given it gratis, at no cost. In restaurants where you have ordered food, ten minutes is the usual waiting time. Please remember that this system works in nearly all bars and restaurants. Please check before entering that this system is in operation. It will save argument later. Civilian bars have no such systems and assurances and you must use these establishments at your own risk. Civilian bars do not accept SLA credit.

2.8 Psychological Examination and Evaluation (Exemption) -While under contract to SLA Industries, operatives will find that they must undergo a psychological evaluation every six months. This is to ensure the mental stability of the operative. This allows the various departments to aid the operative if they are having difficulty with their position in the company, in which case, new duties and psychoanalysis will be made available to the operative. If, at any time, an operative is deemed unfit for normal service to the company, one of two courses of action are open to the employer: 1- Expulsion of the individual for being unfit for service with an SCL revocation, and confiscation of all SLA properties. 2- The granting of an exemption certificate to allow them to continue their present duties in the manner to which they are accustomed and comfortable with.

Warning: Failure to be present at your bi-annual psycho-evaluation without a proper exemption certificate will result in an investigation from the department of Internal Affairs.

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOSES

MEDICAL EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE

THIS CERTIFICATE GRANTS THE BEARER THE RIGHT TO FORGO ANY AND ALL FORMS OF NORMAL PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION AS RUN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOSES AS IT HAS BEEN DEEMED UNNECESSARY FOR SUCH TESTING TO BE CARRIED OUT ON THE HOLDER OF THIS CERTIFICATE.

NAME OF HOLDER _____ SIGNATURE _____

AUTHORIZED BY _____ SIGNATURE _____

DATE OF ISSUE _____

EXPIRY DATE _____
(If applicable)

DEPARTMENTAL AUTHORISATION _____

THIS DOCUMENT IS ISSUED IN CONFIDENCE IN ANY WAY

EXCERPT FROM UPTOWN WOMAN

INTRUDER: THE MAN BY JULIE TRAVERS

There are times on Mort when all that is important, all who are important, are gathered into one place. Last night at SLA Halls was one such moment. The setting was mythically large and grand as befitted the people that walked beneath the high vaulted ceiling. Among the shining pillars, New Paris fashion glittered alongside the dark menacing figures of the protectors of SLA Industries; food and drink from all known worlds graced the antique tables; and the people talked of affairs high and low. Who knows what empires changed hands that night, what lives were lifted up to a new light and who was cast down into the darkness of anonymity? But although I was doubtless witness to moments of great political significance for Mort, all this correspondent can write about, think about is Intruder. INTRUDER: THE MAN

I found him alone in a dark corner. I was nervous, as any woman in the presence of this media figure would be, but Intruder is as gentle with the members of the weaker sex as he is violent in conflict. He looks at you with those brilliant blue eyes and the whole of Mort vanishes as you fall down into those aquatic windows of his soul.

I confess that most of my carefully prepared questions went straight out of my head, so I asked him about one of the most distinctive aspects of his image; his hair. He was deceptively modest.

"I don't have a name for the style. We have a couple of secretaries in Slayer's office who cut my hair. This doesn't have a name, its just a mess. I did cut it short about four or five years ago, but I didn't like it. It made my neck look too thin."

Of course I had to take him up on this. No–one would deny that Intruder has style; style in that chic, arrogant, handsome way, which is so difficult to describe. But when challenged to define his own concept of style, Intruder had these words of wisdom to impart.

"Don't try to follow any style but your own. The media often exerts too much influence on people. What you should do is look in the mirror and start from there." Intruder definitely has limitations placed on his style. "Most of the stuff I wear is armour. This coat, for example, no–one made this. I've had it from year one. It both cleanses and heals itself."

And it does! He cut that glorious garment and before my eyes it stitched itself up to look even better than before. Intruder is without doubt an eldritch and uncanny man. Dare I say a magician of our time? And his name? What tale lies behind that?

"I don't have another name. I didn't choose 'Intruder'. And it is more than just a name. A girl said once that it was real, but she's gone now."

"Gone now" is the phrase heard over and over again about Intruder's loves. Nowadays he is a romantic, but lonely figure. I asked him if this was the way if would always be from now on, or if there was any hope...

"I'm not allowed to have a relationship with anybody. My image restricts me. In ten years time magazines don't want to see me sitting next to a thirty year old, when I still look 22. It's hard being with someone and watching them grow old– while you always remain the same. I always seem to lose control in relationships. They can't keep up with me and I can't keep up with them. And in relationships I can be dangerous. I don't mean to be– as I said I always seem to end up losing it– control.

"Yes, there are always people who want to be with me, but it isn't fair on them. A lot of rival companies dislike me. They can't punish me, so they punish the people I care about. I've lost a lot of friends that way. It's so difficult keeping friends– especially when the world is in the state it is. I do have one or two people, who are close to me– Taarnish and a couple of other really old people, those who have got past the mortality problem."

So of course I asked him how we could get through this "mortality problem". (It did, after all, seem the only way to get closer to the elusive, charming and gallant Intruder. It took him a while to form an answer. I think, perhaps, he thought we wouldn't understand.

"You need a healthy mind. You have to live for your feelings."

But now to leave aside the romance and come down to practicalities. If you do manage to overcome the mortality problem (and I don't think Intruder thinks LAD counts), what do you give him for dinner when you finally get him up to your apartment?

"I like spaghetti. Spaghetti's fun. If people invite you over, ask you what you want and you say spaghetti, they panic. Its such a messy food to eat. I quite like Itztrong Cola too. But I'm drinking milk right now– to be different." And the last words of advice from this fascinating man, the founder of the Ebon race, the media warrior, the tragic lover? Intruder's last words to you reader were

"Talk to the guy who suits you."

It's certainly what I aim to do (again).

JULIE TRAVERS

MORT

"Mort is just one big bucket full of rain. You ever looked at the SLA Industries fashion magazines? It's all cool and hip umbrellas, so much water and no swim wear in sight, sheesh."

'Beast' Brain Waster SCL 2A

The World of Progress is a vast structure of solar systems containing planets who work and manufacture for SLA Industries. The purposes of such worlds are wide and varied; some are designated to obtain natural resources, others are heavily armed and used purely for storage. However, most are converted into huge Industrial Worlds, used for production and manufacture of SLA's goods –materials for growth, supplies for cities and civilisations, foodstuffs and armaments for nourishment and protection, and it's main industry; television, for the restless eyes of society.

The Industrial Worlds are home to billions of workers and civilians. Alone, these environments are vulnerable to a selection of evils, Rival Companies constantly aim to corrupt and destroy the system of SLA, the inhabitants of fallen domains relying on armed robbery and murder for survival and unspeakable horrors that prey on the weak and defenceless.

Hence, since the birth of the World of Progress, SLA Industries has raised, trained, created, bred and enlisted operatives and employees who are combat trained to protect the society that SLA owns.

Operatives and employees are positioned wherever they are needed most and none are needed more than on SLA Industries' largest and most important Industrial World, Mort. This planet is the main office for the whole system of SLA Industries, the nerve centre, the brain that controls the whole body of commerce; the World of Progress.


HEARTLAND

Mort is recorded as having the highest production rate ever. It also contains the depravity capitals of the World of Progress. It is a mixture of cultures stretching from the racy and sophisticated lifestyles of the corporates and operatives to the seedy slums of the unemployed, the street gangs and the nightmarish existence of the Carriens race, the vermin species of Mort.

Mort also boasts the highest crime rate ever, anarchy germinates in Mort's darkest corners. 'Blind spots', as they are known, are civilian areas undetected by observation centres –relying upon SLA security patrols, the Shiver Units, to suppress, and SLA operatives to investigate this population disaster: the seething mass known as Downtown.

The planet Mort is industry personified, a world that since the birth of SLA Industries has been stripped naked of nearly all natural resources and it's surface drowned with a sprawling mass of industrial factories, power plants and vast cities, over populated and disturbingly claustrophobic.

All that is left are toxic oceans of industrial waste, ozone depleted skies filled with dark clouds that rain and storm, day and night. A society that has never seen a forest, natural life or blue skies on a sunny day.

The sun has no place here, on this synthetic morass. The hopes and dreams of the people of Mort, take the form of television and media influence.

The air they breathe, the food they eat, the pavements that they walk on and the cities they live in are all part of SLA Industries. Everything you could ever want or need is provided for you. The influence is everywhere you look, all six senses are catered for in SLA Industries' World of Progress, a universe dominated by commerce.

Along with many other Industrial Worlds of it's size, the very structure of control hangs in the balance. Civil unrest and unemployment are always on the rise, the recession maybe non-existant but this generation has always been restless.

Mort has large areas of social repression scattered across it's city terrain, realms of frustration and discontent, places where television is not enough for the masses of unfortunates, the homeless, the unemployed, the undereducated and undernourished, the people of Downtown.

Beyond the Perimeter of SLA Industries, accommodation for operatives and employees is dangerous and in truly violent territories, crime and rioting is rife. SLA Industries' Observation Centre cannot cover these areas of unrest, they are blind to the hostile signals of Downtown and beyond...

THE FALL OF MORT 300 SD (THE EVOLUTION OF DOWNTOWN)

There are many queries surrounding the structure of Mort. With a company as successful as SLA Industries, would not the sheer profit gained in one year alone not cover removing civilian depression in Mort's Downtown areas?

The trouble started 600 years ago, when SLA Industries was planning for the big push forward. It was a time for improving the standard of living in neglected areas, in 300 SD (SLA/Standard Date). It was then merely called 'Central Outskirts'.

SLA Industries planned to build a 375,000,000c office block for SLA's civilian department, the Society Security Organisation (S.S.O.). However, the S.S.O. lacked sufficient funds to run smoothly and see to the needs of Mort's public and unemployment figures. To this end, SLA Industries awarded the S.S.O. a



development grant to construct the enormous office block in Central Outskirts' Sector 1.

It was to be called 'Salvation Tower', a Society Security office built to organise the housing and accommodation for the homeless and the needy, it would deal with health and safety aspects in old Outskirts' tenement blocks. Salvation Tower was also to act as an employment office that could strip the unemployment figures by seventy percent. It seemed like true salvation for the population, hope for the future, an ice-pack on the financial climate.

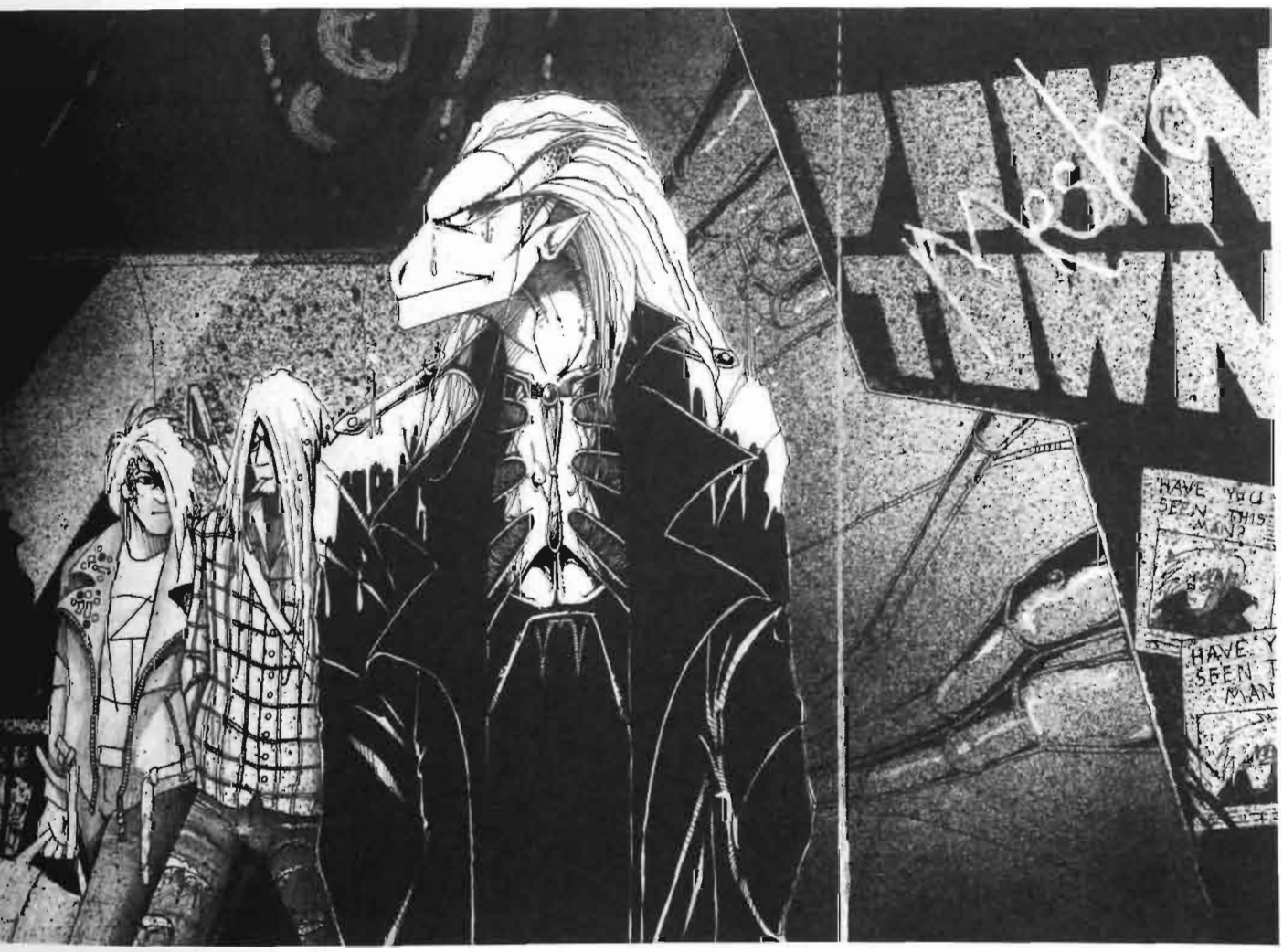
However, unknown to the World of Progress, the Salvation Tower was sealed with a curse. There were many unforseen factors which caused the fall in 300 SD., a massive disaster on a variation of levels.

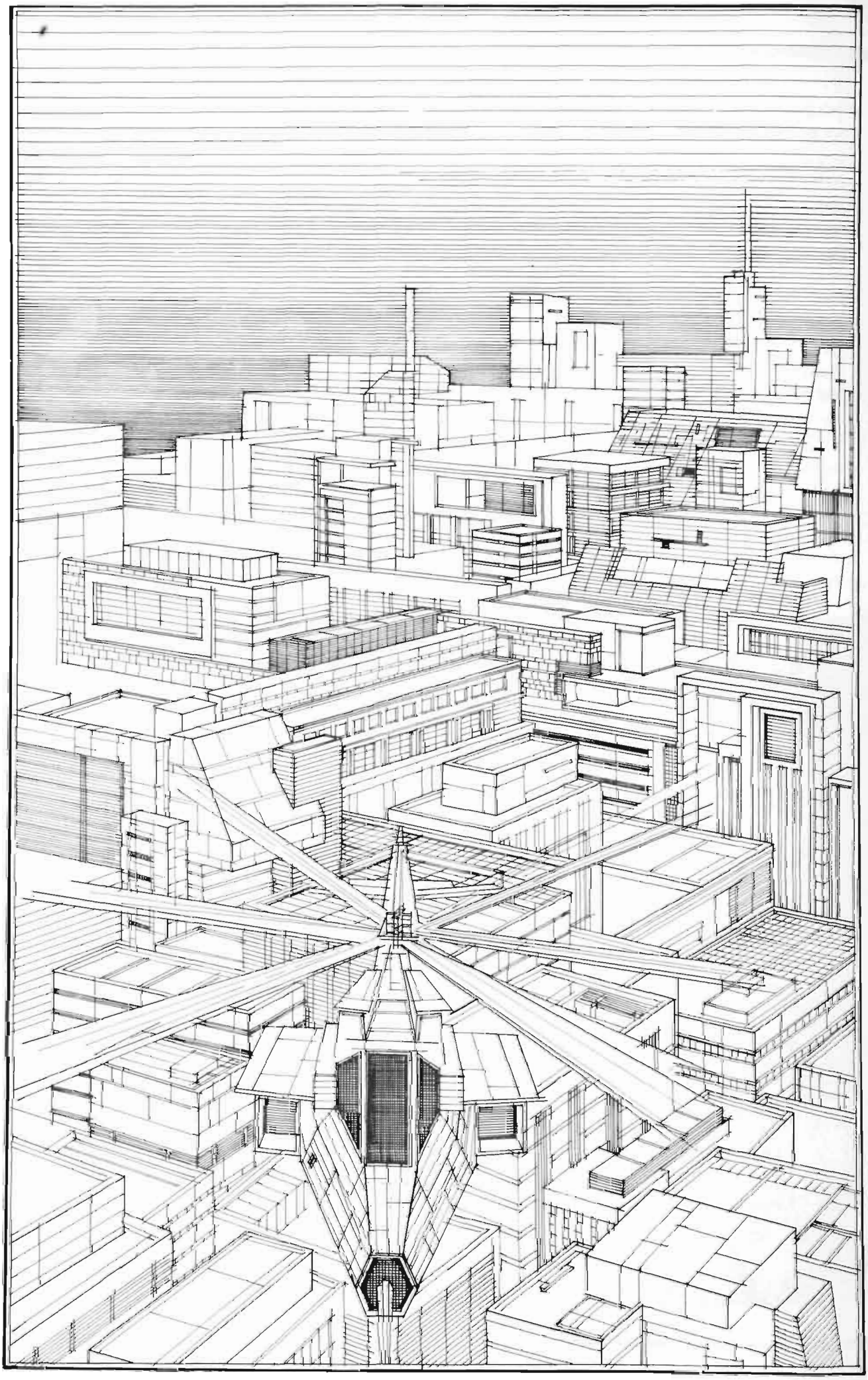
In the first century of the World of Progress, SLA Industries had already managed to cover the entire land mass of Mort, so as the corporation grew, when there was no more room to build across, SLA built up to the skies and down into the planet's core. Mort's lower levels were and still are used for storage purposes, and in Central Outskirts, subterranean floors were converted into huge reservoirs for containment of water. The initial cities of Mort were re-floored on higher levels and the original surface was rebuilt into a colossal intertwining subway system, a passage for fibre optic cables to power the heart of Mort and allow the blood of communication to flow in these arteries from the heart of SLA. Between these underground necessities weaved Central Outskirts' sewer system.

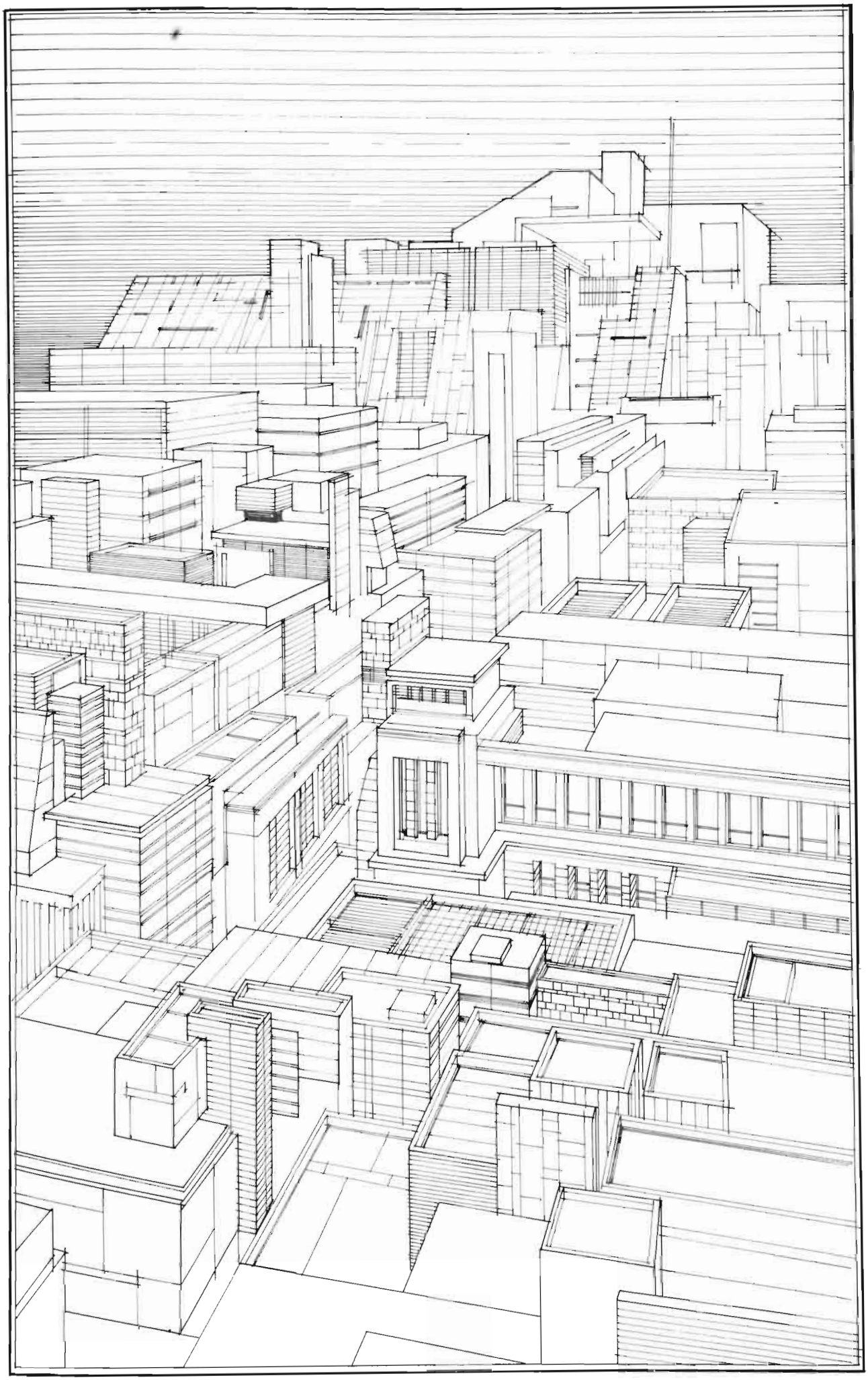
In the early years, Mort's reservoirs were vital to the planet's survival since initially it suffered from a water shortage due to the population explosion. Water supplies were provided by Ice Worlds during the SLA Industries/Wraith Raider alliance after the Conflict Wars.

SLA Industries' water supplies were poured into vast reservoirs the moment the workers finished constructing them and then they were sealed over with Mort's new additions to the Central Outskirts.

The architectural department of SLA Industries spent a decade surveying the construction area for the







erection of Salvation Tower in Sector 1 and, after much speculation, the building commenced. During the construction of Salvation Tower, Mort suffered it's first ecological disaster: It started to rain and it didn't stop. The deterioration of Mort's natural ecosystem to permanent rain was almost entirely due to the increasing pollution. The only optimistic aspect to arise from the weather change was that it completely depleted Mort's drought problem. However, this is when the real disaster struck, a nightmare that gave birth to Downtown.

When the rain beat down on Mort without a break for over a month, SLA decided that it was time to empty it's precious reservoirs. Above them sat Salvation Tower, two weeks before it's grand opening. When the reservoirs ran dry, the structural supports around them gave way and the giant building sank down. As it fell, the tower caused underground chaos, the building ripped down vital power cables in Central Outskirts.

The domino effect went into action as surrounding buildings crashed to the ground, flattening sewers and subway access points. Tube trains collided with falling wreckage from towering apartments and thousands were killed in a catastrophe comparable to a huge earthquake.

The whole of Central Outskirts fell apart almost instantaneously, as Salvation Tower fell, it failed to crumble or break up, the architects of SLA Industries had designed Salvation Tower to stand up to anything and it did, it merely sank twelve levels then stopped sinking whilst wide-scale disaster erupted around it.

Salvation Tower was also the link-up to all five sectors of Central Outskirts so, during the fall, SLA lost all contact during the disaster. The outskirts of Central Mort were thrown into darkness as the whole territory went black, devoid of all power, cables cut and flattened under tons of rubble. Central Outskirts was in pieces and not even SLA Industries could cover the cost of such a monstrous catastrophe.

In the aftermath of the destruction, SLA Industries once again sealed over the fallen wreckage with new streets and buildings, promises of renewal and a better style of living consoled the homeless and heart-broken as SLA Industries aimed for a cheaper alternative to cover up their disastrous oversight.

What was left of Central Outskirts 1 to 5 were sealed off with huge armoured walls and conveniently forgot about as SLA Industries raised the surviving populations' hopes with their newest project, an enterprising scheme that would cater for the public's needs quickly and efficiently.

600 years on, SLA Industries' project has remained both faithful and futile, populated and poverty-stricken to this day. To the civilians of Mort, the project was given no name and remained without until the sprawling mass and it's masses spoke for itself. A project, populace and place called Downtown.

To this day, a dark dividing line, called 'The Perimeter' separates the fast-paced, media hyped, corporate controlled lifestyle of the operatives and employees from the under classes who reside in Downtown and barely survive on the meagre amounts of income created by small time employment and Society Security funds. The culture gap between these two opposites is incredible but, although this mixture of social upbringing is truly worlds apart, both walks of life need each other for survival.

MORT'S IMPACT ON THE WORLD OF PROGRESS

Mort is the nerve centre of all activities in the World of Progress. SLA Industries' head office has been stationed on Mort's surface for the last 900 years and does not have any plans for moving, regardless of how hard its rivals try to evict it. Mort is the most well protected Industrial World in the whole of the World of Progress. It has to be, Mort's functions are essential for the advancement and survival of SLA Industries.

Mort is a city the size of a planet. From space, it is an ugly grey virus hanging in the stagnant void; the World of Progress. The varying classes of society that live on Mort view their existence there with great diversity. The operatives, employees and corporate heads of departments regard Mort as a financial jackpot waiting to be won. Its fame and power call to the streetwise entrepreneur who is liberated by what this monstrous city of SLA Industries has to offer, its filthy and prospering landscapes of tower blocks, skyscrapers, seedy gangplanks and desperately hot prospects.

Down below Mort's glossy surface of the operative's stained hopes and dreams, the downtrodden civilian populace live by a very different philosophy.

To them, Mort is a hell hole, a disgusting, nauseating squalor of shattered dreams. Daylight for the hungry civilian is a flickering strobe light, a daily stroll is a deluge of dirty rain and, worst of all, a mugging is a brutal murder, below the uncaring eyes of Mort Central, in Downtown.

All of Mort's dreams are balanced by an equally generous quantity of nightmares, feared by the civilians and faced by the operatives, watched by the television generation.

On Mort, SLA Industries is faced by the daunting prospect of controlling and dominating the restless evils that inhabit the violent yet productive planet. For many operatives this line of work becomes their career for life and they travel the length and breadth of unemployed Downtown in a constant attempt to maintain SLA order in urban chaos.

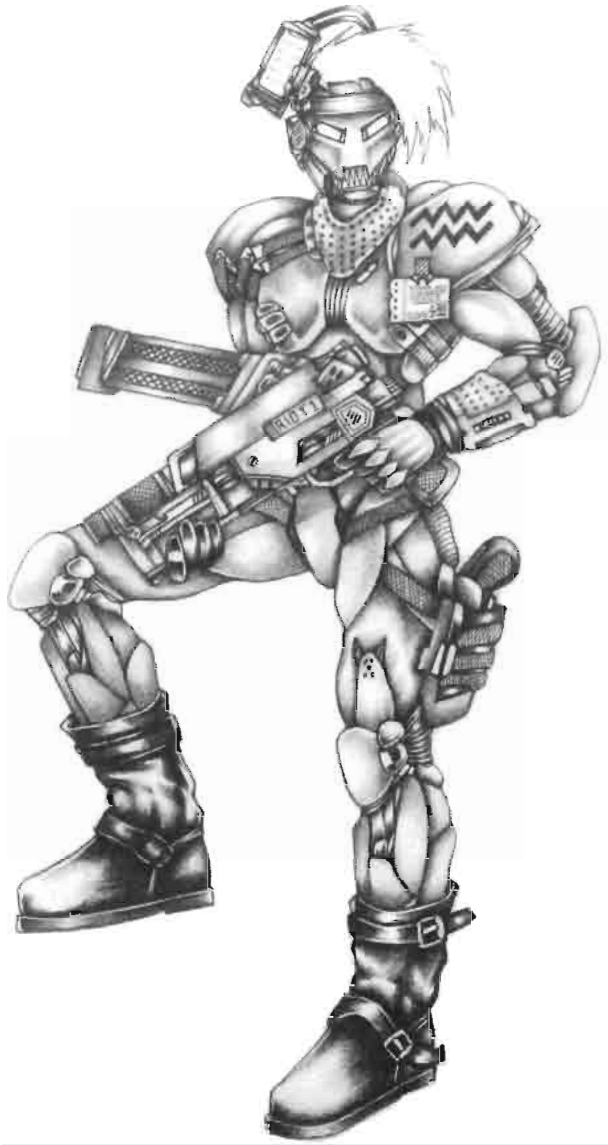
Since the Fall in 300 SD., Downtown has changed only in size, getting bigger and deeper, more difficult to control. As Downtown sinks into the core of Mort, it becomes harder for SLA Industries' Observation Centres to watch and supervise criminal and subversive activity occurring in Downtown. The observant eye of SLA Industries can only stretch so far. There comes a time when SLA Industries has to take precautionary measures and send operatives to search and explore the hateful and wasted depths of Mort to uncover the enemy and try to evict the terror germinating at the core.

The importance of Mort to SLA Industries is unimaginable, it characterises the very heart of the World of Progress making it the prime target for rival oppression and the silent infiltration into urban societies.

With so much enemy intrusion on Mort's enormous cities, SLA Industries needs protection against the competitive intentions of its prime rivals DarkNight Industries and Thresher Incorporated. Underneath the industrial giants thrive a multitude of renegade Soft Companies comprising of traitorous corporates and operatives who work independently and struggle to progress by attacking loyal members of SLA, bullying and manipulating civilian classes and injecting private network channels on SLA Industries' airwaves.

What follows is an entourage of violence and crime, so in order to quell such an uprising of malefactors, SLA Industries deploys Shiver Units – corporate police who are used primarily to subdue and repress illegal and subversive citizens beyond the SLA Perimeter.

Anything beyond mugging, theft and robbery is usually designated to the often–televised operatives who are suitably armed and trained to deal with heavy resistance and insane serial killers. Shivers are vital to maintaining law and order on Mort –however, they don't get the ratings an operative can. Shiver Units are only ever issued Blocker Body Armour and gauss guns as standard, although there are certain instances where upgraded Shiver Units are necessary to deal with civilian riots and arresting operatives who couldn't take the pressure and have gone AWOL.



Shiver Unit in standard Body Armour uniform carrying the 'Browbeater' Gauss Rifle for riot control and crowd dispersion.

Nevertheless, Shiver Units are there to be feared by operatives and citizens alike, since they are funded by Station Analysis and Internal Affairs, so if one's intentions are even slightly anti–establishment, the Shiver Units will clamp down on you, without hesitation or mercy.

Shiver Units are there at the operative's disposal, they are usually the first to uncover criminal circum-

stances and murder victims as they spend most working hours, patrolling Downtown in shifts that last for 24 hours. The Shiver Unit's search for treason in society never ends.

Unfortunately the Shiver Units can't be everywhere at once, no matter how many airborne units or APCs they deploy. Downtown has called for outside response to repress the ever growing crime rate. The answer is found in an independent organisation called Monarch Law Enforcement Agency (M.L.E.). They are a traditional police force, armed with CAF weapons and garbed in Striker light armour. The Monarch Police, despite their good intentions and determination, are still no match for the faceless and disturbingly inhuman approach of Shiver Units. SLA Industries has made no attempt to stop the Monarch Law Enforcement's work: As long as the little agency are risking their lives against the petty thieves and sleazy drug pushers, SLA Industries' Shiver Units can deal with the real epidemics like serial killers, Carriens and DarkNight, finding their secluded hideaways and hovels and sending in the operatives to investigate and eradicate for the SLA network.

In conjunction with the patrolling Shiver Units are the numerous Observation Centres that silently study Mort Central and Downtown. Finance chipped operatives and Internal Affairs agents are minions of Observation Centres and watch the world of SLA somewhat surreptitiously.

The Observation Centres are no less vital to the existence of SLA than the Shiver Units. While they deal with the common problem of mundane operations, the secret skills of the Observation Centres root out the most clandestine of operatives.

In any event, Mort, with all it's dangerous backstreets and grimy pathways is the most popular stage, the top selling studio for all kinds of media coverage. When it comes to murder, mystery and intrigue, Third Eye News has plenty to say about the adventurous and rebellious factions from Mort Central to the lowest levels of Downtown.

Commentary on two Contract Killers:–

Jack – "... Well, Bob, at least these two haven't picked a densely populated zone."

Bob – "That's right, Jack, Morbid was warned by his sponsors, they don't like dead customers."

Jack – "Well, that puts them in a league of one... They are still squaring off with a minimum of gun play. They are looking for rating here."

Bob – "That's right. Who wants to see a fight that's over in less than 12 seconds."

Jack – "Well, as long as it doesn't drag out beyond a five minute slot..."

Bob – "Whoa! Shellac is making a charge whilst shooting up junk. What's in his dispenser? U.V.?"

Jack – "Rush, I'd say, but hell he'll need more than good junk to survive Morbid's MACs."

Bob – "My moneys on Morbid. Shellac's Power Claymore just bounced off his Crackshot without so much of a... Wow! Nice move there. Both MACs in a flurry of such finesse and... yes... Shellac is bleeding."

Jack – "Nice roll there."

Bob – "That's right, Jack, but he's lost his sword."

Jack – "Bad show! He's drawn his guns!"

Bob – "Damn! He's just shot Morbid... yes, he's dead. What a disappointment. Where's my rifle? I'm gonna plug him..."

THE ARCHITECTURAL BREAKDOWN OF MORT

The best way to visualise Mort is as a mountainous landscape where the highest peaks of it's industrial mountains are the Uptown areas of SLA Industries, accommodated by the operatives, corporates, highly paid and respected employees hired by SLA. From there, every hill–like city on the planet's concrete surface sinks into lower levels of depravity, housing and social classes. The subterranean levels of Mort is over populated and unemployed –never seen by the upper classes other than on public occasions. Then, even deeper, once through the multitudes of dark and inhospitable levels, lie wide expanses of dead cities, fallen and crumbling buildings of a bygone SLA era. These are areas whose social and economical levels have bottomed out, the hostile territories that surround an uncertain existence of normality, are known as Cannibal Sectors. Dangerous by day, deadlier by night, the Cannibal Sectors are home to the most unspeakable and unimaginable horrors conceived by mankind.

On Mort, it is hard to believe that only miles separate the glamour and prestige of Mort's central and Uptown from the mindless cannibalism breeding in the barren wastelands. Only the thin and unsteady Perimeters of Mort protect and hide it's vulnerable population from destruction and truth.

MORT CENTRAL

Mort Central is essentially the operative's landscape. It is the lavish city of wealth and pleasure. In the centre of this extravagant and excessive metropolis is the SLA Industries' Head Office, a huge monumental shrine that contains the most important and influential departmental heads in the World of Progress but foremost, it is the home to the head of SLA Industries; Mr. Slayer.

Head Office is the most opulent example of Post–Conflict architecture with it's grandiose aspirations to be the great leviathan in the sea of sprawling mass that is Mort Central. The pyramidical apex breaking the skyline is like a shark's fin cruising through all the lesser edifices of surrounding monuments to the overwhelming success of SLA Industries.

The building itself is an awesome sight to behold, both inside and out. Whilst Head Office has an oppressive and harsh exterior, the interior is an expansive and cathedralesque setting, giving the world surrounding SLA Industries a truly religious element. Even within this industrial, yet decorative, realm, visitors have to stretch their necks to view any detail on the staggeringly high ceilings. The cliff–like walls are a blaze of carvings, murals and statues, painstakingly sculpted by nine centuries of Dark Lament's Necanthropes and Ebons.

At the pinnacle is Mr. Slayer's office, a place not open to anyone below SCL 2F. Few people gain entry to this office regularly other than Intruder, Senti or the Preceptor Teeth. It is a monstrous dark station of power and the pillars that fortify it are inscribed with thousands of glyphs. Mr. Slayer rarely leaves this nightmarish palace, other than to make public speeches, at which assassination attempts are common –although even a 17mm HESH round to Mr. Slayer's head doesn't seem to make him bat an eyelid.

With the exception of Mr. Slayer, nobody can buy accommodation in Mort Central, it is simply a huge market for the operatives and employees where they can purchase anything from guns and armour to clothes and accessories (especially umbrellas). Mort Central is a breeding ground for thousands of department stores and expansive shopping centres. It is a materialist's heaven, anything can be bought on the surface of Mort Central.

However, Mort Central has a darker side. As well as honouring the SLA shrine –Head Office– it also holds countless control and Observation Centres, the bureaucratic side of SLA Industries also resides here. Corporate installations and structures such as these are open and operational 24 hours a day, dealing with operatives, financial management and accountancy, running departments and general administration of day–to–day SLA Industries.

For operatives, Mort has a great social and night life, equipped to please with a selection of parks, pleasure centres (for all tastes), bars, nightclubs and of course, the SLA operatives favourite; The Pit, Mort's largest and most successful nightclub. As the name suggests, operative bars are only open to operatives and any employees working for SLA Industries. Civilians from beyond the Perimeters need to get a pass just to get into Mort Central.

Despite Mort Central's gleam and glamour, it still rains constantly –although it is a cleaner rain than the filthy drizzle that falls on Downtown. People in Mort Central can at least see the sky, though it may not be much to look at.

The streets on Mort Central are safe and clean, any dirt or scum is quickly swept down through the grating into the lower levels where it belongs. The operative territories of Mort Central are the best protected areas on the planet. SLA Industries can't afford to lose its precious stations, control and Observation Centres and Head Office to rival insurgencies. Mort Central is covered with Shiver stations ready to act at a moment's notice. There are few BPN's open to operatives concerning Mort Central simply because it is so well fortified against the opposition. Mort Central has a history of rival raids and bombings. There are some circumstances, however, where BPNs assign operatives to work on debt collection and Extermination Warrants for unwanted Corporates in Mort Central.

Mort Central covers 2500 square miles of the planet's surface before deviating into the various sub–levels and factory sectors that span the rest of Mort's sinister surface.

UPTOWN

The expansive sector called Uptown is designed purely to accommodate operatives and high ranking employees. Like Mort Central, the sector is well protected by Shiver Units since it is home to many important people in SLA Industries. Rumours have stated that Uptown is also installed with several secret Observation Centres designated to the analysis of this highly esteemed area's tenants. In reality, Uptown is crawling with Internals and they are watching everybody. SLA Industries believes that subversion begins at home so Shiver Units patrol operative streets very closely.

Cloak Division's Dark Finders are also in abundance. These are biogenetically enhanced humans hired by SLA Industries as a mode of police detective, a peg above the Shiver Units. Dark Finders are fitted with the new Nuke Tendon Implants, as a working test of Karma's biogenetic laboratories' latest design. The product of this intensive surgery is a SLA manufactured superhuman; faster, stronger and generally fitter than the average human operative. Nuke Tendon Implants push them beyond natural limits once grafted onto the patient's natural body tissue. Details of the workings of these implants are, currently, classified.

Most Dark Finders are so fanatically loyal to SLA Industries they have become the archetypal image of Cloak Division, a breed apart from the freelance operative. They are polished, uniformed and militarised, many harbouring an almost religious fervour.



In Uptown, the Dark Finders' special police force is feared and hated. These children of Cloak Division trust or favour nobody. The better you are, the more they dislike you. As far as the Dark Finder is concerned, he is the only loyal and trustworthy employee in SLA Industries, with the exception of Mr. Slayer, his idol and eternal leader. Everyone around him must be watched and regarded as a traitor.

If Internal Affairs suspects a subversive in Uptown, they immediately contact Cloak Division and a Dark Finder will be sent to investigate and interrogate the individual.

Despite the high corporate police activity in Uptown, it is an excellent living environment with Mort Central usually only a few pleasant blocks away from the operative's apartment.

The average operative apartment contains the minimum of a bedroom, living room, kitchen, bathroom, fitted with a phone/fax so that SLA Industries can contact the operative at any time necessary. This will all cost the starting operative about 100₵/month. If he or she so desires, it is possible to rent a better and bigger apartment for more money though, for the best rented accommodation, the cost is very steep.

There are always plenty of blue taxis and shops where the operatives can purchase their week's necessities and amongst the operatives that live in Uptown, there is very little trouble other than the usual late night revellers.

SUBURBIA

"Dumb-ass kids! Why do they do all those stupid drugs, they're really crazy. It's SLA Industries' fault: If they didn't work the parents so hard, they might have the opportunity to supervise their children and I wouldn't have to bust them raiding the pharmacist on the Duke Street strip. Thanks, Mr. Lindsay, that's all."

Monarch Law Sergeant Douglas, courtesy of Downtown Phoenix 892 SD.

At the bottom end of Uptown lies the claustrophobic and densely populated cluster called Suburbia. It is home to the majority of SLA Industries' mundane employees in their millions. The housing is of a lower standard than Uptown's lavish tower blocks. In Suburbia, buildings are much closer to the ground making it easier for airborne Shiver Units to patrol. There are not many operatives that live in Suburbia as most operatives can afford better than the borderline accommodation in the Suburbs. SLA Industries has unfortunately had problems housing all of its operatives recently and a small minority of its starting operatives have been forced to accept Suburbia rented apartments.

Even with the large percentage of the suburban population being employed by SLA Industries' factories and manufacturing installations, crime still occurs in Suburbia. In most cases, crimes committed in Suburbia are by the SLA employee's offspring. They are usually aged between 15 and 18 and end up as malefactors as a result of television, illegal drug abuse, lack of parental supervision and everyday tedium with the looming prospect of a lifetime career putting the tops on beer bottles, like "ma and pa". It isn't really the teenage criminal's fault –they are just misled and misunderstood because their parents

have to work long and hard every day. There is no one to watch over the children, so they quickly become juvenile delinquents.

SIC Network doesn't help matters. In its desperate attempts to rake in more money and trainee operatives, it subconsciously teaches its young viewers a sick and twisted education of violence through the action-packed lifestyle of SLA the Contract Killer.

With the growing problem of juvenile crime, there is always one who has the makings of a young killer.

In SLA Industries' gradual social decline, there is the ever growing problem of genocide in secluded areas within Suburbia. Many of the serial killers around the suburbs have slipped in through the SLA Perimeters in search of new victims. However there are some who were born in stable households but are still victims of SLA Industries' systematic abuse.

Around the outskirts of the SLA Suburbs are the manufacturing plants where the civilian employees go to work for the 9 till 6 shift, this is mostly where Downtown's evils creep through to break the monotony of the tiresome Suburbia.

THE SLA PERIMETERS

"I don't know where it is, right, but I know there's a gap in the Perimeter line separating the Cannibal Sectors from us. I don't mean the sewers because then the crazies are gonna stop at Downtown. No, this gap's gotta be real small, y'know, so the dogs can get through. They've been creepin' round Suburbia chompin' on the young kids and babies. Damn crazy droolin' mutts..... there's gotta be a gap."

'Dead-End' Human Powersuit Pilot on Suburban Manoeuvres, courtesy of Third Eye News.

The SLA Perimeters are huge fortified walls that separate Mort Central, Uptown and Suburbia from Upper and Lower Downtown, and the terrifying Cannibal Sectors.

Shiver Units patrol the Perimeters almost as cautiously as Mort Central for what lies beyond the great heavily armed and armoured walls are warring gangs, deadly Company Rivals, carnivorous Carriens and renegade Manchines.

To deal with the intruding horrors of darkest Downtown, SLA Industries has deployed heavy resistance to guard the Perimeters -ranging from the reliable standard Shiver Units in Body Armour all the way up to Dogeybone Armour and Shock Armour, ready to deal with persistent and powerful adversaries.



SLA operatives all have an SCL 10 or higher. SCL 10 is not the lowest however, as factory workers and the like all hold SCL 11 passes. An SCL card of 11 or higher is needed to get through the Perimeter lines. Anyone coming in from Downtown must be registered and have a Civilian Visitor's Pass or an SCL 11 card in their possession in order to get through the Perimeter line: Anyone approaching the Perimeter line who is not registered under SLA Industries' civilian rights is instantly placed under arrest on suspicion of operating as a DarkNight mercenary.

SLA protection of the Perimeter never declines, it has maximum security, 24 hours a day, to make sure absolutely nothing gets through without proper identification and a pass. However, cunning infiltrators slip through into Suburbia via the sewers and industrial installations, undetected by SLA Industries' Observation Centres.

The Perimeter walls are 30 metres high and 6 metres thick, and encircle the whole of Mort Central, Uptown and Suburbia.

D O W N T O W N

"Oh, bloody kids, y'know the little ones, I hate 'em, and the scary thing is, they don't nick the good stuff, like cigarettes and girlie mags like proper kids should. No, it's t.v. guides for Chrissakes, I mean, not even chocolate! Freaks me out!"

Zaeed Downtown Shopkeeper

Downtown is the fragile slum of Mort itself, a massive melting pot of poverty, tension and unemployment. The people and places are hidden well under the high-class streets of Mort Central on the surface of the planet. Most of Downtown bulk is held in subterranean levels, where class and wealth are depicted by height. The higher up you are in Downtown, the richer you are. The further you are from Mort Central's streets, the poorer you are. This philosophy is common knowledge and completely true. Downtown itself has broken depths into two social and housing classes, Upper and Lower Downtown.

Downtown is falling apart and pieces are slowly being dragged away by dominating forces, criminal organisations funded by DarkNight Industries, urban vermin like Carriens, drug pushers and mass murderers.

The unfortunate unemployed citizens that inhabit the deeply enclosed squalor live in terror of the monsters that have evolved in the wake of SLA Industries' productive, yet uncaring, progress. These obscenities of SLA society are the by-product of its own produce, the drug pusher takes SLA drugs, the serial killers are inspired by SLA television and carry their firearms and blades and the mutated Carriens are speculated offspring of industrial and toxic waste from SLA mass-production facilities. SLA Industries created Downtown itself, by the collapse of Salvation Tower in 300 SD.

Nearly everybody that lives in Downtown receives welfare of 40ū a week plus Housing in order to survive. It isn't a lot of money, especially when all your time is your own. The boredom and poverty is unbearable, leaving little more for the citizen to do but watch television for every waking hour of the day (and often night). The only energy an unemployed person living in Downtown ever seems to expend is in travelling to the local newsagent or supermarket. There are very few places to go in Downtown, nowhere is truly safe, and everybody is scared to venture the end of an alley.

Daylight is a rare sight in Downtown, unless you are travelling the upper levels, as most of the sky is hidden by grating from the gangplanks and pathways. When the rain falls from the polluted clouds, it plummets right through Mort Central and down into the depths of Downtown. By this time it is grimy from slipping through the dirty, steel grids and lattices of the walkways where people have walked.

Looking up through Downtown, one can see others walking the gangplanks right above you and some below. These walkways resemble huge fire escapes that stretch from building to building that make cheap and quick fitting streets. At a distance, the structure of Downtown seems like a complex, metal interlocking jungle of tubes, passages, alleys and corridors that lead to millions of cheap and unstable boxes called houses.

The best areas of Downtown are upon the highest levels close to the SLA Perimeters. If operatives are looking for large, popular street gangs like Krosstown Traffic, The Johannas or The Kiestas, then they will probably be found here. Most of the Downtown gangs move up to higher levels when exploring or travelling to their hang-outs. The three gangs mentioned above are organized and knowledgable so it is advisable to bribe them for information as it is unadvisable to use force for their organisations are heavily populated with many members. The most ruthless of these gangs is The Johannas and they have been known to behead arrogant SLA operatives.

Downtown cults and street religions are also very popular in the lower levels. Disturbed and insecure minions pray, preach and sacrifice in the name of false gods. Sometimes, their worship takes material



form in the shape of psychotic serial killers and Downtown monsters or mutations. These people are easily impressioned and misled, feeling the need to pay a lifetime's homage and more to the insane murderer's power and myth.

Mort's worst monsters receive their own selection of loyal worshippers, such as Digger, Hallowe'en Jack or any ancient killers with age, reason or a sense of mortality. The followers of such fiends are blinded by their own petty existence and alarmingly fanatical over the legends of destruction that reside in the lairs of Downtown in wait for the worshippers to call them and bring mutation to the gentry of SLA Industries.

"Look! I've got a scoop. We're talking five, maybe six, minutes of prime time footage waiting to go live here. No, I will not hold, just patch me through to the boss and finish painting your nails in someone else's time, love. Hello, Mac? Yeah, It's Scope here. I'm set up with a story about to happen here. No, I won't tell you where. The last thing I want is for your full-timers to steal my exclusivity. Yeah, you'll do it. I would. Now, look. I have the potential for a five or sixer here. All I need is a slot. We're talking hot. Hey! Turn the tracer off! Yes, you are! I heard the pulse tone and my line security screamed 'trace' to me. Ok.

"I have a story about to happen and I'm the only camera here. If you aren't interested then I'll sell to someone who is. WHAT? Ok, ok, don't bring that up. Two minutes? You've got to be kidding. Five or six. The story warrants it. Trust me. What? Ok. I have been wrong before but not this time, I'm not. I know I said that last time but this time is for real. Ok, five and a half at...what? Are you trying to take away my livelihood? 75% min. 35? Who do you think you are dealing with, Mac? I will go as low as... damn. It's live! Patch me through now! No, I can't wait! I'm mobile. Get me on t.v. Now. Negotiate later. What? 50%? Ok. Just slot me in now. Ok... am I on? Ok...

"Mike Scope for SIC. Here in Sector 12, Hallowe'en Jack holds the hearts of the neighbourhood for ransom as the rain washes the tears of the grievers into the sewers. Just behind me, you can see his carnage mounted high. Shall we find him?"

Sometimes, SLA operatives are gifted with undesired praise. What follows is a period of bad press, a pesky epidemic of Copycats, mimicking your every move and assassination attempts from opposing factions. It can all get quite messy and it is guaranteed that SLA Industries will be less than pleased with the circumstances, your fault or not.

A good many of the Downtown cults are 'SLA-hating' communities and will attack any operatives anywhere near their god's vicinity. On occasion, this religious problem escalates into something serious and the worshippers prayers are answered and something stirs from its slumber in the Cannibal Sectors.

Although Downtown cults preach false prophecies, on occasion their words have a disturbing truth. The Chien Cult believe there is an immortal demon in the reservoirs of Downtown, beside Cannibal Sector One. They say it is a winged man-dog as big as a tank and it comes from the distant end of the World of Progress and it will raze Mort Central to the ground. However, this is all mere speculation and, as yet, there is no conclusive evidence to prove that a winged monster resides in the reservoirs. No operatives have investigated this territory. It is a treacherous journey on a structurally unsafe path and the whole area is infested with Carriens, human cannibals and carnivorous pigs from Mort's sewers.

Downtown is so large and jumbled, SLA Industries itself has difficulty mapping its entirety, so many areas and levels of Downtown have been built over, collapsed or just plain lost in the fast pace of progress. Many places just disappear, replaced by new surroundings. It seems almost impossible to map Downtown and quite easy to get lost, even by those unfortunate individuals who live in there.

The people in Downtown who do know where they are going are DarkNight Mercenaries: SLA Industries main Rival Company operatives in the discrete layers of Downtown, undetected by Observation Centres. DarkNight continually scatters the drugs needed for incessant serial killers in various hide-outs, makes financial agreements with underworld organisations, trading hardware for loyalty, and selling highly advanced equipment and necessities to the Downtown Black Market for very reasonable prices.

Very rarely will DarkNight challenge SLA Industries with physical force and combat, it is far more brutal acting as an undercover subversive: It does more damage that way. In this respect, SLA Industries fears them more so than Thresher Incorporated. It knows what to expect from Thresher: Brutal raids on SLA Industries' less protected areas.

DarkNight, on the other hand, can invade the SLA television network and fill the Downtown viewers with hard facts or propaganda against SLA Industries. DarkNight only intercepts certain areas at a time with short sharp broadcasts from Channel Resistance in order to sway the loyalty of small communities at a time.

So inspired are certain enterprising individuals of DarkNight activities that Soft Companies (indepen-



dent rival sub-companies) have risen from its impact on society. Soft Companies come in many forms, some act like minor product manufacturers that sell without the SLA label or brand, others are violent and aim to compete with SLA Industries and expand into Major Company status like DarkNight and Thresher. Most Soft companies survive through rival backing and sponsorship and most small rival organisations are equipped with DarkNight hardware. This produce can also be purchased on the Black Market.

The Black Market in SLA Industries is highly illegal and any citizens found in possession of Black Market goods are arrested. Most goods for sale in these seedy slums are equipment stolen from dead operatives. This means of quick cash is common practice amongst Downtown gangs who wait for heavy combat in the lower levels, hide until the firing and blasting stops and then scavenge whatever they can grab before the Shiver Units arrive to clean up. Then the gang returns to the Black Market stalls to sell the stolen goods to the barterer.

Civilians can buy DarkNight supplies, drugs and equipment from both sides of the SLA Perimeters and on occasion, information. Downtown Props (mercenaries and assassins) can be hired and commissioned by gangs and crime groups, even the cruel and sinister skin trade is available to the perverted.

The skin trade entails the kidnapping and capture of young and pretty female gang members who get too close to Beckon Street: The 'Downtown Beacon' -Mort's own red light district. Beckon Street is a dirty strip stacked with pimps and prostitutes, stripper bars and nightclubs, pleasure halls and brothels for all tastes -alien races included. Young Downtown females, and very often males, disappear all the time and most are sold away to sleazy corporates and twisted criminal world organisations for pleasure purposes.

The three main Downtown gangs intend to put an end to the merciless skin trade present in and around the Downtown Beacon, regardless of the Shiver Units warnings. As far as they are concerned, they have lost too many members already and cannot let this go on. Slavery will not be tolerated.

Downtown cults are also catered for in the Black Market. There are many ethnic stalls selling books and manuscripts on the occult and demon worship, even the highly illegal Glyph cards are also available -under the counter of course.

The age of biogenetics has phased out a great many eras of technology, especially the short-lived boom of cyber-limbs that a small number of Soft Companies attempted to fill the market with: Chrome enhancements that drained the patient's humanity and only contained a limited power cell of a decade. Since then, the foolish 'chrome warriors', once deaf to Karma Biogenetics pleas and warnings, now litter the social gutter of Lower Downtown, in Rust Alley.

Rust Alley is a secluded hideaway for disabled and powerless cyber-tramps and beggars who live off the kindness of passers-by, asking for food scraps or money. These poor unfortunates cover their non-functioning limbs and eyes with coats, hoods and rags, in shame of what they are and once were, remembering a time when it was all about "looking cool".

Beyond Rust Alley lies deeper loathing than bygone heroes, a home and resting place for the insane. A place of madness, unspeakable savagery and total anarchy: the Cannibal Sectors.

"Wow, I saw an old person the other day. No, serious, I mean really old, like 50 or somethin'."

Rebecca Jorden Krosstown Traffic gang member (18)

THE CANNIBAL SECTORS

"Even from Mort Central, you can taste the foul presence of Cannibal Sector One."

'Mute' Ebon Investigator SCL 4A

Mort's cannibal sectors are the worst example of SLA Industries' neglect for its environment, both socially and ecologically. As the name suggests, Cannibal Sectors are inhabited by sub-humans who feed



off the flesh of people in order to survive. It is a barren wasteland that hasn't been renovated since the fall of 300 SD. Massive tower blocks still lean in ruin waiting for a gentle breeze to topple them, caused by the devastation of Salvation Tower all those centuries ago.

There are five known Cannibal Sectors in and around Mort's main cityscape, the most deadly and hostile of which is Cannibal Sector One, home to Salvation Tower itself and Digger, Downtown's oldest and most notorious Manchine. These depleted areas of depravity are what is left of Central Outskirts. Nothing has changed here, everything is as shattered as it was 600 years ago, except that the corruptive expanse of the Cannibal Sectors is growing steadily.

Like Mort Central, SLA Industries has cordoned off the Cannibal Sectors as best as possible with Perimeter Walls and Shiver Unit surveillance. Not only is the Cannibal Sector's surface a hell hole but the dark and dank sewers below are more treacherous still. Most of the Cannibal Sectors' inhabitants are nocturnal, using the black voids of the sanitation tubes to rest during the daylight hours when brave airborne Shivers scan the deteriorating streets.

Sewers in the Cannibal Sectors are a haven for a multitude of horrible fiends, like the Carriens Race. The Carriens are an ominous and ugly breed of vermin that have caused great controversy in the World of Progress as little is known of their foul origins. The main populace of Carriens are normal Carriens which are humanoid in form in spite of their disturbing heads that resemble that of a bald skull-like dog, mouths bristling with razor sharp canines and frantic yellow eyes. Carriens are noted for their ferocity and animalistic nature. They are purely carnivorous and will attack anything that they encounter, clubbing them to a grisly death with brutish hand weapons.

"It's a shame how people treat the Carriens race. I understand how they think and act. To them Downtown is a forest, the human are prey; 'long pig'. They are hunters in an urban jungle, instinctive and cunning. I can relate to the Carriens breed, so I have devoted my life to their destruction, rather be a hunter than hunted."

'Reffa' Wraith Raider SCL 7B

The larger beasts of their species are the Greater Carriens. They are similar in form though they are much larger and have heads similar to bovine animals such as bulls and stags brandishing huge horns and antlers. They are hulking, brutal animals who take great joy in sadism and savagery, tending to beat and treat their lesser kin like scabby mongrels. Greater Carriens usually lead and control the Carriens and this domination is enforced through the Greater Carriens' great size and strength, though neither race is very intelligent. The Carriens race only





have a rudimentary understanding of society, relying more on their canine instinct. The Carriens are not serial killers, they are hunters: They kill to survive. The inhabitants of Mort are their prey.

Even the Carriens race has its abominations. The horrific and ghoulish mutations in the stagnant sewers that know only pain and madness eternal, their only desire is to release their anger and insanity on the first passers–by. The Carriens mutations are physical disasters, born distorted and, as a result, their nerve endings are ablaze with excruciating agony that will last for the rest of their unfortunate lives. The Carriens mutants are uncontrollable berserkers in a blood frenzy that never ends, no two are alike but all are huge ugly twisted slavering monsters. You cannot kill a Carriens mutant, you can only put it out of its misery.

The Carriens race has split itself into primitive tribes scattered around the various Cannibal Sectors, some are largely populated and organised into hunting packs. Others are smaller, merciless and anarchic, such packs hold more Greater Carriens than others.

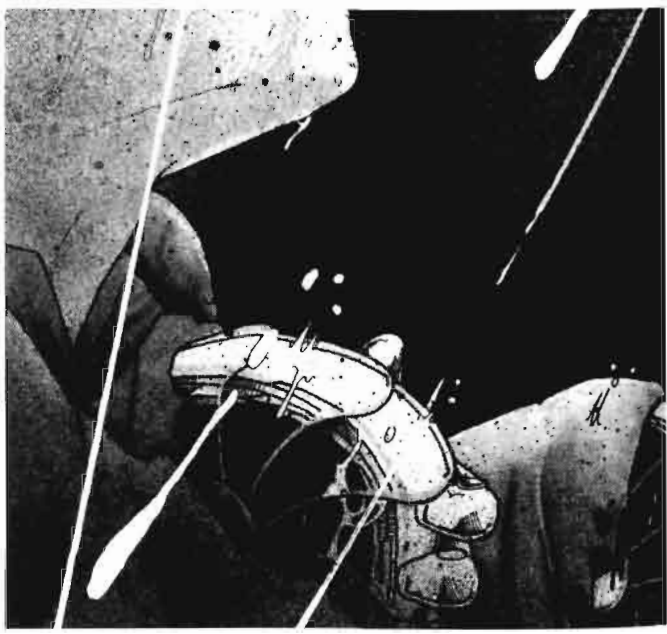
Carriens are regarded as being once human, genetically mutated by industrial waste and pollutants dumped into the sewers in the Cannibal Sectors, although there are some who say that they are 'throwback' Conflict aliens that have inhabited Mort since before the birth of SLA Industries and the World of Progress.

Carriens hate sunlight and will always travel in the shadows in daytime although they are rarely seen above ground before darkness. They have evolved in the darkness of the sewers so they have very keen night vision, hearing and senses, however most will back away from bright lights and flashes, particularly Ebon illumination abilities.

Carriens are not the only hostile wildlife to populate the sewers. It is also filled with diseased rats and it is renowned for its carnivorous pigs. Like the cannibalistic civilians, the pigs from Al Crawley's Slaughterhouse have been roaming the streets since the Fall of 300 SD. When the collapse hit Central Outskirts, the grimy slaughterhouse, famous for the quality meat from the Resource World 'Deliverance', subsided and slid down into the sewers and has been there ever since.

The pigs are more akin to wild boars. They are muscular and powerfully built with gaping mouths full of flint–like teeth that can snap off an arm without any difficulty. Carnivorous pigs usually roam in herds and will generally eat anything they can get their trotters on. Flesh is the obvious favourite but the pigs will feast from a sanitary menu of rabid dog, plague ridden rats, industrial and human waste and more unsavoury side servings too disgusting to mention.

Upon occasion, an exploring operative may come across a solitary Manchine, on the hunt for more skin to graft onto its repulsive body. During the 'Chrome Warrior' fashion in 885 SD, the World of Progress went through a short lived and sad phase of manu-



facturing limited cyber-parts, enhancements and robotics.

The Manchine was one of the range. It was meant to act as a combat android on War Worlds and to be used to disperse civilian uprisings on Industrial Worlds. One concept model was made whilst biogenetics were being organised by Senti, as an emergency back-up plan. Fortunately, the Stormer project was a success and the Manchine plan was aborted until 885 SD. The Manchines malfunctioned almost as soon as they come out of the assembly plant. The Manchines were designed to be integrated within public society and were hidden under layers of biogenetic flesh. As the Manchine project was aborted, so was the the production of the preserved biogenetic flesh designed to cover their cybernetic bodies. Rumour has it that the Manchines were implanted with human brains. The result was a rotting corpse/robot that stank like Cannibal Sector One.

The public was in an uproar, nine foot tall metal cadavers were walking the streets, draped in decomposing flesh from their past victims. The Manchines were programmed to act like real people, and they did, in a way inconceivable during their production.

In the end, SLA Industries abandoned the Manchine project, along with the rest of the chrome gear phase. The remaining models, like the original prototype were scattered around the various Cannibal Sectors in a final attempt to make them useful by letting them run riot in the Sectors and Sewers killing sub-humans and Carriens. This is where the Manchines belong, here they can be by themselves, monsters amongst other monsters. Unfortunately, Manchines still attack SLA operatives since they cannot tell the difference between them and any other targets.

At night, chaos erupts and the cannibals, pigs, Carriens, serial killer cognates and Manchines rise from the slimy pits and reservoirs in search of human nourishment, breaking isolated barriers and parading Lower Downtown. The deadly offspring of the Cannibal Sectors rear their ugly heads in every seedy alley and street corner of Mort's nightlife.

The only people who can prevent their ghoulish journeys of consumption are SLA Industries' trained specialists, the operatives.

The formation of these urban environments span the length and breadth of the planet, cluttered with industrial madness and progress in its dirtiest and most ruthless forms. The tortured lands of Mort can only be safely journeyed via the spaghetti formation of the gauss train tubes that get inhabitants from A to B, and every place in Mort's alphabet of industrial advancement.

The planet Mort has several city structures similar to that of Mort Central, like Orienta and Meny -the huge, clean city that trains SLA Industries' operatives. Meny is positioned on the other side of the planet from Mort Central where the air is slightly cleaner and SLA Industries has attempted to revive small natural sources using biogenetics.

In most cases, the planet Mort is the standard function and condition of all Industrial Worlds in the World of Progress: Ugly, oppressive, suppressive and rotten to its unnatural core.



DIGGING UP THE DIRT

PART THREE

I threw her out. Yes, I know, you don't want to know about any sorry, tragic love–affair. You want to know about Digger. Did I find out where he was? Yes, I did and yes, I will tell you about it. But you listen first! You damn well listen about what happened to me, what happened to Nicki...

Poor stupid, little Nicki.

Ok, Ok, I'm sorry man. This may be all your fault but it doesn't concern you. But I couldn't let her follow me around with Slayer eyes, could I? And I couldn't let her know how much it hurt me.. its better she goes away thinking I'm as much of a shit as you are. She'll get over it quicker that way.

You're frothing at the mouth a little, man. Something up? Don't feel you're getting enough respect? Well you can't kill me yet.. not until you've got your information and that means not until I got my meal, so order. I've lost my girl and I've seen stuff no–one should see. I know I'm already living on borrowed time, so you TV scum you don't scare me.

Lemon Chicken, nice choice. I'll use chop–sticks please.

Good food? Know where it came from?

To reach your objective you have to go through Cannibal Sector One. I'll give you a tip, go via the sewers then all you have to watch out for are the pigs– carnivorous pigs. Don't bother trying to shoot one. You can only get a few shots off before it tears your arm off. It'll be happy with that for a while and you can run off, unless, of course, they're hunting in a pack and they normally do.

Hmm, how come I'm intact. Gas and a mask, you jerk. Listen I'm not going to spell out the route to you. I doubt you'd remember it. Here's a map. Don't snatch and don't go yet. You need to know what's out there.. you need to know about Salvation Tower.

What's Salvation Tower? Salvation Tower is the reason I'm not scared of you any more, Blood. If you get out of there alive, you'll know what I mean. It leaves a memory– even to a non–Ebon bone skull– a memory you'll carry with you until you die. Listen, I still remember every step I took, every smell and every god–forsaken sight.

I had this theory the occupant might go out at night. Of course I wasn't really sure then what I was looking for. I'd heard the stories about the Manchine, but I didn't credit them. Anyway, I figured at night most of Cannibal One and Downtown are on the street so why should this critter be any different.

Must have been about midnight when I pushed the sewer cover up. Wet street, much like any Downtown one, crumbling buildings, shit in the street, only it was dead quiet. I mean completely quiet. How many places do you know on Mort where its so silent the absences of sound hangs like a rank smell in the air? All those buildings with black eyes, staring at me, like they know why I'd come there, like they knew I was never going back. I fingered the gun in my pocket for reassurance, but it felt like a toy... I have.. I have never felt so like a child...

And another thing, the rain was easing up. It didn't stop, though for a while I thought it might. I stood and stared at the clouds, stood in the middle of the goddamn street staring at the sky for any idiot to shoot at or mad–man to capture.

Did you know that in some languages the name of our planet means Death?

Nothing happened so finally I wandered up the street. They'd told me.. who? You don't get to know.. They'd told me the building I need to find was two blocks away from the sewer exit. I thought they meant a few minutes walk, but the devastation down there is unreal. Its like walking through some crazy theme park. There are whole complexes lying on their sides; others are shattered and there are still personal things– like chairs and stereos and clothes hanging out of them, sodden in the rain. You think there must be some–one round the next corner, someone coming to reclaim their property or even looters, but there's no–one; no–one ever comes down that street.

I'd taken a rope with me and you'll need one too. One of the stupidest experiences of my life was mountaineering up one of the fallen blocks; there isn't any other way. This was one of the shattered ones and the route I had to take took me from one bathroom to another; all the main plumbing was down one side and I had to climb through kitchen and bathroom again and again. I kept thinking how different they all were, wondering about the people who had lived there. It wasn't until I was over the top that it occurred to me that all that stuff should have rotted away long before now. Then I started thinking about the way it was all in the right places– towels on racks that sort of thing. The building was shattered, totally wrecked, as if a tremendous lightening bolt had struck it dead centre. I started imagining someone, maybe a gang,



decorating the whole thing like some kind of giant memorial. Then it hit me that I hadn't seen any bodies, no bones, nothing and I started getting shit–scared.

But I went on; I was still scared of you then. I must have climbed for a good two hours before I saw it. It was utterly unmistakably. Forget what you've ever heard, Salvation Tower is still standing. Ok several of its floors might have sunk through to the reservoirs, but unlike everything else that came tumbling down in that massive earth–slide, Salvation Tower just sank its roots further into the earth and hung on.

You can get in the bottom window at the west corner. There might well be another way in, but I never got the chance to look. The first thing that struck me was the stench; I had never smelled anything like it. It was over powering. The gas mask was no help at all, so I used my purification shield. I don't know what you're going to do.

The floors are very sticky and every second storey has been ripped out. The structural walls are mostly still standing so the whole thing is like some giant child's puzzle. It takes a while to re–orient to it. The first little bit is fairly normal, crumbling but normal. And then you start hearing the pounding.

Its very quiet, so quiet and so rhythmic that you'll probably make the mistake I did and assume its your heart pounding in your ears. Then I saw the first foot. Yeah, that's what I said foot. You know, like off a person, except there weren't no person attached to it. There was a red leather boot with a neatly fastened strap, a calf but no knee–cap and no leg. It had been placed on a small stone stand. My heart skipped a beat, the pounding didn't. I found over fifty feet on that floor, men's, women's, right, left, booted, naked. Just feet. And never a pair.

Half way up the next flight of stairs the knees started. Row upon row of knee–caps. They were all decaying, foul and rotting, but each of them had been placed with such care. The spaces between them were exactly the same, even the angle they were placed at. I got the strangest feeling as I was climbing the stairs that every other one was female.

I think you can imagine what I find on the next floor; upper legs. The place is an abattoir. I wanted to turn and run. It wasn't your money that kept me going. You may find this hard to believe, but I wanted to know who had created this. I wanted to know what kind of a mind could conceive of such a project. Deep down inside I was hoping it was some sad fuck of an artist, some weird gang determined to out freak everyone and everything, some thing that wanted to offend the God, who left Mort so long ago.

About five floors up the walls change. After you waded your way through male and female genitalia, the walls become plastered with intestines, veins and arteries and they pulse. I had a good long look. There's no blood flow. They have been wired up to a generator; you'll find it at, surprise, surprise, the heart of the building.

As you get higher up, you start finding things; name badges, clothes, photographs. You'll recognize some of them. Some of them belonged to some of Mort more prestigious ex–citizens. All of them disappeared. I can imagine what happened– how they felt being dragged here, how they felt when they saw what they were going to become a part of; I touched some of the memories. I don't wish that fate on you, even after Nicki. Was Digger there? Yes, he was and he was occupied, which is how I made it out alive. There is a floor, which is nothing but a sea of necks. Can you even imagine that man?

And he was there sawing the neck of this guy. The new piece of art work was still alive. Digger made the first slice as I walked through the door, that was when the guy started to scream. I think before that he'd been crying, probably praying and shitting himself too. It's amazing how loud a human can scream when something is sawing through its neck. He– Digger– was doing it so carefully. He had a row of scalpels and saws beside him. Obviously he wanted to make as neat a job on this piece as the others. He'd staked the man down so he couldn't move. He hadn't gagged him though. The screaming didn't bother him. In fact every now and then he stopped, stood back and watched as if he was trying to understand why or how the guy was feeling.

I watched till he got to the neck bone. It never occurred to me to try and save the victim. It didn't occur to me to try and do anything. I just stood there, completely stunned.

Digger is a good fifteen feet tall. He has six, maybe eight arms, each of them end in something long and sharp and lethal. Somewhere he has a set of hands. I think they came out of his stomach. His skin or what there is of it is mostly black and rotted, you can see the servos sticking through. Parts of him though are fresh. He winds fleshy limbs into and onto his servo skeleton. I guess what they say about Manchines is true; they really do want to become their victims.

Anyway, when I heard the saw biting into the bone, I turned and bolted. Digger never looked up, but I'm pretty sure he knew I was there. He was

simply too busy to care.

I think I mostly fell down the stairs. I didn't use a rope on the way out. I didn't even use gas in the sewers. To be honest I can't remember a great deal of my exit. I don't think my brain started working until I was back in Downtown, back in my flat–that was when I started to cry. Then I called you.

What's the matter? Have I put you off your food? Fancy some of mine? Its squid. Or at least I think it is. You're a funny shade of green Sour Blood. Before you leave to throw up, give me the money. Thanks.

Its a pity you started promoting your run on Channel 69. I guess you can't very well back out of it now. Still its nice to know you had so much faith in my investigative powers.

No, I never saw Digger's face. I think that's the last thing a lot of people have seen and I didn't want to join them, not for all the gold on this planet.

I take it you're still going? Well, if you want any chance at all take an Ebon with you. There's no way you'll get me back there, but I hear Sheri Hepine isn't too fussed about who she works with. You'll find her in Downtown, ask around.

Well, good–bye. I can't say its been a pleasure, but I don't expect I'll see you again.

THE MANSLAUGHTER FIXATION

Insight into Downtown's Serial Killer Epidemic

"Look pal, if it's happened. I've seen it, right. I've been drivin' this cab aroun' Downtown for fifteen years, yep, fifteen years. Lemme tell ya, I seen some evil stuff, I mean real evil, no holds barred horror. See here, this is their home, see, their own little abattoir like. I seen 'em all, Halloween Jack, jeez he's scary, man, Abandon, Slasher, The Stain, you name 'em, I see 'em. I even see Dolly Mixture, that new freak in town.

"Hey, they maybe crazy, but they ain't stupid, serious, there's something strange about them. They always know you're here, there ain't no hidin' it. It's like, like they can smell your fear or somethin', I ain't never got outta this cab 'round here. Fifteen years a' here too long, an' they know it, I ain't crazy, they'd take me for ol' times sake it's been so long. They're worse than animals man, there ain't no stoppin' nor controllin' 'em. They'll outlive your SLA Industries. Y'know, ya can't ... kill insanity. They'll always be here..."

Santo Jefferson. Downtown Cab Driver, 15 Years

Courtesy of Social Eye 14th July 899.



On a claustrophobic and densely populated Industrial World like Mort, stress grows at a terrifying rate. The tired and restless generation in its desperate need for recognition, breeds insanity, like a unfathomable plague.

Insanity is nourished in the World of Progress under the influence of television which depicts the glossy and glamorous image of violence. It stars SLA Industries' combat operatives at their best, the Contract Killers battle and challenge rival versions in deadly pitch battles in the seedy streets of Downtown.

The restless population love it, they can't live without it. This strange aphrodisiac is one of the most popular forms of stress and tension relief, albeit confined to a spectator sport rather than being competitive. However, the visual indulgence of massacre causes gross paranoid deficiencies within certain members of the public.

Psychosis has taken its toll on society and created the offspring to psychological disorder –Mort is plagued by serial killers.

The symptoms of a serial killer vary widely, most suffer from social and sexual inadequacies, bad childhoods and severe mental disorders in most cases causing the unfortunate individuals to lead shadowy lives of extreme sadism and unspeakable violence. Most of Mort's serial killers are highly influenced by Contract Killers motivating the civilian serial killers to hide their identities with bizarre and macabre masks and costumes. The murderers often kill in a certain style and leave their victims with a brutal trademark in disturbing admiration of their Contract Killer idols. The results of serial killers' brutality can range from the mildly unpleasant to the mentally scarring. The most severe and savage examples of victims are the work of real madmen, psychotics with personal motives and purposes rather than the copycat killers in despairing search of attention and acknowledgment. SLA Industries' Department of Psychology has evaluated six general categories of urban killers that operate and reside in Downtown.

Contract Killers

These are simply operatives and employees of SLA Industries, and mercenaries from other major companies (Suppressor Powers). In most circumstances, the work of the Contract Killer is purely showmanship. He or she acts like a madman in front of the camera in order to get better ratings, but, to a SLA operative, this is common knowledge. The media love to see Contract Killers really taking each other apart and the money falls in with the fame and sponsors. Most Contract Killers are very stable and professional, more like combat businessmen than insane mad men. The public, however, believes the act that the Contract Killers present, not realising that the Contract Killer is paid to kill. Although this is not always the case, there are Contract Killers where the pleasure of bloodshed is a top priority.

Props

"Show me cash and I'll show your enemies the wake of death."

Downtown Prop Spooky's standard business line.

'The Props' is a term used strictly in Downtown to specify their gangland bodyguards and mercenaries for hire. Props are usually ex-company operatives and freelancers that hire themselves out to warring gangs –at a price. Like Contract Killers, Props wear a unique costume or use a particular weapon that becomes their trademark –something to be remembered for or by. They are feared and respected in Downtown, for their training and experience. Props know Downtown like the back of their hands which makes them particularly lethal, especially where cunning and stealth is required. It is also common to find them armed with company armour, weapons and equipment as they are veterans of the streets. A large majority of Props keep their mercenary career as a secret identity: Props always wear masks to hide their true identity. All good Props are experienced and must be approached with extreme caution as many have been diagnosed 'unstable'.

Copycat Killers

The copycat killers are a common problem in Downtown. These shallow individuals simply mimic the style and activities of feared and renowned serial killers such as Halloween Jack and Bane Root by wearing pumpkin masks or removing victims backbones for secret possessions. Some copycat killers are frighteningly close but the large percentage are sad imitations compared to the genuine psychopaths. Copycat killers have been known to burn the palms of their hands in order to leave no hand prints at the scene of a crime. Out of all six categories, these individuals are the most paranoid and insecure. They receive no recognition from the public and are often assassinated by the real murderers they were trying to impersonate. Whenever a serial killer makes a name for himself on prime time Third Eye News, there are always about five or six copycat killers to follow in his bloody path.

Genocides

The Genocides usually turn out to be the most savagely consistent of all six categories since they have no prejudice and preference as to who or what they kill, just so long as they can sustain their cruel





blood-lust. Genocides always have a set pattern to their killing, they almost always stick to certain territory or a location and guard their realm from other killers with fierce pride. Genocides are very animalistic and speak little or not at all. They remain silent and deadly, they have no comprehension of reasoning or compromise. Genocides are like lethal automatons with complete disregard for any form of life and their single purpose is murder by whatever means possible.

Obsessives

Obsessives are probably the most organized and determined of the civilian serial killers. They kill for a reason that is personal to them. One may only kill people of a certain hair colour or name, or something else equally trivial which to the Obsessive is of the utmost importance and must spend his or her life exterminating anyone called Susan with red hair, for example. This disorder can be caused by traumatic past experiences that the Obsessive has never quite got over. Obsessives are usually disturbed from an early age and the problem germinates slowly as the youth grows up until the individual suffers a tragic circumstance that sends him over the edge. Many Obsessives have collective fixations that are extremely disturbing to the public eye: Many collect trophies from their victims such as hair, eyes or even skin for self-gratificational purposes. Obsessives usually kill to satisfy themselves rather than the eyes and ears of the public. Everything that the Obsessive sees or does is significant to his or her being and one will always struggle hard to express it in the most unnerving ways.

Cognates

Cognates are a collection or group of serial killers who feel akin and join as one and begin a massed slaughter in Downtown. Cognates are few in numbers due to the asocial nature of most psychopaths however, there are some who remain insecure and rely on safety in numbers. Individualism still remains even in Cognates, there is no standard garb or uniform, only one's self expression. Cognates will not accept copycat killers since they regard the mimics as having no pride or self esteem. Copycat killers are killed on sight. Cognates get confused with Downtown gangs whom the cognates take a great joy in hunting and finally killing. To the member of a Cognate, killing is a sport, the thrill of the chase.

With such an abundance of serial killers in Downtown, many questions crop up regarding how many of these enigmatic monsters are actually mad or even slightly disturbed? Out of the horde of criminally insane that grows every day, who is insane? What

makes a real madman?

These questions are best answered by SLA Industries' special police force, the Shiver Units. As the organisation responsible for mopping up the work of social misfits, they say that some victims have found have been so horribly mutilated that only a madman could have performed such a gruesome task. There are some things that a normal, stable person cannot even consider achieving or thinking, these are unnatural thoughts and actions that make grown men in Shiver Units cry, the bodies of no–longer–people who lived in unfair times.

Insanity is a talent reserved for the insane and no one else. This is what separates the real madmen from the copycat killers.

Last year, Mort saw the arrival of two new asylums, many newspapers regarded the situation a 'sigh' of the times, and they were right. Many stated that the cause of the serial killer's population increase was due to social frustration, unsatisfactory education schemes and unhygienic living conditions –especially in lower Downtown areas. SLA Industries' television networks were influencing the World of Progress' youth to commit violence and corruption unto itself and nearly all the allegations ring true.

SLA Industries' department of Psychology and Psychoses is situated inside of Mort's largest and most well–known asylum. The Bethlehem Institute contains the World of Progress' most despised yet loved madmen. The departmental head, Dr Arthur Mellie, has recently stated how the increase of serial killers is a positive advantage to the progress of SLA Industries for two reasons; firstly, because serial killers help decrease the surplus population and secondly because the public and media love murder and horror. Murders in Mort make sales. The operatives and employees will always find plenty of Blueprint News files (BPNs) requiring investigator and combat operatives for Downtown's latest serial killers. The TV orientated population tune in on the squads and watch them analyze and solve the clues that the serial killer leaves in his murderous trail until, finally, the confrontation takes place between SLA Industries' stars and the mass murderer. Third Eye News can string the public along for months, gradually building the tension towards the money–making climax. The sheer hype of a murder case rakes the money in like nobody's business.

This is all very well until the serial killer starts killing operatives and things start becoming very serious because the public sees that the murderer can beat the SLA operative. Then another operative squad with more reputation is called in to exterminate the slightly more dangerous than possible killer and BPN file consolidated payment increases. The media and Third Eye News start again, only this time with more TV coverage and even more hype... for more money.

Like Contract Killers, Downtown serial killers can receive their own franchise marketing deal (although obviously they won't be informed or even paid for their face or name) where SLA Industries makes the family board games, the arcade game, a trademarked comic, biogenetic masks for the kids (plus a free plastic cleaver) and, of course, limited edition posters and the kids cartoon mini–series (that lasts as long as the killer survives).

SLA Industries' media is not the only organisation that uses and abuses naive psychopaths. Necanthropes have been known to kill civilians, to satisfy their own sadistic pleasures, in the style of a fresh young serial killer. Then, once the Necanthrope takes on the BPN file to track him down, the Necanthrope can kill as many civilians as he wants blaming it on the serial killer. The option is risky but can pull in lots of coverage because the public think the killer is really special since he apparently kills twice as many victims than the normal.

DarkNight, as always, has intervened on serial killer territory in the lowest basement regions of Downtown. DarkNight agents have scattered various equipment around their usual hide outs –drugs and hardware, aiming to make them harder and tougher.

Since the deployment of DarkNight supplies, the latest serial killers that SLA operatives have to challenge are now spaced out and hardened up with the combat drug known as Shatter, an odd mixture of Rush and Kick Start. The serial killers are also armed with CAF firearms and powered close combat weapons. The DarkNight agents ask for little in return for their supplies, only that the serial killers regard SLA Industries as their sworn enemy. Offering the murderers delusions of grandeur and a false sense of importance has proved successful, Third Eye News' most recent reports have shown heavy assaults from serial killers towards anyone wearing so much as a SLA badge.

SLA Industries has also recently researched and tested DarkNight's drug 'Shatter' in their biogenetic laboratories and have horrifically discovered that it is not only a combat drug but a DNA altering drug. Every one in a million DNA strands of the pusher's structure will gradually change in a random fashion. This function is progressive and the more Shatter pumped into the bloodstream, the more the body will

change and mutate. Unfortunately, Shatter, like all combat drugs, is highly addictive.

SLA Industries' Shiver Patrols in Downtown have already started reporting serial killer situations slaughtering Carriens close to the terrifying Cannibal Sectors.

COST OF LIVING

There are several things one can say of living in the World of Progress– one of these is that it will cost you money. The average person earns, in a routine job, 200ū in a week. This doesn't go far –it will just cover a cheap mortgage, a spouse, 2.4 children and a small commuter motorcycle– but it is better than the Mort welfare system can provide: 40ū a week and housing payments if you have accommodation. 40ū does not go far: 30ū will feed one person for a week and 10ū will keep them warm using the unitcard system fitted to most of the Mort Rented Property Register houses and flats. Add to this a successful series of adverts on the (state provided, duty free) television and there is a population desiring products above their means. The upshot of this is a state created crime wave for which the corporate autocracy is free to impose whatever law enforcement they desire. A theocracy of television, the common religion of the masses.

A day in the life of Joe Public:

"I rise at 10 or 11 in the morning– there's no point in waking before then as Mort is boring as hell before mid–day. I eat a sort of breakfast/lunch type affair –usually pre–packed, self–heating– and open a can of coffee to kick–start my taste buds as they try to recover from the night before. I wash last night's rain out of my hair and clothes and hit the streets about 12ish. The cold rain on my face wakes my brain and I do my days shopping and am back in time for the good programmes on SIC at 1. This keeps me going until the natural light dies at 5ish. I hate the sunlight– it gives my headaches– and much prefer the continual lights provided by SLA.

"While I am out, I try to find my mates and have a laugh. Oh, yeah, I will have eaten by 4 or thereabouts– it's difficult to keep track of time during 'KillZone'. Anyway, we go to the mall 'Zombieland' or one of the others. We watch TV at one of the telly shops trying to catch 'Fight Night' on SIC. Always good for a laugh. After that we head out for a drink at our local: 'Snoozy Sue's' for a few bevvies, hoping no SLOPs decide to come in and hassle anyone... SLOPs? SLA Ops. Anyhow, we head off to 'Shaft' for a quick boogie 'til 1–2ish until the loud buggers take over the floor. Hey, don't ask how I can afford it but I make ends meet. Anyway, we get a few more drinks and relax a little. Then home: unless I'm lucky, then her place..."

The average civilian does not earn enough money to support a style of life they think they deserve or desire. It is for this reason that crime is rife and barter and black market sales are commonplace in Downtown. Scavenging is common with any firefight being an open invitation to the human hyenas of the underclass. Monarch Law Enforcement try their best to combat the crime but, being underfunded and understaffed, they can do little to bring the crime rates down. The Shiver Units usually move in with large crime and leave Monarch to deal with missing handbags and regular muggings.

RESCUE SERVICES

SLA Industries will provide you with a fire service to put out any fires in your home. This is because they own your property and don't want fires beneath their city undermining the structural stability. This, coupled with the famous Mort rain, means fires are uncommon. The sight of Shiver Fire Fighters speeding through the urban jungle of Downtown clears the streets. The Fire Fighters have carte blanche to traverse any obstruction to get to a fire. The vehicles they use are strong, armoured, heavy, designed to drive through anything in their way including other armoured vehicles.

"The fire started at 15:12. I happened to be in the area at 15:13. The Shivers were here at 15:15. They drove through our van, killing the link man and three technicians. The fire was out by 15:18. The building was a derelict warehouse with nothing or nobody in it. I am a cameraman, not a reporter. A civilian is holding my camera for me. I think this is... er... naughty. Sorry about my poor speaking. I am a cameraman. Are we on the air? I hope the Shivers aren't naughty again. I lost two friends and two people I know. I suppose they were friends too. I'm not having a good day. Hey! Come back with my camera..."

Cameraman Blutowski, prior to his arrest as a media subversive for calling the protectors of the city 'Naughty'.

The medical service on Mort is equally as responsive yet they don't have the authority to take lives in the course of arriving at their destination. They work, mainly to save the lives of SLA operatives and employees as part of their medical cover plan. Civilians have a form of health service entitling them to free medical treatment and hospital bills. The civilian service, headed by the Department of Health and

Safety, is not as good as that which the operatives receive but at least it is free.

"Damn, this bullet wound hurts. How long will the Ambulance take? DarkNight swine. You're all dead now."

... BLAM BLAM ...

"Serves you right, you damn corpses. Stop looking at me!"

...BLAM BLAM BLAM...

"My head hurts and I'm bleeding. Hurry up ambulance! Hey! DarkNight! Your tank doesn't frighten me. I'll kill you all. That's right! Run! Ha!"

...BLAM BLAM...

...BADOOOOOM...

...BADOOOOOM...

"Hello, Home base? Doctor Clarkson here. Scratch one operative. He was delirious and he shot at us. Our other wounded guy in the ambulance had a MAL assault cannon. He fired from his bed through the side of the ambulance and totalled the operative. He left a mess here, he shot sixteen civilians, lined up the corpses and was torturing them. One of the civvies must have had a gun and plugged him. That's when he called us. Send in a clean-up squad. It's a mess."

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

The city of Mort Central is a vast expanse to traverse. The usual route taken by the commuter is the subway, a bus or a motorcycle. The more affluent may use a uniform, blue, high-sided taxi provided by one of the many rival licensed companies working on Mort. A SLA Operative will, more than likely, drive through in a car. Driving through Mort is quite easy as, apart from public transport, there are not many private citizens capable of paying the crippling annual road tax that Operatives are exempt from. If you see someone driving a car that isn't blue and high-sided then they are either rich or working for SLA -or both.

The subway system of underground trains was mapped on a system of circles, intersecting at more popular locations. The neat, tidy and plain easy map was distorted after several disasters, both natural and man-made, including the Fall of 300. The lower levels are unsafe structurally and socially with several lines breaking into sewers allowing the carnivorous pigs and Carriens access to more central areas than above ground. What was previously the pride of Mort is now an embarrassment waiting to happen.

SLA Industries magnificently side-stepped the PR disaster that is the disrepair of the subway by implementing, in under one week, a superb bus system with a spider's web pattern of routes overlaid onto the map of Mort Central proving to the public that their welfare was well in hand with SLA Industries. The bus may be slower than the subway but on some routes you are much more likely to arrive in an alive state.

Public, as opposed to private, transport is set in its routes and cannot diverge or take short-cuts depending on traffic flow. This is were the most common form of private transport comes in. You may not be able to take the spouse and kids on the back of a motorcycle but you can get from A to B pretty damn sharpish. The motorcycle remains the freedom-machine for the single person and is only challenged by the Keshang, or personal powersuit. The Keshang is a powered suit allowing a person the speed and protection to join the roads in an anthropomorphic shape. They have the same cold fusion power units as motorcycles and are easily repaired. The current trend amongst the youth of Downtown is to build their own Keshangs from the chassis up and arm them with what ever armaments they can find. SLA Industries' view on this is very negative and are imposing heavy fines on the owners of such 'hot-rods'.

The long-distance railways of Mort are very efficient and safe invalidating the need for an air service. The relatively low cost of a long-distance train, coupled with high safety, provides the public with a quick and easy method of travel to anywhere on the planet. The size of a Mort gauss train is 8m high, 6m wide and 50m long per carriage with more than 8 carriages being the norm. The trains speed along at over 400km/h after being shot out of the station in a magnetic linear induction tube resembling a large gun with repeater stations along the way providing a gentle boost. On the super-express lines, there are medical requirements for passengers as the immense acceleration can cause black-outs and trauma shock. These speeds are normally reserved for goods trains but, for the fit, the speed of the journey is a bonus and these trains frequently break the sound barrier. Twice.

"AAAAAAARGH!!!"

John Macros on his first super-express trip.

The taxi service in Mort Central is run by over 1000 independent companies licensed by SLA Industries. A Mort taxi is a blue vehicle the same size as a medium sized car but tall enough to stand up inside. With a certain type of lunatic behind the wheel, taxis can

cover Mort Central faster than a bus. The average lifespan of a Mort taxi driver is 15–20 years behind the wheel before their nerves go.

Off–world transport is handled by SLA Industries with the Foldship. A shuttle will leave Mort and fly into space where a character will then board a magnificent foldship. The Ebon navigator will then fold space instantaneously using reality folding techniques passed down since the days of Glyph Cards. The passengers will disembark onto another shuttle and fly down to their destination planet in comfort.

Air travel on Mort is virtually non–existent with the sky being claimed for corporate purposes with the Shiver SCAF bikes taking to the air, the last thing the RADBikes and Kilcopters of SLA need to worry about is some civilian flight getting in the way.

With road tax for automobile owners being set artificially high, only the rich can afford to run a car on the roads of Mort. The exception to this is that all employees and operatives holding a Security Clearance Card are exempt. The sight of a flash corporate bourgemobile or an armoured combat–proof hardmobile is usually the only way people ever see cars. This image of cars for the exclusive is carried on through the popular media placing a desire for a car firmly in the hearts of the Mort civilians: Another reason for wanting to work for SLA Industries.

"I saw a HighJoule Masari with wide wheels, dropped shocks, low profiles, skirt, spoilers and leather interior on the 'Slider P.I.' show when I was a lad. I knew then I wanted one. A true classic. I worked my ass off through schools just for my dream. I used driving simulators set to react just like the HJ. Time passed and I forgot the plot of the show but remembered every detail about the car. I even decided what mods I would make to the design. From school to college, college to Orange Crush, I worked for my car. I have an SCL badge and three HJs. That is what I call a world of progress."

Daniel 'Torque–Wrench' Llanos, SCL 5c Operative.

LIFESTYLES

Civilian life on Mort is encapsulated into several categories and stereotypes: the Street Punk, Downtown Man or Mr Downtown, the Subversive, the Operative, the Contract Killer, the Corporate, the Alien, the Junkie... the list goes on. All of these archetypes live and thrive in the society that created them and all integrate into a living persona that is Mort. A creature of ambiguous race and sexuality, it thrives on controversy and the shock of the new whilst maintaining a status quo of complacency and stagnation. The 900th anniversary of the World of Progress, according to cynics, will be just like the 800th and the 1000th: devoid of change and lacking in direction. SLA Industries, on the other hand, knows exactly what will be happening. Proposed advances in technology and society will be a mask, covering the real face of progress. SLA will allow the citizens new lifestyles to distract them from their meaningless lives. Fashions from New Paris will be paraded and weapons from Mort will be shown. The same old drudgery repackaged in a fresh cover. The World of Progress will be striking a blow for progress to achieve the same level of life they have always had, showcasing the obsolete as innovative.

ALIEN INTEGRATION

The Wraith Raider, the Shaktar and, to some degree, the Stormer are alien to Mort yet they are a vital part to society, integrated into the society that accepts them as their own. The Stormer was created for the World of Progress and, as such, had a niche created for it. The other two were introduced into an alien society and had to fight to retain their heritage in a society that has no heritage to speak of.

THE SHAKTAR

The Shaktar managed to retain their racial purity and honour by fighting for SLA Industries using their alien attitudes and views as a beneficial weapon in their arsenal. The well–known code of honour they live by is promoted by the media's portrayal of the Shaktar as a warrior who is good to have on your side, with Shl'llr, Captain Contract's faithful Shaktar sidekick always getting wounded and fighting on regardless whilst maintaining his honour and protecting his friend, the Captain, to the death, relying on the medical support given by Dr. Fish, the Captain's personal friend and surgeon. This is the most popular portrayal of the Shaktar in the media and serves as an example of how loyal and honourable the Shaktars are to SLA Industries. The official Shaktar view of this portrayal is, on the whole, negative as they do not like being portrayed in a children's cartoon playing lapdog to a fictional media icon. Several official complaints have been received from Shaktar society and there are rumours of the character being 'removed' from the series. The creator of the character was shot by a Shaktar for 'being a racist and bringing the honour of the proud race of Shaktars into disrepute'. No charges were levelled against the assassin, a well–known, but unnamed, Operative.

SHAKTAR CODE OF HONOUR

1– Honour

Uphold the honour of the Shaktar race.

Respect the true warriors of your race.

2– Family

Respect your elders. Your parents gave you your life. You are prepared to return it at their demand.

3– Friends

Accept as friends only those to whom you own a debt of honour or place a great trust in.

Never distrust a friend unless they openly betray you.

Defend the life and honour of your friends as if it were your own.

4– Truth

Never lie to anyone worthy of your trust unless ordered to by a superior.

5– Faith

Complete any task you undertake.

Act to the best of your ability.

Show others you are undertaking a duty by wearing your ceremonial scarf.

6– Loyalty

Obey anyone you accept as a superior.

Act as an ambassador of the race at all times.

7– Purity

Uphold the purity of the Shaktar race.

'The savagery and brutality of the war worlds is best exemplified by Dante.' Corporal Ketch remembered these words as he surveyed the battlefield. Dante was taking his new troops away from him. One week as an officer and he landed here as his first post of command. He spoke gravely to his troops, "I need a group of volunteers to take that gun emplacement out. It's costing us heavily."

"Give me a Reaper with two full belts. I will take it," rasped Sh'nth, a Shaktar trained in support weapons.

"On your own? Don't you need help?" replied corporal Ketch.

Sh'nth spoke in short, clipped words, obviously on the edge of losing his temper. "My fellow soldiers are my friends. I will not have have them die needlessly by my side. I will take it."

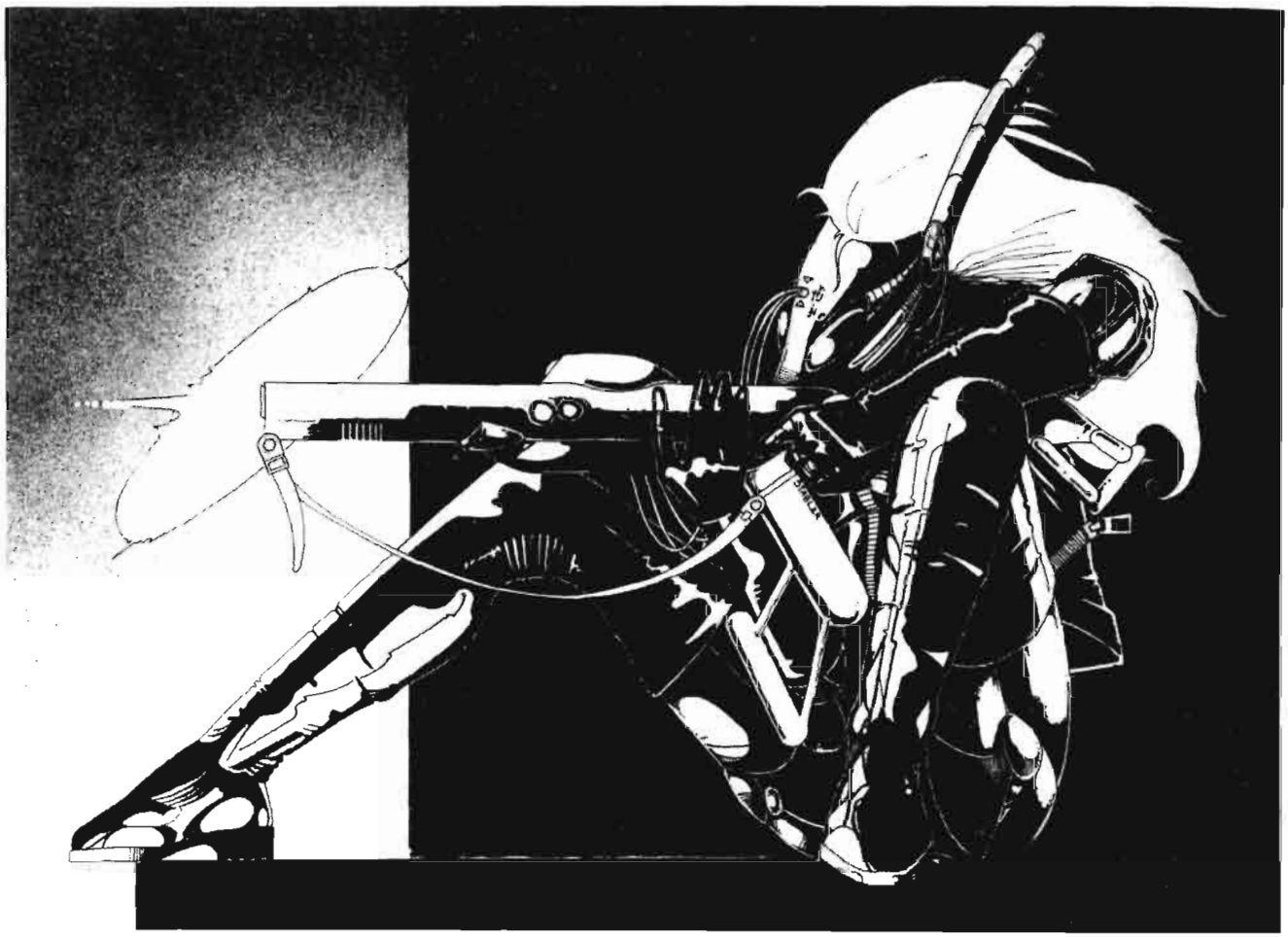
I interjected, more for Sh'nth's benefit than the corporal's. "Listen to him. Don't cross him. He's said he will do it; Consider it done. Try and stop him and he will stop viewing you as a superior and will think of you as an obstacle. We lost two sub–commanders that way, corporal."

The corporal looked at the mountainous alien. He looked into the yellow eyes and tried to speak as an officer. "OK, Sh'nth, get to it."

Sh'nth proceeded to don his ceremonial scarf as a few troops whistled under their breath. They relaxed and watched a master at work. Sh'nth took the emplacement with minimal wounds. He later received a medal of honour. He cried tears of joy upon receiving a medal his human companions would view as apparently trivial but I think it meant more to him than any other medal he could have got. As far as I know, Sh'nth is working as an operative somewhere here on Mort. I pity his enemies as does he.

Extract from 'Dante, in my own words.' by General Haleru.





THE WRAITH RAIDER

From the icy wastes of their home planet to the rain of Mort, the Wraith Raider has always been a survivor. They adapt to their surroundings admirably and the corporate war of Mort is taken as just another hunting ground. The adaptability of the Wraith Raider has guaranteed them a place in the World of Progress. They generally take positions as scouts, assassins or technicians using their natural leanings to forge themselves a place in the corporate hell-hole that is Mort.

Reton placed the long, slim shell into her FEN 30-30 rifle, thinking more of her target than her actions. She kneeled on the rooftop, hunched into an obscure firing stance where her knees protruded in an uncomfortable-looking manner, the rifle seated firmly against her shoulder. The hunt -traditional yet without ritual. A means of survival. Instinct. Her target came into view, in spite of being over a kilometre away, thanks to the high-powered optics she had fitted on her FEN. She took careful aim and prayed for the rain to pour down harder -the summers of Mort were bearable but not on a high, unshielded rooftop in Mort Central. She aimed. A lifetime passed as she remembered the crossbow she made her first ranged kill with. The awe she felt when she found out she could kill without needing to be near her prey. Now she had one of the best rifles SLA Industries has to offer with a custom barrel, custom sights, custom handgrip and custom electronic triggering. Custom killing. Killing for custom. Killing for a living. She kneeled motionless and squeezed the trigger. The gun bucked slightly yet silently in its deliverance of death. Her target flew backwards, blood gushing from a hole on his head, then lay still. Commotion at a range. She cleaned her barrel, activated her climbing kit and gracefully abseiled down the side of the building, landing silently and disappeared into the clamour of Mort.

The typical Wraith Raiders on Mort do not think think of themselves as ex-patriots, unlike the Shaktars, but take to any environment with their renowned adaptability. The only problem they have, apart from the occasional racist jibe, is the heat -or, rather, the lack of cold. The Ice Worlds to which they are indigenous are, unsurprisingly, very cold and when they are on Mort they wear coolant tubes to combat what to them is a harsh environment.

OPERATIVE HOUSING

Each operative is given housing, when available, by SLA Industries. The quality of accommodation is dependant upon what is currently available (see Character Generation: advantages/disadvantages). The usual property is an apartment with a bathroom, kitchen and living room/bedroom. SLA will fit a phone/fax and a television. A typical apartment will be part of a block with a communal garage, an entry phone and some form of security. The unlucky operatives get a bedsit in Downtown or worse: a shared bedsit. The lucky get an Uptown house with a garage and maybe even a garden. The registered homeless are at the bottom of the list and will have to save some credit and put themselves on the housing list. The rich can, of course, bypass a lot of the paperwork.

"One member of my squad has no home. I have little sympathy for his self–induced state and, according to the operative's handbook, may not offer him any of my spare rooms in either of my houses, one in Uptown Mort and one on New Paris. Who am I to buck the system for a Brain Waster?

"As for my friend Nf'tndrd, the Shaktar, we applied for special dispensation to allow him to stay on my premises. He acts as a security guard for a Cloak Division operative/corporate, namely me. Nobody with any sense would try to mess with a Shaktar defending a friend's property. Their code of honour requires them to act in a way useful to myself and, of course, he's a good friend and is handy to have around. I wouldn't know how to strip a gun so I leave it on the kitchen table overnight and come down in the morning to a clean, loaded custom Blitzer.

"Why does SLA Industries allow me to live in my family house and allow Manu to starve on the streets? That is the democracy of money. One Credit: One vote. I am in favour of the system, it encourages ambition –a virtue lacking in the general inhabitants of this planet."

Cerise, GBH Squad, Cloak Division, SCL 6a.

"Tha thinkst tha got problems? I got me tank to drive round lookin' cool in, right. Smashin'. Well chuffed. SLA say 'no, no, no. Mr Wintch, tha canst not have a flat. Tha got unlucky. tough,' or somethin' like that. So what do I do? I live in me tank by me tod. I get drunks usin' my home as a toilet. They come along and stand against 'Bertha', me tank, the poor lass, and Zip, Flet, Pssssss, 'Ah'. I wouldn't wish that on nobody. If I had a flat, I'd have a garage and no stains on me Dante Camouflage, Pattern 13."

James Wintch, Operative, SCL 10 and disgruntled.

BULLET TAX

Most Operatives working for SLA Industries have a gripe regarding the cost of bullets. They are expensive beyond the normal levels of taxation. The reasoning goes that SLA Industries charge their own operatives tax on a commodity that is used for the protection SLA and that this is unreasonable. SLA do not approve of the widespread slaughter of their customers, however, and charge heavy tax on bullets. The other reason for bullet tax is that SLA like their operatives to use hand weapons on camera. The public don't like watching gun fights half as much as a good knife fight.

"I was up against a whole bunch of Carriens with a FEN AR. I had to seriously watch my trigger. I couldn't waste ammo on paltry Carriens, as it's just too expensive to spray at shadows in the dark. I pulled my CAF spinner and drew a short sword, dead ornamental with engravings and stuff. As soon as I did that, the media turned up. Talk about good timing. With SIC at my back and smelly Carriens up front, I knew I would have a good time. I screamed a prime–time type war cry and charged, knowing I would be on Killzone. The sponsors phoned the very next day and I got me a financier. Bullet tax? I love it. It made me rich and famous."

'Warcry', Contract Killer, SCL 5B



TAXI RIDE

TRANSCRIPT OF TAPE INTERVIEW BETWEEN LEONIE HARTSURE AND INTRUDER.. PRIVATE FILE.. NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE.

INTRUDER: You're new to all this, aren't you?

LEONIE: Yes, I am. But I want to leave the paper behind, I want to break into television. That party was quite an eye opener for me. Were you enjoying it?

INTRUDER: When you have lived as long as I have, you tend to abandon likes and dislikes.

LEONIE: I don't understand you. But then that is hardly surprising. I wonder if any of us comprehend what goes on inside your mind. We have an image of you but....

INTRUDER: I distrust the images– father of the Ebon, warrior and all that. I'm not so much a father as a teacher. I give advice. I had hoped to evolve a race, which could express itself well, truly. You should be careful not to make waves, Leonie.

LEONIE: I don't want to make waves, I want to understand. We're all trapped, aren't we? Even you. You're under the power of Slayer.

INTRUDER: I would agree with that to a certain extent. But if I left or died there would be another one to take my place. And what right do I have to make another go through this all... to know what I know.

LEONIE: Did Slayer give you your name?

INTRUDER: I have a real name. But its not worth as much as your life.

LEONIE: Are you an Intruder into SLA society?

INTRUDER: It was meant as an operative type name. I was trained in the martial arts, in espionage. I intruded into other people's territory, corporations... but it became more than a property thing.. it became emotional. Slayer is very good at keeping secrets.

LEONIE: Is Slayer a friend?

INTRUDER: I wouldn't trust anyone else to watch him the way I do.. but friend? After such a long period of time it is difficult to say who is in control. Maybe I just cover up for what Slayer really wants to do.

LEONIE: You are a very solitary figure. Is that by choice?

INTRUDER: Partly by choice, partly by rule. My sponsoring agent is Senti. She controls all the PR stuff. I'm not allowed to have relationships– female or otherwise.. that's a definite no.

LEONIE: How do you feel about that?

INTRUDER: When?

LEONIE: When it mattered.

INTRUDER: It was painful. Hard. But it does make sense. People grow old.

LEONIE: Senti?

INTRUDER: There never was a relationship between me and Senti. I was.. I was a bit of a toy. There's too much stigma around being solitary.

LEONIE: What happened with Senti?

INTRUDER: She had a lot of demands. She lives a lot in fantasy. She always wanted to create something that thinks as I do.. She lives in a dream. She did want me, but I talked her out of it.

LEONIE: So there never really has been anyone for you?

INTRUDER: There have been a few, but they weren't proper people. It's not a small world and there aren't many fish.

LEONIE: But surely in all those years..? I'm sorry that is too like prying.

INTRUDER: You are new to this.. (laughs)

LEONIE: Let's switch to a safer topic. Why don't you age?

INTRUDER: This is safer? Would you believe me if I said Slayer and I were both dead.

LEONIE: If you said that.. yes, I think I would believe YOU. Are you?

INTRUDER: Yes, very dead.

LEONIE: Well for a 900 year old corpse you're looking very good. Are we dead? Did we die and come here?

INTRUDER: Are you alive?

LEONIE: I have to ask you that. You, Slayer, Senti, you're always here. We come and go.

INTRUDER: Do you think it's biogenetic?

LEONIE: It's like you and Slayer created a world. Like you are Gods. But there aren't any any more.

INTRUDER: Close, very close.

LEONIE: OK, I'll go along with this for a while. If this is true, do you think of us as people or creations?

INTRUDER: No, I try to look for the best. You're people. You have rights. You've just been raised to think you don't.

LEONIE: Intruder, are you telling me the truth? Do you expect me to believe this. I don't think you're lying, but none of this makes any sense.

INTRUDER: We're here. I expect I'll see you again.

LEONIE: Would you like to come in for coffee? And I do mean just coffee.

INTRUDER: You're sharp. Don't get cut. Good night.

(Scrawled across the bottom of the sheet)

Waves.. Wave.. Wave Lynsay.. Dead.. Don't make


DRUG
NUN

GAME SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

In the World of Progress, fantasy meets reality. Anything is possible, within reason. These rules provide the reason...

DICE

In SLA Industries, only one type of die is used. Two ten-sided dice (2D10) are used to resolve all skill and characteristic rolls.

CHARACTERISTICS
(Statistics or Stats)

Characteristics are what make a character. Each character has eight statistics which decide how mentally and physically capable the character is of performing certain acts. These include strength (STR), dexterity (DEX), diagnose (DIA), concentration (CONC), charisma (CHA), knowledge (KNOW), physique (PHYS) and COOL. There is one other characteristic, FLUX, but this will be explained in 'Character Generation'. There are certain skills attributed to each characteristic. There is a minimum and a maximum for each statistic, depending on what character class is taken. Each stat can go as low as 1 and as high as 15. This will determine the number of ranks that a character can have in a skill attributed to that stat i.e. directly related, for example, a character has a Dexterity (DEX) of 7. This means that if the player were to choose Martial Arts as one of their character's abilities, the maximum would be Rank 7. Each stat can also be rolled as an independent characteristic where the player must roll 2d10 and add their stat. The result of this roll must be 11 or higher (11+) or it is a failed roll.

Example: Pastille is being chased by a rival company operative on Mort who knows that she has no ammunition left in her FEN AR rifle. She runs down a dark alleyway and to her horror finds that it is a dead end with a large wall looming in front of her. She has a Climb Rank 5 and manages to climb up without


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too much trouble, but the wall is very narrow on the top and the Games Master asks her to roll her dexterity stat (DEX) to balance on the top of the wall while she finds her bearing to climb down the other side. The Games Master also gives her a –2 modifier to the roll as it is dark and she is under stress. Pastille gets a 5 on her roll and only has a DEX of 7. With the modifier, she fails her roll and falls off the wall into the merciless hands of the rival company operative. The Games Master might also then make her roll her PHYS or DEX to see if she is able to stand or stay conscious after the fall.

SKILLS

To determine how good a character is at a particular ability, a system of skill ranks is used, which allows a player to know what their characters' standard is in any one talent by rating levels of ability from 1 to 10 (and above for masters...), with 1 being trained, 5 being expert and 10 being master.

Example: A character with Rank 7 Rifle skill is a good shot with a rifle or shotgun whereas a character with no ranks (Rank 0) in Rifle would probably not know which end of their rifle to point at the enemy and where the trigger was, and would probably be better off wielding it as a club.

There are a multitude of skills available to characters and no one character could be an expert on everything, so characters tend to specialize in certain areas instead of being a jack–of–all–trades and a master of none.

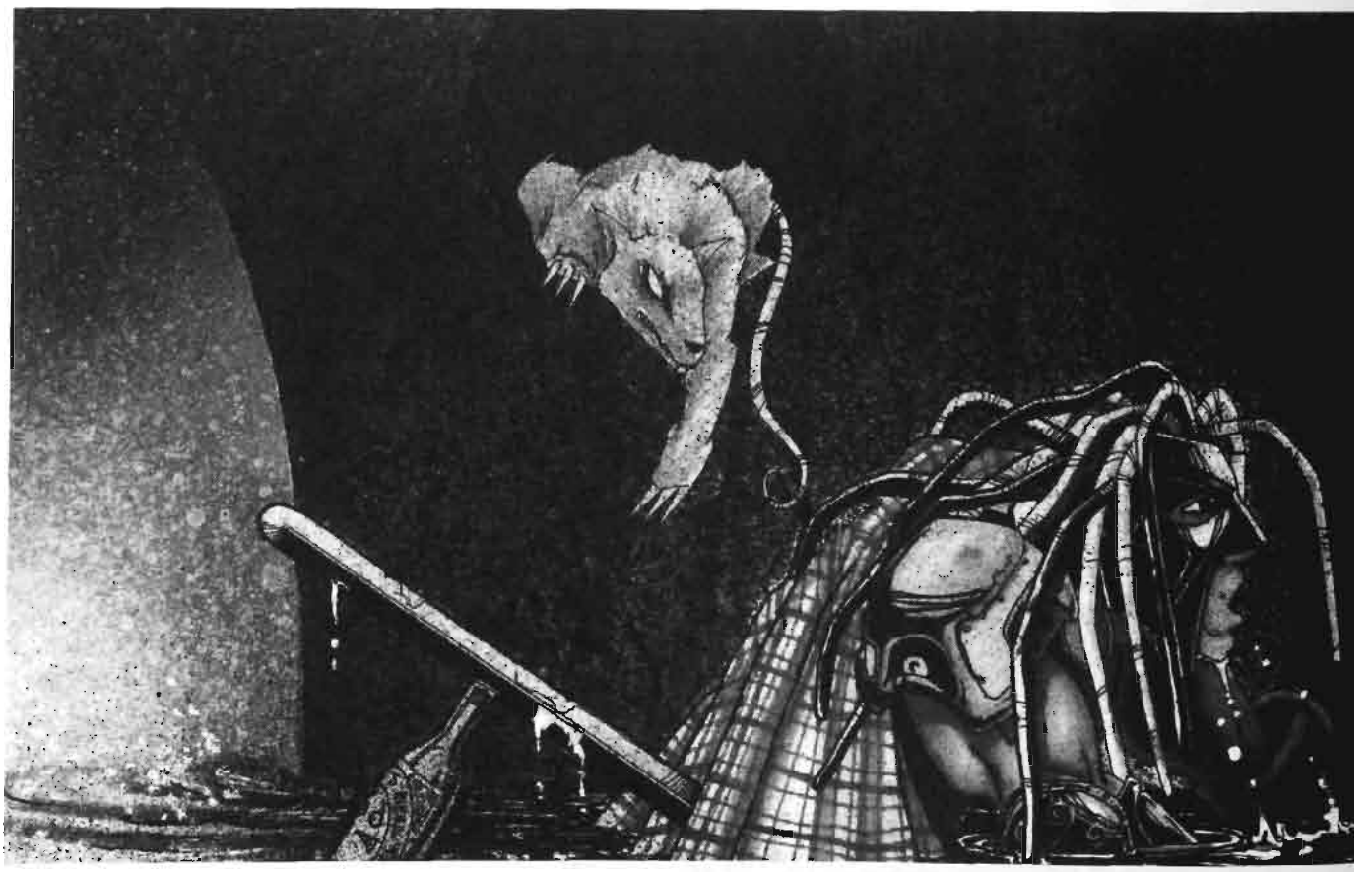
ACTIVE AND PASSIVE SKILL ROLLS

Active

When a character is attempting an activity under stress or needs to know how well they succeed, they roll the dice and add their skill rank and any modifiers (penalties or bonuses) to the roll. If this is 11 or higher (11+) they succeed and if they roll 21+, they achieve exceptional success. If the character is untrained, they have either a –3 modifier on the roll, or no chance (at the Games Master's discretion).

Passive

If the character is doing something that is well within their field of expertise and are under no stress, or no more than usual, then they do not roll the dice but check their skill rank against the difficulty level set by the Games Master. If their skill is equal to or higher than the difficulty, they succeed. If their skill is three or more ranks lower then they cannot succeed. If their skill is two ranks lower then they may attempt a roll at –6 with any modifiers the Games Master cares to throw their way. If their skill is one rank lower then they may attempt a roll at –3 with



modifiers. If the character is untrained, they have no chance at all, for example, try performing heart by-pass surgery without ever having studied medicine.

An example of skill use in a game:

Brion, SCL 9, is a human trained in the Death Squad package. He is asked by the Department of Sanitation to investigate the disappearance of a Frother on clearance duty. He is wading through a sewer when he passes a floating SCL card. His Detect skill is Rank 5 and the Games Master places the difficulty of spotting the card at Rank 4 (fairly obvious but dark). He spots it and picks it up (passive skill use). Reading the name is a Rank 3 difficulty in the dark. Brion's Literacy is Rank 4 so there is no problem there (passive skill use). Suddenly, he hears a noise (passive Detect Rank 1) and recognises it as a carnivorous pig! He pulls out his FEN 603, fitted with laser painting and a silencer, in one hand and his MAC knife in the other (Ambidextrous Advantage: Can use either hand with no penalties) and tries to hide in cover (subtract his Hide from the pig's Detect) and fails (His Hide is Rank 2, the pig's Detect is Rank 9!). He checks the pig over (Evaluate opponent Rank 6: Active roll of 13+6) and realises that the pig is mean, tough, angry, hard, old, mad, etc. He decides to get out of there. Now. He sprays his FEN 603 in the pig's direction (Active roll in combat: Suppressive Fire) and decides to climb the escape ladder he saw behind him, after sheathing his MAC. He hits the pig and runs (check Move Rate and subtract 1/2 for running through water). He notices the pig is having some difficulty in breathing (Rank 5, passive Detect) and is below normal speed. Just as well– as the pig would normally be able to run him into the ground. He makes it to the ladder and furiously clambers up as fast as possible (Climbing ladders is normally a passive Rank 1 Climb but with a carnivorous pig charging at you, it becomes an Active skill at –3. He rolls 16 plus his Climb Rank 3 minus the 3 makes 16. Success!). He climbs out of reach of the pig who is trying to climb the ladder. The hatch above is wedged shut (A Shiver Tank is parked on it but Brion doesn't know this...) and the pig is beneath him, snarling. He shoots the pig with his 603 but his bullets seem to have no affect. He empties his gun to no avail and cannot reload without letting go of the ladder with his other hand. He is safe as long as he holds on. Just then, as the pig tries to bite him, he notices something in the pig's mouth. He tries to make out what it is (Active Detect at his Rank minus 2. He rolls 19 plus his Rank 5, minus 2 making 22, an exceptional success) and sees the twitching hand of a Frother, with the drug injector pumping Ultra–Violence into the severed hand and dribbling down the pig's throat. This requires a Fear roll as the hand appears to be still alive... (Fear rating of 7, Brion's Cool is 5. He rolls 2d10 and gets 16. This



gives 18 on the fear table, giving Brion eight rounds of stun and a minor Physical Disadvantage. Brion will st–t–tammer. This is a Rank 1 Bad Speech Disadvantage.) Brion stays on the ladder and wibbles to himself for nearly a minute (The Games Master is generous enough to deem Brion secure on the ladder but makes him drop his FEN 603). The pig keeps trying to get him. Eventually (eight rounds later) he regains his composure and decides to try and kill the pig. (The Games Master is still trying to work out why he hasn't used his headset communicator and checks if the character would be as forgetful as the player. Disadvantage Bad Luck Rank 3: Yes, he would. If he didn't have bad luck, then the character might have thought of it and the Games Master would give the player a hint.) He draws his CAF pistol, the sort with a macho name and no stopping power, and empties the clip into the pig. The pig looks strangely at Brion, perplexed at the loud noise but no worse for wear. Brion curses the pharmacologists who created UV and throws his CAF 'Steel Death' at the pig (Passive throw, he's not really aiming). Boink! The pistol bounces of the pig's nose. The pig is intrigued yet still mad. Brion knows he doesn't stand a chance and draws his MAC, ready to jump on the pig and die valiantly. (His bad luck of Rank 3 comes into play here as the GM has decided the Shivers above him heard the shots and are trying to move their tank to reach him. The GM decides they will arrive just after he jumps.) He gives an almighty cry and jumps. "D–D–D–die, you M–m–m–motherf–f–f..." (Brion's player checks his DEX and works out his phases and actions, as does the GM. The pig goes first.) The pig strikes as the Shivers open the manhole cover. (The onlooking Shivers now have to make a Fear roll...)

FEAR

There comes a time in every character's career when they face something that drives fear into their hearts. No matter how cool a character is, there is always something more terrifying than they can handle. This section is designed to help the Games Master moderate the effects of fear on SLA characters.

Many things can cause fear, for example:

Monsters –Anything that might be seen as a monster can cause fear. Note that different characters may have different ideas of what a monster is. To a sheltered school–girl, a Stormer is a thing from nightmare; whereas to another Stormer it is merely a potential friend.

Death and Injury –Seeing dead bodies, death or horrific injury can cause fear. Again this depends heavily on experience. A pathologist is likely to be unaffected by anything but the most gory of injuries.

Weird stuff –Anything that does not fit within the characters world–view can be terrifying. Slime oozing from bullet–holes in a car, strange unidentifiable noises in the distance, etc.

Just How Scary Is It?

Various factors affect how terrifying something is:

Big Things are Scary –Size. The bigger something is, the more terrifying it is. A twelve–foot tall hairy man is terrifying. A two foot tall hairy man is merely cute.

Oh my God! Its right on top of me! –Distance. The closer something is, the more terrifying. If you're observing something from a distance through binoculars it's much less scary than if you walk around the corner and find it staring into your face.

What the hell is that! –Bizarreness. If something is unusual, different, strange or just plain bizarre –that makes it more scary. A domestic cat isn't at all frightening, but what about a cat with two heads?

Thank God I knew what to expect! –Familiarity/Preparation. The more familiar something is, the less scary. If you know you're going to meet a 7 foot man with a sharks head, then it's much less terrifying when you finally meet him.

I didn't think, I just pulled the trigger –Combat. If you're expecting trouble, fear has less effect on you –although it may catch up with you later. An experienced soldier with a loaded assault rifle in his hands is more likely to respond rationally than if trouble bursts in through his bathroom window.

It's snarling at me! –Getting personal. If the source of fear is directed at you, its much worse, i.e. A Stormer sitting two tables away snarling at the barmaid is much less scary than the same Stormer turning to snarl at you.

FEAR RATINGS

Fear ratings run from 5 to 15 typically, but can go beyond. Fear ratings for any given thing may be different for different characters, but will typically be the same for all characters in a group. The Games Master should choose a fear rating considering all of the above factors. A Fear rating below 5 isn't usually enough to make anyone roll for. The table below gives some example ratings for typical novice characters.

Example	Fear rating
Finding a dead body	5
Finding a friend's dead body	8
Finding a friend's mutilated dead body	10
Meeting an angry Stormer	6

Meeting a Stormer who hates you	8
Hallowe'en Jack waking you up	13

USING THE FEAR RATINGS

In order to scare a character, the Fear rating must be greater than their COOL stat. If it is, then the character must subtract their COOL from the Fear rating, then roll the remaining value as if it were a skill, i.e add 2d10. If this roll is less than 11, they are scared but can act normally (but should role–play it). Otherwise, use the table below. The Fear roll is not rolled as a skill that the character is trying to fail but rather as a skill that the Games Master would like to make. The Games Master or the players can make the Fear roll.

Note that coping with fear without long–term effects increases your COOL, minor results have no effect, and major effects reduce your COOL. Any character whose COOL is reduced to zero becomes a gibbering wreck, afraid of their own shadow, and requires serious psychiatric help. Your COOL cannot increase above your racial maximum using this table.

Total	Effect	Cool change
11–15	Stunned	+1
16–17	Stunned + Major Psychological	0
18–19	Stunned + Minor Physical	0
20–21	Faint	–1
22–23	Panic	–1
24	Panic + Major Psychological	–2
25	Panic + Major Physical	–2
26	Severe Physical	–3
27	Coma	–3
28	Major Panic	–4
29	Major Panic + Severe Psychological	–5
30+	Major Panic + Severe Physical	–5

Stunned –Take no actions for a number of turns equal to the amount the Fear roll was over 10. If someone tries to bring you out of it, or you are injured, you may make a 2d10 roll under your COOL to snap out of your stunned state.

Faint –You pass out in terror for approximately 5 minutes.

Panic –You run away screaming, go berserk, curl up into a ball or do something equally stupid and out of control. What you do is your choice, but the Games Master has final say. You snap out of it in a number of turns equal to the amount the Fear roll was over 10.

Coma –You collapse in a coma. You will require medical help to bring you around, and will be



unconscious for at least a day.

Major Panic –You completely lose control. You will do anything to avoid the object of your fear, including leaping though a 20th storey window, killing yourself, shoving your friends at the source of your fear... Anything. The Games Master has the final say on what you do, but you can be sure it won't be rational.

Minor/Major/Severe Psychological –You have acquired a lasting mental scar from your experience. The other players suggest what it might be, the final choice lies with the Games Master. It should be appropriate to the source of the fear. A minor psychological result is merely a personality quirk, such as starting smoking again, or developing a nail–biting habit, or never sitting with one's back to a door. A major psychological effect is a mental disadvantage worth up to 5 ranks added to an existing mental disadvantage. Phobia and Psychosis disadvantages are particularly appropriate here. Severe psychological effects are similar to major psychological ones, but add up to 10 ranks of mental disadvantage.

Minor/Major/Severe Physical –You have suffered a physical effect from your fear, perhaps even a heart attack or stroke. A minor effect is merely a quirk, such as a white streak in your hair, or possibly a temporary loss of hit points due to shock. A major effect is something more serious. You take 10 points of damage (and two wounds) due to a heart attack, stroke or other similar effect. A severe physical effect does damage similar to a major effect, but also adds up to 5 ranks of physical disadvantages or reduces your physical stats by 10 points value (2 stat points) as well. As above, the disadvantage should be suggested by the other players, but left to the GM's final decision. Again, it should fit the source of the fear.

Example: A news team break into a room to find a very angry man with the head of a shark turning to face them, and hissing from deep inside his huge and open mouth. The Games Master assigns this a Fear Rating of 10, since they didn't expect this and haven't seen anything like this before.

Jake, the camera–man, has a COOL of 8, so the Games Master rolls 2d10 and adds 2. The total is 16, so Jake is stunned for 6 turns, and will acquire a dislike of fish. Jake's COOL is unaffected.

Angela, the news reporter, has a COOL of 5, so the Games Master rolls 2d10 and adds 5. The total is 20, so Angela faints dead away. Her COOL is reduced to 4.

Sturm, the operative who has been running cover for them, has a COOL of 10, so doesn't even need to make a roll; he opens fire.

REPUTATION

Reputation is all–important to SLA characters. Good public reputation can make your work on the streets a lot easier, although it may mean being pestered by the press. A good reputation with the media can mean they interview you in preference to the other operatives around. A good reputation with SLA can make it easier to advance in security clearance (SCL). A good reputation with other operatives can make it easier to find people willing to work with you.

A character can have a number of reputations. Each reputation has a specified group it affects, a rank which indicates the effect it has on people and a short description of what you are famous for.

At the start of play, reputations may be bought as advantages or disadvantages, but in play, they are acquired and lost purely by the character's actions. If a character acts in a manner that agrees with their reputation, it may get stronger. If they act in a manner that contradicts it, it may get weaker. People find it easier to think badly of others though, so it is always easier to lose good reputations than shake off bad ones.

Reputations are limited by Charisma (CHA) in the same way as Charisma skills. People only ever think really well or badly of people with charisma.

Typical groups for reputations to affect are: SLA Staff, SLA Operatives, Media staff, Media viewers, Downtown, Rival Company Operatives and staff.

REPUTATIONS IN PLAY

If a character encounters someone who may be affected by their reputation, make a roll as if the reputation were a skill. A negative reputation rank is treated exactly as if it were a positive value, the minus sign is merely used to indicate that the reputation is not a favourable one.

A successful roll (11+) means the encountered person has heard of the character, and might be influenced by what they heard. Extra success (20+) means they will be affected by the reputation with every additional success increasing the effect.

Sometimes a good reputation may count against you, for example, if a character has a good reputation as a slayer of cannibals to media viewers and he meets a media viewer who sympathises with the cannibals, the reputation may count as bad reputation to that

viewer.

Example: Virtue is a Contract Killer who gives large donations to charity, and is a popular media star. However, some SLA operatives suspect he may be an agent for a rival company. He might have the following reputations:

Reputation	To	Rank
Great Media Performer	Media Staff	4
Excellent Operative	SLA Staff	4
General 'Nice–guy'	Media Viewers	6
Suspected double agent	SLA Operatives	–1

Note –To have a Rank 6 Reputation, he must have a Charisma (CHA) of at least 6. A character's Reputation cannot go above that of the governing statistic i.e. Charisma (CHA).

CHANGING REPUTATIONS IN PLAY

After each play session, briefly discuss with the players what each character has done. Decrease the ranks of any good reputation that hasn't been reinforced in a month or so of game–time.

If a character has done something notably good in the eyes of some group, allow them to increase an appropriate good reputation to that group, take a new good reputation to that group at Rank 1, or decrease a bad reputation to that group by 1 Rank.

If a character has done something notably bad in the eyes of some group, decrease any good reputation to that group by 1 or more points, give them a new bad reputation or increase an existing bad reputation.

Bear in mind however that the stronger someone's reputation gets the harder it is to increase.

COMBAT

In the World of Progress, some things cannot be dealt with using diplomacy and tact. Some situations require the use of force, others degenerate into conflict naturally. SLA Industries' foundations rest on war, and old habits die hard –unlike characters who, if they are not careful, die easily. It pays to be able to survive in the World of Progress.

To deal with combat between characters, time is broken down into 3 second rounds with each round being broken down into 5 phases. This timing system allows players to work out what they are doing and when they can do it, enabling them to utilise their skills to their best advantage. With the Games Master counting through the time and keeping track of who acts when, it is possible to maintain a grip on a potentially difficult area of role–playing.

ROUNDS, PHASES AND ACTIONS

Rounds

A round lasts for 3 seconds. In normal (non–combat) situations, time can pass in either rounds or real time, speeding through unused time like a writer of a book, concentrating time to the level required for the detail. Combat, and other periods requiring exact timing, therefore have the rounds broken down into even smaller chunks. Each round is split up into 5 phases– lasting .6 of a second each.

Phases

The order in which characters act is determined by their dexterity (DEX). There are five phases in a combat round and the higher a character's DEX, the more actions they may have. The character gets one action per phase they act in. The five phases are numbered from one to five.

Dex	No. of Actions	Phases Acted In
1–3	1	3
4–6	2	2,4
7–9	3	1,3,5
10–12	4	1,2,4,5
13+	5	1,2,3,4,5

Actions

A character can move in every phase but they may only execute a motion when they have actions. The amount of actions a certain activity takes is determined by the table below. Any other activities not listed can be determined by common sense or be at the Games Masters' discretion.

Activity	Actions taken
Standing	1
Kneeling	1
Going Prone	1
Firing Stance	1
Diving	1
Reload	2 (1 on DEX roll)
Drawing a weapon	1 (0 on DEX–4 roll)
Setting gun	1 (0 on DEX roll)
Aim	1
Changing movement	1
Throwing item	1
Firing	1
Hitting	1

Standing is rising from a kneeling position to a standing. Kneeling is adopting a kneeling posture

from standing or prone. Going prone is lying down from a kneel. Firing Stance is adopting a firing stance whilst standing. Diving is 'hitting-the-deck'. Reloading is reloading a firearm when ammunition is ready. This can be done in one action providing the player makes a DEX roll with double-one being an automatic fail. If the roll is failed, then the reload is unsuccessful and must be attempted again next action. Drawing a weapon is taking a ready weapon from a MagHold, holster or sheath. This may be done in Zero actions (effectively) providing the player makes a DEX roll with a minus 4 penalty with, as above, a double-one automatically failing. Failure means it takes one action as per usual but otherwise no penalties. Setting gun is changing a gun from single-shot to full-auto. This may be done in Zero actions with a Dex roll with failure meaning it takes the normal 1 action but otherwise no penalties. Aim is the act of aiming a weapon and is described below. Changing movement is changing from one movement type to another ie. stationary to run. Throwing item is throwing a knife, grenade or similar. Firing is shooting at someone. Hitting is wielding a weapon and hitting something with it or using unarmed combat.

TURN SEQUENCE

The turn sequence decides when different types of actions may take place during a round.

1 -The first turn that is made is when every player must declare their movement over the next round. They must state whether they are stationary, walking, running or sprinting.

2 -The Games Master must then count through the phases of the first round from 1 to 5.

3 -In each phase, both players and the Games Master must check which characters may act. Do steps a) to d) for each phase, having characters who can act at this point doing so in one of the following stages:

a) Ebb abilities and attacks in order of character's DIA. This takes one phase to formulate the equation and the ability will activate in the following phase. See 'The Flow of the Ebb' chapter later in this volume.

b) Missile combat in order of DEX.

c) Hand-to-hand combat or defensive manoeuvres in order of DEX.

d) Bleeding, Healing and non-combat activities, such as hiding.

4 -Finish counting through the phases and do end of round bookkeeping.

Example: Two players, Dave and Anne, are about to have their characters enter combat. Anne is playing Grimm, a Brain Waster, and Dave is playing Nucleus, a Frother. Grimm and Nucleus are in Dowtown, scouting for a DarkNight assassin. They find him in an alleyway and spot him at the same time as he spots them. The assassin's name is Jackel. Grimm's DEX is 9, Nucleus' DEX is 12 and Jackels' DEX is 10.

Phase One: Grimm acts first as she performs an Ebon ability. Nucleus acts second followed by Jackel.

Phase Two: Grimm's Ebon ability is activated. Nucleus acts first, followed by Jackel.

Phase Three: Grimm acts.

Phase Four: Nucleus acts first, followed by Jackel.

Phase Five: Nucleus acts first, followed by Jackel and then Grimm.

MOVEMENT

A character declares their movement from a choice of Stationary, Walking, Running or Sprinting. The character's movement value is determined in Character Generation and is dependant on their encumbrance. Movement also gives participants penalties when trying to shoot a moving target or moving while firing. The move rate is movement per phase. Multiply this figure by 5 to determine how much they may move per round. The running skill bonus only applies to sprint movement: A Wraith Raider with a Running skill of Rank 10 runs at 4 metres per phase and sprints at 9 metres per phase or 45 metres per round or 100m in 6.67 seconds! Under controlled conditions, on a smooth track, with running shoes, well trained and ready to sprint, a Wraith Raider champion sprinter may break the 5 second mark but not under combat conditions.

RACE	WALK	RUN	SPRINT	RUNNING SKILL
Human	1	2	3	+0.3
Frother	1	2	4	+0.3
Ebon	1	2	3	+0.3
Brain Waster	1	2	3	+0.3
Stormer	1	3	4	+0.3
Shaktar	1	3	5	+0.3
Wraith Raider	2	4	6	+0.3

ACTIVITY	TARGET	FIRER
Stationary	0	0
Walk	-1	0
Run	-3	-2
Sprint	-2	n/a
Dive	-4	n/a

Diving is an act of pure defensiveness and involves diving to the ground with little or no thought of the landing. No activity is possible while diving.


PENNY LANE

Running without going anywhere –'Dancing'– is possible giving the character the bonuses and penalties while not moving.

A character moves in every phase regardless of whether or not they may act in that phase but seeing as the distances involved are so small, a character's movement is handled at the beginning of the round with phase–by–phase movement only being used where completely necessary, which is not often.

Example: A Character is running down the street towards a doorway under a hail of gunfire and the Games Master needs to know exactly which phase they reach cover. Phase–by–phase movement would be used in this case.

Example: A character is running down a street shooting whilst being shot at. They have no chance, or even inclination, of reaching cover this round. Movement would be dealt with at the beginning of the round as usual. Shooting would be dealt with phase–by–phase.

ENCUMBRANCE (OPTIONAL)

The amount of weight a character may carry with no movement penalties is determined by the table below. The player should cross reference the character's STR stat with their race to determine the maximum weight allowable for normal movement (M), half (penalised) movement (PM) and no movement (NM). This table tells you how much a character may lift and carry in kilogrammes.

Race	M	HM	NM
Human	15+2xSTR	x2	x3
Frother	20+2xSTR	x2	x4
Ebon	13+2xSTR	x2	x3
Brain Waster	18+2xSTR	x2	x4
Wraith Raider	15+2xSTR	x2	x3
Shaktar	23+2xSTR	x2	x4
Stormer 313	25+3xSTR	x3	x6

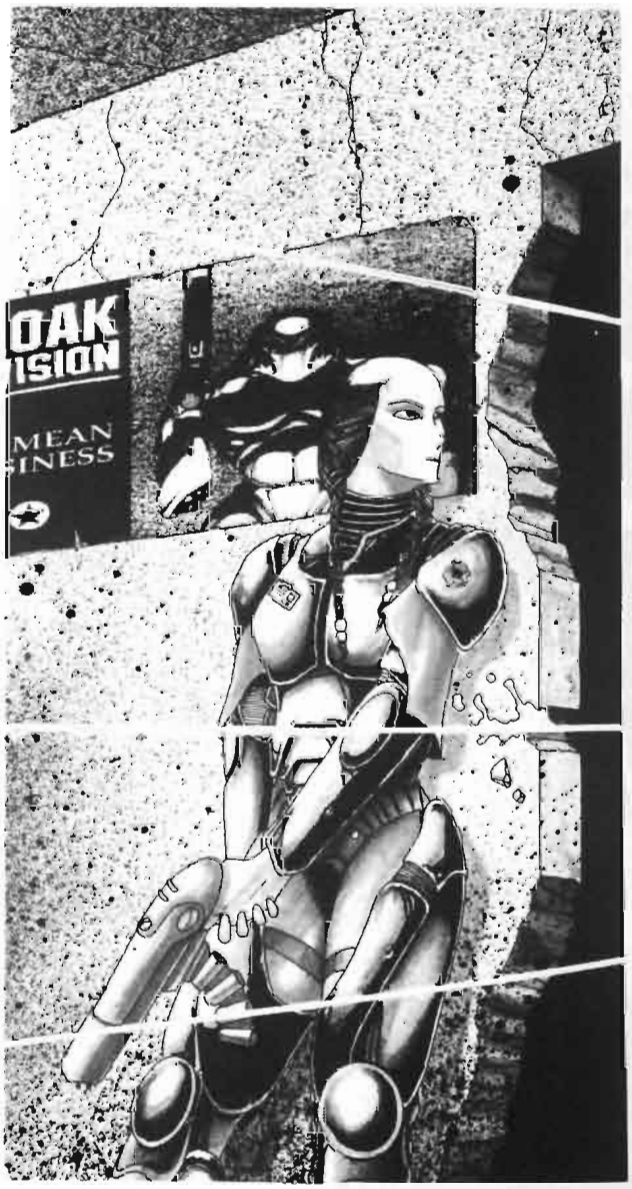
Example: Brazil, a Stormer, and his human friend, Isabelle, are sprinting along together. Brazil's sprinting rate is 6.1m/phase as he has a Running Skill of Rank 7. Isabelle only has a Running Skill of Rank 1 so she is only able to sprint at 3.3m/phase. Isabelle weighs only 50.9kg and is extremely tired so Brazil picks her up as he has a STR of 13 and is still able to carry her as well as all her equipment and his own, which weighs 78kg altogether. This makes a total of 128.9kg which is under his limit of 192kg for penalised movement so he is now at half his movement rate but is still able to sprint at 3.05m/phase.

STANCE

A character may be in one of three stances: Standing, Kneeling or Prone. A standing character may kneel in one action, a kneeling character may go prone in one action and a standing character may dive prone (see Diving). Getting up, a character may go from prone to standing in one action and then stand in one action. The firing and target modifiers are as follows:

Activity	Target	Firer
Stand	0	0
Kneel	–1	0
Prone	–2	0

A kneeling character is counted as being in firing stance and a prone character is counted as being in firing stance with a rest. These penalties only count to targets on the same level as their attacker –If the attacker is looking directly down from the top of a



building, for example, then these penalties work in reverse: Prone 0, kneeling –1, standing, –2.

Firing stance is a stance where the firer stands in a fixed position and supports their weapon firmly in both hands. Getting into Firing Stance takes one action and allows the character to aim for longer, obtaining further bonuses.

HAND–TO–HAND

When a character enters hand–to–hand combat, they may have one attack in each action. To determine if the attack is successful, roll 2d10 and add your weapon skill (and any other bonuses and penalties): 11 or higher is a hit. To determine damage caused, look up the damage caused by that weapon and add your strength bonus (Strength divided by 3, round down). Extra damage is also added for every point rolled over 20.

Example: Kt'ntp'th, a Shaktar with Strength 9 and Blade 1–H Rank 6, stabs a civilian with a dagger. The player rolls 13 to which the Blade Skill is added giving 19: A hit. The damage caused is 1 for the dagger plus 3 for his STR bonus making 4 total. If the player had rolled 18, the damage would have been 8 (Roll of 18 plus skill of 6 makes 24 giving a further +4 bonus to damage).

AIM

When a character attacks another, they decide where they are aiming (either Torso, Head, either Arm or Leg) and declare it to the Games Master. A torso aim entails no penalties and if a character does not state where they are aiming, it is assumed they are aiming at the torso. These aims take no actions. A character may also spend one action aiming their weapon for a better hit.

ACTIVITY	BONUS	ACTIONS
Aim	+1	1
Aim–Torso	0	0
Aim–Arm	–1	0
Aim–Leg	–3	0
Aim–Head	–4	0

DEFENSIVE MANOEUVRES

A character may use their skill to defend against an attacker, attacking less effectively but being more protected. They state how much of their skill is to be used as attacking and how much is to be used for defending. They may use up to all their ranks in defence. This only defends against hand–to–hand attacks and only those aimed at the defending character.

Example: Kt'ntp'th decides to defend against another character. He is using a knife at Rank 6 (Blade 1–h). He elects to use 3 for offense and 3 for defense. That round, he is at Rank 3 with his knife and any attacker is at –3 to hit him.

PENETRATION

Armour is designed to stop damage getting through to the wearer. Each type of armour has a Protection Value (PV)– this is the amount of damage that it negates. Each weapon has a penetration value (PEN), which represents the different efficiencies of various types of weapons at getting through armour. The PEN is subtracted from the PV with any points left over being subtracted from the damage (DMG) of the weapon. See 'Armour' below for a list of the protection values for the different armour types.

Damage = Weapon DMG + STR Bonus of character – ((PV – PEN) if over 0)

If this result is 0 or below, then the opponent will still take 1 point of damage (1 hit point), due to the blow.

Example: If the civilian in the previous example had been wearing Body Armour and Kt'ntp'th had been using a MAC Knife, the damage would have been worked out thus: MAC Knife Damage=4, STR



Bonus=3. This gives 7 damage. The Body Armour has a PV of 5. The Penetration Value (1 for the MAC) is subtracted from this leaving the Armour to stop 5–1=4 points of damage. Kt'ntp'th therefore does 3 (7–4) points of damage to his target.

WEAPONS

There are a multitude of hand–to–hand weapons available to a character, from fists to the Power Claymore. Each weapon does a specific amount of damage, penetration and armour damage.

NAME	DMG	PEN	AD	SKILL
	Unpowered			
MAC Knife	4	1	1	Blade 1–H
Shaktar Claws	0	1	0	Unarmed
Stormer Claws	1	1	0	Unarmed
SLA Blade	1	0	0	Blade 1–H
Club/Bat	2	–1	0	Club 1–H
Sledgehammer	3	–1	1	Club 2–H
Sword	2	0	1	Blade 1–H
	Powered			
Chain Axe	5	4	3	Chainaxe
Pacifier Baton	5	0	5	Club 1–H
Power Claymore	6	4	3	Blade 2–H
Vibro Sabre	4	4	2	Blade 1–H
GASH Fist	4	4	2	Unarmed
Flick Scythe	5	4	3	Polearm
Mutilator Fist	5	3	3	Unarmed
Power Disk	4	4	2	Blade 1–h

BONUSES AND PENALTIES

If a character is using a weapon they are not trained at using, they have a penalty to their 'to hit' roll. If a character is using a natural weapon (their fists, claws etc.), they get a bonus to their roll. Visibility also hinders characters who are not using optical enhancements.

ACTIVITY	BONUS	NOTES
Unskilled	–3	
Natural Weapon	+1	includes fists
Visibility	–1 to 5	Dark room to No light

PROJECTILE

When a character enters projectile combat, they may have one attack in each action. To determine if the attack is successful, the player must roll 2d10, add the appropriate weapon skill and add or subtract any bonuses: 11 or higher is a hit. The damage taken to the target is the ammunition damage plus bonuses as well as any points over a roll of 20.

DAMAGE

The damage taken by the target is the bullet damage minus the Protection Value (PV) of the armour minus the Penetration (PEN) of the ammunition type as long as the (PV – PEN) is larger than or equal to 0.

Example: A 12.7mm pistol round has a PEN of 8 and a DMG of 8. HARD Armour has a PV of 10. Bullet DMG of 8 – (PV (10) – PEN (8) = 2) = 6 points of damage taken by the target.

Example: If the 12.7mm round hit a character wearing Body Armour, the damage taken to the target would be much greater. Body Armour has a PV of 5. Bullet DMG of 8 – (PV (5) – PEN (8) = –3) = 8 points of damage taken by the target.

AMMUNITION TYPES

There are several calibres of ammunition in SLA, and each calibre may be bought in several different types. Here is a list of all of the types available to a SLA Operative:

STD: Standard rounds.

AP: Armour piercing rounds

HP: Hollow–point or 'Dum–Dum'

HEAP: High–explosive armour–piercing

HESH: High–explosive Squash–head

DAMAGE (DMG)

PISTOL	STD	AP	HP	HEAP	HESH
CAF	2	–	–	–	–
8mm long	5	1	–	9	–
10mm auto	5	1	9	7	–
12mm	6	2	10	8	12
12.7mm	8	4	12	10	16
17mm	–	–	–	–	–
10ga. shot	6	–	–	–	–
10ga. slug	7	–	–	–	–
RIFLE					
CAF	3	–	–	–	–
8mm long	8	4	–	10	–
10mm auto	8	4	12	10	16
12mm	9	5	13	11	18
12.7mm	13	9	17	15	26
17mm	32	28	36	34	64
10ga. shot	9	–	–	–	–
10ga. slug	10	–	–	–	–
SPECIAL					
Ballbearings	3	–	–	–	–
Vibro discs	8	–	–	–	–
Chopper Packets	15	–	–	–	–

AIMING

A character may take more time aiming to make sure the shot reaches its target. This takes one phase per aim. A shot fired with no aims is counted as being wild. If the character intends to aim for more than four actions, they must be in a firing stance. If the character wishes to aim for six actions, then they must be in a firing stance and have a rest for their weapon. A character cannot aim for longer than this unless they have 'Marksmanship' as a skill. Each Rank of Marksmanship allows the character to aim for a further one action in a firing stance and with a rest. This can only be achieved if the character is not being shot at, and they are under no stressful conditions.

Activity	Bonus	Phases	Notes
Wild shot	–3	0	
Aim–1	0	1	
Aim–2	+1	2	
Aim–3	+2	3	
Aim–4	+3	4	
Aim–5	+4	5	Firing Stance
Aim–6	+5	6	Firing Stance and Rest
Aim–7+	+6	7	As above + Marksmanship
Aim–Torso	0	0	
Aim–Leg	–2	0	
Aim–Arm	–3	0	
Aim–Head	–4	0	

PENETRATION

Penetration is determined by calibre and type of ammunition, with the following penalty:

Activity	Penalty
Silencer	–1

Penetration for Projectile combat works the same as with hand–to–hand with one difference: If a character is hit and the bullet is stopped completely by the armour, they will take one hit point of damage (but no wounds) from the impact. This rule does not apply to characters wearing Dogeybone, or larger, armour.

PENETRATION (PEN)

PISTOL	STD	AP	HP	HEAP	HESH
CAF	2	–	–	–	–
8mm long	9	12	–	11	–
10mm auto	4	7	1	6	0
12mm	7	10	4	9	2
12.7mm	8	12	5	10	3
10ga. shot	1	–	–	–	–
10ga. slug	3	–	–	–	–
RIFLE					
CAF	3	–	–	–	–
8mm long	10	11	–	12	–
10mm auto	5	8	2	7	0
12mm	8	11	3	10	3
12.7mm	9	12	6	11	4
17mm	21	24	18	23	16
10ga. shot	7	–	–	–	–
10ga. slug	4	–	–	–	–
SPECIAL					
Ballbearings	0	–	–	–	–
Vibro Discs	12	–	–	–	–
Chopper Packs	8	–	–	–	–

RATE OF FIRE

A gun that is listed as having a rate of fire (ROF) of 3 or higher is classed as being a fully–automatic weapon. These weapons are capable of sustained bursts of fire.

AUTO–FIRE

Firing a weapon in fully–automatic bursts at one target is called auto–fire. The firer gets bonuses to hit the target as it is no easier to hit a target if you use more rounds but each round has a chance of hitting, increasing the overall probability of a hit. The firer gets a bonus to their 'to hit' roll, depending on the ROF. The amount of rounds that hit are determined by the firer's Auto/Support skill. The same roll is used for both determining whether or not the hit is successful and how many rounds hit the target. The firer rolls to hit, as normal, and applies all their bonuses to see if they hit. The same roll is then worked out again only replacing the weapon skill with the Auto/Support skill. The amount over 20 is the amount of rounds that hit with a double zero meaning all rounds hit. Certain bonuses do not apply to the amount of rounds that hit– Rate of Fire bonus and Rifle bonus. If the to hit roll is a success, one round will hit, minimum, even if the



roll says otherwise. Any extra damage for the first bullet (above a roll of 20) only applies to the first round.

ROF	Bonus
3	+2
5	+3
10	+4

SUPPRESSIVE FIRE

If a character decides to 'trigger–lock' –hosing down a target with the trigger locked firmly back until they wish to stop or empty their gun– then they aim at an area as opposed to a target. Anyone in this area may be hit. This is known as 'suppressive fire'. The to hit roll is based on the Auto/Support skill, aim, visibility, stance, wounds the firer has received, size of the target area, range and nothing else.

Anything that enters the area is hit on a roll of 11+, with size modifiers and movement being taken into account. Every point over 10 is one round hit up to the maximum ROF of the gun used.

FIRING BLIND

A character may fire without looking hoping to hit something or just to keep heads down. This is counted as suppressive fire with no bonuses. It is based more on fluke than skill. No skill is used, no aims are used. Range is taken into account, as is ROF.

GRENADES

"Grenade! Hit the deck!"

When it comes to general all–round destruction, a grenade is hard to beat for its scare–factor. Each grenade has a blast rating which is the amount of damage it does to any targets in the area of effect. The area of effect of a grenade is 6m radius with a secondary blast zone of 12m radius. Any character within the 6m blast zone takes the full blast rating as damage –Armour protects, of course, and each grenade has a penetration. Any characters in the secondary blast zone take half damage at the same penetration. If a character wishes to be heroic and sit on a grenade, they may do so: The blast rating at the epicentre is five times the normal blast with any damage left over –after removing the victim's torso, arms and legs– being divided by 5 (rounded to the nearest) to give the new blast rating. If characters wish to place a helmet over the blast, the helmet had better have an ID of at least 50!

Example: Big Joe and Little Norm both jump on Blast Rating 10 grenades. Joe's Hit Points are 16, Norm's are 7. Joe would take 50 damage, killing him outright but stopping 48 points of damage (Torso:16, each arm: 8, each leg: 8) which makes the grenade's blast rating 2/5 or 0.4 which is rounded to zero. Well done, Joe. Norm, on the other hand, only stops 21 (Torso: 7, each arm: 3, each leg: 4) which only lowers the blast rating to 29/5 or 6. Nice try. If Norm were wearing armour, the ID of the armour would have been depleted as well as his hits, possibly lowering the blast rating to zero.

All characters in the primary blast zone have to make a PHYS roll, with the blast rating as a penalty, to remain standing. The amount the PHYS roll was failed by is the amount of phases (not actions) the character is stunned for, unable to act. Characters in the secondary blast zone make a PHYS roll with the blast rating halved as a penalty.

Simple Blast grenades have a blast rating of 1 with a penetration of –1, meaning armoured characters will take no damage but will still suffer the effects of concussion.

Fragmentation grenades have a blast rating from 1 to 10 with a penetration of 0 to 10. The standard SLA issue Fragmentation Grenade has a Blast Rating of 10 with a penetration of 6.

Smoke and Riot (gas) grenades have no blast or penetration but look identical to Blast and Fragmentation grenades, at a quick glance. For details on area of effect, see the grenade's description in the Hardware section.

All grenades are inert until primed and have a timer set to 3 seconds as default but the timing can be set anywhere from .6 of a second to 10 seconds –setting the timer takes one action as does throwing the grenade so only those with a high DEX set it at the shortest setting... The range a grenade can be thrown is dependent upon the character's strength. Short (optimum) range is 5m + 1m for every point of STR, long range (there is no medium or extreme) is 15m + 2m for every point of STR. Grenade Launchers have been banned since 758 SD on Mort but there are rumours of the ban being lifted in the near future. Weapon manufacturers have already got designs ready to release and have been testing them on Dante and other War Worlds.

If a character throws a grenade and misses, at short range the amount failed by, on the to–hit roll, is the distance in metres from the intended target, and this figure is tripled at long range. The direction from the target is as follows:

ROLL ON 2D10	DIRECTION
2–4	Behind
5–6	Behind and Left
7–9	Front and Left
10–12	Front
13–15	Front and Right
16–17	Behind and Right
18–20	Behind

ARMOUR DAMAGE

(Optional)

Armour takes damage according to the calibre and type of round used.

ARMOUR DAMAGE (AD)

CALIBRE	STD	AP	HP	HEAP	HESH
CAF	1	–	–	–	–
8mm long	1	1	–	2	–
10mm auto	2	1	4	3	4
12mm	2	1	4	3	4
12.7mm	3	2	7	6	6
17mm	4	3	6	5	8
10ga. shot	7	–	–	–	–
10ga. slug	4	–	–	–	–
SPECIAL					
Ballbearings	1	–	–	–	–
Vibro Discs	2	–	–	–	–
Chopper Packs	6	–	–	–	–

BONUSES AND PENALTIES

Aggressor Activity	Bonus	Notes
Unskilled	–3	
Wounded	–1	Per wound
Running	–2	
Shotgun	+2	Shot shells only
Laser Painting	+1	Not long or extreme
Telescopic sights	+1	Med. to ext. only
Pistol: no stock	–1	Med. to ext. only
Bipod/rest	+1	Med. to ext. only

Target Activity	Penalty	Notes
Walking	–1	
Running	–3	
Sprinting	–2	
Diving	–4	
Speeding	–1	Per 20 km/h
Size–Small	–2	Half human Size
Size–Medium	0	Human–Stormer
Size		
Size–Large	+2	3m or larger
Size–Huge	+5	6m or Larger
Visibility	–1 to 5	Dark to No light
Partial Cover	–1 to –3	Cover adds PV

RECOIL

(optional)

Each projectile has a recoil value (listed as RCL in the weapon description) that equates to the kick a firearm gives the user when fired. The rating is the strength needed to fire the weapon with no penalties. If the recoil is over the strength of the user, the amount over is used as a penalty to the roll to hit. If the recoil is 4 or more higher than the user's strength (STR), the user cannot fire the weapon without taking damage equal to the amount over 3. This damage is bruising damage to the arm (or arms) used and causes no wounds but could incapacitate or kill the user and requires a PHYS roll to stay conscious.

Example: Cerise, STR 3, fires a Blitzer, recoil 8, and she is at a minus 5 to hit and will take 2 points of damage to the arm she is using to fire the gun. If she fails the PHYS roll, she will go unconscious. She only has 2 hit points in her arm which would leave her with no hit points in her right arm. Time to buy Recoil Baffling.

RECOIL BAFFLING

A gun's recoil can be reduced by means of springs, gas blowback systems and other means. The recoil of



a gun is reduced by the factor of the recoil reduction system or baffling –see Hardware for descriptions of the different available systems. Recoil in a pistol may be lowered by using two hands to hold it when in firing stance. This technique lowers the recoil by 1. Recoil for a rifle may be raised by holding it in one hand as a pistol, allowing the rifle to be fired on Pistol skill but this doubles the recoil of the rifle and is, therefore, only recommended for the very strong.

Example: Moloch the Stormer, STR 15, has a FEN AR modified by FEN labs to a pistol grip. The recoil of a FEN AR is 8 but when used as a pistol, this is doubled to 16. Moloch has one factor of recoil baffling fitted which lowers it to 15, making it useable with no penalties as a pistol.

RANGE

The further away a target, the harder it is to hit. The range of a target (short, medium, etc) depends upon the type of projectile weapon you use, for instance trying to hit a can with a sniper rifle at 50m is easier than trying the same shot with a snub pistol. The longer ranges are only possible with sights (scopes) and with the weapon firmly supported with a bipod or tripod. The range classifications are listed here with their penalties.

Range	Penalty	Notes
Close Combat	–3	–5 with rifle
Point–Blank	+5	Within 5m
Optimum (Short)	+0	See weapon description
Medium	–2	Opt.x 2
Long	–4	Opt.x 8, Scopes
Extreme	–8	Opt.x 16, Scopes and rest

PROJECTILE EXAMPLE

Projectile Example: Three operatives are about to enter projectile combat; Reton, a Wraith Raider scout, M'rt'n, a Kick Murder Shaktar, and Lee, a Death Squad human. Reton with her FEN 30–30 sniper rifle has a DEX of 10; M'rt'n, the FEN sponsored Shaktar has a DEX of 12 and Lee, carrying his 3 Blitzers and his Reaper Cannon, has a DEX of 8. The three DarkNight operatives –Jo, Link and Dixon– they are up against have dexterities of 7, 9 and 11 respectively.

Phase One: M'rt'n goes first and takes a shot at Link who he can see in partial cover (Passive Detect Rank 4). It is broad daylight, M'rt'n has no problems with the recoil of his fully automatic FEN AR and sprays: He rolls 15 + his Rifle Rank 7 which makes 22. He gets a –3 modifier for a wild shot (no aim has been taken), a +3 for ROF 5, –1 for Link being in partial cover and +1 for his Laser Painter. He hits Link in the torso with two rounds as his Auto/Support skill is also 7. M'rt'n is using HP in his FEN AR and Link is wearing DarkNight Body Armour with a PV of 5 so the damage is worked out thus; DMG is 12 – (PV (5) – PEN (1) = 4) = 8 points of damage/round = 16 points of damage to Link's torso, one wound and 8 points of damage to his armour. He goes down straight away. Jo pulls out a stolen FEN 603 and takes a pot shot at M'rt'n who couldn't see her and was concentrating on Link. She has recoil baffling on the FEN 603 as well as a Laser Painter. She is also leaning on an upturned barrel in firing stance. She rolls 7 on the dice and adds her pistol skill of Rank 5. She gets 12 plus modifiers of +1 for her Laser Painter and +1 for resting on the barrel. She also gets a +2 for the FEN 603 ROF 3. This comes to a total of 16. Unfortunately, she only has an Auto/Support skill of 1, so only 1 round hits her target. M'rt'n is wearing HARD Armour which has a PV of 10. 10mm ammunition does 5 points of damage/shell with a PEN of 4. This means that M'rt'n will take 5 – (10–4) = –1 or 1, as every bullet will cause at least 1 point of DMG to the target. M'rt'n takes 1 point of damage to his torso and 2 to his HARD Armour. Lee, standing, opens fire and trigger locks his Reaper Cannon for the next round. Dixon dives into cover. Reton now takes aim on Jo who she can see from her high vantage point with her FEN 30–30.

Phase Two: Dixon now takes aim on Reton whom he spotted with a passive Detect roll (Rank 7) and so on...

DEATH, DAMAGE AND HEALING

HIT POINTS

Hit points are an abstract way of determining how much damage a person may take before falling unconscious or dead. Each limb has its own hit points and damage taken to a limb is taken off the total hit points as well. The total hits is the maximum damage a character may take before being killed. If a character gets, for example, both their legs removed with a chainaxe, they will probably die. Hit points may be lost and recovered in numerous ways.

SHOCK

If the damage is equal to or greater than half the hits in that location (round up) then the character must make a physique (PHYS) roll. If the damage taken is more than the character's physique stat then they must make a roll at minus the excess. If the character fails either of these two rolls, then he falls down unconscious.

WOUNDS

Every time a character is hit, they take a wound. If they receive a wound, they will lose a hit point every five rounds after they were wounded, in the bookkeeping phase. Subsequent wounds shorten the time between loss by 1 and more than 5 wounds causes 1 hit point per round for each wound over 4.

Example: Matt Shiester, 17 hit points, gets shot in the leg for 3 points, leaving him with 14. He also takes one wound. Next phase, he gets hit twice for 2 and 6 points. This leaves him with 6 hit points. he also has 3 wounds and is operating at –3 modifier on all activities. In three rounds he will lose another hit point unless he seeks medical aid.

Example: Matt, having recovered from the last encounter, gets mugged by civilians using CAF weapons. They get the jump on him and shoot him 7 times. By some fluke, they all hit and each do 1 point of damage. Matt laughs heartily and tries to return fire. Not easy at –7. At the end of the round, during bookkeeping, the Games Master informs him he has lost 3 more hit points. He has 7 hit points left and will lose 3 more in every bookkeeping phase. He will probably die unless...

RECOVERY OF HIT POINTS

Healing by an Ebon is the most popular choice of recovery as it takes only two phases to complete. Drugs take effect three phases after it has been administered. For more details on which drugs help with the recovery of hit points and wounds, see the 'Drugs' section later in this volume. Proper medical attention, as in a character administering paramedical aid, will only stop wounds but not restore hit points without drugs or time.

Example: Fusion, an Ebon, has lost 4 hits and 2 wounds in the last round. Her friend, Ribbons, another Ebon, will be able to 'Heal' her in the following round but it will only take place in Phase Two as each Ebon ability takes two phases to formulate. This means that she will not take any further losses to her hit points.

Example: Sneaky Pete, a scout, has lost 2 hit points and has 1 wound from being in a firefight. Carl, the human medic, is three streets away administering aid to another squad member, and will take 10 rounds to get to him. By this time, Pete will have taken a further 2 hit points with bleeding. Carl will have to administer 2 doses of Kick Start to stop all the bleeding and cure his hit points. If Carl gets held up on his way to Pete, 5 rounds later, Pete will take a further hit point in bleeding.

Standard medical practice has evolved since the Conflict Wars but not as much as the Ebb and Pharmacology. For this reason, many characters will never undergo hospitalisation as there is nearly always an Ebon or a doctor with Kick Start on hand. For those unfortunate enough to need hospitals, the amount of damage is not normally the problem: The type of damage is the worry to standard medical practice. Most wounds –bullet wounds– if left to normal hospitalisation will heal within two weeks whereas severed or broken limbs take six or more weeks.

REGENERATION

Due to the extremely high metabolism of the Stormers, which was written in to their DNA during their growth, the ability to heal occurs at an extremely accelerated rate. Stormers, the biogenetic character class, are able to regenerate both hit points and wounds during combat, naturally. In the bookkeeping phase of every fourth round, a Stormer may regenerate one wound until they have none. They can then regenerate one hit point in the bookkeeping phase of every fourth round.



Example: Bonky, the Stormer has taken a total of 6 hit points and 2 wounds in the first three phases of the first combat round. At the end of the fifth round, he is able to regenerate one wound and by the end of the ninth round, he is able to regenerate his other wound. By the end of the thirteenth round, he is able to regenerate one of his hit points and so on...

ARMOUR

Armour will give protection in any location until the ID in that location is completely gone. The ID of armour is depleted when using the optional Armour Damage rule.

IMPACT DAMAGE

Impact Damage (ID) is the amount of punishment that the armour can take before it is useless.

	ID/Location			
Armour Type	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs
Striker	–	5	5	5
Flak Vest	–	8	–	–
Body Armour	8	14	10	12
Deathsuit	10	15	12	14
Exo, Base	10	20	15	17
Exo, Heavy	15	35	25	28
Exo, Stormer	20	40	30	35
HARD	20	50	40	45
Powercell	20	70	50	60
Crackshot	20	80	60	70
Dogeybone	60	150	80	120
Shock	80	200	120	180

PROTECTION VALUE

The Protection Value (PV) is the amount of damage stopped from an attack. Any damage that goes through is taken off the hit points.

Armour Type	PV	Notes
Striker	1	Civilian Motorcycle Armour
Flak Vest	3	
Body Armour	5	'Blocker'
DeathSuit	6	See Ebon abilities: 'Protect'
Exo, Base	7	
Exo, Heavy	8	
Exo, Stormer	8	
HARD	10	
Powercell	12	
Crackshot	15	
Dogeybone	16	
Shock	18	

BOOKKEEPING

The bookkeeping phase is the phase in which wounds are taken into account, drugs take effect etc. It is not a phase as such but is a marvel of Einsteinian physics in which the world has time to sit down and hit you with reality. This phase happens at the end of each round, after phase five.

MINIATURE RULES

When playing SLA Industries, players may wish to use metal or resin miniatures to depict their characters. Any miniatures will suffice but SLA Industries miniatures are recommended as they represent Operatives with true SLA hardware. Miniatures are placed on a map (preferably drawn on 25mm Hex paper) created by the GM, representing the current location and situation. The miniatures are moved on the map phase by phase. A game played with miniatures can become highly strategic or free-form, as the players and GM see fit.

1 hex = 2m

Move rates: Hexes per phase

RACE	WALK	RUN	SPRINT	RUNNING SKILL
Human	0.5	1	1.5	+0.3m
Ebon	0.5	1	1.5	+0.3m
Brain Waster	0.5	1	1.5	+0.3m
Frother	0.5	1	2	+0.3m
Stormer	0.5	1.5	2	+0.3m
Shaktar	0.5	1.5	2 1/2	+0.3m
Wraith Raider	2	2	3	+0.3m

VEHICLES

Vehicles may range from a standard motorcycle to a Kilcopter but they all use the same system of movement. Each vehicle is given a top speed in both Kilometres per hour and Metres per phase (Miles per hour can be worked out from the speed in Km/h by dividing by 8 and multiplying by 5). Acceleration and deceleration is given in Metres per phase per phase and this is the amount that can be added or subtracted per phase from the current speed. Vehicles move every phase regardless of the driver's actions. A driver decides, at the beginning of each round whether they are accelerating, decelerating or retaining their current speed. If a character wishes to change their speed at any time other than the beginning of the round, they must make a Drive roll on the relevant drive skill for their vehicle. A character without the relevant drive skill cannot drive the vehicle.

Example: Mark Wilse (Drive skill, Rank 6) is driving an Augustus at 100 Km/h (16m/phase) and puts his foot to the floor. The acceleration rate is 2.8 which means that the vehicle will reach top speed (51.2m/phase) in 13 phases. During the first phase of acceleration, the vehicle is doing 18.8m/phase (rounded to 19 for tabletop movement), in the second phase, it is doing 21.6m/phase.

Each vehicle has a turning circle which is the amount of distance a vehicle needs, in metres, to turn

180º at low speed. At higher speeds the turning circle is used to determine how well the vehicle may turn. A person walking has the lowest turning circle (0) and may change direction as often as they wish while running (sprinting gives them a turning circle of 1, however).

When moving at any speed over their acceleration rate, a vehicle with a turning circle of 1 moves 2m (1 Hex when using miniatures) before turning 60º, a turning circle of 6 means it would move 12m before turning 60º. This equates to a threefold increase. If the driver wishes to turn faster, they may do so by attempting a special manoeuvre: If they wish to turn in twice their turning circle, in metres, they must make a drive roll. If they wish to turn in their turning circle, in metres, they must make a drive roll and get a special success: 21 or higher.

Example: Mark Wilse (Drive skill, Rank 6) is driving his Augustus at 2m/phase. This is below its acceleration rate so it would only take him 5m to turn his car about face. At any speed over this, it takes 15m to turn about face without flash manoeuvres. If he were driving at 25m/phase and wished to turn 180º in 5m, he would need to roll 15+ on 2d10. If he wished to turn 180º in 10m, he would need to roll 5+.

When vehicles are being used and players wish to know exactly where their characters are, miniatures are advised but when characters are running around with vehicles driving nearby, the vehicles will end up taking an enormous amount of space for manoeuvres due to the speeds involved.

Whenever a driver attempts a manoeuvre under stress or is attempting to turn very fast, a roll against the driver's skill is required at whatever penalties or bonuses the GM deems necessary. A failure is looked up on the table below using the amount the roll was failed by.

FAILED DRIVE ROLL

Amount failed by — Result

1–5 Vehicle is out of control and will continue to move at the current speed for one round in the current direction, hitting anything in its path. Control can be regained with a successful drive roll next round.

6–10 Vehicle is out of control and will decelerate at the vehicle's maximum deceleration rate in the current direction, hitting anything in its path. Control cannot be regained until the vehicle stops.

11–15 The vehicle loses traction and skids. The vehicle will continue to move in its current direction, decelerating at half its maximum rate. Control can be regained once the vehicle is stationary.

16–20 The vehicle rolls (ground vehicles only) and continues in the same direction with no control at all. It will decelerate at a quarter of its maximum rate until it is stationary or it hits something. Control cannot be regained until the vehicle has been put on its wheels (ground vehicles only: Airborne vehicles plummet until they hit terra firma...) unless it landed the right way up (14+ on 2d10, adding any ranks of luck the driver has).

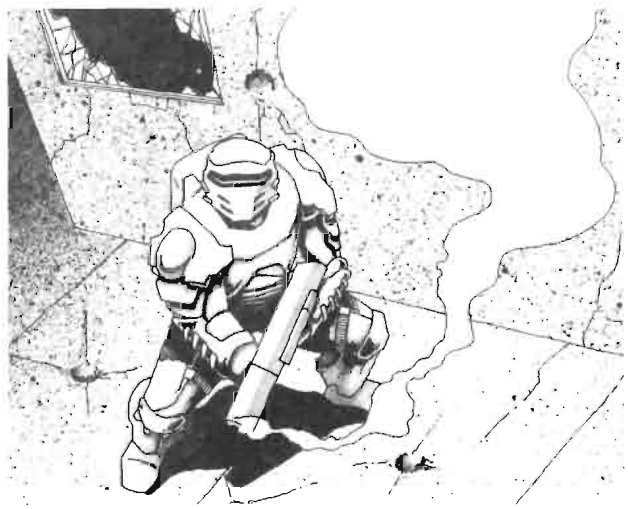
21+ Vehicle is dead. It rolls, fishtails or any other method of displaying its lack of life. Imagine your favourite car crash in a film and remove the explosion at the end. Control cannot be regained until the vehicle has been repaired ("We're talking telephone numbers, pal...").

EXPERIENCE

A character learns and improves as time and events pass by. This is simulated by Games Master rewards: Experience Points. A character that performed well in a particular adventure may earn 2, 3 or even 4 Experience Points at the end of the adventure. If a player does not pay attention or participate, they may earn 1 or no Experience Points at all. The ultra–heroic, on the other hand, may be lucky to learn 5 in one adventure, but this should be rare. An adventure can last from anywhere between one and six or more actual game sessions.

Experience Points may be spent on skills or stats and can be saved up from one adventure to the next. Skills are purchased at the same cost as in character generation with one difference: To start a new skill –to buy Rank 1– costs 5 Experience Points.

Statistics may be purchased at 5 Experience Points for each point of increase, up to the racial maximum. Advantages and Disadvantages may not be bought with Experience Points.



CHARACTER GENERATION

"They gave me my 100₵ and sent me out onto the streets of Mort. I was grateful for the training I had received at Orange Crush and Meny. Within my first week, I had relied upon almost everything I had learned. I advise you to learn as much as you can: you can't learn too much here. Otherwise your active service will be short and not very sweet. Now, get on with it."

Marshall McSlithe, Training Officer, Orange Crush.

For a player to take part as an operative in SLA Industries, they must create a character –a persona or alter ego. The player will decide all the aspects, capabilities and the background of their character using the system described below. The player will need paper, a pencil and a copy of the character sheet –you may photocopy the sheet at the back of this volume as many times as you require for your own personal use. The character sheet is designed to be useful for keeping track of character's skills, abilities, equipment, money, weapons and ammunition, as well as their state of health.

When generating a character, it is useful to do all the calculations on a sheet of paper and then transfer all the details to the character sheet on completion. It is best to write on the character sheet in pencil as various information changes throughout the course of play. Correcting fluid is not cheap and looks messy.

CREATING A CHARACTER

The player must first decide what type of character they wish to play. This can be as vague as "a big hard monster" or as detailed as "a reclusive Kick Murder Ebon with no friends except a goldfish called Brian". The first stage is usually deciding on the race or class of character. The choices are described in detail in the following pages. They are the Human, Frother, Ebon, Brain Waster, Wraith Raider, Shaktar and the Stormer. The player has a pool of 300 points to spend



After three years, Tachi the Reaver arrives back on Mort after a Slaughter Tour of New Paris. It has been a trying season for Tachi although he has managed to gather one or two sponsors on his off–world excursion, such as Vigatex, Sigerson and the latest and most enigmatic word on the street: Doppelganger –Karma's latest secret toy project. It must have something to do with those New Parisian implants, judging by his performance up against Pearl Slammer, they weren't off the factory floor.

Word has it, from Third Eye, that Tachi's going for the big one during the Fall of this year –but as we all know, for Contract Killers like Tachi, it's always the fall in the circuit.

on natural characteristics (the basic physical and mental attributes of the character), skills (the abilities of the character), advantages and disadvantages. If the character is an Ebon or Brain Waster, they must also use these points to buy Ebon abilities (See 'The Power of the Ebb').

NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS (STATS)

The natural characteristics or statistics (stats) are the basic building blocks of a character. They specify how strong, fast, intelligent and calm the character is. The stats also determine the limits of the skills the character may learn. The statistics used in SLA Industries are as follows:

STRENGTH (STR)

The physical strength of a character determines how capable a character is of carrying, lifting and throwing objects of a certain weight. To refer to how much your character can lift, throw and carry, refer to the 'Encumberance' section in this chapter. This characteristic also determines how hard they can punch someone during hand-to-hand combat. The strength of a character also effects how much physical damage is taken by an opponent when struck. This damage bonus is worked out by the character's STR stat divided by three (rounded down). For more information on this bonus, see the 'Combat' section but at this stage of generation, the player should just insert the bonus in the appropriate place on the character sheet.

DEXTERITY (DEX)

This stat describes a character's agility and reaction time. This characteristic is also used to decide when the character is able to act during a combat round. To see how you would do this, refer to the 'Combat' section later on in this volume. A character must also note down at this stage whether they are right or left handed. They can only be ambidextrous if they purchase the appropriate advantage, see 'Advantages and Disadvantages' later on in this chapter.

DIAGNOSE (DIA)

A character's diagnose characteristic is how well they can solve problems of a mental nature. It also implies how well a character may learn from certain situations.

CONCENTRATION (CONC)

This characteristic represents a character's attention span and ability to concentrate on a particular activity, person, situation etc. This characteristic is especially used with Ebons and Brain Wasters when performing Ebon abilities.

CHARISMA (CHA)

The Charisma stat represents the ability to influence, charm and impress surrounding characters using both speech and actions i.e. body language.

PHYSIQUE (PHYS)

The general physical fitness, or physique stat, is determined by adding the character's STR & DEX stats together and dividing by two (rounding up).

KNOWLEDGE (KNOW)

A character's basic intelligence is represented by their knowledge characteristic. This is determined by adding the character's DIA & CONC stats together and dividing by two (rounding up).

FLUX

This stat is rated zero for all characters except Ebons and Brain Wasters who start with 10. FLUX represents an Ebon's energy level. Ebons may increase their FLUX at the normal cost of 5 points per point like any other stat but after generation, during play, they can increase it at a cost of 2 points per point of increase. See 'The Power of the Ebb' chapter.

COOL

How a character may act under stress and in intimidating circumstances is represented by a character's COOL statistic. A character with a high COOL is very calm and does not crack under pressure and a character with a low COOL is nervous and is more likely to panic in a frightening situation.

When a player first starts to generate their character, each characteristic starts at five (5). Using their starting points, they can then spend the points on characteristics. Each point of increase costs five (5) points. For every character class, there is a racial maximum. (There is no maximum for the FLUX stat.) This is shown on the table below:-

CHARACTERISTICS	STR	DEX	DIA	CONC	CHA	COOL
Human	5–10	5–10	5–10	5–10	5–10	5–10
Frother	5–12	5–10	5–8	5–10	5–10	5–10
Ebon	5–9	5–10	5–10	5–13	5–11	5–9
Brain Waster	5–11	5–10	5–10	5–11	5–8	5–11
Wraith Raider	5–10	5–15	5–12	5–9	5–10	5–8
Shaktar	5–13	5–13	5–8	5–8	5–9	5–12
Stormer	5–15	5–13	5–8	5–8	5–8	5–15

A character can go one point over his racial maximum for COOL if they take 'Exceptionally Cool' as an advantage (See Advantages/Disadvantages). This would not be bought at the start of character generation but added later on when the player was adding the final touches and will be explained in the appropriate section. A player can also go below the starting characteristic and he or she would receive 5 points for every characteristic point decreased, e.g. if the player decided to have a CHA (Charisma) of 4, then the player would receive 5 points to spend elsewhere.

SKILLS

This section deals with the varying skills that make up a role–playing character. Each skill is attributed to a characteristic i.e. Running is attributed to PHYS (Physique) as the character could only have up to a Rank 7 Running if the Physique is 7, etc. It would not be natural to be able to run at a professional standard if you are a complete physical wreck.

In SLA Industries, skills are measured in Ranks with Rank 1 being basically trained, Rank 5 being expert and Rank 10 being a master. Each class starts with certain skills at base Ranks. These are the free skills that each character class starts with. From here, the player spends points to obtain or increase the skills they want their character to be trained in. A player may spend as many points as desired on skills providing no skill Rank goes higher than the statistic that governs it (see skill list) and no skill may start higher than Rank 10, for example, a character with a DEX of 6 may not have a Rifle skill higher than Rank 6 and a character with a DEX of 11 may only start with Rifle Rank 10.



The cost of skills is one point per Rank cumulative. This means that to buy Rank 3 in a skill, the player must buy Rank 1 + Rank 2 + Rank 3. Rank 1 costs 1 point + Rank 2 which costs 2 points + Rank 3 which costs 3 points = 6 points altogether. This is best shown on the table below.

Skill Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Base Cost	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cum. Cost	1	3	6	10	15	21	28	36	45	55

If the character has one or two ranks already in a skill and they wish to increase it, they need not buy the skill at it's full cumulative cost but may buy the skill ranks desired. For example, Jim has a Wraith Raider with a base skill of Rank 1 Detect and wishes to increase it to Rank 5. He must then cross reference the base skill rank (1) with the skill rank (5) that he desires. The total cumulative cost for this would be 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 = 14 as opposed to 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 15 if he was starting from Rank 0. The table below shows this more clearly.

Skill Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Base Rank										
1		2	5	9	14	20	27	35	44	54
2			3	7	12	18	25	33	42	52
3				4	9	15	22	30	39	49
4					5	11	18	26	35	45
5						6	13	21	30	40
6							7	15	24	34
7								8	17	27
8									9	19
9										10

If the player decides that their stats are too low, they can always spend points to increase their potentials. A character may (at some point in the game) have a skill Rank higher than the governing statistic. If they lose some of a statistic through playing– for example; the character gets poisoned and their strength drops from 8 to 6 –then their skill Rank does not drop but they may only use the skill at the new statistic level. They do not lose the skill and if their statistic returns to its previous level, they may use the skill at its original level again.

The list of skills provided is by no means exhaustive and Games Masters or players in conjunction with Games Masters may create new skills along the same lines as the ones listed in the skills sections as long as the skill does not make the character more powerful than having any other skill would.

PRIMARY SKILLS

STRENGTH

Unarmed Combat –Unarmed Combat is the basic skill of fisticuffs with no flair and pile–driving blows. The stronger the character, the better their potential. This skill also covers brawling, using bottles, etc. (For more information on hand–to–hand combat, see the 'Combat' section in this chapter.)

Blade, 1–H –With a wide choice of blades from pocket knives through daggers to the MAC knife, characters trained in one–handed blade have the widest choice of close combat weapons available. This skill does not cover throwing knives.

Blade, 2–H –This skill is for the serious blade fan and covers weapons like the formidable Power Claymore favoured by Frothers.

Club, 1–H –Clubs have been around since pre–civilised times. As people become more civilised, so do their clubs– riot batons and suchlike.

Club, 2–H –Baseball bats and other improvised large clubs have been used by gangs on the streets and enthusiastic operatives all throughout the World of Progress. Even the hockey stick has seen a revival since the Carriens infestation of Downtown.

Chainaxe –The chainaxe is the epitome of the direct approach Contract Killer. This weapon has a very defined technique to stop users from hurting themselves.

Flexible Weapon –Nunchakus, bike chains, whips and their like are unpredictable by the untrained. All of these weapons are covered by this skill.

Pole–arm –Old fashioned spears and ultra–modern Flick Scythes are covered by this skill. In the weeks that 'Spearman', the Contract Killer, was famous; until his death, the spear gained in popularity and many gang members are well versed in it's use.

DEXTERITY

Martial Arts –A trained martial–artist can defend themselves and fight as well as an armed person. On top of that, it looks good and can strike fear into the hearts of your average punk. This skill covers all types of Martial Arts such as judo, ninjitsu and karate.

Gymnastics –Originally taught as a sport, Gymnastics has been learned by combat operatives who have to rely on their agility to dodge hand–to–hand attacks. If the character decides to dodge attacks, they may subtract their skill rank at gymnastics from the attacker's roll during any phase they may act.

Forgery, Manual –A skilled forger can produce documents that look authentic to the naked eye and

even under close manual scrutiny. This skill does not allow a character to fool a machine, however, as this is the reason electronic devices were implemented as security.

Sleight –This skill covers the art of prestidigitation, or sleight of hand. A person skilled at sleight can palm small objects, cheat at cards and pick pockets.

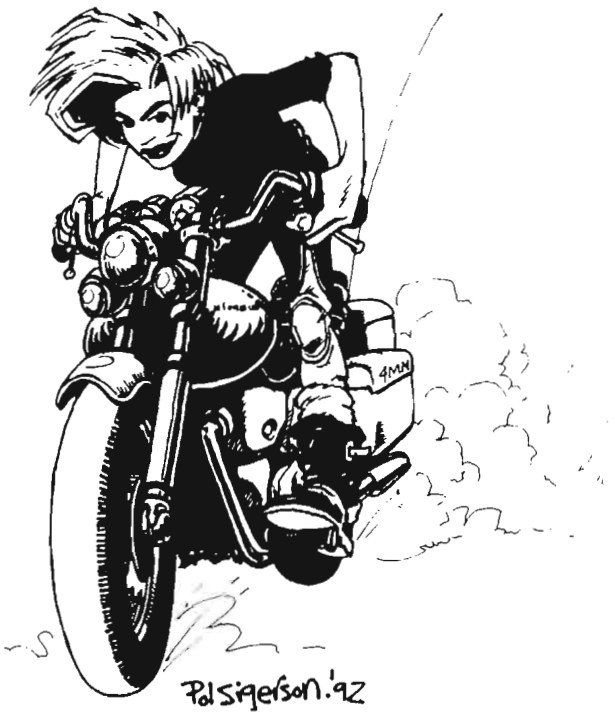
Sneaking –Moving silently has saved the lives of many an operative. This skill also covers moving without leaving a trace.

Hide –Using this skill enables a character to use shadows and natural cover to avoid detection. This is a passive skill if the character's hide is higher than the opponent's Detect skill. It is an active skill when being pursued or hunted. Combined with sneaking, this skill is part of the arsenal of a scout, moving without detection through normal (non–Ebon) means.

Pistol –This skill covers all one–handed ballistic projectile weapons. This includes both pistols and SMGs. See the 'Combat' section for effects.

Rifle –This skill covers all two–handed ballistic projectile weapons. See the 'Combat' section for effects.

Drive, Motorcycle –This skill represents the ability to be able to drive both light, heavy and military motorcycles. (Other driving skills are under the CONCENTRATION heading.)



PHYSIQUE

Wrestling –Similar to gymnastics, this skill represents the ability to wrestle to professional standards but in combat situations, for example, incapacitating an opponent by pinning them to the ground.

Acrobatics –This skill represents the knowledge and ability to perform acrobatics, both in a sporting and combat situation as more and more operatives are learning to use acrobatics as a way of increasing physical fitness for use in close combat situations.

Running –A character trained in this skill will be able to run and sprint faster than usual for controlled periods of time, adding a 0.3m/Rank to the character's normal sprint rate. See 'Movement' later on in this chapter.

Climb –Especially useful for scouts who scale large buildings on Mort to gain a high vantage point for sniping, this skill gives the character a professional knowledge of the tools and techniques of climbing and scaling steep surfaces.

Swim –This skill enables a character to swim to professional standards including scuba diving and snorkelling.

Auto/Support –Whether multi–rate or fully automatic, guns need this skill to control them as a weapon with a rate of fire is totally different from a single shot weapon. See the 'Combat' section for more details.

Throw –This skill covers throwing grenades and knives as well as everyday objects like bricks and bottles. With the ever increasing gang war problem on Mort, this skill is becoming more popular every day.

CHARISMA

Leadership –This skill enables a character to take on the responsibility of a leader, for example, of their squad –to persuade other characters or to calm them in the face of combat or other such situations.

Seduction –A character using this skill is able to seduce or attract another by the use of their body and voice. This may be for personal or ulterior motives.

Disguise –Particularly for the use of undercover operatives, disguise enables a character to conceal themselves with the use of make–up and prosthetics so that other characters will not recognise them.

Interview –To have a successful conversation, using manipulation if required, with a person of higher or lower status without stuttering or being ner-

vous, a character is best using interview.

Diplomacy –A character skilled in diplomacy is able to manage relations with the press, the public and important personnel tactfully, politely and carefully. It is necessary on Mort, where the media are very important, for all operatives who wish to gain public recognition to have this skill to some degree.

Communique –A character with this skill is able to make successful official announcements and reports when speaking to higher ranking operatives or employees. For example, an operative wishing to present a report personally to their squads' financier would be able to speak clearly, concisely and would be able to make themselves understood.

Haggle –With this skill, a character is able to bargain and negotiate favourably with other characters, for example, to haggle with a contact about the price for a piece of information.

Persuasion –Using this skill, a character can entice other characters into situations which they would normally refuse to enter or to do something which they not normally do. For example, a successful roll might mean that an operative could persuade a civilian who has just went mad with an SMG to hand the gun over and mellow out.

DIAGNOSE

Computer Use –This skill enables a character to use computers, word processors, software and various other similar devices to professional standards.

Electronics, Industrial –This skill gives a character knowledge of electronic construction and design at an industrial level i.e. electronic systems and circuit boards.

Mechanics, Industrial –With this skill, the character has the ability and knowledge of machinery, involving how it is designed, built and manufactured at an industrial level.

Demolitions –The use of this skill allows a character to rig and prime detonators, set explosive charges, construct timers, mechanical or electronic (with the use of the Electronics skill) and handle explosives.

Medical, Paramedic –A character trained in this skill is able to perform on–the–spot first aid to injured colleagues, set broken bones, stop bleeding etc., but is unable to perform surgery or diagnose disease. This skill can only be performed with the use of a Medi–kit.

Tactics –This represents the character's knowledge of battle field and combat encounters and how best to use troops or squad members and weapons in difficult situations.

Tracking –This skill enables a character to track prey through different types of terrain, be able to tell how old the tracks are, what type of tracks they are, etc.

Bribery –To successfully persuade another character to act improperly or in their favour for a gift of money or a possession, a character must be skilled in bribery.

Torture –This skill enables a character to perform successful infliction of bodily pain as a means of persuasion or punishment.

Lock Picking –This skill enables a character to use manual lock picking tools to open conventional safes and doors etc.

Electronic Locks –This skill has developed as an extension and progression from the lock picking skill, where the character is skilled at hacking into electronic security systems, keypad operated doors, electronic safes etc. This skill cannot be performed successfully without the aid of Electronic Lock Picking tools.

Business Administration –A character skilled in this ability can manage the administrative affairs of a squad, is aware of various types of forms used in the company, i.e. requisition forms, the filling out of reports, etc.

Forensics –This skill enables a character to find certain characteristics of a criminal by subtle traces that they leave behind at the scene of the crime. This includes genetic fingerprinting, gene sampling, dental recording, time of crime, entry and exit points to the scene and giving potential scenarios as to what really happened at the scene of the crime as well as scientific examination of corpses to see how they were killed, etc.

Pathology –A character trained in pathology can successfully analyse organs from live or dead bodies for disease.

Read Lips –This skill represents the knowledge and ability to be able to read lips at a distance and understand what is being said.

Intimidation –Intimidation represents the ability to find out what will scare another character– For example, some characters will be more intimidated by a harsh voice than a person flexing their muscles at them and growling.

CONCENTRATION

Weapons Maintenance –This skill allows a character to clean and maintain their personal weapons to a

high standard. This includes sharpening close combat blades, maintaining powered close combat weapons, maintaining weapon equipment –telescopic sights, laser painting and silencers etc.

Drive, Civilian –This ability enables a character to drive civilian vehicles, taxis and light trucks as well as jeeps.

Drive, Military –This skill represents the ability to drive military trucks, APCs, tracked vehicles and tanks.

Detect –This skill represents the ability to spot suspicious circumstances, traps, information, find clues or spot an opponent in hiding.

Medical, Surgery –A character with this skill can perform professional surgical operations on people. A character must have at least one Rank in Medical, Practice before they may take this skill. The appropriate equipment must be used to be able to perform this skill successfully.

Marksman –A character with this skill will take a more accurate shot given time and favourable conditions. This is particularly useful to scouts and snipers who wish to improve their aim. See the 'Combat' section for more information on this skill.

Business Finance –A character with this skill has the ability to manage finance, be it their own or their squad's finances and to budget it accurately for their needs.

Photography –This skill represents the ability and knowledge to be able to produce quality photographs and films using the necessary equipment i.e. a camera, vidi-cam. The user may also develop their own film and photographs with this skill.

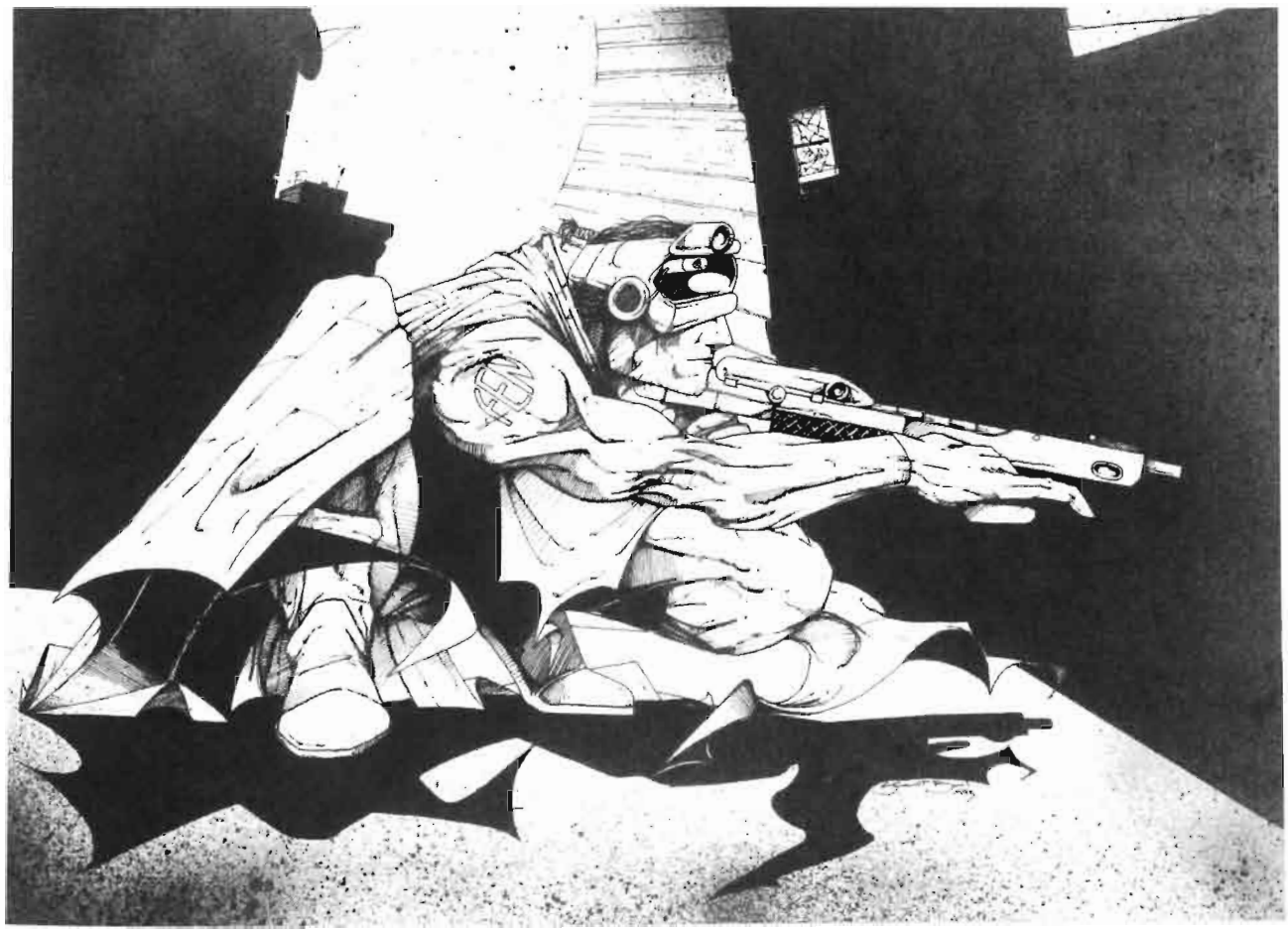
KNOWLEDGE

Computer, Subterfuge –A character with this skill is able to hack through computer systems to obtain information through networks.

Electronics, Repair –A character with this skill is able to repair any small to medium electronic devices but does not have the knowledge to build them. They are able to diagnose a problem and solve it.

Mechanics, Repair –This skill allows a character to diagnose a mechanical problem and repair it using the appropriate tools.

Demolitions Disposal –This skill enables a character to defuse and deactivate set charges –explosives, booby traps, timer set devices and hand grenades.



Survival –Using this skill, a character is able to survive in the wilderness by finding water, constructing or finding shelter and finding food from natural resources in forests, deserts, mountainous regions, etc.

Medical, Practice –This ability enables a character to perform an analysis, and diagnose the illness of another character. At Rank 5, this skill is the equivalent of a doctorate, where a character would be able to set up in practice alone. To take this skill, the character must have at least one Rank in Paramedic.

Streetwise –A character who has been brought up in the streets of Mort will know much more about 'the law of the street' than someone who has lived in seclusion or a closed environment. This skill represents the level of knowledge a character has about the streets. A character with a high streetwise is likely to have been brought up in and around Downtown, Suburbia or both.

Evaluate Opponent –This skill enables a character to judge what sort of combat abilities their opponent is skilled in. The higher the roll made, the more information should be given to the character.

Literacy –A character with a literacy skill is able to read and write to a good standard. A character without this skill does not necessarily mean that the character cannot read and write, it will just mean that their writing will probably be unintelligible and they will have no interest whatsoever in reading.

SLA Information –This skill represents a character's knowledge of the company they work for. This includes the way the company works, rules and departmental regulations, recognising heads and important persons within the company, etc.

Psychology –This skill represents the knowledge, practice and study of the mind as well as knowledge of the clinical treatment of mental diseases and psychoses.

Astronomy –This skill represents the scientific knowledge and study of celestial bodies in the World of Progress. This may be a chosen star system or several systems.

Pilot, Military –This skill allows a character to pilot a shuttle, hover vehicle and the formidable Kilcopter used on Mort.

Navigation –This skill represents the character's knowledge of navigation and navigational equipment including the Nava–map, ordinary maps, compasses, navigational systems on military vehicles as well as using the stars and landmarks.

Space Navigation –This specialized skill is only taught and learned by few and those few are mostly Ebons, used in conjunction with their Space folding abilities. It allows the character the knowledge of star systems and the passages through them.

SECONDARY – SPECIAL INTEREST – HOBBY SKILLS

The following is a list of skills that a character may choose to further the background of their character. These may have been learned through proper training or just picked up as a social interest at an early age. The governing stat for each secondary skill is included in brackets.

Gambling (CONC) –A character skilled in gambling means that they are capable of playing games of chance with possessions or money and usually come off better than opponents without the skill. The higher the rank, the better chance the character has of winning.

Ecology (KNOW) –The character is interested in the study of the relation of organisms and ecosystems to one another and their surroundings.

Cooking (KNOW) –The character is interested or trained in the art of cooking or has been trained as a chef.

Agriculture (KNOW) –The character has been brought up in a natural environment, has studied or is interested in agriculture.

History (KNOW) –The character is interested in the history of the World of Progress.

Dance (PHYS) –The character is either trained or interested in dance of various types.

Artistic Ability (CONC) –The character has an interest in art and/or is able to produce work to a good standard.

Music –general (KNOW) –The character has an interest in music and/or is able to read and write music.

Sewing (DEX) –The character has been trained or is just interested in sewing and needlework.

Archaeology (KNOW) –The character has been trained or is interested in the study of ancient cultures by the excavation and analysis of physical remains.

Physiography (KNOW) –The character is interested

in the study of the surface of the various planets in the World of Progress.

Cinematography (KNOW) –The character is interested or is trained in the art of making films.

Theatre (KNOW) –The character is trained or is interested in theatre and the modern arts.

Languages:–

Killan (KNOW) –This is the common language of the human race. In player's terms, it could be classed as 'SLA English'.

Wraith (KNOW) –This is the standard language of the Wraith Raider race. It is quite easily spoken by humans and many learn it to be able to converse easily with their colleagues.

Shaktarian (KNOW) –This is the home language of the alien race, the Shaktars. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult for humans or humanoid races to learn as there are no vowels in the Shaktarian language but it can be translated easily into written form and given vowels to help other races speak it. "Klgw'r nwk gjjf l'ndr txfdw bzlr mfkt nkm'ftg ndkdf'grj kcvd'd" is pronounced "Klugwar nowak gijif laendre tixifodew bizalr mofket nekamfteg nakeedif'gruj kicavid'd "

Sign Language (KNOW) –This is the standard language of mute humans and is also used by the colleagues of deaf characters.

New Parisian (KNOW) –This is the common language of people from New Paris. In player's terms, it is French.

Sports: Various (PHYS) –The character has been taught or is interested in one or several sports.

Architecture (KNOW) –The character has been trained or is interested in the design and construction of buildings and manipulation of interior space.

Physiology (KNOW) –The character is interested or has been trained in the science of the functions of living organisms and their parts.

Palaeography (KNOW) –The character is interested in or has been trained in the study of ancient writings and manuscripts.

Botany (KNOW) –The character is interested or is trained in the study of plants.

Zoology (KNOW) –The character is interested or trained in the study of animals.

Mathematics (KNOW) –The character is interested or is learned in the abstract science of numbers, quantity and space.

Video Games (KNOW) –The character is skilled in the art of playing or designing video games.

Sing (CHA) –The character enjoys singing and is interested in singing.

Play Instrument (KNOW) –The character can has been trained or has picked up the skill of being able to play an instrument.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Advantages and disadvantages are used, in the case of advantages, as supplements to skills, or in the case of disadvantages, as a means of obtaining more points for skills, stats and advantages or, thirdly in the case of both, as a means of adding flavour and originality to a character. Both advantages and disadvantages are either measured in Ranks, like skills –only limited to Rank 10 with no stats governing them– or as a one off cost. Ranks of advantages and disadvantages are not paid for cumulatively as with skills, but are paid for at a set cost. For example; Good hearing Rank 1= 1pt, Rank 2= 2pts, Rank 10= 10pts. A character cannot have obviously opposite advantages and disadvantages ie: Good looking Rank 6 and ugly Rank 5. A description of the advantages and disadvantages may be found below:

PHYSICAL

Looks: Handsome/Ugly– This advantage allows a character to have up to 10 Ranks of 'Ugly' or 'Handsome'. The character receives 1 point per Rank for the 'Ugly' disadvantage and the Handsome advantage costs 1 point per Rank. Each character starts with average looks, Rank 1 Handsome is slightly better looking, Rank 10 is stunningly attractive. Rank 1 Ugly is slightly unattractive and Rank 10 Ugly is horrendously grotesque.



Ambidextrous– This advantage allows the character to be able to use either hand rather than take modifiers for using their off–hand. It does not mean that they may, for example, use a gun in both hands at the same time. It means that if the character is injured in one limb, they may use their other limb to do the job or perform the skill equally well. There are no Ranks in this advantage and it is a one–off cost of 10 points to the player.

Vision: Good/Bad– This advantage is particularly useful for scouts and investigators. It costs two points per Rank up to 10 Ranks and means that, at higher Ranks, the character is able to spot a person further away than usual. This is at the GM's discretion. Bad vision gives the player two points per Rank and means that the character is, at higher Ranks, nearly blind. At lower Ranks it may only affect their reading, watching television or a VDU screen. Above Rank 7, the character is completely blind in one eye. At Rank 10, the character is completely blind in both eyes.

Hearing: Good/Bad– A character with good hearing is able to hear sounds or noises easier than a normal character up to, at higher Ranks, being able to hear noises that the other characters in their squad cannot hear at all. Bad hearing means that the character is unable to hear as well as their colleagues and finds it difficult to listen to conversations at higher Ranks. Good hearing costs one point per Rank up to Rank 10. A character receives one point per Rank of bad hearing up to Rank 10. Above Rank 7, the character is totally deaf in one ear and at Rank 10 the character is completely deaf in both ears.

Figure: Good/Bad– With the good figure advantage, the character has, at higher Ranks a noticeably athletic and shapely body or, in the case of a female, a curvaceous and voluptuous figure. This costs one point per Rank up to Rank 10. A bad figure implies that the character has a dumpy, plain body and, at higher Ranks, is overweight, misshapen and ill–proportioned and the player will receive one point per Rank of disadvantage.

Speech: Good/Bad– At a cost of two points, the good speech advantage gives the character a +1 to any CHA governed skill rolls only when the character is using speech in a non–stressful situation, for example, if the character is usually calm in combat situations, then they might use their speech advantage along with their Leadership skill to calm other members of their squad. The character may also receive two points for bad speech and so receives a –1 to any skill rolls governed by the CHA stat. Only one Rank in both the advantage and disadvantage is allowed.

Time Keeper: Good/Bad– With the good time keeper advantage, the character, at higher levels is always on time and has no need for an alarm call or a watch. They know instinctively when they are supposed to be out of their bed in the morning and always arrive at their meetings on time, if not slightly early. Each Rank costs one point per Rank up to Rank 10. With the disadvantage, the character finds it hard to get up in the mornings, is usually late for meetings and looses track of time quite easily. At higher Ranks, they are persistently late and cannot prevent it, even with several alarm clocks and a watch on either wrist!! The disadvantage gives the character one point per Rank up to Rank 10 to use elsewhere.

Sleeper: Good/Bad– This advantage is very similar to the good time keeper advantage where a character can sleep well at night and know how long they must sleep before they get up. The character, at higher levels will instinctively know how long they need to sleep without being tired in the morning. This costs one point per Rank up to Rank 10. The bad sleeper disadvantage means that the character is unable to sleep well and is always tired in the morning. At higher Ranks, the character usually takes medication for this condition as they are unable to prevent it even if they go to bed early at night. A character will receive one point per Rank of disadvantage up to Rank 10.

Sterile– This disadvantage will give the character 10 points. There are no Ranks and the character is unable to have children. This may be a natural sterility or has come into effect before the character joined SLA Industries as an operative.

Allergy– The Allergy rank determines how severe the condition affects the character in everyday life. The character may choose any allergy as long as they are willing to play it if it comes into effect. Each Rank gives the character 2 points to spend elsewhere up to a maximum at Rank 10 of 20 points.

General: Good/Bad– This general heading covers any physical advantages and disadvantages that have not been covered above, but must be specified by the player and agreed upon by the GM before game play. It allows a character to take any advantage or disadvantage, at a cost of 2 points per Rank, up to Rank 10 or to receive 2 points per Rank up to a maximum of 20 points at Rank 10 for the disadvantage.

Medical i.e. illness– This disadvantage gives a character 3 points/Rank up to Rank 10. Unlike other disadvantages, each specific Rank has been attributed to a specific illness. If the player, however, wishes to take another illness which is not listed here, then the GM may give it a Rank and effect similar in severity to those listed here.

Rank Illness

–1 Psoriasis –This disease does not affect any stats but could affect the character's looks if they have the condition on their face (at the GM's discretion).

–2 Anaemia –This disease gives a –1 to the PHYS stat which means that the character is more likely to faint or go unconscious due to lack of red blood cells.

–3 Asthma –This condition gives a –1 to the PHYS and DEX stats. This also means that the character is on constant medication.

–4 Migraines –A character with this condition will have recurring migraines throughout playing time. When they do have one (this is up to the GM), they must take medication and take a –4 to their CONC stat for the duration of the migraine.–

–5 Albino –This condition gives the character white hair, pink or white eyes, thin blood and a loss in strength, –2 to STR. They find it difficult to stay warm and are very susceptible to glaring sunlight which will affect both their skin and eyes. Most of these symptoms should be left up to the GM as to the severity. The character also has to stay on medication to increase coagulation of the blood, especially in combat situations.

–6 Immunodeficiency –This illness means that the character is susceptible to various small illnesses e.g. influenza, colds etc. Most of these will tend to be illnesses that no longer affect the average person on Mort due to better health care systems. When playing a character with immunodeficiency, the character will receive a –2 to their general PHYS as well as a –1 to their STR stat whenever they catch a new illness (at the GM's discretion) when they have to take medication.

–7 Epilepsy –Having this disease means that the character is either on constant medication or will have regular fits, the severity of which is at the GM's discretion. These must be taken into consideration during playing time.

–8 Haemophilia –Having this disease means that any wounds or hits that the character may contract during combat will take twice the amount of time to heal. This means that any healing drugs, e.g. Kick Start, give the character half the normal amount of hit points back and that Ebons have to spend twice as much FLUX to heal the character. The character is also on constant medication.

–9 Parkinson's disease –This muscle–wasting disease gives a –2 to STR, DEX and PHYS. The character must also be on constant medication to control the condition.

–10 Multiple Sclerosis –This is a serious progressive disease of the nervous system where the character will receive a –3 to their DEX stat as well as a –1 to their PHYS and CONC. The character will deteriorate gradually over 5 years receiving a –1 to their DEX and PHYS every 6 months, until they die.

Note: All operatives are able to receive free medication as part of their employment contract. See the 'Operative Hours" chapter on Drugs.

DNA Tattoo, Good/Bad– A DNA tattoo is a permanent design on the body which has been tattooed onto the body and, will remain on the surface of the skin even if damaged (through an injection by Karma or by the use of the Ebon ability Enhancement). For example, if the character is shot in the vicinity of the tattoo, it will regrow to it's original form. A good tattoo is pleasing to the eye, and in the higher ranks will cause gasps of astonishment etc. This costs one point per Rank up to a maximum of 10. A bad tattoo indicates that it is a rough design and unprofessionally done or perhaps so grotesque it cannot be viewed without experiencing nausea. This will give the player 1 point per Rank up to a maximum of 10 Ranks.

Drug Addict– This disadvantage indicates that the character already has a drug addiction of some sort before joining the company. This may be a combat drug, soft drug, medical drug or a lesser drug like nicotine, caffeine etc., which the character has used previous to joining SLA Industries or during training. (See the 'Drugs' chapter.) Each Rank of this disadvantage will give the player 2 points to spend elsewhere.

MUNDANE

Financial: Savings/Debt– A character with this advantage or disadvantage will have 100¤ per Rank in savings or debt. This is either a personal debt, bank loan, cash savings or bank savings. The char-

acter either receives three points per Rank for the disadvantage or pays three points per Rank for the advantage.

Vehicle– This advantage can be bought at a cost of two points per Rank. The character will receive the vehicle stated below for each specific Rank and more details can be found in the 'Hardware' chapter of this volume. The use of the term 'own' is not strictly accurate with SLA vehicles. This means that the vehicle belongs to SLA but has been permanently leased to the character. Vehicles are usually obtained by 'buying', requisitioning or inheriting before the character begins as an operative so the character can choose any one of these reasons for having the vehicle. When the character leaves or is retired from SLA, then the vehicle goes back to it's rightful owner but until then, the character is responsible for it's repairs and maintenance. As far as civilian vehicles are concerned, it is completely owned by the character and repairs and maintenance must be carried out in either Suburbia or Downtown as spares are not available in SLA Industries.

Rank	Vehicle
+10	You own a SLA A.P.C. (disarmed)
+9	You own a SLA military jeep (disarmed)
+8	You own a large SLA car
+7	You own a SLA military motorcycle (disarmed)
+6	You own a large SLA motorcycle
+5	You own a small SLA car
+4	You own a small SLA motorcycle
+3	You own a large civilian motorcycle
+2	You own a small civilian motorcycle
+1	You have use of a parent/friend's car or motorcycle (civilian)

Housing: Good/Bad– The housing advantage is bought at a cost of 3 points/Rank up to a maximum of 10 Ranks. The disadvantage gives the character 3 points/Rank to spend elsewhere. The standard housing for an operative is explained later on in this chapter. See 'The Starting Operative–Housing and Equipment' in "Mort".RankSituation (All have separate kitchen and bathroom except where stated 'shared facilities')



10 Own lease for apartment on Mort (same as Rank 8) and own outright house off planet (same as Rank 6) or other way about.

9 Own lease for Uptown detached house – garden, garage, up to 3 bedrooms and living room

8 Own lease for Uptown apartment –up to 3 bedrooms, living room and dining room

7 Uptown detached house –garden, garage, up to 2 bedrooms and living room

6 Uptown (semi detached) house –garden or garage, 3 bedrooms and living room

5 Uptown (semi–detached) house –garden or garage, 2 bedrooms and living room

4 Uptown (semi–detached) house – 2 bedrooms and living room

3 Uptown apartment –3 bedrooms, living & dining room

2 Uptown apartment –2 bedrooms and living room

1 Uptown apartment –1 bedroom and separate living room

– Standard Uptown apartment –1 bed/living room

–1 Suburban apartment shared with one other operative

–2 Suburban bedsit –1 bedroom with shared facilities

–4 Living with parents in Suburbia

–3 Upper Downtown (semi–detached) house –1 bedroom/living room and small garden or garage

–5 Upper Downtown apartment –1 bedroom/ living room

–6 Upper Downtown bedsit

–7 Lower Downtown (semi–detached) house –1 bedroom/living room –8Lower Downtown apartment –1 bedroom/living room

–9 Lower Downtown bedsit –bedroom/living room with shared facilities

–10 On the street –homeless

All accommodation as well as gardens and garages in Upper and Lower Downtown is in a depreciated and rough state, this must be left up to the GM's discretion.Income: Wealthy/Poor– This advantage will give a character a 10₢/Rank income monthly at a cost of 2 points per Rank up to a maximum of 10 Ranks which can be for anything the player chooses e.g. shares, dividends, inheritance, bonds etc. The character can also choose to have a 10₢ a month per Rank outgoings which can be maintenance payments, direct debit etc. The player will receive 2 points per Rank up to a maximum of 10 Ranks.

General: Good/Bad– This allows a character to take an advantage at a cost of one point per Rank up to Rank 10 or to receive one point per Rank up to a maximum of 10 points at Rank 10 for the disadvantage. This general heading covers any mundane or financial advantages and disadvantages that have not already been covered here but may be specified by the player and agreed upon by the GM before game play.

Info: Good/Bad– The character will know of good or bad mundane or financial information which is either a hindrance –they are not supposed to know of it– or a help, it is beneficial to know about it. The advantage pays a dividend of one point per Rank up to Rank 10, the disadvantage gives the player one point per Rank up to Rank 10 for use with other skills or advantages. Use your imagination.

MENTAL

Cool: Exceedingly/Jelly– The character will receive a –1 or a +1 to their racial maximum COOL stat at a cost of five points for the advantage or, for the disadvantage, the character will receive 5 points. The COOL stat can only go one point above the racial maximum and this does not increase or decrease the actual stat but only the maximum or minimum. There are no Ranks in this advantage/ disadvantage.

Phobia– The character may choose up to three phobias from the list below or make up their own and receive the points for each. The Rank determines how much the phobia affects the everyday life of the character and they receive two points per Rank up to a maximum of ten Ranks. If the character encounters the object of their phobia, the GM rolls 2d10 and adds the rank of their phobia with 11+ meaning they will try to get away from whatever it is that gives them fear and 21+ meaning they are frozen for a time determined by the GM.

Agoraphobia –fear of open spaces
Algophobia –fear of pain
Altophobia –fear of heights
Aluirophobia –fear of cats
Androphobia –fear of men
Anthropophobia –fear of human beings
Asthenophobia –fear of weakness
Batrachophobia –fear of reptiles
Brontophobia –fear of thunder or loud noises

Chaetophobia –fear of hair
Claustrophobia –fear of enclosed spaces
Clinophobia –fear of going to bed
Coprophobia –fear of faeces
Cynophobia –fear of dogs
Demophobia –fear of crowds
Doraphobia –fear of fur
Eisoptrophobia –fear of mirrors
Eleutherophobia –fear of freedom
Entomophobia –fear of insects
Eremitophobia –fear of being alone
Erythrophobia –fear of blushing
Genophobia –fear of sex
Gymnophobia –fear of nudity
Gynophobia –fear of women
Haematophobia –fear of blood
Haptophobia –fear of being touched
Hodophobia –fear of travel
Hypegiaphobia –fear of responsibility
Hypnophobia –fear of sleep
Kakarrophiaphobia –fear of failure
Katagelophobia –fear of ridicule
Kinetophobia –fear of motion
Linonophobia –fear of string
Lyssophobia –fear of insanity
Mastigophobia –fear of flogging
Mysophobia –fear of dirt
Myxophobia –fear of slime
Necrophobia –fear of the dead
Nelophobia –fear of glass
Nyctophobia –fear of the dark
Odontophobia –fear of teeth
Ommetophobia –fear of eyes
Ophiophobia –fear of snakes
Panphobia –fear of everything
Peccatophobia –fear of sinning
Pharmocophobia –fear of drugs
Phonophobia –fear of speaking aloud
Photophobia –fear of strong light
Piscophobia –fear of fish
Poinephobia –fear of punishment
Pteronophobia –fear of feathers
Phobophobia –fear of being afraid (nasty...)
Sciophobia –fear of shadows
Selaphobia –fear of flashes
Sitophobia –fear of food
Tachophobia –fear of speed
Technophobia –fear of technology
Teratophobia –fear of 'monsters'
Thallasophobia –fear of the sea
Traumatophobia –fear of injury
Triskadecaphobia –fear of the number 13
Trypanophobia –fear of injections
Xenophobia –fear of the unknown

Any other phobias not listed here are usable at the GM's discretion.

Arrogant– This disadvantage means that the character is only slightly arrogant at times at the lower Ranks up to, at Rank 10, a completely conceited and pretentious person whom nearly everyone will dislike. For each Rank up to ten, the character will receive two points to spend everywhere.

General: Good/Bad– This allows a character to take any other advantage at a cost of one point per Rank up to Rank 10 or to receive one point per Rank up to a maximum of 10 points at Rank 10 for the disadvantage. This general heading covers any mental advantages and disadvantages that have not already been listed here but must be specified by the player and agreed upon by the GM before game play.

Psychoses– There are many different types of psychosis and the character may choose up to three from the list described below and receive the points for each. The character can only take up to a Rank 9 Psychosis and if it reaches Rank 10 during game time, then the player is no longer allowed to play the character and must hand it over to the GM as an non–player character (NPC). The character will receive 3 points for each Rank in psychoses to spend elsewhere.

Psychopathy –The character is prone to react to stress with violence and aggression. The Rank determines how severe the condition is and how irrationally the character reacts to a situation.

Sociopathy –This is a term used for a character who may seem normal but somehow is unable to fit into everyday life, for example, they may have little or no emotions but be very skilled at pretending that they have. People will regard sociopaths as especially dangerous if they ever find out. The Rank determines how sociopathic the character is and also how well the character can hide it with false emotions.

Delusions –A character with delusions believes in something that just isn't true. This must be specified and appropriate to the Rank taken.

Split Personality –The character's personality has fragmented into two or even multiple alternating personalities. These may or may not be aware of each other. The Rank determines how frequent they will alternate and the intensity of the change in personality.

Compulsions –The character is compelled to perform some type of behaviour –usually abnormal– frequently, for example, kleptomania is com-

pulsive stealing. The Rank determines how severe the compulsion is.

Paranoia –The character believes that everything and everyone is out to get them. They find it hard to trust even close friends. The Rank determines how intense the paranoia is,and how severely it affects the character's everyday life.

Perversion –The character gains pleasure from something that is generally regarded as socially unacceptable, for example, sadists get pleasure from other peoples pain. The Rank determines how severe the perversion is.

Schizophrenia –The character is affected by delusions, a breakdown in the relation between thoughts, feelings and actions as well as delusions and a retreat from normal social life. The Rank determines how severe the disease affects the character in everyday life.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL

Major: Friend/Enemy– For a cost of five points per Rank up to a maximum of ten Ranks, a major friend will help the character when in trouble, within reason, and go out of their way to do so– give information freely at higher Ranks, and ask for no favours in return especially when the friend chosen is a SLA operative. A major enemy will go out of their way to harm, cause trouble for, or even kill the character. A major friend/enemy is usually an important person or group of people e.g. the leader of a subversive group, a Shiver Unit commander, a departmental head, a Rival Company employee, etc. An enemy will hold a grudge forever and a friend will stay true. The character will also receive five points for each Rank of disadvantage up to Rank ten, and a major friend can be bought at a rate of five points per rank.

Minor: Friend/Enemy– A minor friend may help the character when in trouble if it is not too much hassle for them and will give out information, but probably ask for favours in return. A minor enemy will not go out of their way to cause trouble but will harm or hurt the character in some way if they are in close proximity to them or if it is not too much trouble. They will hold a grudge for a long period of time but it is possible to make it up to them. Each Rank of minor friend costs one point up to Rank 10 and the character will receive one point for each Rank up to Rank 10 of minor enemy to use elsewhere.

Luck: Good/Bad– This advantage is used by the GM during game time when a character may need a little extra help after failing a fatal skill roll. The disadvantage is also used by the GM to, for example, select a character to whom an accident is about to happen. The advantage is bought at a cost of four points per Rank up to a maximum of Rank 10. The character receives four points per Rank up to a maximum of 10 Ranks for the disadvantage. The Rank in luck is used like a skill roll by the GM only.

Dependant– If the character chooses a dependant, they must care for them or make arrangements for the care of them. They may also need to pay maintenance or arrange food and housing for them. This is at the GM's discretion once the player has chosen the Rank as below. This disadvantage gives the player one point per Rank up to a maximum of ten to use elsewhere. Shaktars may have more than one wife/husband.

Rank	Situation
–1	A pet
–2	A young relative who is unemployed
–3	A older relative who is infirm
–4	A parent who is bedridden
–5	A homeless younger sister/brother
–6	A wife/husband (unemployed)
–7	A child
–8	A husband/wife and child
–9	A husband/wife and children (two/three)
–10	A husband/wife and children (a few more) or Husbands/Wives and children (a few) depending on the cultural background of the character.

General: Good/Bad– This allows a character to take an advantage at a cost of one point per Rank up to Rank 10 or to receive one point per Rank up to a maximum of 10 points at Rank 10 for the disadvantage. This general heading covers any circumstantial advantages and disadvantages that have not already been covered here but must be specified by the player and agreed upon by the GM before game play.

SOCIAL

Pacifist– Depending on the Rank chosen, the character will either be reluctant to enter combat or will refuse point blank to enter any sort of fighting, even a bar room brawl. The Rank determines the severity of the condition. This disadvantage gives the player 2 points per Rank up to a maximum of Rank 10. When the character enters, or is about to enter, a combat situation, they must make a COOL roll minus their pacifist Rank to enter the situation calmly.

Reputation: Good/Bad– A good reputation indicates that the character will be recognised as a decent individual by a specified group, or in general. A bad reputation indicates that the character will be disliked or mistrusted by a specified group, or in general. These may not necessarily include friends but people who have heard of the character through others. The cost of a good reputation is 2 points per Rank up to Rank 10 and the character will receive, for a bad reputation, two points per Rank up to Rank 10.

General: Good/Bad– This allows a character an advantage or disadvantage not already listed. The nature of this is negotiable between the player and the GM. This costs t two points per Rank up to Rank 10 or, for the disadvantage, the player receives two points per Rank up to a maximum of 20 points at Rank 10 for the disadvantage. This general heading covers any social advantages and disadvantages that have not already been covered here but must be specified by the player and agreed upon by the GM before game play.

Chicken– A character who has 'chicken' as a disadvantage is both unwilling to enter combat situations as they are too scared and will be reluctant to enter into any situation which might frighten them. The Rank determines the intensity of the condition. A player who takes this disadvantage will receive two points per Rank and must roll on their COOL stat whenever they enter a scary situation with a modifier equal to their 'chicken' Rank.

HOBBY

Natural Aptitude– A natural aptitude advantage is the born ability to be able to perform any specific one of the normal (non–combat) or secondary skills– for example if a character has Computer Use Rank 6, they may also have Natural Aptitude Computer Use at Rank 8. If the character has to make a roll on their skill and fails, having the Natural Aptitude means that the character is able to make a second roll at the same Rank as their advantage or skill rank, which ever is lower, which, in the case of the example above, is 6. The character is able to have a higher Natural Aptitude Rank than their skill but is unable to use it at that Rank until their skill increases with experience. This costs 3 points per Rank up to Rank ten.

Simple: Good/Bad– A simple hobby is basically a lesser skill which is usually of no importance to game play but might be useful or just plain interesting to the character if taken as a disadvantage. It can be rolled as a skill if ever required. This costs one point per Rank for the advantage or the character receives one point per Rank for the disadvantage up to a maximum of ten Ranks either way.

QUICK REFERENCE TABLE	COST/RANK	MAX RANK
Looks: Handsome/Ugly	+1/–1	10/10
Ambidextrous	10	NONE
Vision: Good/Bad	+2/–2	10/10
Hearing: Good/Bad	+1/–1	10/10
Figure: Good/Bad	+1/–1	10/10
Speech: Good/Bad	+2/–2	1/1
Time keeper: Good/Bad	+1/–1	10/10
Sleeper: Good/Bad	+1/–1	10/10
Sterile	10	NONE
Allergy	0/–2	0/10
General: Good/Bad	+2/–2	10/10
Medical	0/–3	0/10
DNA Tattoo: Good/Bad	+1/–1	10/10
Drug Addict	0/–2	0/10
Housing: Good/Bad	+3/–3	10/10
Income: Good/Bad	+2/–2	10/10
Vehicle	+2/–2	10/10
Financial: Good/Bad	+3/–3	10/10
General: Good/Bad	+1/–1	10/10
Info: Good/Bad	+1/–1	10/10
Cool: Exceedingly/Jelly	+5/–5	1/1
Phobia	0/–2	0/10
Arrogant	0/–2	0/10
General: Good/Bad	+1/–1	10/10
Psychoses	0/–3	10/10
Major: Friend/Enemy	+5/–5	10/10
Minor: Friend/Enemy	+1/–1	10/10
Luck: Good/Bad	+4/–4	10/10
Dependant	0/–1	0/10
General: Good/Bad	+1/–1	10/10
Pacifist	0/–2	0/10
Reputation: Good/Bad	+2/–2	10/10
General: Good/Bad	+2/–2	10/10
Chicken	0/–2	0/10
Natural Aptitude	+3/0	10/0
Simple: Good/Bad	+1/–1	10/10

TRAINING PACKAGES

After having spent all the character generation points, the player gets to choose a training package. This is the field in which the character has been trained. The character gets bonus Ranks of skills in six fields of expertise. If the character already has the skill, then they get an extra Rank. If the character has no Rank in the skill, then they receive the ability at Rank 2. The package may be chosen at the beginning of character generation, and usually is, but the bonuses are not added until all the points are spent. The package may also be used to help the player with

the personality of their character and could feature heavily in their characters' background. Players may also discuss amongst their group which packages are to be taken, so as to provide a rich mix of characters in a squad. The ten training packages are as follows:–

Death Squad Package: The Death Squad Package trains and places the operative in an advanced and heavy assault form of combat. The Death Squads are trained to analyse the enemy and are usually equipped heavily with armour and equipment, as they are faced with the toughest, most brutal missions and often battle rival company operatives and agents who are as well armed as they are. In these squads, promotion comes fast if the operative can survive for long enough. There are usually one or two Death Squad trained operatives in a normal squad.

Auto/Support (PHYS)

Rifle (DEX)

Rival Company (KNOW)

Tactics (DIA)

Evaluate Opponent (KNOW)

Unarmed Combat (STR)

Kick Murder Squad Package: The Kick Murder Squad Package trains the operative in the form of assassination and espionage. The trainee operative learns Martial Arts and other forms of close combat. Their missions can vary widely from murdering an important company representative to the retrieval of a secret Rival Company map or weapon. Any mission or job that involves stealth and silence is given to the Kick Murder Squad.

Hide (DEX)

Sneaking (DEX)

Martial Arts (DEX)

Climb (PHYS)

Acrobatics (PHYS)

Any Close Combat Skill

Investigation and Interrogation Package: The Investigation and Interrogation Package trains the operative in undercover work. The operative learns rapidly how to root out traitors, analyze the structure of Rival Companies, extract information from captives, gain reliable sources and recover lost information– all aspects that are essential to their company's survival. This package is usually appropriate to Ebons whose goal is knowledge and loyalty. This is also the basic training for Shiver Unit troops.

Detect (CONC)

Rival Company (KNOW)

SLA Info (KNOW)

Streetwise (KNOW)

Interview (CHA)

Forensics (DIA)

Medical Package: The Medical Package is a very in–depth and specialized form of training and most companies find that an operative with these skills is an essential part of a squad, especially when there are no Ebons to compensate for the other operative's lack of medical skills. The operative's medical training includes Paramedic skills and Forensics as well as Pathology and Computer Use so that they are able to use the medical computer software available to them in SLA Industries.

Paramedic (DIA)

Medical Practice (KNOW)

Forensics (DIA)

Psychology (KNOW)

Pathology (KNOW)

Computer Use (DIA)

Mechanics Package: The Mechanics Package is similar to the Medical Package with respect to the amount of specialized training involved, and most squads with a vehicle of some sort find that an operative with a Mechanics training package is necessary for the upkeep of their vehicle, as it is usually a valuable asset to the squad. The Mechanics Package also includes training for the operative in Computer Use, Subterfuge and Electronics.

Mechanics Repair (KNOW)

Mechanics Industrial (DIA)

Electronics Repair (KNOW)

Electronics Industrial (DIA)

Computer Use (DIA)

Computer Subterfuge (KNOW)

Pilot and Navigation Package: The Pilot and Navigation Package trains the operative in all aspects of company transport. This involves learning how to drive and pilot the varying vehicle types, which range from small jeeps to the Line Mate tanks, from armed bikes to the heavily armed Kilcopter. The pilot is also given a knowledge of how to repair and analyse certain parts of damaged and non–functioning vehicles. The package includes training in navigation which comprises map–reading, a knowledge of navigational devices such as the Nava–map and land marks. An operative trained in this package is essen-

tial to a squad who frequently travel.

Pilot Military (KNOW)

Drive Military (CONC)

Drive Motorcycle (DEX)

Navigation (KNOW)

Auto/Support (PHYS)

Mechanics Repair (KNOW)

Business Package: This package is essential for any operative who wishes to climb the corporate ladder in the business side of SLA Industries or, alternatively, if a character wishes to become a combat financier for their squad. The training comprises of administration and financial skills as well as public speaking and diplomacy skills necessary for a corporate in the harsh environment of the corporate sector.

Business Administration (DIA)

Business Finance (CONC)

Diplomacy (CHA)

Communique (CHA)

SLA Info (KNOW)

Computer Use (DIA)

Strike Squad Package: The Strike Squad Package training is the basic Militia training for operatives. The operative is not trained in a specialized field but a selection of the basic skills needed to be an operative. A player can further specialize his/her character later on in generation if he or she so desires. The Strike Squad Package training provides a good basis for versatility in SLA Industries.

Drive Civilian (CONC)

Drive Military (CONC)

Pistol (DEX)

Rifle (DEX)

Paramedic (DIA)

Any Close Combat Skill

Scouting Package: An operative trained in the Scouting Package is necessary in most squads as their specialized skills are nearly always required. The streets of the cities in the World of Progress are as vast, and as complex, as the great jungles on the Natural Worlds. Scouts are necessary for both. Training includes the use of sniper skills as well as tracking.

Tracking (DIA)

Streetwise (KNOW)

Detect (CONC)

Running (PHYS)

Sneaking (DEX)

Rifle (DEX)

THE STARTING OPERATIVE – HOUSING AND EQUIPMENT

Operatives working for SLA Industries (i.e all PCs) start with 1500₢ (in addition to any money or debt from advantages) and a starting kit of equipment. This 1500₢ is to be spent on anything in the hardware section although characters may keep any change. Money in SLA Industries works in two currencies: The Credit (₢) and the UNI (¤). The Credit is a non-existent form of currency in so much as there is no such thing as a one credit note, all dealings in Credits are dealt with via a Finance card or a finance chip. A Credit is equal to ten UNI's –Universal Currency Unit.

THE UNIVERSAL CURRENCY SYSTEM: A BRIEF EXPLANATION

"Due to the size of Mort and it's dependants, it has been deemed necessary to introduce a single system of monetary organization. This will be in the form of the Universal Currency Unit, or the UNI for the purpose of ease of description. The UNI will be standard throughout the Known Universe to allow for complete integration of all provinces of Mort into a single market where the transaction of funds and/or goods will be held at a constant and steady level. This control will ensure the financial stability of all involved.

"Earlier monetary systems which attempted to use this type of currency governing failed for one reason. Communication between the various groups involved was too inadequate to support such a system, but under the watchful eye of SLA Industries the UNI will be a perfect example to all others that single currency systems can, and do, work.

"Employees of SLA Industries will feel the benefits of this system more than any others. Their position within the monetary–ruling body will offer them the opportunity to use the credit facilities of SLA Industries. These facilities, supported by the strong value of the UNI will give the employee a much greater income. These operatives are considered to be direct representatives of SLA Industries and, as such, are

paid accordingly in SLA Industries credits (credit notes). These credits are directly linked to the value of the UNI (10 UNI=1 CREDIT) and as such can be considered legal tender.

"The UNI will be, for everyone, an equal share in the World of Progress."

Finance Department, SLA Industries

004.SD. Ref: 6063 BCT.

The standard starting equipment that all operatives receive upon entering SLA Industries is as follows:–

Headset Communicator, Klippo Lighter, Pen, FEN 603 (See Hardware) and two clips of ammunition, a Blueprint News File case, an S.C.L. card, a Finance card or finance chip, a Package card and badge, a Departmental Authorization Card, two sets of clothes, one set of footwear, an operative organizer, a SLA badge, a Weapons Maintenance Kit, minor personal effects and a pack of contraceptives.

Upon starting work for SLA Industries, all operatives are given an induction bonus of 100₢ which is credited directly to their account. This bonus cannot be spent until the game has commenced.

Each operative also receives housing, when available, by SLA Industries when they first join the company. Unless you take the Housing advantage or disadvantage, this is usually a furnished one bedroom/living room apartment in Uptown Mort fitted with a kitchen and bathroom in a block which also has a communal garage, entry phone and security system. The apartment itself is owned by SLA Industries but each operative is responsible for paying the rent each month as well as any bills incurred. The apartment also contains a fax, telephone and television as well as washing facilities. Taking a Housing disadvantage basically means that the operative joined the company at an inopportune time and was housed elsewhere on Mort due to Uptown housing shortages e.g. a Downtown apartment. If the player chooses Homeless as a disadvantage, then this means that the character was placed at the bottom of the housing list upon entering the company and has insufficient funds to secure any accommodation. This also means that the character is unable to stay in a friend or fellow operative's accommodation due to their own financial position.

FINANCE CHIP

When a character first joins SLA Industries, they are given the option of being fitted with a finance chip. The Games Master may or may not play out the chip being fitted at the start of the gaming session. For more on this, see the 'Operative Hours' chapter, 'Finance Chip' section as well as Section 2.3 Finance –Chipped Operatives– in the Operative's Handbook. Ebons and Brain Wasters cannot have a finance chip fitted, as the flow of the Ebb in their body would cause the chip to be rejected from their body. When the character gets their chip fitted, they will see that within the periphery of their field of vision, they are able to see the time, their finance rating, the date, their SCL, their name and SLA security number. Any operative without a finance chip will receive a Finance Card instead.

HIT POINTS

How much physical damage a character can withstand before dying is very important in the World of Progress. The way this is dealt with is by hit points. Hit Points (or HITS) are worked out by adding the character's STR and PHYS stats together. This gives the total hit points a character has. The hit points that each location on the body can take are worked out as follows:

Head: Total Hits / 3, rounded up

Torso: Total Hits

Arms: Total Hits / 2, rounded down for each arm

Legs: Total Hits / 2, rounded up for each leg

See the section on 'Combat' for how hit points and healing work.

MOVEMENT

How fast a character may move is determined by two factors; their race (creed) and their running skill. Look up these on the table below and insert them into the appropriate place on the character sheet.

METERS PER PHASE

MOVE RATE	WALK	RUN	SPRINT	RUNNING SKILL
Human	1	2	3	+0.3
Frother	1	2	4	+0.3
Ebon	1	2	3	+0.3
Brain Waster	1	2	3	+0.3
Wraith Raider	2	4	6	+0.3
Shaktar	1	3	5	+0.3
Stormer 313	1	2.5	4	+0.3

ENCUMBRANCE (OPTIONAL)

The amount of weight a character may carry with no movement penalties is determined by the table below. These should be inserted on the Character Sheet in the spaces provided. The player should cross reference the character's STR stat with their race to determine the maximum weight allowable for nor-

mal movement (M), half (penalised) movement (PM) and no movement (NM). This table tells you how much a character may lift and carry in kilogrammes.

Race	M	PM	NM
Human	15+2xSTR	x2	x3
Frother	20+2xSTR	x2	x4
Ebon	13+2xSTR	x2	x3
Brain Waster	18+2xSTR	x2	x4
Wraith Raider	15+2xSTR	x2	x3
Shaktar	23+2xSTR	x2	x4
Stormer 313	25+3xSTR	x3	x6

Normal Movement is the amount of weight they may carry with no movement penalties, Half movement is when the weight slows the walk, run and sprint speeds to half and no movement is the amount a character may carry but without being able to move.

PHYSICAL BUILD

A character's height and weight can be chosen from between the maximum and minimums from the tables below, taking into account any stats and advantages and disadvantages that may affect it i.e, a character with a STR 3, DEX 2 will only be 1.90m, 120kg if they are overweight as in the Bad Figure disadvantage and a character of STR 9 and DEX 8 would not be likely to be 1.55m, 44.5kg.

A player has freedom to decide on eye colour, hair colour and style, and complexion –within racial limitations– keeping advantages and disadvantages in mind.

Height Table

RACE	MINIMUM	AVERAGE	MAXIMUM
Human	1.55m	1.75m	1.95m
Frother	1.55m	1.80m	1.95m
Ebon	1.55m	1.80m	1.95m
Brain Waster	1.55m	1.95m	2.10m
Wraith Raider	1.80m	1.95m	2.10m
Shaktar	2.10m	2.40m	2.60m
Stormer 313	2.10m	2.40m	2.60m

Weight Table

RACE	MINIMUM	AVERAGE	MAXIMUM
Human	55.5kg	65.5kg	75.5kg
Frother	55.5kg	68.0kg	75.5kg
Ebon	55.5kg	68.0kg	75.5kg
Brain Waster	55.5kg	75.5kg	83.0kg
Wraith Raider	68.0kg	75.5kg	83.0kg
Shaktar	83.0kg	98.0kg	108.0kg
Stormer 313	83.0kg	98.0kg	108.0kg

Players who take over/under height or over/under weight in Advantages and Disadvantages may go above or below the norm for their race.

ROUNDING OFF YOUR CHARACTER

Once all the character generation points have been spent and the character sheet has been filled in, the player must breathe life into their statistics. A name must be chosen and written on the SCL card. Equally important is the character's background and personality which must be decided upon. Experienced role players will have few problems at this stage but for the less experienced, here are a few suggestions: Think how advantages and disadvantages would affect the character, think on the statistics and how they could effect the character, i.e. a character with STR 3, DEX 2, DIA 9, CONC 8 would hardly have spent their youth surviving by their fists and more likely would have used their intelligence to guide them through their earlier years. Skills should also play a large part in the background, as a character brought up in a poor family would hardly have encountered super computers in a home environment. They are much more likely to have got Computer Use Rank 6 through an educational establishment or such like. Keeping common sense to hand will always be useful in deciding upon a personality and background for your character.



SLA OPERATIVE SECURITY CLEARANCE CARD

NAME

CLASSIFICATION

PACKAGE

SQUAD

DEPT

SCL

STRENGTH	
DEXTERITY	
DIAGNOSE	
CONCENTRATION	
CHARISMA	
PHYSIQUE	
KNOWLEDGE	
COOL	

MOVE RATE

WALK
RUN
SPRINT

ENCUMBRANCE

MOVEMENT
HALF MOVEMENT
NO MOVEMENT

LIFT
THROW

WEAPON	SIZE	PEN	DMG	AD	ROF	CLIP	CAL	RCL

AMMUNITION

HIT POINTS **ARMOUR**

		PV	ID
TOTAL			
HEAD	–	–	
TORSO	–	–	
L.ARM	–	–	
R.ARM	–	–	
L.LEG	–	–	
R.LEG	–	–	
WOUNDS	○○○○○○○○○○		

HEAD:1/3 (UP) TORSO:1/1 ARMS:1/2 (DOWN) LEGS:1/2 (UP)

NATURAL WEAPONS	PEN	DMG	AD

DRUGS	TYPE	DRUG USAGE

WEAPON NOTES

INITIATIVE PHASE
1 2 3 4 5

DAMAGE BONUS

SKILL	RANK	STAT	MAX RANK

HUMAN

QUOTE: "You ask me what I'm doing in SLA Industries. Huh, what? Just because I'm not a red monster or a psycho Ebon type thing, you think I'm just some sort of inferior weakling! Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you– but look around. The human race is everywhere, you guys would be lost without the benefits of 'mankind'. We're here on Mort– look down any street and see how many more humans there are compared to all the other God–like species SLA hires.

I mean you turn on the television and it's almost always human presenters and reporters. And do you know why that is? It's because we're not as ugly, thick or just plain emotionally messed up as the rest of the races in the World of Progress."

INSIGHT: You were born in the backstreets of Mort, so when it came to the unseen laws of the urbanite, if you didn't know it, it wasn't worth knowing. You grew up around seedy slums, doused with filthy corruption. If anything went wrong or weird in Mort Central, it slipped down your street. You were raised amongst madmen and monsters– some working for SLA Industries, some against.

Either way, you knew SLA was for you. There is no exaltation, no pride or honour for you or your race. The humble classes of mankind are weak and stupid, the people of Downtown walk quietly beneath the shadows of Ebons and Stormers– your race is the underclass and you know it. It was your own fault for not evolving when you had the chance. However, you have found the bodies of nosey Ebons dumped under the Downtown walkways, Brain Wasters quietly tucked away in insane asylums, Shaktars and Stormers alike torn apart by horrific creations of industrial mutation and exhumed Wraith Raiders who just couldn't take the heat. You know no race is perfect.

Some say the human race is upstaged, but this is no time for crocodile tears and self pity. The human mind is versatile and adaptable to the rigours that progress demands. You knew the Stormers could kill you with a punch, but if brains were dynamite, they wouldn't have enough to blow themselves up. You stood by and watched the Ebon's sanity crumble under the pressure of their so–called 'great power'.

To see the both sides of the human race is to be human, and your subtle understanding of life's infinite scope, variety and selection makes you worth as much, if not more than, any other breed of operative SLA hires.

Your race was born with the gift of choice.

BACKGROUND: The sheer versatility of the human race makes it more significant than any other race or species hired by SLA. They are not typecast by any mental or emotional difficulties in the ways that other operatives are, although humans have a much wider emotional range from person to person.

In this respect, it is very difficult to judge and evaluate an individual human. The human mind is a very complex and diverse product of nature, sometimes it can take years to analyse and study one particular mind. What is known about the majority of the human race is its ability to influence and manipulate others, especially those of their own kind.

SLA Industries' television network eagerly employs humans for the entertainments industry. Most of the human race have an active (sometimes over–active) imagination that never seems to cease in its technicolour output of ideas and imaginary concepts.

Mort and the World of Progress both have a high proportion of humans to other races. Humans are found mainly on Industrial Worlds. To them, the urban environments of Mort are home. Most humans have great difficulty in adjusting to new and different societies and environments, unlike the Shaktars and Wraith Raider races.

Humans have also made worthy employees in SLA Industries. Many modest humans find work and careers as Shiver Unit Police, Corporate lackeys, Karma scientists etc– whilst out on the street the independent Monarch Law Enforcement Agency is completely manned by humans.

Despite the human mind's sophistication and variety, they have a tendency to ignore principles, a large percentage are selfish and ignorant. They are often easily manipulated and misguided. Humans can potentially be as emotionally disturbed and disordered as the Ebons and Brain Wasters. However the human's problem is not often caused by interbreeding, as is the Brain Wasters. The majority of Downtown's serial killers are humans since feelings of inadequacy within mankind abound, especially in the face of other species. Humans have a terrible addiction that breeds insanity and manipulation –television– the drug that shapes and moulds an ever growing and expanding race.

APPEARANCE: The overall appearance of humans varies enormously from person to person, in a similar respect to Ebons and Brain Wasters.

Both mentally and physically, humans differ drastically from one another. In height they can range from around 1.55m to 1.95m tall. Humans come in all shapes and sizes, short and fat, tall and thin, however, SLA Industries' rigorous training usually trims and shapes up the human physique.

Human complexions are equally diverse, men and women are commonly white, black, brown and yellow. Like the Wraith Raider, human skin changes in

shade and tone due to the climate and weather (a tendency to 'tan' in warm temperatures although skin has to be exposed to sunlight).

The human hide, however, is not as resilient as that of the Stormers and Shaktars, nor are humans as naturally fit as the Wraith Raider species. This is mainly due to the urban environments that humans inhabit.

Mankind also have differing eye and hair colour. The human eye has a developed pupil and an iris that is usually blue, brown, green or grey that reacts heavily in a sudden change in light.

INTERACTION:

Humans on;

Frothers: "People confuse us humans with Frothers, yes, we are both a part of mankind, but there are a few subtle differences. One being that Frothers only last for about two years of being an operative, max., but hey, that's drugs for you."

Ebons: "Yeah, the Ebons are alright. They are so intelligent and provocative. I wish our species could express ourselves so naturally as they can. On the other hand, I don't think we're below them, after all, we don't turn into monsters."

Brain Wasters: "What happened to the Ebon race, huh? Why did they have to evolve Brain Wasters? The Brain Wasters make our society even more corrupt than it already is."

Stormers: "I've never been sure of Stormers. I'm not sure, there's just something wrong with them, even although they're out there everyday on the street. It's just something... unnerving."

Shaktars: "They are amazing creatures with so much control. So stable in society yet so unstable in combat."

Wraith Raiders: "Wraith Raiders are very quiet creatures, aren't they? So modest, yet so deadly, their great speed is truly unmatched."

BASE SKILLS: Literacy (KNOW) Rank 1, Detect (CONC) Rank 1, SLA Info (KNOW) Rank 2, Rival Company (KNOW) Rank 1, Streetwise (KNOW) Rank 2, Unarmed combat (STR) Rank 1.



FROTHER

QUOTE: "Regrets! Are you kiddin'? I love bein' a Frother, and all the drugs that go with it. Man, I was born with the puncture wounds right there on my arm... see? Yeah, you just wouldn't believes the kick I get outta combat. It's great man, you feel all the adrenaline startin' to flow, your frothin' glands kick in, ya shoot up your poison, you feel the rush and then it's bye bye Mr. Sanity. I mean, once it's in, your out man– until someone goes down. All you can see is this kinda like, red haze and your 'clan dreads' flickin' about your face and the sonovabitch goin' down under your claymore, yeah! By the time, you're finished with the last 'hard case' you're up to your knees in 'em. The rush, man, there ain't nothin' like it."

INSIGHT: Out there on the streets of Downtown, you've seen the slime and sleaze, you've the tension and boredom of the lower classes. To you, there was only one form of escape, one short and safe route to bliss. When it came to happiness, you knew where to look, when the time came to feed your addiction, your poison. Sometimes it was pleasure and paradise, other times it was protection and power, you had even tried a few drug cocktails in your time. Either way, it got you by in Downtown like nothing else could. Some people were stupid enough to call you a 'junkie', but it was so much more to you, You were a connoisseur. You knew the good from the bad, the strong from the weak, the pleasure drug from the combat drug. You weren't just a plain, old 'drug addict', they would shoot up with window cleaner if it would give them a kick. No, with you, it was different, you were a better judge than that. You would only inject the best, the specific drug for the desired effect. The problem was the cost and your needs were expensive to say the least, especially on the black market. As money got tight, you turned to theft and robbery. Then, finally, the Monarch Police caught you during a raid. You knew what this meant, life imprisonment or the death penalty, but just before you gave up all hope and 'cold turkey' began, a corporate from SLA Industries appeared with the money and authority to pull you out. The guy in the black suit came to your cell and made you an offer, you could either rot in your cell and die or join SLA Industries, become a Frother and have legal access to the best soft and hard company drugs in the world of Progress. As the corporate left you to make your decision, you suddenly realised that prison cell grey wasn't really your shade.

BACKGROUND: The Frother operative is a 'combat drug junkie' in the simplest terms. He is an expert in the application of soft and hard drugs. Frothers live a wild life of chemical madness, they live for their addiction and most have gone all the way to 'Ultra Violence', SLA Industries' most powerful and self destructive combat drug ever created.

Drugs make the Frother what they are, the lethal narcotics affect their minds and bodies to an equal extent. Frothers are basically humans who have joined SLA Industries due to their drug addiction. Most are initially delinquents and gang members from Downtown areas, all aging between 16–20 years old, all in desperate need of help. The drugs in SLA Industries and the World of Progress are very addictive, most youths start out in control of their habit and the more they 'shoot up', the more fixated they become. As always, sooner or later the money will run out since nobody beyond even Suburbia can afford to feed their expensive habits, so the addicts join SLA Industries simply to survive.

SLA Industries watches the Downtown/Suburbia regions as closely as possible. Internals are everywhere– analysing the drug pushers and their chemical progress, considering the individuals with mental and physical potentials for becoming Frother operatives.

Frothers are one of the few classes that SLA Industries actively headhunts– a large percentage of Frother operatives are brought to SLA through unfortunate circumstances.

On the other hand, there are some Frothers who were born into the position. Over the centuries, Frothers have slowly become a breed unto themselves. The young Frothers are born with enhanced strength and physique due to their parents, and their grandparents daily consumption of company narcotics. These Frothers were born for the drug experience.

Due to this unnatural upbringing, many Frother families have grown into proper clans. The rule of the drug has become a tradition, a birthright. The Clan Frothers carry Power Claymores as a symbol of their family, their parents who nurtured them in the World of Progress with chemical love.

APPEARANCE: The name 'Frother' is derived from the operative's tendency to salivate and drool like rabid dogs while under the influence of company drugs like Rush and Ultra Violence.

Most Frothers hired by SLA Industries are very combat orientated, tending to opt for hand–to–hand weapons like Power Claymores, which were designed and created specifically for the Frothers' use. The Frothers are a very physical breed of human, similar in many respect to ancient berserkers. Frothers tend to go insane in combat, charging in and lashing out with their two–handed swords. They seem to know no fear in battle.

Frothers take a lot of inspiration from ancient costume and traditions, draping their armour with

decorative tartans and kilts, their overall appearance can be quite unique. The typical Frother is a visual 'Trouble Beacon' since they mash their long straggly hair into shocking sticky dreadlocks with thick, bright and colourful paints. this makes the Frother look mean, aggressive and not just a little insane. For them, there is no point to camouflage, and the television viewers of Mort's masses love them. The drug addict cares not who sees him. The Frother has to make a visual and physical impact before the drugs wear off, or he dies.

The overall sight of such crusty, colourful and kilted maniacs, foaming profusely at the mouth and charging insanely at the enemy with nothing but a sword and a war cry is disturbing to say the least.

The typical Frother is tall, well–built (more so than the normal human) and obviously physically enhanced by the drugs, yet, there are some who are Frothers in the loosest terms, taking no part in kilts and clans, they are simply operative drug pushers.

INTERACTION:

Frothers on;

Humans: "What do you think of humans? I am a human! We've just changed, y'know, what with all the drugs and stuff. Its just that Frothers don't usually go in for all that investigatin' and business lifestyle."

Ebons: "Nah, they're too damn mellow for their own good and the fact that everythin' in life's got a meanin' to Ebons, it's all crap, they should just take some of our stuff and just get plain mean."

Brain Wasters: "Aw, jeez, I hate Brain Wasters, they're nothin' man. All they got goin' for them is that they got real big mouths. It's really funny though when their flux runs out, they ain't so big and hard then."

Shaktars: "Now, they're cool. They are seriously hard dudes with great hair. I love all that honour they've got goin' for them an' stuff. People oughtta be more like the Shaktars. There just ain't enough pride for yer race in the World of Progress."

Stormers: "I think they're kinda like weird mixtures o' us and the Shaktars. Big, fulla teeth and drool lots. Yeah, I just wish I could regenerate like them, they're kinda cool."

Wraith Raiders: "The chilly dudes? I'm not sure, they're too sneaky and fast. They're okay kinda guys an' all but there's just too many damn Wraith Raider snipers y'know. Takes all the fun outta fightin'."

Base Skills: Detect (CONC) Rank 1, SLA Info (KNOW) Rank 1, Rival Company (KNOW) Rank 1, Streetwise (KNOW) Rank 2, Unarmed Combat (STR) Rank 1, Blade 2–H (STR) Rank 2.



EBON

QUOTE:– "Do not be fooled by the harsh temperament of our brutal cousins, the Brain Wasters. We are not the same, we follow the teachings of Intruder. We live by our feelings and we are blessed with the power of Ebb. This precious gift gives purpose to our lives. In the World of Progress all thrive for advancement and the Ebon race is no different. We search for knowledge and learning is the source of our advancement. In the ruthless regime of SLA Industries, the truth and all it's enlightening secrets wait for the gifted to uncover the great knowledge written in the form of Glyphs."

INSIGHT:– You have grown up in a world of inspiration and imagination. From the day of your birth, your Ebon parents have taught you to express your emotions. You are an Ebon and you have a gift, it is the power of Ebb, the essence of your race. You are not like your aggressive and selfish kin, the Brain Wasters. It is not brutality, savagery or suppression that lead to power. To you, the course of wisdom is a spiritual and deeply symbolic path of learning, truth and understanding. On the shady back streets of Mort lie Glyph cards scattered like the remnants of a dead society. These objects of desire are alluring but illegal and to join SLA Industries is justice and advancement personified. In SLA Industries, you will be trained to your full potential at the Institute of Ebb, a Meny Training facility, and receive your Science Friction DeathSuit that will slowly and lovingly become part of you, just as you will become part of SLA Industries and its Ebon family. The society within SLA Industries also accommodates the father of the Ebon race, Intruder. You are drawn to him as if he were a long lost brother to you. Intruder is your guide and one day you may have his potential but until then, you must live up to the expectations of the Preceptor Teeth, a harsh and unforgiving Necanthrope. Between the two Ebon races, your breed is the more reluctant to turn and the Necanthropes watch you very closely as if you are not the only one with thoughts on your future.

BACKGROUND:– The vast majority of the Ebon race are good natured, well mannered and polite as if it had been born to them. They are raised to progress and advance to their full capabilities. An Ebon will never stop the search for knowledge and enlightenment. It is their driving, force and the reason for their existence.

The typical Ebon is poetic, inquisitive, tragic and impulsive and everything that happens in their life is symbolic, all circumstances have meaning and reason. Most Ebons are strong believers in fate and destiny.

If an Ebon, for example, sees a small boy fall over in a rainy street, they will relate to the boy and the scene. The street represents the Ebon's life and the injured boy is like the Ebon, who feels for the child's pain and sorrow. The Ebon is a fallen infant in the watery streets of Mort and the constant rain signifies the intervention of Necanthropes in the Ebon's mind, the icy drizzle makes the wound sting. The injury symbolises the Ebon's vulnerable nature which the cold salty rain of Necanthrope Society will always find and seep into. This emotional and often traumatic train of thought rules and controls the Ebon's life, they live for meaning and even social circumstances are clues to progression, experience is a source of divine wisdom.

Ebons live by their feelings and, as a result, they are an extremely emotional and highly strung race. Each Ebon is a mood, incarnate. Many base their existence around a particular emotion, some even name themselves after them. The broad difference and variation of feelings and outlooks create vast dividing lines between the race– yet they can all be recognised for one thing, and that is the intensity of whatever emotion they embody.

The manipulation and understanding of Ebb is as important to the Ebon race as the philosophy and symbolism of their lives. Ebb abilities and talents enhance the Ebon's capabilities, mentally and physically. An Ebon will explore the various elements contained in Ebb, in order to gain experience and therefore advance.

Life and its meaning is all just one big puzzle, one which the Ebon will devote all their time to solving, at any cost. All the clues in the whole of the World of Progress can be tied down to SLA Industries.

To an Ebon, SLA Industries is a gargantuan library full of ground breaking secrets, hidden from operatives and the public alike. within these extracts of truth are power and progress, but with such great benefits can come great hazards. Extracts of truth hold poison too and many Ebons have died before their time through nothing more than their inquisitive nature, strangled by the hands of Internal Affairs and Cloak Division.

Ebons must advance through knowledge. They must do so with caution, stealth and eternal patience.

APPEARANCE:– To be standing in the company of an Ebon should be like standing in the presence of an angel, and even without the Illumination talent, they still seem to stand out in a crowd and shine. Ebons are a blaze of bright and vibrant colours with a rich impact, yet as subtle and intricate as the delicate personalities and outlooks they personify. Is is actually very rare to see an Ebon with normal skin tones and hair like browns or blondes. Abnormal is normal for an Ebon. They may sport pillar box red, sky blue

and ultra violet hair together with egg white, pastel pink and electric blue eyes devoid of irises or pupils. An Ebon's skin tones are about the only resemblance they bear to their cousins, the Brain Wasters. A pale, gaunt complexion is common with both Ebon races, although the normal Ebon's skin is refined rather than unhealthy. Male Ebons have very little body hair unlike the Brain Wasters who always seem to have a five o' clock shadow even after they have shaved. Female Ebons have a complexion most human females would kill for. Their skin is soft, smooth and unblemished without make-up.

An Ebon's appearance is their emblem or insignia–their ornate and finely detailed DeathSuits always correspond with their wearer's body. Some say that the Ebon DeathSuit has a style and sophistication all of its own. Never has mass-produced clothing been so supremely individual.

Names are very important to Ebons, whatever they are called or known as is important to their lifestyle--hence, names like Pastel, Swan, Geist, Crystal, Shine and Chapel are common while Brain Wasters have aggressive names like Beast, Heretic, Ministry and Spider.

INTERACTION:

Ebons on;

Humans: "The humans are to be admired for their influential and inspiring nature. It is a shame that the human race chose a different path of evolution to us. Our species is so close both in mind and body."

Frothers: "Like the Brain Wasters are a shameful part of our race, the Frothers are of the humans. They are loud and ignorant, a truly obnoxious breed with the foolish audacity to destroy their own bodies and minds for fun."

Brain Wasters: "We grieve that we are related to the Brain Wasters. They disgrace our kind with their destructive tendencies and brutal temperament. We take no responsibility for the Brain Waster philosophy."

Stormers: "The Stormers try so hard to fit into society, to understand moral values and emotional reasoning. I act upon the kindness of my race and intend to give the Stormers all the help they need in order to become people rather than the monsters they are condemned as."

Shaktars: "Although their appearance is dark and forbidding, the Shaktars are an honourable and noble race that all should take as an example."

Wraith Raiders: "The Wraith Raiders are a strange and slender race that hold much mystery and so much insight. There is great cunning and instinct behind their cold, blood red eyes. They are here to be favoured and feared."

Base Skills: Literacy (KNOW) Rank 1, Detect (CONC) Rank 1, Rival Company (KNOW) Rank 1, SLA Info (KNOW) Rank 2, Communique (CHA) Rank 2, Persuasion (CHA) Rank 1.



BRAIN WASTER

QUOTE: "Hey, you starin' at me. Well, if you are, you'd better be kneeling. You see these eyes, huh? Yeah, pretty aren't they, these are Brain Waster eyes. I'm a Brain Waster, an' don't you forget it 'cause i'm the best of my race an' don't any of those girlie Ebons tell you otherwise. Always goin' on about how god-damn provocative they are, well we were here first. Brain Wasters are intense, were so goddamn intense our eyes are charred. There's nothin' as powerful as us, nothin' as violent either, that's why were favoured, see? By the Necanthropes, our elders, I'm gonna be one someday. . . Hey, why I'm talking to you, inferior! I'm gonna take you apart you sonovabitch !"

INSIGHT: The day you were born, your parents feared and hated you, they saw your eyes, black and charred, even then they knew you would grow to become a Brain Waster. When you were six, your parents tried to reform you by giving you a pet kitten, you killed it. There wasn't much left to dispose of, just a charred skeleton. Then, at ten years' old, there was school, a period of your life where playground friends were in distinct shortage due to your asocial nature. No one ever understood you and the violence building up inside you. Bullies were never a problem to you– if anything you were the bully. You thrived on your supremacy, your power, even then you knew you you were one of the chosen. Your purpose was to rise up from your inferiors, quench your thirst for power and join SLA Industries. Once inside the power structure, you would follow the dark and sacred path of the preceptor and become a Necanthrope, the final and most powerful stage of Ebon being. Food, rest, love and compassion are of little consequence and nourishment to you. Power is your need so you must progress through beating and abusing others with the force of your Ebb, your joy of destruction. You are no longer a child, now you are a Brain Waster, and no one must ever ignore you again.

BACKGROUND: In nature, Brain Wasters are asocial and arrogant to some degree, most have a superiority complex especially towards those lack the power of Ebb such as humans, who the Brain Wasters regard as the lesser race, in most cases. There is also much social discomfort between Brain Wasters and the Ebons. The reasons for this animosity are wide and varied, Brain Wasters despise the Ebons temperament most, as well as their emphasis on expressing their feelings.

Brain Wasters express themselves too, but their output is a great deal more savage. A Brain Waster's emotions are unstable, aggressive and violent if given reason, hence a large majority of the Brain Waster population are extroverted as they hate to be ignored or taken for granted. A Brain Waster has to be the centre of attraction.

Another reason for hatred of the Ebon race is their stable temperament and to that extent their stability towards matters that the Brain Waster cannot control. He is naturally unstable and will more often than not seek aggression and violence as an answer to regular problems.

Physically, Brain Wasters are as dishevelled as they are mentally, they suffer an unpleasantly high metabolism. This physical disorder means the Brain Waster will have to eat and sleep more than the usual to sustain themselves, which makes the Brain Wasters even more irritable and antisocial. This ailment is caused through interbreeding and is something that cannot be extracted from the Brain Waster race. They are naturally hyperactive.

Despite their dislike for the Ebons, Brain Wasters are very proud of what they are and their ability to use the power of Ebb.

In this respect the two races are akin, although Brain Wasters tend to burn their flux upon purely forceful and destructive areas of Ebb abilities. Brain Wasters are basically Ebon Warriors who use their flux to invoke fear, respect and recognition in order to receive power control and advancement in a way far from ebon philosophy.

Brain Wasters survey most other races with contempt, and regard them as inferior due to their lack of Ebb ability and their need for order, honour and compassion. Some have said that rather than contempt for others, it is more likely to be a deep and disguised form of jealousy. A Brain Wasters inability to accept that they are tearing their own minds apart for power, to the great pleasure of the Necanthropes, whose needs are always all–consuming.

APPEARANCE: In appearance, Brain Wasters are usually tall, well built and oppressive looking characters. Their hair is mostly long, wild and insane, jet black and other dark tones. They are unshaven and somewhat unkempt. Like Ebons their complexion is pale and often undernourished thanks to their high metabolism. However one true redeeming feature of the Brain Waster which separates him from all other races is his eyes, they are strange and unnerving, charred black around the eyelids with pure white and red eyes to looking luminous and shocking. This burnt flesh pattern around the eyes is something the Brain Waster is born with that allows him or her to be recognised as an individual.

The visual impact is intensified by the clothes chosen by the Brain Waster to enhance their forbidding nature– such as bikers' leathers and boots. Any variation on this aggressive theme usually retains the familiar black colour scheme.

Brain Wasters often increase their Protect area of learning in order to upgrade their DeathSuit so as they may receive all its physical advantages and to channel its flux to create a sinister and skeletal formation on the armour.

Although the Brain Waster has a great concern for his appearance, he often neglects respectability and hygiene in order to provoke fear and dislike in others.

It is also noted that even in a good mood a Brain Waster always seems to frown.

INTERACTION:

Brain Wasters on;

Humans: "They're weak, stupid and powerless but what do you expect from the lesser race. We left them behind centuries ago. They kind of went stale and stagnant in the wake of progress."

Ebons: "Look, don't even talk to me about Ebons. They are patheticly weak and emotionally retarded. Ebons let feelings drag them down, while we are free and nothing can stop us. Nothing."

Frothers: "You mean the Junkies–in–Skirts? Hah, what a sad collection of droolers. These guys couldn't control their bladders let alone their salivary glands."

Shaktars: "Wow! Now, they're hard. Big red crazy aliens who are into all that loyalty an' honour stuff. They're pretty weird guys. Fast as hell, too."

Stormers: "Nah. We don't hassle the Stormers, much. They ain't just big. If you mow them down, they just get back up, real quick. Stormers are all teeth and claws. You just don't want to see these guys get mad, they make Frothers look like school girls."

Wraith Raiders: "Heh, heh, the call of the wild. Aww, the Wraith Raiders are, like, dead cute. Kinda like big teddy bears that go for your fridge at a party.

Base Skills: Intimidate (DIA) Rank 2, Unarmed Combat (STR) Rank 2, Streetwise (KNOW) Rank 1, Literacy (KNOW) Rank 1, Detect (CONC) Rank 1, SLA Info (KNOW) Rank 1.



STORMER

QUOTE: "I work for SLA Industries. They made me. Karma, I mean, yeah, Biogenetics, that is what I am made of. Strong stuff, I am strong, my teeth and claws are sharp, they cut people in half. I am not mad, I only kill when I am told to. I want to be as good as Taarnish, the first Stormer. He is smart, smaller than me, I mean. People think we are like Shaktars, we are not. When we are shot, we rege... we get better, with out help. I talk to people, I like people, but not Brain Wasters. At the Pit, they call me a 'gun–head', I am not a gun–head. I carry my gun in my hand."

INSIGHT: You were never born, you were created. Your first waking memory was the tank, it was like a deep red haze. Outside the thick glass, you could see the scientists milling around, stepping over coils of tubes and pipes leading back to your tank and others. On either side of your womb–like container, Stormers in biogenetic vessels float, curled into the foetal position in the slumber which you have just awakened from. As you fully regain consciousness, the tubes inserted into your body disconnect and float away. Slowly, you rise to the surface of the tank, and the bright light hits you for the first time. As you climb out of the tank, the scientists take notice and come to your aid. One hoses you down as you are naked and dripping with liquid protein from the bio–tank. In this laboratory, there are four hundred tanks, containing Stormers in varying stages of development. You are finished, complete. On your forearm, you notice a DNA bar code with the numbers '313' tattooed onto your steel–like muscles. The bio–scientists that bustle around you are a good few feet shorter than you and a great deal weaker. Instinctively, you know that with one punch or claw, you could kill one of them. Instantly, you know where to hit them, as if it were second nature. They tell you that you are a product of SLA Industries, Karma Biogenetics, a Stormer designed to destroy Company Rivals and other minorities that threaten your creators.

BACKGROUND: The Stormer project was one of the main reasons for SLA Industries success. The concept was brought to Mr. Slayer by Senti 900 years ago. At the beginning of Biogenetics production, Intruder's mind was used as a test subject so that Karma (SLA Industries' Biogenetics Division) could graft his feelings and emotions, the essence of his being onto the DNA strands which would make up the first Stormers.

The very first production model looked exactly like him, though it was a dangerous and emotionless replica of Intruder called Angel (who nowadays works for SLA Industries' 'Black Chapter'). The second design produced Taarnish, the 313 Stormer original we all know today. The 313 'Malice' mould is still in use. It has remained the most reliable and popular model produced around the World of Progress. A tribute to the awesome capabilities and advancements of Karma Biogenetics. Like the Ebon race, Stormers see Intruder as a sort of father figure since they are all based on his memories, gut feelings and raw emotions. Taarnish is also held in high regard. He himself is a member of the 'Black Chapter' although he despises Angel and regards him as a pale imitation of the real person that Taarnish has known for so long. The feelings are reciprocal, Angel hates Taarnish also, for he is very intelligent and keeps Intruder from the slippery well of insanity.

Like Taarnish, all Stormers are large, strong and powerfully built creatures. Their bones are as tough as steel, their muscles and body tissue can regenerate without any medical aid or Ebon Healing necessary.

Originally the Stormers were created for the sole purpose of combat– however the World of Progress has evolved since the extinction of the Conflict Societies. In todays' more sophisticated environment, particularly on Industrial Worlds, the Stormers' roles are more humane and civilised.

The public who live in the World of Progress have been raised in the presence of Stormers. They see the Stormer more as a protector rather than a monster. People see them everyday doing normal, everyday things. Stormers are not of human intelligence, though they are smart enough to take BPNs, be generally sociable and act as respectable operatives for SLA Industries should. Stormers are not monsters, they are genetically created for combat and defending the company. When in social circumstances, the Stormers will act as normally as they can (maybe slightly aggressive, they will get nasty if you call them stupid) and will visit and drink in the Pit like any other operative hired by SLA Industries. Despite their monstrous appearance, SLA have attempted to give them as many human characteristics as possible, like jumping up to any 'heavy' songs that come on at the Pit, although the dance floor usually empties at this point, as Stormers have a tendency to get carried away– but they usually only cause minor injuries.

APPEARANCE: The Stormer appears as a huge, hulking brute of up to 2.60m tall, built heavily with large thick muscles that cover his/her entire body, even a Stormer's fingers are muscular. Stormers are humanoid in shape, but are crowned with grim and menacing heads filled with long sharp teeth and wide staring eyes. Their overall facial appearance resembles that of a skinned horse due to the long and equine shape of their heads.

Stormers lips do not meet, and their teeth are always bared so the Stormers tend to drool and snort which makes them even more horse–like.

This is the average appearance of a 313 Stormer. However over the 900 years of development there have been numerous variations, small modifications in style. Longer claws, narrower and wider builds and sometimes the injection of foreign DNA into the main strands have caused the entire body to alter as a result. All changes to these Stormer variants have been minor, only really changing in style, colour or appearance. In spite of this, Karma intends to produce proper variants and upgrades, that enhance the Stormers physical and mental capabilities beyond the normal genetic limits.

The traditional Stormers, the 313's, are still the most popular and reliable operatives.

INTERACTION:

Stormers on;

Humans: "Yes, humans are alright."

Frothers: "Frothers are good, yes, in combat. Frothers talk to much, shut up."

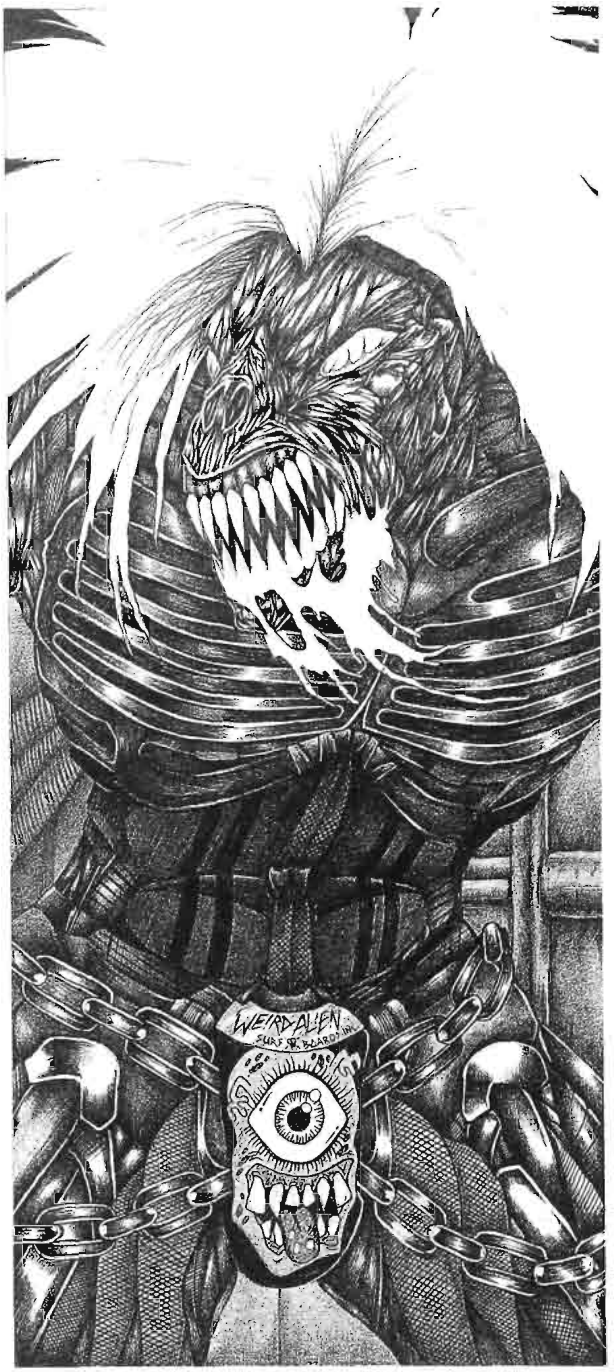
Ebons: "I like Ebons, they are kind and talk to me, they show how to talk polite."

Brain Wasters: "I hate Brain Wasters, they are rude to me, call me names, so I hurt them."

Shaktars: "They are good fighters and have good codes. People think we are alike, we are not."

Wraith Raiders: "Wraith Raiders are okay, but slippery and fast."

Base Skills: Unarmed Combat (STR) Rank 2, SLA Info (KNOW) Rank 1, Rival Company (KNOW) Rank 1, Intimidate (CHA) Rank 2, Streetwise (KNOW) Rank 1, Evaluate Opponent (KNOW) Rank 1.



SHAKTAR

QUOTE: "The days of war are long gone. I am a Shaktar, a warrior. We are one of the last races of many. The Shaktars of old fought in the Conflict Wars. It was the first and the last time we ever accepted defeat. We could not conquer SLA Industries. The ancient Shaktars were wise, they prepared for our arrival by joining with SLA Industries, they had sense. Now we have power, strength and life. We still have our traditions, our beliefs and our honour as warriors. All of our enemies of old are now extinct. They battled, without reason, whereas the Shaktar race understood the Big Picture. Here today, I am a SLA operative and still a Shaktarian warrior. I destroy the enemies of SLA Industries with great pride."

INSIGHT: You were raised on one of the unsparing and unrelenting Tribe Worlds, home to your race, the Shaktars. From the day you were born, you were taught to fight and revel in the midst of combat. You were taught to respect your elders as the great warriors they were and are. Unlike the Wraith Raider species, parenthood and family trust are very important to you. You must work and fight hard to fill the boots once worn by your exalted relatives. From an early age, you were taught the Shaktarian traditions and, most importantly, the code of honour. Once you have learned the Shaktarian attitude, you are noble, trustworthy and dignified, the weak willed and dishonourable offspring of your race do not survive. Your elders are steadfast in the ancient traditions and merciless against those who do not conform and are disrespecful towards the Shaktarian Code. Once you have come of age, you must prepare and ready yourself for the Exalted Challenge. You are given the sacrificial dagger and sent to face and kill the sacred Shahantian bull, the primary horns on it's bovine head are your exalted trophy of distinction and maturity. As you bear the horns of adulthood from the slaughtered bull, you wear them as a proud warrior crown. Now you have proved yourself to your race, you are ready to leave the mountain cities of the Tribe World and join SLA Industries, as an operative and Shaktarian Warrior.

BACKGROUND: The Shaktars are an ancient race of warriors from the Conflict War era. Many uneducated individuals believe them to be barbaric and savage. These people are foolishly deceived, the Shaktars are a proud, honourable and dignified species. They will always protect their friends to the death, never attack anyone of lesser attributes than themselves without direct orders, and they will always uphold the name and honour of their family and trusted friends. The Shaktarian code of honour and family they are part of is very important to them and they will let no–one slander or corrupt their name or value.

The young Shaktars have great respect for their elders, especially those who conceived them as well as their appraised High Lord Shahanti, who over watches their race. The elder Shaktars were once brave and loyal warriors renowned for their valour and courage. It is expected of the Shaktar offspring to follow in their honourable footsteps and become the proud and powerful warriors that their elders once were.

Shaktars have strong faith and trust in their capabilities as warriors. It is common for a Shaktar to take an 'oath' in the face of combat, particulary if the odds are not in the favour of their present company. They will state their intention to the party and don the 'braid of oaths'. This is a ceremonial scarf that a Shaktar will wear if he has undertaken an oath, which shall not be removed unless they have succeeded in their task or have died trying. For non–Shaktars, it is a great honour to be given a braid of friendship. This is a symbol of the Shaktar's total trust in the individual. The braid of friendship also acts as a form of protection. Not many people will hassle a close friend of a Shaktar.

Shaktars very rarely enter small physical disputes like fisticuffs or bar room brawls. Usually a Shaktar will battle to the death and never retreat. Retreating is a sign of cowardice– Shaktar elders were never frightened and they would be thoroughly ashamed of a young Shaktar if he ran. Every Shaktar's dream is to die in combat. To die of natural causes is a great disappointment to the race.

While the Wraith Raider's typical lifespan is relatively short, the normal Shaktars' is comparatively long– most survive until the age of 170. When young Shaktars join SLA Industries, they are often in their mid–thirties and from there, their abilities will not falter through age until they are well over the age of 120.

The Shaktar race regard 7 as a sacred and symbolic number, since the First Tribe World, Kn'nth, is surrounded by seven moons. The Shaktar society is heavily based around the number seven– even their code of honour has seven themes; Honour, Family, Friends, Truth, Faith, Loyalty and Purity.

As the Shaktars come of age, they must prove themselves to their elders. In order to enter adulthood, all young warriors must accept the Exalted Challenge. On the various Tribe Worlds, there is a special, brutish breed of bovine called the Shahantian bulls. They are heavy, stalwart and temperamental beast that the Shaktars must defeat to prove themselves. Shahantian bulls have three sets of horns and upon beating the animal, the Shaktar keeps the small front horns as a symbolic trophy. They are now a true warrior and may leave the Tribe Worlds to join

SLA Industries to face new challenges but never forgetting their ancient traditions.

APPEARANCE: The typical Shaktar has an odd and oppressive appearance. Their stature and build issimilar to that of a Stormer– they are tall aliens, well built and evolved in the shape of a warrior beast. A Shaktar's skin is scaly like a reptile, similar to that of an alligator or a crocodile yet it is the colour of human blood. Their skin is contrasted by their sinister, keen yellow eyes that some find rather intimidating. The most noticeable features of a Shaktar's head are the thick, fleshy strands, similar to dreadlocks, that drape the length of his back and the bizarre mandible–like lips that adorn both sides of their sharp, toothy jaws. Shaktars also have long, thick, prehensile tails that sway and coil tensely if the owner is getting aggressive. The Shaktarian language is a tricky and almost incomprehensible language to grasp and learn, the main dialogue comprising of throaty and guttural speech lacking in vowels. However, rough translations litter the speech with human vowels.

INTERACTION:

Shaktars on;

Humans: "They are intelligent beings but lack strength and vigilance."

Frother: "The Frothers make good warriors but have no control."

Ebons: "Ebons are gifted people but are too easily misled by Necanthropes."

Brain Wasters: "So much potential, so much waste."

Stormers: "They have admirable abilities, it is a great shame they are not natural."

Wraith Raiders: "The Wraith Raiders are a skilled and intelligent race but could benefit from unity amongst their own kind"

Base Skills: Unarmed Combat (STR) Rank 2, Detect (CONC) Rank 1, Evaluate Opponent (KNOW) Rank 1, Rival Company (KNOW) Rank 1, Survival (KNOW) Rank 2, Climb (PHYS) Rank 2.



WRAITH RAIDER

QUOTE: "Here, where I now live on Mort, is far removed from my distant Home World. Sometimes I miss the chilling breeze, the dazzling white snow and the exhilarating thrill of the chase so far in the depths of my memory. Now I am an operative for SLA Industries and all I have left from my past are faint memories and the instinct to hunt and kill. Mort is no less harsh than any environment or situation I have come from, it is still survival of the fittest. SLA Industries needs our hunter race because we are survivors, not like the Conflict Aliens. All they knew was destruction and war. We kill to survive and rely on cunning and stealth. I kill for blood, and blood is money. I get paid for what I do best, I'm a money hunter.

INSIGHT: You were born into a litter of Wraith Raider cubs, your fur was snowy white, which made for excellent camouflage in the snowy steppes of your home world. In a litter of six, you were one of the four who survived. As you watched your brother and sister die, you realised quickly that your life would be a struggle for survival, the two dead kin lacked your strength, stamina and determination. As nature took its course, you learned how to walk and run. It was only a short space before you knew how to hunt and kill like the other life forms on your planet. Soon, it was time to leave your parental haven and learn the laws of civilisation, to speak, to read and write and understand the importance and values of modern technology, like firearms. After years of preparation to enter the World of Progress, you left your icy Home World, you knew you would never see your parents again. As far as they were concerned they were just breeders for the Wraith Raider race– but also tutors wise in both realms of experience, SLA and natural survival. Now you are gone, they will simply start again with yet another litter of cubs. For you, it was time to go and enter the urban hell hole of Mort with its complex views, inhabitants and capitalist society, a setting so alien to the environment you were raised. You learn to forget the memories of life and nature and to comprehend the ruthless principles of corporate lifestyle, as an operative– infinitely better than staying and raising your own litter.

BACKGROUND: Humans, Ebons and the like generally regard the Wraith Raider species as intelligent, predatory aliens and, for the greater part, this is correct. The Wraith Raider's hunting skills and animal instincts are apparent to any observer. Their bodies are slender, muscular and unbelievably fast. So much so that Wraith Raiders are the most dextrous operatives hired by SLA Industries.

To most, the upbringing of a typical Wraith Raider would be thought of as unreasonable, primitive and not slightly gruelling. However, Wraith Raiders see no form of unfairness in this. To them, it is all part of life and it is natural that their young clubs should be raised in such a way.

Compared to the average human lifespan, the Wraith Raiders is drastically shorter– the oldest Wraith Raiders range from 45 to 50 years old. The majority of Wraith Raiders who come to the World of Progress are only about 10 years old but have the intelligence and maturity of a fully grown adult human. In order to survive, a Wraith Raider cub must be able to run by the time he is one year old, he is fully grown by the time he is seven and joins SLA Industries at the humble age of ten. the common Wraith Raider has not long to grow and learn before they are thrown into an urban environment. It is a short life unless he knows how to survive.

Compared to a normal human, the Wraith Raider's diagnostic skills are a great deal higher – they have to be. They must learn fast, there is not much time in the icy wastes of the Home Worlds before joining SLA Industries. A Wraith Raider can gather information fast but has difficulty concentrating. His attention span over certain activities is shorter than that of a human. It is as if the Wraith Raider's sharp reflexes makes his concentration lapse over long periods of time.

The planets where the Wraith Raiders are raised are the Ice Worlds, some of which are used as Resource Worlds because of their great water content, though usually most are left to be used solely as Home Worlds.

These Home Worlds are left untainted by SLA Industries in order that the Wraith Raiders can be raised in a completely natural environment. They learn to hunt at an early age, then go on to be taught social values and, if they are suitable, the young Wraith Raiders may go to Meny for operative training. Due to the Wraith Raiders' high diagnose, their standard training package only lasts for 8 months instead of the usual 12 undertaken by normal operatives.

Wraith Raiders act differently from operative to operative upon joining SLA Industries. From the natural environment of the Ice Worlds to the claustrophobic cities of Mort is a radical change for a fresh Wraith Raider operative. The training facility at Meny breaks their young alien students in gently, by teaching them that Mort is just another hunting ground, where Rival Companies are the prey.

APPEARANCE: Wraith Raiders resemble large humanoid lions. They stand on two legs and their bodies are slim but athletic with well pronounced muscles. Wraith Raiders have no fat, they are simply too fit although in circumstances where a Wraith

Raider gains so much as a slight pot belly, the rest of the race will hold them in disgust. For this reason, Wraith Raiders always keep in shape through fear of social damnation and a physical drop in effectiveness.

The Wraith Raider species have a strange hide. On the Ice Worlds their fur grows long and white and their eyes fade to pale pink. However if they then return to warmer planets like Mort, their hair thins out till it is almost unnoticeable at a distance. In warmer climates, the Wraith Raider has the semblance of human hair– however it is usually navy blue or deep purple, and his soft velvet–like fur is the colour of lavender with a mottled pattern similar to a leopard. Their eyes become narrow slits of red.

Since the Wraith Raiders are basically hunters, their bodies sprout teeth and claws, which they use when stalking (although later in adolescence, guns and other weapons are preferable to them). The typical Wraith Raider wears a coolant suit, which regulates their body temperature.

Since they originate from Ice Worlds, the Wraith Raider species can survive in sub–zero temperatures without worry. However they tend to dislike hot temperatures, but will tolerate them as long as they are not extreme.

INTERACTION:

Wraith Raiders on;

Humans: "Variable physique, plump and fleshy. Generally unfit species."

Frothers: "Stupid, insane. Best hunted at a distance, with a gun."

Ebons: "Too emotional. Relying too heavily on the mind."

Brain Wasters: "Aggressive and pointless, approachable after all flux has been burnt. Burn them."

Stormers: "Acceptably dangerous, fortunately only produced by SLA Industries."

Shaktars: "Foolishly 'broody'. Best advice – forget family, forget honour and forget trust."

Base Skills: Survival (KNOW) Rank 2, Tracking (DIA) Rank 2, Detect (CONC) Rank 1, Martial Arts (DEX) Rank 1, Running (PHYS) Rank 1, Climb (PHYS) Rank 1.



THE POWER OF THE EBB

EBB

The Ebon Race has evolved on a single basic premise: The World of Progress (the universe) is based on one fundamental formula that is extremely unstable. This basic formula struggles to retain stability and, in the process, it splits itself and will continually do so until it reaches a sufficient safe state. Upon this hypothesis, the universe is structured and built. This creative formula is called the Ebb, it shapes and controls all that exists in this universe. Ebb is also something that can be controlled and manipulated by a race that understands its concept and knows how to utilise formulae: The Ebon Race.

EBON RACE

The Ebon Race is a species unlike any other. Originally, their race was discovered by Intruder who understood the basic principles of the Ebb and how to use its powers to the full potential. Intruder knew the Ebons had a rudimentary knowledge and that with the necessary tutoring, he could evolve a race of beings devoted to the Ebb Formulae that direct the universe. In spite of the Ebon's great power potential, they are a highly–strung and emotional race. Even the Ebon's appearance reflects their individual persona. Hot tempered Ebons can grow fiery–red hair and eyes of flame–like yellow, while the most tense Ebons can be stark white eyed with shocking electric blue hair. Ebons are recognised by their abnormal eyes, having no pupils or irises. In this respect Ebons can be spotted a mile off, since their very emotions come across in their somewhat pale and draughty appearance: They really stand out in a crowd. Besides these inhuman features, they have a distinctly human appearance, offset by their excitable natures.

With study and research, Ebons can read the intricate and incomprehensible patterns of glyphs in order to cast their formulated powers. With such knowledge, Ebons can read minds, heal wounds, move objects without touch, create light and lift through the depth of space. Ebons also have the capability to be offensive with their abilities, enjoying the power to blast their victims –though most Ebons view these talents as defective and self–destructive. These aggressive abilities are best left to the masters





they were formulated for: Brain Wasters.

BRAIN WASTERS

The Brain Wasters are a subsidiary race of Ebons, looked upon by most as a type of Ebon Warrior due to their aggressive, antisocial and frequently psychotic behaviour. This 'breed' of Ebon has been described as having a mismatched gene, hereditary in the natural evolution of the Ebon race, but it has not been isolated as yet. The Brain Wasters' most outstanding features are their charred eyelids (To date, there has never been an explanation for this unusual formation). While the majority of Ebons' overall image is bright and colourful, the Brain Wasters' is dark and forbidding. Since the beginning of SLA Industries, animosity has grown between the two classes. It is a conflict of supremacy, status and viewpoint, kindling the fire of the Brain Waster's temper and arrogance.

Due to the Brain Waster's naturally violent tendencies, they opt to learn the Ebon arts of destruction, such as Blast and Thermal. They also violate the manipulation of Telekinesis and Enhancement for vicious and deadly purposes. Most Brain Wasters are antisocial but, nonetheless, proud of what they are and somewhat aloof from the Ebons.

FLUX

The 'flux' is the shift of the raw energies of the formulated universe, the flux is everywhere and a part of everything. Ebons draw these energies into their minds and bodies. They are channelled and broken down into the construction of Ebon Abilities. Ebons and Brain Wasters alike make their bodies into vessels for flux.

When the Ebon is about to charge an ability, they calculate the desired formula and exert flux from his body. Flux is necessary to charge every Ebon talent: Without flux the Ebon is useless and will not be able to use their powers. Ebon and Brain Wasters' bodies draw in flux every day and this is stored until it is used. Flux can only be gathered when the Ebon is at rest or relaxed. Their mind must be free from thoughts and complications. Some Ebons enter the fœtal position to enhance the flow of flux through their mind and body.

SCIENCE FRICTION

Science Friction is the construction of flux into material form, such as in the shape of the illegal ancient glyphs and the vital source of Ebon power, the DeathSuit.

Dark Lament specialize in the construction and formation of all Science Friction artifacts for the Ebon race employed by SLA Industries. When practising Science Friction, the Ebon must visualise the object trying to be created and calculate the necessary formulae and the corresponding flux required and then concentrate. If the estimations are correct, the Ebon instantaneously exerts the mandatory flux and the object is created from nothing more than the Ebon's calculations, concentration and mental energy. Styles vary from Ebon to Ebon, since natures and outlooks are individual. Emotions shape the fashion of each Science Friction artifact. The art of Science Friction is a difficult skill to learn and it takes years of practice to become a master. Even the smallest of objects cost the Ebon dearly in flux.

The entire staff at SLA's Dark Lament are fully trained Ebons who have devoted their knowledge and experience to the production of Science Friction equipment such as DeathSuits, Pathfinders and Flint-

locks for the Ebons and Brain Wasters trained in Blast. Dark Lament is a strange and sinister sub–company, their factories and offices are ornamented and sculpted in the sinewy and anatomical form of the Ebon, which to the outsider looks gloomy and deeply forbidding, yet Ebons feel at home in such places. Even entering such domains, the Ebon can sense the surge of copious amounts of flux being used to create saleable items. Most Dark Lament facilities are decorated and engraved with huge ancient and ornate glyphs, constantly in use. Dark Lament accounts for all Ebon tastes, sick and sweet.

Anything purchased for Ebon use in SLA Industries is created and produced by Dark Lament.

GLYPHS

The glyphs are hieroglyphic patterns and configurations Ebons read and calculate in order to achieve successful abilities. In truth, every Ebon ability known is a glyph. If the Ebon cannot understand the glyph, they cannot use the skill. Glyphs usually come in the form of cards with the formula inscribed on the surface. Before the creation of the DeathSuit, 'Glyph Cards' were the only way of utilising abilities, so a multitude of Glyph Cards had to be created. Ebons would be walking about with literally a deck of cards in their pocket so combat was a messy and often fatal affair as the unfortunate Ebon fumbled with over 30 cards trying to find his Blast card while the enemy riddled him with bullets. Reading Glyph Cards took a great deal of insight: Failure to understand a glyph could cause a form of partial madness. Experienced Ebons who had survived through the ages have come to know this procedure as 'Insane Insight' taken on by the most foolhardy and eager Ebons and Brain Wasters determined to advance their being at any cost. In any event, old Glyph Cards caused no end of complications and were eventually disbanded from creative production in favour of Dark Lament's most recent creation, the DeathSuit. Glyph Cards are now only available in Downtown's black market stalls which are eagerly snapped up by Rival Company Ebons circulating in the lower levels of Mort. The Glyph Cards are now illegal and, if found in Downtown, are to be handed in to the Department of Ebon at Head Office. They must not be in the possession of any rival or feral Ebons, since it is a talent few know how to use effectively. Amongst the most powerful and dangerous of the remaining Glyph Cards are the Advancement Glyphs which, with the proper knowledge and experience can raise the Ebon's Formulae one rank and failure to understand the glyph will result in a +1 Rank in Psychosis. If the Ebon's Psychosis reaches Rank 10, they will go completely insane.



DEATHSUIT

Since the outdated Glyph Cards disappeared into the dark end of Downtown, the mass–produced DeathSuits from Dark Lament have become an Ebon necessity. Without DeathSuits, the Ebon race would now fall apart. Ebons need the DeathSuit in order to charge abilities and store flux. Without one, an Ebon is naked –mentally as well as well as physically. Like the Glyph Cards, the DeathSuits are created by Science Friction so they are specially designed to channel and store flux, the finely shaped contours are shaped like the Ebon's body. To many, the Ebon DeathSuit is disturbing and ghoulish. Some have called it a 'skinned man' due to its skeletal and skinless muscle–like qualities, hence the original name, 'DeathSuit'. The reason for this anatomical structure and design is so that the Ebon becomes at one with mind, body and DeathSuit –like a second skin to the Ebon. Once the suit is filled to the maximum with its storage of flux, the DeathSuit becomes symbiotic with its wearer, taking on a similar appearance to the Ebon's emotions. The symbiotic nature between the Ebon and their DeathSuit changes the colour and style of this second skin: The DeathSuit can turn pastel, psychedelic, tie–dye, chequered or



any pattern, colour or shade the Ebon cares to choose –the DeathSuit can even go transparent if the Ebon feels really daring. Although the primary uses of the DeathSuit are to store flux over and above the natural potential and enable the Ebon to charge abilities, it also acts as a suit of armour. With the correct understanding of Protect, the Ebon can raise the basic Light DeathSuit's protection and power. The stronger the DeathSuit, the more it shall enhance the Ebon's own physical attributes whilst wearing the symbiotic suit. The longer the Ebon wears the DeathSuit, the more attached they will become to it, growing weary to remove it from their body. All Ebons regard it as a tragedy if a DeathSuit is destroyed in combat and many Ebons have been known to become suicidal over the loss of a loved DeathSuit. Essentially, an Ebon should buy a DeathSuit as a starting operative and wear it until death and beyond. An Ebon or Brain Waster can easily find themself disgraced by the whole Ebon race for foolishly losing their DeathSuit in a fire–fight. Over years of working for SLA Industries, Ebon operatives build up a friendship or bond with their DeathSuit, especially when the suit becomes sentient through the Ebon's experience. When the wearer is suitable trained, they can interdermalise the suit inside the body and still retain all of its attributes. This is when the Ebon and DeathSuit really become one. An Ebon may never need to remove the suit for any reason, they merely draw the suit inside themselves. The appearance of some of these talented individuals can be somewhat bizarre, especially when someone, for instance, hits them with a baseball bat and the feeble weapon shatters on contact with the Ebon's 'skin'. Stranger still is if the Ebon retains the DeathSuit's symbiotic colour pattern on their skin: It is not uncommon to see a high ranking Ebon walking around with marble or tie–dye skin that seems as potentially tough as armour. To a non–Ebon operative, these suits, and whatever powers they possess, are unuseable to a foreigner. It is highly doubtable that a human, alien or otherwise would even know how to put a DeathSuit on.

FORMULAE

An Ebon's formulae is their understanding and comprehension of the powers of the Ebb. The higher an Ebon's formulae, the greater their knowledge and potential to achieve more powerful abilities. Ebons and Brain Wasters with high formulae are better at recognising and reading the ancient glyphs on the pillars of Head Office, in the halls of Dark Lament, the archways to the Department of Ebon and on the illegal cards that circulate throughout Downtown. All starting Ebons receive a free Rank 1 Formulae although this skill may not go any higher during character generation, an Ebon or Brain Waster must raise their formulae through learning, understanding and experience: Experience points given through gaming.

GETTING CLOSE

This common term used to describe Ebons and Brain Wasters who are going through changes as a result of particularly high formulae. Such experienced individuals are on the verge of the next evolutionary step, they are about to turn Necanthrope. When an Ebon or Brain Waster reaches Formulae Rank 8, they will start to experience nightmares of a horrific manner. Such cruel dreams are a twisted mixture of the victim's worst fears and memories –more than the poor sleeper could imagine in waking hours, no matter how sick or deranged they really are. The 'Dream Demons' can invoke fear into the hardest of Ebons and Brain Wasters. This is the beginning of a long and painful journey –a small price to pay for such great knowledge for the Ebon is 'getting close' to changing. Regrets appear for the first time in their life, the understanding that they now have is like a curse of their mere existence. The terrible nightmare they are living is for the rest of their life if they do not continue learning formulae or take the daily injection of 'White Noise': A drug specially designed to banish the Dream Demons. Ebons and Brain Wasters who fear the change to Necanthrope are almost White Noise addicts. If they miss so much as one injection, the Dream Demons will haunt their dreams worse



than ever before. If the Ebon reaches Formulae Rank 9, the Dream Demons also plague the subject's waking hours. The presently unstable and neurotic Ebon is subject to flashbacks, short conversations with non-present friends, dead relatives and imaginary people advising them to enter 'The White'. There is no rest for the Formulae Rank 9 Ebon and even now, the White Noise is failing to suffice for the Ebon's every hour. By the time they reach Formulae Rank 10, the watching begins. Everywhere the Ebon goes, they will feel the presence of other Necanthropes watching them -day and night. Upon occasion, they may see one standing on a street corner watching them drink in an adjacent bar. Such observers are usually dressed like corporates, wearing black coats and suits with starched white collars. It is hard to visualise their faces and they will always stand motionless, then a car or person will pass in front of them and by the time the field of vision is restored, they are gone. This is a period when no matter how much company the 'turning Ebon' has, they always feel alone and deeply paranoid. Whenever they try to point out the 'watcher', their friends cannot see them and tell them they are either mad or just 'seeing things'. This makes the Ebon feel worse, much worse and then they realise: They are getting close.

THE WHITE

Now there are only two options left open to the Ebon. They can either take on the daunting prospect of staying on White Noise for the rest their life or they can give up the endless struggle and turn Necanthrope. The Necanthropes, themselves, will know instantly when the Ebon submits to their trust, they pull back the Dream Demons and Observers and simply take them away. Instinctively, the Ebon will know they are coming, the Ebon will leave whatever they are doing and wait for them. Wherever they wait, they will be approached by a large Dark Lament APC and from this monstrous black vehicle shall exit eight renowned Necanthropes. From here they take the Ebon to Necanthrope Society where the Ebon will be transformed as one of their own, one of the divine race. The experience the Ebon feels when they enter the APC is one of a black void and the sensation of falling and never landing, an urge to be violently sick and the long prayer for rest that never seems to come. When their prayers are finally answered, they dream of a period of change and hibernation. They feel that they are wrapped in cobwebs and then realise that it is a chrysalis that enshrouds them. When the weary Ebon awakens, they are lying in an enormous Dark Lament cathedral, the circular aisles that surround them are filled with every Necanthrope the Ebon has ever seen, or heard of, including the Preceptor -they are deeply scared yet honoured by his presence. A strange and beautiful woman walks forward in a flowing black gown, in many respects the 7ft tall woman resembles a witch of Necanthrope origin, she has the presence of sensuous power. With a voice as sweet as honey, she asks the Ebon, politely "Steel or Lead". If the Ebon asks for "Steel", the Necanthrope Witch will draw a sword and impale them through the heart and in the event of accepting "Lead", the reward is the same except with a BLA 046 M "Blitzer".

Either way, the Ebon is dead and ready to enter 'the White'. With their DeathSuit and nothing else, the dead Ebon is thrown into the gleaming ethereal light. From here they must choose again, whether to continue on the great journey into the afterlife beyond 'The White', or battle to become worthy of Necanthrope status. What ensues is a challenge against all odds, faceable only by the dead Ebon, they have the necessary knowledge and understanding of the formulae and the Ebb to solve the puzzle of transformation. The Ebon must prove their loyalty and determination, they must come to terms with their past, their horrors and meet the correct conclusions in order to pass the test -alone. For any Ebon or Brain Waster entering the White, they must face obstacles and experiences they have lived and will relive again to prove worthiness to the Preceptor Teeth and Necanthrope Society itself. If the Ebon follows the wrong path, they are lost in the White, forever. If they follows the right path, they will shed their old self and its past and swear blind loyalty to the Preceptor Teeth and no other. This is the only true path for return. As the blinding light dims and darkness returns, the new Necanthrope awakes from their slumber. Both mentally and physically, they have changed. They feel proud of what they have become and have little apprehension of the departing Necanthropes, exiting from the aisles, one by one. All they feel now is love and admiration for the Preceptor Teeth and the Necanthrope Society they now belong to. The Necanthrope is full of new thoughts, ready to face a new existence with brave Necanthrope views and eyes to guide their lessers to the path they have chosen. They are a fully fledged Necanthrope and are permitted to return to this place whenever they feel the need. They have the option to live as one and return to their friends or squad or they may join an 'Eight as One' and enter a group of newly born Necanthropes and act as one body, made up of eight Necanthrope minds. As long as the Necanthrope is not killed in combat or some other fatal circumstance, they are effectively immortal and, like their brothers, sisters and the Preceptor, will live forever.



NECANTHROPE

The Necanthrope is the final stage of Ebon being, a formulated Ebon or Brain Waster was has entered the spectral white light that lies somewhere in Cannibal Sector One: Only certain Necanthropes know where it is. The divine globe that the 'pre–Necanthrope' must be bathed in before they are reborn in the form of a true Necanthrope. It is a desperate battle of the mind in which the Ebon or Brain Waster must struggle to hold onto life by proving and swearing their loyalty to the Preceptor and the Necanthrope Society. Only those strong and worthy turn Necanthrope. It is a great honour given only to those of great faith and devotion.

All Necanthropes have sworn allegiance to Preceptor Teeth, Necanthrope Society and SLA Industries. The Preceptor's word is final and all Necanthropes, young and old respect this. Within the Necanthrope Society, there are rules that all Necanthropes must obey:

You must not abuse your power

Respect your elder Necanthropes

Respect the Preceptor's wishes

Do not force any Ebon or Brain Waster to enter the white

Do not debase the Necanthrope Union.

The first rule –you must not abuse your power– is an important decree to Necanthrope Society's reputation. Is is sometimes known for fresh Necanthropes (particularly Brain Wasters) who have just turned to freely exhibit their newfound power for ulterior motives (such as bullying and controlling Ebons by the use of White Reverence). Elder Necanthropes despise this form of misconduct and will punish the 'upstart' severely.

The Necanthrope is meant to respect the authority and power they are granted, they are expected to act accordingly and to act as an example to their lessers: The Ebons and the Brain Wasters. The Necanthropes have a reputation to hold up to their inferiors, a dark and grim stature that all Ebons and Brain Wasters must obey.

The 'Elders' of the Necanthrope Society are elder indeed, Preceptor Teeth and his infamous Union all range from 800 to 900 years old, Teeth being 921 years old himself. Even the Necanthropes that are in the region of 300 are regarded by the Elders as being 'young and immature'. The power and understanding of the Ebb, acquired by the elders is phenomenal –they have had nine centuries to hoard this wealth of Ebb knowledge and energy.

The Preceptor Teeth has wishes and desires for his entire race, the Ebons and Brain Wasters must learn and advance and they must strive for this power. The Preceptor Teeth wishes of his Necanthropes that they guide their eager lessers, especially those who wish 'to turn', they must be taught the subtle ways and preparations required to conceive a powerful and fitting Necanthrope. One of Necanthrope Society's most important rules is that no Ebon or Brain Waster must be physically forced to enter 'the White', although Necanthrope Society will, however, torture and torment its needed apprentices to do so with 'Observants' and 'Dream Demons'.

When Ebons and Brain Wasters turn Necanthrope, they have a choice to make before leaving Necanthrope Society. They may remain independent and solo, or they may become part of a Necanthrope Union, or 'eight in one' as it is known.

A Necanthrope Union is a group of eight Necanthropes who act as one. When a Necanthrope Union begins, all its members are usually of the same stage of being and stature. Within the eight, they may or may not choose a leader, one who maintains control and order. Sometimes, this is necessary since Necanthropes can be impulsive and erratic, by nature. The Necanthropes must remain in the eight at all costs and they must protect and guard each other through thick and thin. If a member of the Union is killed (Necanthropes do not die of old age), the others must find another Necanthrope of the same stature and power or of the same family (this may be a Bloodline –Ebon or Brain Waster relative).

The day that this happens is a tragedy that should never have occurred. Whatever the Ebon race feels for their DeathSuits, the Necanthropes feel more for each other. Necanthrope Unions are like families, they look after each other: They are as one.

In appearance, the Necanthropes maintain a similar vein or style. However, in the same respect, no two Necanthropes are alike. They are separated by their change, transformation, attitude and outlook, which all disturbingly roll into one to make the overall appearance. A Necanthrope's visual impact amplifies with power and age. The Preceptor Teeth has the aura and presence of a demi–god. His White Reverence and Incarnation are unmatched.

Some Necanthropes retain their human features and their transformations are subtle, delicate and profound, implied only by their outlook. There are others whose appearances improve in the White. Its ethereal and spectral idiosyncrasy transmutes them into angelic forms with a certain grace and elegance. Their look is beautiful and the embodiment of inno-


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cence, but even the most pure 'angel' from the White, is laced with the dark undertones of a brooding Necanthrope. These characters are as terrible as they are beautiful and commonly used by Necanthrope Society as passionate assassins and lady-killers.

Then there are those whose metamorphosis in the White is monstrous and horrifying that bear no natural resemblance to the Ebons and Brain Wasters who entered the light. They are creatures of dark origin and their incarnation is nightmarish and nauseating. The radically changed and ghoulish Necanthropes are usually aggressive and offensive Brain Wasters who welcome these demonic prospects and transform accordingly, they thrive on the stigma of what they have become.

The new Necanthrope shrugs off their Ebon past and philosophies. The White is a gate between life and death and they have left the Ebon they once were behind them. All things change in the light, even outlook and attitude. The Necanthrope mind is serious and sedate, far removed from any Ebon understanding. Its pensive nature is born of a certain emotion, mentally and physically, naming themselves after what they embody and a presence of Incarnation that indicates what they are and feel.

When Ebons and Brain Wasters enter the White, they enter wearing their DeathSuit. Within the light and duration of the test, the Ebon and their DeathSuit truly become as one, so essentially it turns and transforms as a Necanthrope DeathSuit. Its shape and style will change to the speculations and will of its owner.

GORE CANNON

Once the fresh Necanthrope exits the White, they are given the option of learning the creation and use of the Gore Cannon, a skill and weapon which can only be taken by Necanthropes who have the sinister aspects and outlooks to control such a malignant weapon.

The Gore Cannon is an Ebb weapon like no other. While the Dark Lament Flintlock fires the Ebon Blast abilities, the harrowing Gore Cannon projects the foulest, disturbing and nightmarish thoughts the Necanthrope can express through the material presence of psycho-reactive Ebb matter. The Gore Cannon begins as an ugly swelling, a rounded, white cyst filled with the grim nature of the Necanthrope. When flux charges the disgusting boil, the poisonous energies travelled the length of the Necanthrope's shoulder and arm until it reaches the tentacle, finger-like barrels that spit the foul ooze. Like the DeathSuit, a Gore Cannon will become sentient and attached to the wearer after time.

VASSAL

All Necanthropes have a Vassal Ebon, who acts as their herald, servant and messenger. The Vassal Ebon must obey the commands of their Necanthrope as long as the wishes do not violate the rules decreed by the Preceptor Teeth. Vassals can be either Ebons or Brain Wasters (usually the same as the Necanthrope was). They are completely loyal and faithful, some would even lay down their life for their masters, but most are quiet and reserved characters who only speak when spoken to. The Necanthrope may never use the Vassal to engage in combat or complete a BPN. The Vassal is there to deal with mundane tasks, such as feeding the Necanthrope flux if they are low and duties involving 'spear-carrying'. The Vassal may progress as far as a position as one of the chosen 'Observers' who watch the formulated Ebons and Brain Wasters who are 'getting close'. The Vassal should never purposefully become a Necanthrope as they are meant to serve the Necanthrope's wishes and little else.

The Necanthrope owner is expected to handle their Vassal in the proper manner and only use them for simple tasks. The Vassal is an honourary gift from the Preceptor Teeth that must not be abused without due reason.

The Vassal Ebon is trained to serve and assist, they are not operative or even combat trained except for





several defensive skills. However, Necanthrope Union Vassals can grow tougher learning high Cure and Blast abilities from their masters.

SLA Industries and the majority of its staff and operatives respect the Necanthropes for their power and wisdom, making them not as expendable as the standard operative. They work exclusively on SLA and the Preceptor's behalf. Their challenge in the White conveys their trust and loyalty.

NECANTHROPE ATTRIBUTES

When Ebons and Brain Wasters have turned Necanthrope, they will receive various traits that separate them from their former species.

A starting Necanthrope has fifty (50) points to spend on Necanthrope traits. (See Advantages and Disadvantages.)

As well as receiving traits, the Necanthrope has free attributes:

1) **WHITE REVERENCE** – Ebons (especially your own breed) will instantly respect you as one of the chosen, for example, a Brain Waster turned Necanthrope will have White Reverence over other Brain Wasters who are unchanged. Victims have to make a CONC roll at a -5 to stay in control.

2) **VASSAL EBON** – A Vassal Ebon is awarded to the Necanthrope. They are an observer or informant and may watch and bid on the Necanthrope's behalf.

3) **INCARNATION** – Upon entering the White, the light probes your thoughts, your inner being. It searches for what you feel, the strongest feeling: Your gut emotion. Necanthropes always have an aura, an Incarnation of their being, for example, Teeth has an aura of nausea, Bargheist has an aura of suffocation –people become short of breath in his presence. The effects of Incarnation are greatly reduced between Necanthropes.

4) **INTERDERMALISATION** – This ability is the same as the standard Ebon ability except that it is a free skill for the starting Necanthrope since the pre-Necanthrope Ebon took their DeathSuit into the White: They are now bonded.

5) **SCL INCREASE** – The Necanthrope receives an SCL increase and gains one number for the change. A starting Necanthrope at SCL 2 cannot however move on to SCL 1 but will reach SCL 2F.

6) **GORE CANNON** – The Necanthrope is now privileged to manipulate and operate the sinister deadly Gore Cannon, not accessible to Ebons and Brain Wasters who lack the dark nature to use it. The starting Necanthrope will receive two free ranks which will enable them to create and fire one.

NECANTHROPE TRAITS

BLOODLINE – Disadvantage, 4 points/rank (1–10): This circumstance is basically an empathic link between two Necanthropes. More often than not, the two are related. Whatever one feels, thinks and sometimes even does, happens to the other. At Rank one, emotions will intrude upon player characters' Necanthropes up until six in varying degrees, when they will feel pain when the other is hurt. Finally at Rank ten, characters with Bloodline will be mimicking entire actions performed by their partner as well as thinking their thoughts, a character's mind will not be their own for short spells of time. CONC rolls at are necessary to retain control of their own actions at a minus equal to their rank: CONC–10 at Rank 10.

EMOTIONAL TIE – Disadvantage, 2 points/rank (1–10): Before you entered the White, you had a close friend/relation/lover whom you cared for. Now that you have changed, they remain concerned for your well-being. This is not a wise situation to get into once turned Necanthrope in a society where outsiders are often condemned, especially if they are persistent for your previous life's return...

EMOTIONAL AFFINITY – Advantage, 1 point/rank (1–10): This trait is a blend of White Reverence and Incarnation. Emotional Affinity is something in the Necanthrope's being that can be turned on or off –it can be a brutal oppressive aura or a presence of seductive charisma. Whatever the emotion or aura exuded, other characters in the surrounding area will feel akin to you, for example, a Shaktar will admire a hard Necanthrope's strength of character if using Emotional Affinity. The Necanthrope uses their rank as a passive skill and all characters whose CONC is lower than their rank are subject to the effects of Emotional Affinity, provided they are impressed by the Necanthrope's particular style. A Shaktar, for instance, would not be impressed by a particular Necanthrope's ability to cheat and lie and get away with it whereas a con-artist would be.

EMOTIONAL INTRUSION – Advantage, 4 points/rank (1–10): This trait is essentially a dark power taken by the more psychological and sinister Necanthropes. Emotional Intrusion is the ability to probe the victim's mind, find their deepest fears/memories/desires and set them alight. Within

Emotional Intrusion, the Necanthrope can reduce the toughest and most resilient minds by digging up what scares them, or would much rather be forgotten. In this way, a Rank 10 Emotional Intrusion Necanthrope can reduce a Shaktar to their knees. Unfortunately, this ability can only be used in calm and social circumstances and is too difficult during combat unless the opponent is a previous victim of this ability. All the Necanthrope has to do is to remind the victim of a fear or memory and terror is unleashed upon the opponent.

The victim must make a COOL roll minus the rank of intrusion, if the victim fails the roll, they are affected by the Intrusion. Example: Rank 10 vs COOL 10 = 11+, Rank 10 vs COOL 5 = 16+.

LIMB/APPENDAGE – Advantage, 5 Points/limb: As the Necanthrope transforms in the White, their physical body may spring extra limbs and appendages that act and operate as normal limbs. The style and size of these obscure extras are of the Necanthrope's choosing, although they cannot supersede the strength and hit points of any of their normal limbs. There is also no limit to the number of appendages the Necanthrope transforms.

NECANTHROPE TEETH AND CLAWS – Advantage, 3 Points/rank (1–10): When the Ebon or Brain Waster turns Necanthrope, they grow sharp and slender or thick and hard teeth and claws. Like Limb/Appendage, Necanthrope's teeth and claws can be in any style or shape of their choosing. For every two ranks of this trait, the teeth and claws will have +1 DMG bonus, i.e. Rank 10 has +5 DMG teeth and claws). Teeth and claws have to be bought separately i.e. Rank 1 Teeth and Rank 1 Claws will cost 6 points.

RADICAL TRANSFORMATION – Advantage/Disadvantage, 5 Points/rank (1–10): The White, the double sided coin of transformation flickers both ways. Many Necanthropes leave the white as beautiful angels, others depart as loathsome monsters. Their bodies have changed as vastly as their minds. For some, the change is minimal. With a subtle trace of Incarnation and Necanthrope teeth, they are like corporation demons, huge and oppressive Necanthropes of great power and intellect.

SIZE VARIATION – Advantage/Disadvantage, 2 Points/rank (1–10): In the respect of Necanthropes change and alteration in appearance, they can also change in size. At one end of the scale, the Preceptor Teeth is 3.35m while the Necanthrope Dunch is only 1.50m (but still manages to accommodate a MAL Assault Cannon if in need of a change from his wide snub-nosed Gore Cannon). Despite the growth or reduction in height and build, the Necanthrope will retain all of their natural characteristics.

SOUL WEAVE – Disadvantage, 15 Points: Many Necanthropes mistake this trait for a Bloodline, however, they are both very different. While the Bloodline deals with the living, a 'Soul Weaver' is a subconscious soul from the White, the ethereal plane, who has slipped into the body of a turning Necanthrope, unnoticed even after the Necanthrope has left the White. The soul is a dead spirit and will never regain a fully conscious state. The Necanthrope will be plagued by the soul's memories at the most awkward of times. These memories can easily block out the Necanthropes present train of thought, even though the 'flashback' only lasts for several seconds. The Necanthrope who has been 'Soul Weaved' must make a CONC roll at a –5 to disperse the memory to the back of their mind.

COMPULSION – Disadvantage, 2 Points/Rank (1–10): Some Necanthropes, after entering the White, grow certain needs, gradual urges and compulsions. However, they are usually a great deal more sick and unnatural than the normal traditional obsessions and perversions of normal society. Necanthrope compulsions are disturbing and perverted, abhorant to everyday people, although the compulsive Necanthrope may on some occasions find circumstances and companions comply with their disturbing needs. In some cases, the Necanthrope's compulsions can get out of hand and uncontrollable, sometimes going as far as serial killing in order to obtain the need. This is when operative investigators and Internals are called in. If the Necanthrope has been really bad, they will be paid a visit from Cloak Division. Compulsions are Blood, Sex, Children, Sadism, Masochism, Sado-Masochism, etc. The perversions are well beyond the realm of a normal person.

PHYSICAL MANIPULATION – Advantage, 1 Point/Rank (1–10): Necanthropes with Physical Manipulation can bend limbs and bones towards awkward angles. Some have permanently twisted limbs and double joints. Physical Manipulation is useful for Necanthropes with skills like Sleight and Sneaking since they can stretch and dislocate themselves into the varied positions required. The most manipulative of which can even disassemble their own backbones.

ALIENATION – Disadvantage, 15 Points: Alienated Necanthropes are unfortunates disbanded from the Necanthrope Society. They may receive no help

or advice from the Preceptor Teeth or any other Necanthropes. Alienated Necanthropes will not even receive a Vassal Ebon to serve them. Such Necanthropes are usually despised by other Necanthropes even though they may be no less powerful.

HIGH PAIN THRESHOLD – Advantage, 3 Points/Rank (1–10): To Necanthropes with a High Pain Threshold, agony is of little consequence to them. Guns and blades may kill and destroy them, but it shall never hurt them as the challenge with the White. During the torturous struggle, it was a test beyond death, a pain beyond understanding. Now the Necanthrope has left the White, the pain of physical damage is of little comparison. All PHYS rolls are at PHYS + the level of this advantage for the purpose of pain–related rolls i.e. Stun rolls in combat.

VOICE CONTROL – Advantage, 5/10 Points/Rank (1–2): The Necanthrope with voice control has complete control over his lips and vocal chords. At Rank 1, they can lower their voice to a deathly growl and do so without moving their lips. The whole effect is disturbing and unnerving: Effective if wanting to intimidate a victim. Rank 1 gives the Necanthrope +1 Intimidate, Rank 2 amplifies the Necanthropes White Reverence. The speech has more control making it harder for the Ebon or Brain Waster to concentrate or resist. Rank 2 Voice Control gives the Necanthrope +7 to the victims CONC rolls at White Reverence compared to the previous +6 CONC.

When the Necanthrope has spent their fifty points, normal advantages and disadvantages may be chosen as long as they do not relate to the character's past (i.e. friend/enemy, etc.) and may spend points on traditional Ebon Abilities (Healing, Blast, etc.) as well as higher ranks in the Gore Cannon skill.

The starter Necanthrope may also spend points on normal stats and skills (STR, DEX, Pistol, Detect, etc.), although they may not raise their Formulae above Rank 11.

When gaining experience, the Necanthrope may increase and buy new Necanthrope traits like any other abilities or skills. If the Necanthrope wishes to raise any characteristics, then maximums are as follows:

STR –	30
DEX –	30
DIA –	20
CONC –	20
PHYS –	Still affected by other attributes
KNOW –	Still affected by other attributes
COOL –	20
FLUX –	Unlimited
CHA –	20



The Pit, one of the preferred operatives' haunts, has recently included 'Glyph Pillars' to stop practical jokes like the Brain Waster's favourite: Using Blast causing an unsuspecting operative's glass to shatter. The cost for the inclusion of these Ebb Negaters –Glyph Pillars drain Flux if an ability is used nearby– was met by Dark Lament to encourage good Human/Ebon relations.

THE FLOW OF THE EBB

"Each of you here today has one thing in common with the person standing next to you. You are all endowed with the gift of the Ebb. You have all experienced what it is capable of. What you do not see is the evil within you. I see all your evils. I look upon you and I see no–one with more than twenty years of life on their face. I have lived nine hundred and twenty years– look at me, and you will know what will become of you. Observe in me the knowledge which you all seek. This will be revealed in the course of time. But be warned. If anyone deviates, even slightly, from the path I have laid down I shall scar their bodies and blister their minds. I have in my mind a maze, which holds secrets and symbols that could destroy cities, and keep souls in bondage. If you follow the path, you may never have the misfortune to gaze upon these symbols. With this warning go now, have my blessing. Always face towards the white, and we shall meet again on the other side. You may leave."

Preceptor Teeth. Giving an induction speech to Ebons beginning their training at Meny.

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HOW TO USE EBON ABILITIES

It was found, some time ago, that it was possible to manipulate the power of the Ebb through the use of complicated hyperbolic equations. These equations take a very short time to calculate (0.6 seconds upon average) with the use of a DeathSuit as a catalyst (equation accelerator).

When a player wishes to use their abilities, it is not normally necessary to calculate how long it will take as 0.6 of a second is too small a unit of time to be taken into consideration during a game. It should, however, be taken note of during a combat round.

CALCULATION PHASE

At the beginning of the round, the player should check their initiative to ascertain when they can act in the round. If they wish to use their Ebon abilities during combat, they must start in a phase where they can act i.e. an action. This is the 'calculation phase' where the Ebon must trigger the hyperbolic equations needed to perform the ability. They can do nothing else in this action apart from their normal movement, i.e. walking, running or sprinting. At this point, the Ebon must spend the appropriate amount of FLUX used to activate the ability.

MODIFIERS

If at some point in the 'calculation phase' the character's concentration is disturbed, for example, if

the character is shot, frightened, falling, physically attacked or interrupted by a loud noise such as someone shouting close by, then a concentration (CONC) roll should be made with modifiers taking into consideration the situation that the character is in –for example– an Ebon in a quiet room concentrating on an equation disturbed by a loud noise outside would have, at the most, a –5 modifier depending on how loud the noise was, etc., whilst an Ebon in the middle of fire–fight who gets shot in the leg while formulating an equation would be at a –17 modifier. Other situations that should be taken into consideration are fear, phobias and how cool the Ebon is before they try and formulate their ability, etc.

"The best way to visualise this is to try and work out a difficult mathematical equation in your head while someone is shaking you and shouting in your face."

If the CONC roll is successful, the ability will happen in the next phase of the round, whether the character is active in this round or not. If the calculation was made in phase five of a round, the ability will be activated in phase one of the following round. If the concentration (CONC) roll failed, the Ebon loses the equation before completing it and also loses their FLUX that would normally have been spent on the ability. They must then start again in their next active phase if they wish to try and perform the ability again.

FORETHOUGHT

It is possible to perform the calculation phase before any possible combat situation arises. This can be both helpful and dangerous. If, for example, the character believes that they are about to enter a situation where combat will be necessary, they calculate their equation before the round starts. If, then, there is no combat, the character cannot stop the ability from activating and must use their equation unnecessarily. On the other hand, if there is a combat situation, requiring the use of rounds, actions and phases, then the ability will activate on the first phase of the first round. To perform the skill at the necessary time, the character must make a Formulae roll at a –5 when the GM declares the beginning of the round. If the roll is successful, they may perform the ability in phase one. If the roll fails, then the character is unable to calculate the equation before the beginning of the round and must wait until their first active phase.

"Everything is numbers these days. People, places, even the Ebb. 400 years ago, you had to feel for your abilities, reach out and touch them with your mind. Now it's all 'I just string a few equations together and POW!'. The art has gone, crushed once more by science."

Frost, Necanthrope, Mort 784 SD.

THE POWER OF THE MIND

Although the Ebon mind is powerful, the other races are not totally at their mercy. The Ebon may be able to manipulate the Ebb to use it as they like but, as with the other races, the Ebon –when attacked by Ebb energies– is as vulnerable as anyone else. The brain is a very delicate organ but the mind can be an impenetrable fortress.

With most Ebon abilities, characters are able to make an Ebb Save against the attack. When a successful attack roll has been made, the victim must roll their CONC minus the rank of the ability. If they are successful, then they are able to fend off the attack with no ill effects. If they fail, then the ability acts on them as normal. There are only two abilities which a character can save against; Communication and Senses. These are abilities which make a direct assault on the victim's mind so this means that their mind is capable of resisting the effect of the attack.

THE EBON ABILITIES

There are 13 standard abilities that an Ebon is able to perform. Each ability has 20 Ranks of expertise. These abilities are bought like normal skills during character generation with one exception, there is no stat limit on the Ranks that you can buy. Instead, the maximum starting Rank of each ability is 10.

The player can buy any or all of these abilities with the exception of Gore Cannon and Formulae. Gore Cannon cannot be purchased until the Ebon has changed into a Necanthrope when they will receive it automatically.

Formulae is an Ebon skill which has 20 Ranks. This can neither be purchased or increased with experience. Formulae is awarded by the Games Master whenever they see fit. It represents the knowledge of the Ebb and also how well the character can read glyphs. Every Ebon starts with a Formulae of Rank 1.

EBON LIST

EBON ABILITY	SCIENCE FRICTION EQUIPMENT
Blast: Force Ebb Kinetic	Flintlock
Blue Thermal: Glacial Ebb	Thermal Gauge
Communication: Voice of the Ebb	Distracter
Detect: Ebb Awareness	Pathfinder
Enhancement: Augmentation	Pineal Stim
Healing: Art of Healing & Purification	Ebb Medi-kit
Illumination: Ebb Illumination	Illumination Gem
Protect: Ebon Guard	DeathSuit
Reality Folding: Ebb Manipulation	Vector Box
Red Thermal: Inferno Ebb	Thermal Gauge
Senses: Sense Perception	Jade Probe
Telekinesis: Force Focus	Focus
Gore Cannon: Celrydreahad	Gore Cannon (Necanthropes Only)

BLAST

Rank	Ability
1	Blast 1 – ARM DMG: 2, DMG: 2, PEN: 4, Range: 25m. Cost 1 FLUX.
2	Bomb 1 – ARM DMG: 2, DMG: 2, PEN: 4, Range: 25m, Blast Radius: 3m. Cost 2 FLUX.
3	Blast 2 – ARM DMG: 2, DMG: 5, PEN: 5, Range: 25m. Cost 3 FLUX.
4	Bomb 2 – ARM DMG: 2, DMG: 5, PEN: 5, Range: 25m, Blast Radius: 3m. Cost 4 FLUX.
5	Blast 3 – ARM DMG: 2, DMG: 7, PEN: 7, Range: 25m. Cost 4 FLUX.
6	Bomb 3 – ARM DMG: 2, DMG: 7, PEN: 7, Range: 25m, Blast Cost 6 FLUX. Radius: 3m.
7	Blast 4 – ARM DMG: 3, DMG: 10, PEN: 8, Range: 25m. Cost 7 FLUX.
8	Bomb 4 – ARM DMG: 3, DMG: 10, PEN: 8, Range: 25m, Blast Radius: 3m. Cost 8 FLUX.
9	Blast 5 – ARM DMG: 3, DMG: 12, PEN: 10, Range: 25m. Cost 9 FLUX.
10	Bomb 5 – ARM DMG: 3, DMG: 12, PEN: 10, Range: 25m, Blast Radius: 5m. Cost 10 FLUX.
11	Blast 6 – ARM DMG: 4, DMG: 15, PEN: 12, Range: 40m. Cost 11 FLUX.
12	Bomb 6 – ARM DMG: 4, DMG: 15, PEN: 10, Range: 40m, Blast Radius: 5m. Cost 12 FLUX.
13	Blast 7 – ARM DMG: 4, DMG: 17, PEN: 14, Range: 40m. Cost 13 FLUX.
14	Bomb 7 – ARM DMG: 4, DMG: 17, PEN: 10, Range: 40m, Blast Radius: 7m. Cost 14 FLUX.
15	Blast 8 – ARM DMG: 5, DMG: 20, PEN: 15, Range: 40m. Cost 15 FLUX.
16	Bomb 8 – ARM DMG: 5, DMG: 20, PEN: 12, Range: 40m, Blast Radius: 9m. Cost 16 FLUX.
17	Blast 9 – ARM DMG: 5, DMG: 22, PEN: 17, Range: 40m. Cost 17 FLUX.
18	Bomb 9 – ARM DMG: 10, DMG: 30, PEN: 15, Range: 40m, Blast Radius: 10m. Cost 18 FLUX.
19	Blast 10 – ARM DMG: 10, DMG: 25, PEN: 20, Range: 40m. Cost 19 FLUX.
20	Bomb 10 – ARM DMG: 20, DMG: 40, PEN: 15, Range: 40m, Blast Radius: 10m. Cost 20 FLUX.

Free Ability: Crack ice and glass.

BLUE THERMAL

Rank	Ability
1	Resist Heat 1 – Up to 50 degrees C, duration is CONC in minutes, Cost: 1 FLUX.
2	Create Cold 1 – Lower temperature of object to –10 degrees C, takes 1 action to lower temp. and 2 rounds to heat up., Cost: 2 FLUX.
3	Freezing Blast 1 – DMG: 6, ARM DMG: 2, PEN: 4, Range: 8m, Cost: 2 FLUX.

4 Ice Blade 1 – DMG: 8, ARM DMG: 2, PEN: 4, when splintered DMG: 2 with further wound, Cost: 4 FLUX.

5 Cold Aura 1 – DMG: 6, duration is one round, Cost: 5 FLUX.

6 Resist Heat 2 – Up to 80 degrees C, duration is CONC in minutes, Cost: 2 FLUX.

7 Create Cold 2 – Lower temp. of object to –30 degrees C, takes 1 action to lower temp. and 3 rounds to heat up., Cost: 6 FLUX.

8 Freezing Blast 2 – DMG: 8, ARM DMG: 4, PEN: 6, Range: 12m, Cost: 4 FLUX.

9 Ice Blade 2 – DMG: 12, ARM DMG: 4, PEN: 8, when splintered DMG: 4 with further wound, Cost: 8 FLUX.

10 Cold Aura 2 – DMG: 9, PEN: 1, duration is one round, Cost: 15 FLUX.

11 Resist Heat 3 – Up to 100 degrees C, duration is CONC in minutes, Cost: 4 FLUX.

12 Create Cold 3 – Lower temp. of object to –60 degrees C within range of 1m, takes 1 action to lower temp. and 4 rounds to heat up or cool an area of 20m in diameter, Cost: 10 FLUX.

13 Freezing Blast 3 – DMG: 10, ARM DMG: 6, PEN 8, Range: 17m, Cost: 6 FLUX.

14 Ice Blade 3 – DMG: 16, ARM DMG: 6, PEN: 12, when splintered DMG: 6 with further wound, Cost: 12.

15 Cold Aura 3 – DMG: 11, ARM DMG: 1, PEN: 2, duration is one round, Cost: 20 FLUX.

16 Resist Heat 4 – Up to 240 degrees C, duration is CONC in minutes, Cost: 6 FLUX.

17 Create Cold 4 – Lower temp. of object to –254 degrees C within range of 10m or area of 50m in diameter to –60 degrees C, takes 1 action to cool down and 5 to heat up, Cost: 15 FLUX.

18 Freezing Blast 4 – DMG: 12, ARM DMG: 8, PEN: 10, Range: 25m, Cost: 8 FLUX.

19 Ice Blade 4 – DMG: 20, ARM DMG: 8, PEN: 16, when splintered DMG: 8 with further wound, Cost: 16 FLUX.

20 Chill – Match hits in opponents body for FLUX to freeze until body naturally thaws out.

Free Ability: Make ice cubes, keep drink cool, ice cream does not run etc.

COMMUNICATION

Rank Ability

1 Thought Plant 1 – Short message, no more than 12 words, range sight, Cost: 1 FLUX.

2 Thought Plant 2 – Short message, no more than 30 words, range sight, Cost: 2 FLUX.

3 Thought Plant 3 – Send message to Ebon if known, range sight within 100km, no word limit, dur. = 30 seconds, Cost: 4 FLUX.

4 Thought Plant 4 – Send message, range 100km, no word limit, dur. = 30 seconds, Cost: 5 FLUX.

5 Converse 1 – Send and receive message, range sight, no more than 12 words, Cost: 5 FLUX.

6 Converse 2 – Send and receive message, range 100km, no word limit, dur. = unlimited, Cost: 6 FLUX.

7 Converse 3 – Send and receive message, range 500km, dur. = unlimited, Cost: 7 FLUX.

8 Mind Read 1 – Basic name, date of birth, address etc., range touch, dur. = 3 minutes, Cost: 8 FLUX. Save Required.

9 Mind Read 2 – Moderate as mind read one as well as friends, family, what I did today etc., range touch, dur. = 5 minutes, Cost: 9 FLUX. Save Required.

10 Thought Plant 5 – Power aura, person sees you as someone to be trusted/followed if they are physically or mentally inferior to you, range touch, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 10 FLUX. Save Required.

11 Thought Plant 6 – Charm, person falls in love with/has great admiration for you, dur. = CHA in hours, Cost: 11 FLUX. Save Required.

12 Converse 4 – Planet wide communication with anyone known, dur. = CONC in seconds, range 18 000km, Cost: 12 FLUX.

13 Mind Read 3 – Super, important information, intentions, secrets, hidden thoughts, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 13 FLUX. Save Required.

14 Thought Plant 7 – Transmits emotions, love, hate, sadness, depression, etc., dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 14 FLUX. Save Required.

15 Converse 5 – Planet wide communication within 18 000km, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 15 FLUX.

16 Mind Read 4 – Persuasion, tell truth about questions asked, dur. = CONC in minutes, range touch, Cost: 16 FLUX. Save Required.

17 Charm – Permanent and passive, no cost. Save Required.

18 Thought Plant 8 – Rewrite person's memories (At Games Master's Discretion), range touch, permanent, Cost: 25 FLUX. Save Required.

19 Thought Plant 9 – Slaver, total mind and body control, dur. = CONC in minutes or until CONC broken, range 5m, Cost: 19 FLUX. Save Required.

20 Thought Plant 10 – Possession, complete conscious mind of Ebon is dumped into mind of the possessed, along with all skills/knowledge/abilities. Ebon's body becomes inert, FLUX cost – 50, duration – till exorcised or leaves of own free will. Save Required.

Free Ability: "Notice me..." They look round and notice you.

DETECT

Rank Ability

1 Detect 1 – Dur. = CONC in minutes, Range 1.5m radius around user, FLUX used in last 4 hours, Cost: 1 FLUX.

2 Track 1 – Dur. = CONC in minutes, follow Ebon aura no longer than 6 hours, range 1.5m radius around user, Cost: 2 FLUX.

3 Detect 2 – Dur. = CONC in minutes, range 4m radius around user, FLUX used in last 8 hours, Cost: 3 FLUX.

4 Track 2 – Know Ebon/Brain Waster/Necanthrope by taste (aura), trail no longer than 12 hours, range 4m around user, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 4 FLUX.

5 Detect 3 – Dur. = CONC in minutes, Range 10m radius around user, FLUX used in last 24 hours, Cost: 5.

6 Track 3 – Trail no longer than 24 hours, follow at range 8m, know taste, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 6 FLUX.

7 Formulation 1 – Used with other abilities to find out what rank/how much FLUX used etc., Cost: 5 FLUX.

8 True Track 1 – Bloodhound style, need personal item of person being traced. The more personal the better. (At the Games Master's discretion), Dur. = CONC in hours, scent must be no more than 12 hours old, Cost: 8 FLUX.

9 Detect 4 – Ebon knowledge, know Ebon scent, will recognise if found again, must be no older than 12 hours, dur. = CONC in minutes, can follow within 10m of the Ebon, Cost: 4.

10 Track 4 – Able to track flux up to 5 days old within range of 10m, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 10 FLUX.

11 Formulation 2 – Physical description and how much flux in last 4 hours, used in conjunction with Detect, Cost: 11.

12 Track 5 – Seek out specific person within 500km, must know their scent as in Rank 9, to location, duration is instant, Cost: 15 FLUX.

13 True Track 2 – Track person from item from flux used in last 12 hours, dur. = CONC x2 hours, Cost: 2 FLUX.

14 Impression 1 – Vague recollection of an incident in the last 24 hours (At Games Master's discretion), dur. = CONC in rounds, Cost: 14 FLUX.

15 Formulation 3 – Have intimate knowledge of Ebon's abilities i.e. formula/abilities and their ranks and how much FLUX they have. Can be used in conjunction with any other ability, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 15 FLUX.

16 Impression 2 – Clearer recollection of incident e.g. how many people, where they were, some images of objects and bits of conversations (At Games Master's Discretion), dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 16 FLUX.

17 Formulation 4 – As Formulation 3 but can clean up pieces of the person's personality and manner etc. (At Games Master's discretion), dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 15 FLUX.

18 Impression 3 – Perfect recollection of incident in immediate area (10m max.) in last 12 hours, dur. = CONC in rounds, Cost: 20.

19 Defensive Precognition – "I've got a bad feeling about this..." No FLUX cost, passive. (At Games Master's discretion.)

20 Death Seek – Able to see images from last 24 hours of life, images last CONC in minutes, range touch, Cost: 20 FLUX.

Free Ability: Sense Ebon.

ENHANCEMENT

Rank Ability

1 Teeth – 3 DMG, 2 ARM DMG, 1 PEN, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 1 FLUX.

2 Claws – 5 DMG, 2 ARM DMG, 2 PEN, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 2 FLUX.

3 Attribute Boost 1 – +1 STR/2 FLUX, max. 5, dur. = CONC in minutes.

4 Attribute Boost 2 – +1 DEX/2 FLUX, max. 5,

dur. = CONC in minutes.

5 Attribute Boost 3 – +1 PHYS/2 FLUX, max. 5, dur. = CONC in minutes.

6 Attribute Boost 4 – Resist fatigue, 3 FLUX/ 10 hours without rest.

7 DNA Hallmark – 1 FLUX/tattoo.

8 Attribute Boost 5 – Toughened skin, P.V. 4, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 8 FLUX.

9 Attribute Boost 6 – +1 STR/1 FLUX, max. 7, dur. = CONC in minutes.

10 Ebb Beast – Cost: 20 FLUX, abilities; +5 STR, +5 DEX, tough skin P.V. 5, Teeth (Rank 1), Claws (Rank 2), dur. = CONC in minutes.

11 Ebb Razor Claws: 10 DMG, 4 ARM DMG, 6 PEN, dur=CONC in minutes. Cost =11 FLUX

12 Attribute Boost 7 – +1 DEX/1 FLUX, max. 7, dur. = CONC in minutes.

13 Physical Manipulation 1 – Teeth (Rank 1), Claws (Rank 2), permanent, 20 FLUX.

14 Physical Manipulation 2 – Growth +/– 10% : +/–50%, 30 FLUX, permanent.

15 Attribute Boost 8 – Tough Skin P.V. 10, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 15 FLUX.

16 Physical Manipulation 3 – Hits increase, dur. = CONC in minutes, 4 FLUX/hit up to double hits/location.

17 Attribute Boost 9 – Resist fatigue, 4 FLUX/day, no need to sleep, max. 8 days.

18 Attribute Boost 10 – Tough Skin, P.V. 18, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 18 FLUX.

19 Physical Manipulation 4 – Body Manipulation, grow extra joints, limbs, 30 FLUX/limb, time taken 30 days – CONC. Permanent. (All at Games Master's Discretion)

20 Ebb Demon – 50 FLUX, abilities: +8 STR, +8 DEX, +5 PHYS, Tough Skin P.V. 18, Teeth (Rank 1), Claws (Rank 11), dur. = 1 hour.

Free Ability: Stronger skin, teeth, nails etc.

HEALING

Rank Ability

1 Heal 1 – Stop bleeding, one wound/FLUX.

2 Heal 2 – Repair tissue/bone, one hit/FLUX.

3 Heal 3 – Stop bleeding, two wounds/FLUX.

4 Heal 4 – Repair tissue/bone, two hits/FLUX.

5 Heal 5 – Stop bleeding, three wounds/FLUX.

6 Heal 6 – Repair tissue/bone, three hits/FLUX.

7 Heal 7 – Repair tissue/bone, four hits/FLUX.

8 Heal 8 – Repair tissue/bone, five hits/FLUX.

9 Heal 9 – Repair tissue/bone, six hits/FLUX.

10 Heal 10 – Stop all bleeding, all wounds/FLUX.

11 Regeneration 1 – (Small) Fingers, toes etc., one FLUX/hit point in that location.

12 Regeneration 2 – (Large) Arms, legs etc., one FLUX/hit point in that location.

13 Regeneration 3 – (Super) Torso, one FLUX/hit point in that location.

14 Body System Purification – Removes all drug addictions, double FLUX cost for combat drugs, takes 4 hours.

15 Physical Manipulation 1 – Increase hits, 10 FLUX/hit permanent. Max. half original hits.

16 Precognitive Healing – 2 FLUX/hit up to a maximum of 20 hits.

17 Retardation of Psychosis – 10 FLUX/rank of Psychosis, duration 48 hours, takes 5 hours to accomplish.

18 Heal 11 – Passive Healing for self. Cure all hits/5 FLUX.

19 Heal 12 – Resurrection if no more than 4 minutes dead, Cost: 40 FLUX, 30 with Ebon Medi-kit.

20+ Soul Caging – Cost: 20 FLUX, See explanation.

Free Ability: Heal scratches, bruises etc.

ILLUMINATION

Rank Ability

1 Blind – Blinding flash of light, forces CONC roll –6 or blindness occurs for 1 round, flash is 10m area, Cost: 1 FLUX.

2 Light 1 – Finger Torch, 10m beam, duration CONC in minutes, Cost: 2 FLUX.

3 Light 2 – Finger Torch, 20m beam, duration CONC in minutes, Cost: 3 FLUX.

4 Light 3 – Hand/palm torch 2m wide, 25m beam, duration CONC in minutes, Cost: 4 FLUX.

5 Charge 1 – Range = touch, DMG: stun, PHYS –2 or stunned for 4 rounds, Cost: 5 FLUX.

6 Light 4 – Orb (free floating), illuminates 15m area, duration CONC in minutes, Cost: 6 FLUX.

7 Light 5 – Eye torch, 10m beam, does not affect eye sight, duration CONC in minutes, Cost: 7

FLUX.

8 Light 6 – Orb (free floating – follows user), illuminates 25m area, duration CONC in minutes, Cost: 8 FLUX.

9 Charge 2 – Range = touch, DMG: stun, PHYS –5 or stunned for 10 rounds, Cost: 9 FLUX.

10 Light 7 – Star Orb (small), duration 6 rounds, 70m area, Cost: 10 FLUX.

11 Ebon Eyes – Physical changes – eyes now glow slightly, choose colour, skin appears bright and very clean, immunity to electric shocks up to 10,000 volts, passive.

12 Light 8 – Orb (As with Light 6), directional control, range 30m, illuminates 30m area, duration CONC in minutes, Cost: 12 FLUX.

13 Enlightenment – All abilities with durations +1 minute onto duration/FLUX point extra spent.

14 Charge 3 – Range touch, DMG: 5 + stun for 10 rounds, PEN: n/a, Cost: 14 FLUX.

15 Light 9 – Star Orb (large), duration 6 rounds, 150m area, Cost: 15 FLUX.

16 Perfect Night Vision – Cost 1 FLUX/hour.

17 Charge 5 – Range = 40m, DMG: 20 + stun for 10 rounds, PEN: 14, Cost: 17 FLUX.

18 Light 10 – Nova Orb (As Star Orb), duration 10 minutes, 1km radius centered on user, daylight, Cost: 18 FLUX.

19 Chameleon – Refract light through DeathSuit, true chameleon skin, invisible, duration CONC in minutes, Cost: 19 FLUX.

20 Glyph Creation – Simple – 20 FLUX, Moderate – 40 FLUX, Difficult – 60 FLUX, See explanation.

Free Ability: Dim lights slightly, make lights flicker. Give small static shocks. Range: touch.

PROTECT

Rank Ability

1 Charge DeathSuit – +1 P.V. per FLUX/day, max. 5.

2 Heal DeathSuit – +1 per FLUX/round.

3 Boost DeathSuit – + 10 I.D./ FLUX (lasts until used), max. 25 per location.

4 Channel 1 – store FLUX, maximum 10, passive.

5 Light to Medium – Your suit is now a medium DeathSuit and gets 1 FLUX/day, passive.

6 First graft – +2 Physique whilst wearing suit, passive.

7 Repel – Protects against fire, cold, rain and electricity, passive.

8 Soothing touch – +2 Cool whilst wearing suit, passive.

9 Channel 2 – store FLUX, maximum 20, passive.

10 Medium to Heavy.

11 Second graft – +2 Strength whilst wearing suit, passive.

12 Suck FLUX – One per touch to the suit's maximum.

13 Interdermalization – Hide DeathSuit under skin, Cost: 1 FLUX to put under, none to bring it out.

14 Channel 3 – Store FLUX, 30 maximum, passive.

15 Heavy to Super.

16 Third graft – +2 Dexterity whilst wearing suit, passive.

17 Living Suit – DeathSuit is sentient and aware.

18 Soul Store – Stores your soul for one day, See explanation.

19 Channel 4 – Store FLUX, maximum 40, passive.

20 Super to Angel.

Free ability: Keep DeathSuit clean, no dust or rain etc.

REALITY FOLDING

Rank Ability

1 Jump Port 1 – Self – 5m, Must be able to see destination, Cost: 1 FLUX.

2 Jump Port 2 – Self – 10m, Must be able to see destination, Cost: 2 FLUX.

3 Jump Port 3 – Self – 20m, Must be able to see destination, Cost: 3 FLUX.

4 Jump Port 4 – Object – free standing, inanimate, range from user 5m, max. weight 1kg, Cost: 5 FLUX.

5 Jump Port 5 – Object – free standing, inanimate, range from user 10m, max. weight 2kg, Cost: 5 FLUX.

6 Jump Port 6 – Object – free standing, inanimate, range from user 20m, max. weight 10kg, Cost: 6 FLUX.

7 Jump Port 7 – Self – 50m, Must be able to see destination, Cost: 7 FLUX.

8 Jump Port 8 – Self – 100m, Must be able to see destination, Cost: 8 FLUX.

9 Jump Port 9 – Self – 200m, Must be able to see destination, Cost: 9 FLUX.

10 Jump Port 10 – Self – Wallwalk, dur. = CONC in seconds, Cost: 10 FLUX.

11 Jump Port 11 – Self – Blind, if clear picture is known, i.e. home, max. 5km, Cost: 11 FLUX.

12 Jump Port 12 – Self – Must be able to see destination within 20m, can take one other person/object up to 80kg, Cost: 12 FLUX.

13 Jump Port 13 – Self – Must be able to see destination within 50m, can take one other person/object up to 80kg, Cost: 13 FLUX.

14 Jump Port 14 – Self – Safe Port, Must know destination within 5 km, can take one other person/object up to 80kg, Cost: 14 FLUX.

15 Mass Port 1 – Everything in a 2.5m radius of user ported within 200m or sight, Cost: 30 FLUX.

16 Mass Port 2 – Selective, can take up to three people if 5m or closer to user within 200m or sight, Cost: 35 + 5 FLUX/person.

17 Jump Port 15 – Self – Planet wide within 20 000km if known or have a picture, as Port 11, Cost: 25 FLUX.

18 Jump Port 16 – Object – Any (even guns, armour etc.) from other people, max. weight 50kg, no more than 50m away to hand or side, Cost: 18 FLUX.

19 Jump Port 17 – Gate – Navigational insight, universe known.

20 Jump Port 18 – Foldship – Port foldship from A to B. Astral navigation must be known.

Free Ability: Palm object, real sleight. 1/2lb objects or less.

RED THERMAL

Rank Ability

1 Resist Cold 1 – Min. temp –10 degrees C, dur. = CONC in minutes, Cost: 1 FLUX.

2 Create Heat 1 – Raise temp. of inanimate object, Range – touch, Cost: 2 FLUX, max. temp 40 degrees C, takes 1 action to heat up and 2 rounds to cool.

3 Burn 1 – 6 DMG, 2 ARM DMG, 3 PEN, Range 10m, Cost: 2 FLUX.

4 Thermal Ball 1 – 10 DMG, n/a PEN, Range 25m, Cost: 4 FLUX.

5 Body Blaze 1 – Cost: 5 FLUX, 6 DMG, 0 PEN, Range touch, dur. = 1 round.

6 Resist Cold 2 – Cost: 2 FLUX, Min. temp –30 degrees C, dur. = CONC in minutes.

7 Create Heat 2 – Raise temp. of inanimate object, Range – touch, Cost: 4 FLUX, Max. temp. 70 degrees C, takes 1 action to heat up and 3 rounds to cool down.

8 Burn 2 – 8 DMG, 4 ARM DMG, 4 PEN, Range 15m, Cost: 4 FLUX.

9 Thermal Ball 2 – 15 DMG, 0 PEN, Range 25m, Cost: 8 FLUX.

10 Body Blaze 2 – Cost: 15 FLUX, 9 DMG, 2 ARM DMG, 1 PEN, Range touch, dur. = 1 round.

11 Resist Cold 3 – Cost: 4 FLUX, Dur. CONC in minutes, min. temp. –60 degrees C.

12 Create Heat 3 – Raise temp. of object/area to a max. of 100/30 degrees C, Range: 1m/20m diameter, takes 1 action to heat and 4 rounds to cool. Cost 10 FLUX.

13 Burn 3 – 10 DMG, 6 ARM DMG, 6 PEN, Range 20m, Cost: 10 FLUX.

14 Thermal Ball 3 – 20 DMG, n/a PEN, Range 25m, Cost: 12 FLUX.

15 Body Blaze 3 – Cost: 20 FLUX, 11 DMG, 4 ARM DMG, 2 PEN, Range 1m, dur. = 1 round.

16 Resist Cold 4 – Cost: 6 FLUX, Dur. = CONC in minutes, Min. temp. is –254 degrees C.

17 Create Heat 4 – Cost: 15 FLUX, Raise temp. of object/area to max. of 100/50 degrees C. Range: 10m/50m diameter, takes 1 action to heat and 5 to cool.

18 Burn 4 – 12 DMG, 8 ARM DMG, 8 PEN, Range 30m, Cost: 12 FLUX.

19 Thermal Ball 4 – Cost: 16 FLUX, 25 DMG, n/a PEN, Range 25m.

20 Cinder – Destroys/burns to ash, FLUX cost = total hits per location of target, Range – touch.

Free Ability: Hand cigarette lighter

SENSES

(Affected senses are taste, hearing, sight and smell)

Rank Ability

1 Shock Sense 1 – Removes sense CONC in seconds. Range – touch, choose sense, Cost: 1 FLUX. Save Required.

2 Shock Sense 2 – Removes sense CONC in rounds. Range – touch, choose sense, Cost: 2

FLUX. Save Required.

3 Shock Sense 3 – Removes sense CONC in seconds, range – 5m, choose sense, Cost: 3 FLUX. Save Required.

4 Restore 1 – Restore sense deprived from 'Shock Sense' Rank 1, range 5m, Cost: 4 FLUX.

5 Restore 2 – Restore sense deprived from 'Shock Sense' Rank 1 & 2, range 5m, Cost: 5 FLUX.

6 Shock Sense 4 – Removes sense 1 minute, range 5m, Cost: 6 FLUX. Save Required.

7 Shock Sense 5 – Scare. Unmodified Fear roll, failed roll means loss of next 4 actions, due to shock, range 80m, Cost: 7 FLUX. Save Required.

8 Restore 3 – Clear senses, sober up, removes shock or confusion for Shock Sense 1 – 5, Cost: 8 FLUX.

9 Shock Sense 6 – Erase 5 minutes of someone's memory permanent, range touch, Cost: 9 FLUX. Save Required.

10 Shock Sense 7 – Remove sense permanently at touch, Cost: 10 FLUX. Save Required.

11 Mind Block 1 – Cost 1 FlUX/hour, stops all detection by Ebon abilities.

12 Super Sense 1 – See in infra-red spectrum of light. Cost: 1 FLUX, duration CONC in minutes.

13 Super Sense 2 – See in ultra violet spectrum of light. Cost: 1 FLUX, duration CONC in minutes.

14 Restore 4 – Any permanently lost sense at touch, Cost: 10.

15 Audio projection – Save sound to disk, duration 2 hours, Cost: 5 FLUX.

16 Video projection – Save sight to disk, duration 1 hour, Cost: 3 FLUX.

17 Restore 5 – Clear sense, passive, shock sense any rank has no effect.

18 Super Sense 3 – Perfect/total recall, cost 5 FLUX/Ebon's CONC in minutes. In that time, a character will remember everything seen and heard (even if player does not).

19 Mind Block 2 – Permanent, passive.

20 Ebon Backlash – "I don't want it! Have it back!" Match FLUX used and return to sender.

Free Ability: +1 Rank Exceptional Vision or Hearing (Player's choice)

TELEKINESIS

Rank Ability

1 Lift & Throw 1 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 12m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 1 FLUX.

2 Lift & Throw 2 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 24m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 2 FLUX.

3 Lift & Throw 3 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 36m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 3 FLUX.

4 Lift & Throw 4 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 48m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 4 FLUX.

5 Shield 1 – P.V. 5, I.D. 20, dur. CONC in minutes or till destroyed. Cost 5 FLUX.

6 Manipulation 1 – Throttle, choke target, must make PHYS roll at a –5 or is considered stunned for 5 seconds, range 4m – sight. Cost 6 FLUX.

7 Fly 1 – Speed 15m/rnd, dur. CONC in rounds, max. height – 1000m. Cost 7 FLUX.

8 Lift & Throw 5 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 60m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 8 FLUX.

9 Lift & Throw 6 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 72m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 9 FLUX.

10 Lift & Throw 7 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 84m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 10 FLUX.

11 Lift & Throw 8 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 96m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 11 FLUX.

12 Fly 2 – Speed 60m/rnd, dur. CONC in minutes, max. height – 2000m. Cost 10 FLUX.

13 Manipulation 2 – Throttle, DMG: 15, ARM DMG: 4, PEN: 8, Range: 30m. Cost 12 FLUX.

14 Shield 2 – P.V. 12, I.D. 40, dur. is CONC in minutes or till destroyed. Cost 10 FLUX.

15 Lift & Throw 9 – Within 10m, Standard weight

1 kg at 108m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 15 FLUX.

16 Lift & Throw 10 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 120m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 16 FLUX.

17 Lift & Throw 11 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 132m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 17 FLUX.

18 Lift & Throw 12 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 144m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 18 FLUX.

19 Lift & Throw 13 – Within 10m, Standard weight 1 kg at 156m /round, weight is inversely proportional to speed, Cost is equal to rank. Cost 19n FLUX.

20 Manipulation 3 – Force intrusion, DMG: 35, ARM DMG: 10, PEN:15, Range: 25m. Cost 20 FLUX.

Free Ability: Move small objects weighing up to 10g. Maximum distance 1m, slowly.

GORE CANNON

(Necanthropes only)

Rank Ability

1 Ebb Gore Generation – Create Gore Cannon (One only).

2 Flesh Friction 1 – DMG: 10, PEN: n/a, range: 25m, Cost: 2 FLUX, No Armour Save. Damage is taken by first living thing. DeathSuit counts as living.

3 Sting 1 – Paralysing sting, DMG: Stun for 3 rounds, PEN: 6, range: touch, Cost: 3 FLUX.

4 Intrusion 1 – Fear roll at a rating of 4, range: 10m, Cost: 4 FLUX.

5 Psychovirus 1 – COOL roll or lose 1 COOL/5 FLUX spent by Necanthrope, effects last for 24 hours, range: 10m.

6 Flesh Friction 2 – DMG: 15, PEN: n/a, range: 25m. Cost 5 FLUX, No Armour Save. Damage is taken by first living thing. DeathSuit counts as living.

7 Sting 2 – Paralysing sting, DMG: stunned for 5 rounds, PEN: 8, range: 20m, Cost 7 FLUX.

8 Intrusion 2 – Fear roll at a rating of 6, range: 25m, Cost 8 FLUX.

9 Psychovirus 2 – COOL roll or lose 1 COOL/5 FLUX spent by Necanthrope, effects last for 4 days, range: 20m.

10 Flesh Friction 3 – DMG: 20, PEN: n/a, range: 25m, Cost 9 FLUX, No Armour Save. Damage is taken by first living thing. DeathSuit counts as living.

11 Sentient Cannon – Gore Cannon Awakens.

12 Interdermalisation – Gore Cannon hidden under skin, small physical trace still visible. (Ebb Gore on hand and lower arm.) Cost: 12 FLUX.

13 Flesh Friction 4 – DMG: 25, PEN: n/a, range: 40m, Cost: 13 FLUX, No Armour Save. Damage is taken by first living thing. DeathSuit counts as living.

14 Sting 3 – Poison sting, DMG: –1 to STR or DEX (Necanthrope chooses) permanent. PEN: 15, range: 30m, Cost: 14 FLUX.

15 Drain 1 – Drain blood, Cost: 30 FLUX, range: touch. (Requires successful unarmed combat roll, every round.) PEN: 15, DMG: 5 hits/round till target is dead. (Zero total hits.)

16 Psychovirus 3 – Lose 1 COOL/5 FLUX permanent, range: 40m.

17 Psychovirus 4 – Rage, COOL roll –1/5 FLUX spent, DMG: +1 rank Psychosis/5 FLUX, range: touch.

18 Drain 2 – Drain Ebon FLUX, cost 5 FLUX, range: touch, requires successful unarmed combat every round, DMG: –5 FLUX till 1) No FLUX left to drain or 2) Gore Cannon is full.

19 Sting 4 – Psychotoxin, cost: 10 FLUX/DMG rank. One DMG rank = –1 STR, –1 DEX, +1 Rank Psychosis, range: 50m, PEN: 16.

20 Psychovirus 5 – Red Rain – Fear Roll at a rating of 15 & nightmares for 2 weeks.

Free Ability: Bad taste, curdle milk etc.



BLAST – FORCE EBB KINETICS

"You want to know what my favourite sight is? Well, imagine some Carriens mindin' their own business and WHAMMO! They explode! HA! I love blast."

'Zap', Brain Waster (deceased).

This is one of the most frequently used and destructive of all the Ebon abilities. Through the use of the Ebon's powers, a force is created from the raw energies of the Ebon and moulded into a physical form. Anger is always a good trigger for such abilities but for the most part, the strongest feelings from the Ebon are always used to fuel the attack. Force Ebb Kinetics is also the most consistent of the Ebon abilities unlike others where the energies required vary greatly. Force Ebb Kinetics is a constant and gradual increase. This makes it quite easy for most to control, learn and use.

RANK 1 TO 20: These abilities are a combination of range target attacks and area attacks. The blast ranks can be, like any ballistic weapon, aimed at a specific target and/or target location i.e. arm, torso, head, etc. and must be treated as normal ballistic for PEN and DMG. All blast ranks are rate of fire 1 (R.O.F.).

Bomb is an area effect skill and as such should be treated as a grenade explosion. The DMG and PEN are constant for the whole blast area. These attacks can be centred on a specific location.

When using Blast or Bomb, use your rank in the skill as your to–hit rank rather than pistol or rifle skills.

BLUE THERMAL: GLACIAL EBB

"So you want me to go into that burning building and rescue the dying kid? Hey, you're the friggin' fire brigade! It don't cost you anything but a little heat on your face. It costs me flux, man!"

Brock (Brain Waster) talking to David Griffiths, Fire Shiver Officer at the scene of a house fire, Mort 897 SD.

The use of the Ebb has led to a few interesting discoveries. Most of the Ebon abilities have opposites, for example, the Art of Healing could be conceived to be the opposite of Force Ebb Kinetics. With Glacial Ebb, these skills are, to all intents and purposes, the exact opposites of the Inferno Ebb. Although the use of Inferno Ebb is straightforward and understood as it was created as a means of surviving harsh climates, the creation of Glacial Ebb was not necessarily brought about by the need to survive in warm climates. This then brings us to the conclusion that Glacial Ebb's creation was entirely down to the requirement of the Ebon to have an opposite in existence for the Inferno Ebb abilities.

The use of Glacial Ebb over the centuries has been refined to such a degree that it is possible to create objects such as strong blades of ice which, through the manipulation of FLUX energy, are almost as strong as some metals. These abilities also allow the user to be

able to reduce temperatures of both areas and objects to, with some of the higher abilities, dangerous levels. Direct conflict between Ebons, one skilled in Inferno Ebb, the other in Glacial Ebb can be a long and drawn out affair as they are able to throw the exact opposites of their Ebb energies against each other.

RANK 1: Resist Heat 1 – This skill is the corresponding ability to Resist Cold 1 in the Inferno Ebb abilities list. It is a refined talent which allows the Ebon to resist temperatures by cooling their own body up to 50 degrees C for a duration of the user's CONC in minutes. This skill costs 1 FLUX.

RANK 2: Create Cold 1 – This talent is similar in capacity to the resistance of heat in Rank 1. The Ebon can, through touching an inanimate object, lower its temperature down to –10 degrees C. This is not enough to do any physical damage to a person but if they are not wearing gloves or armour, they may suffer from freezer burn and this may effect the use of their fingers. This must be at the GM's discretion. The object takes 1 action to cool down and 2 rounds to return to its normal temperature. The cost of this skill is 2 FLUX.

RANK 3: Freezing Blast 1 – This is an icy blast which is fired from the palm of the Ebon's hand. The blast does 6 points of damage, an armour damage of 2 with a penetration of 4. The range for the blast is 8m and costs 2 FLUX.

RANK 4: Ice Blade 1 – Using this gift, a character is able to form an icy blade about the same size as a short sword or a large dagger. The Ebon, when attacking the opponent, must make a successful Blade 1–H attack roll to strike which then does 8 points of damage and 2 points of armour damage with a penetration of 4. when the blade has struck the victim, it shatters causing the ice to splinter inside the victim for a further wound and 2 points of damage at a cost of 4 FLUX.

RANK 5: Cold Aura 1 – This ability allows the Ebon to create a chilly aura about themselves for 1 round which will do 6 points of damage with a penetration of 1 to any object or person who is touched by the Ebon. If the Ebon wishes to touch a person, then they must make a successful Unarmed Combat roll. The damage is taken by the first tangible object or surface, i.e. armour, that the Ebon touches. This skill costs 5 FLUX.

RANK 6: Resist Heat 2 – This is a stronger version of the Rank 1 Resist Heat where an Ebon may tolerate temperatures up to 80 degrees C by cooling their body gradually. The duration for this ability is no longer than the Ebon's CONC in minutes and costs 2 FLUX.



RANK 7: Create Cold 2 – This skill enables an Ebon to lower the temperature of an inanimate object, by touch, down to –30 degrees C which would be enough to damage anybody who touched the object without wearing protection, causing damage at the Games Master's discretion. This ability costs 6 FLUX and takes 1 action to cool down an object

with 3 rounds to return to its previous temperature.

RANK 8: Freezing Blast 2 – This is a stronger version of the Rank 3 skill where an icy blast is fired from the palm of the Ebon's hand. The blast does 8 points of damage and 4 points of armour damage with a penetration of 6 due to the sheer force of the blast. The range for the blast is 12m and costs 4 FLUX.

RANK 9: Ice Blade 2 – Using this gift, a character is able to form an icy blade the same size as a short sword or a large dagger. The Ebon, when attacking an opponent must make a successful Blade 1–H attack roll to strike which then does 12 points of damage and 4 points of armour damage with a penetration of 8. When the blade has struck the victim, it shatters causing the ice to splinter doing a further wound and 4 points of damage at a cost of 8 FLUX.

RANK 10: Cold Aura 2 – This ability allows the Ebon to create a chilly aura about themselves for 1 round which will do 9 points of damage to any object or person when touched by the Ebon with a penetration of 1. If the Ebon wishes to touch a person, then they must make a successful Unarmed Combat roll. This skill costs 15 FLUX.

RANK 11: Resist Heat 3 – This is a stronger version of the Rank 2 Resist Heat where an Ebon may tolerate temperatures up to 100 degrees C by cooling their body gradually. The duration of this ability is no longer than the Ebon's CONC in minutes and costs 4 FLUX.

RANK 12: Create Cold 3 – This is a more complex version of the Rank 7 ability where an Ebon may lower the temperature of either an object or an area similar to the Rank 12 Inferno Ebb skill. The first part of this skill enables the Ebon to lower the temperature of the inanimate object, within a 1m range, down to –60 degrees C which would be enough to damage anybody who touched the object without wearing protection, at the Games Master's discretion. The Ebon can also cool an area of 20m in diameter centred on themselves down to –60 degrees C. This takes 1 action to cool and 4 to return to its normal temperature. The cost for both these abilities is 10 FLUX.

RANK 13 – Freezing Blast 3 – This is a stronger version of the Rank 8 skill where an icy blast is fired from the palm of the Ebon's hand. The blast does 10 points of damage and 6 points of armour damage with a penetration of 8. The range for the blast is 17m and the cost is 6 FLUX.

RANK 14: Ice Blade 3 – Using the stronger version of this gift, a character is able to form an icy blade the same size as a short sword or a large dagger. The Ebon, when attacking an opponent, must make a successful Blade 1–H attack roll to strike which then does 16 points of damage and an armour damage of 6 with a penetration of 12. When the blade has struck the victim, it shatters causing the ice to splinter inside the victim for a further wound and 6 points of damage. This skill costs 12 FLUX.

RANK 15: Cold Aura 3 – This ability allows the Ebon to create a chilly aura of 1m in diameter about themselves for 1 round which will do 11 points of damage and 1 point of armour damage to any object or person when touched by the Ebon with a penetration of 2. If the Ebon wishes to touch a person, then they must first make a successful Unarmed Combat roll. This skill costs 20 FLUX.

RANK 16: Resist Heat 4 – This is a stronger version of the Rank 11 Resist Heat where an Ebon may tolerate temperatures up to 240 degrees C by cooling their body gradually. The duration of this ability is no longer than the Ebon's CONC in minutes and costs 6 FLUX.

RANK 17: Create Cold 4 – This is a more complex version of the Rank 12 skill where an Ebon may lower the temperature of either an object or an area similar to the Rank 17 Inferno Ebb skill. The first part of this skill enables the Ebon to lower the temperature of an inanimate object, within a 10m range, down to –254 degrees C which would be enough to damage anybody who touched the object without wearing protection, at the Games Master's discretion. The Ebon can also cool an area of 50m in diameter down to –60 degrees C. This takes 1 action to cool down and 5 to return to their normal temperature. This skill costs 15 FLUX.

RANK 18: Freezing Blast 4 – This icy blast from the Ebon's hand is now extremely powerful and causes 12 points of damage and 8 points of armour damage with a penetration of 10 due to the sheer force of the blast. The range of this skill is now 25m at a cost of 8 FLUX.

RANK 19: Ice Blade 4 – This is the strongest, most lethal form of this skill where the blade has now grown in size to a 2–handed weapon. The Ebon when attacking the opponent, must make a successful Blade 2–H attack roll to strike which then does 20 points of damage and 8 points of armour damage with a penetration of 16. Due to the sheer force of energy used in this skill, when the blade has struck the victim, it explodes causing ice to shatter inside the victim for a further wound and 8 points of damage. This ability costs 16 FLUX.

RANK 20: Chill – Once a character has reached this level of Glacial Ebb, the Ebon is able to perform one of the most fatal abilities within the limits of the Ebb power. The Ebon must match the identical amount of FLUX with the total number of hit points that the opponent has in their body, i.e. total of head, torso, arms and legs, to then chill the victim and reduce their body to an ice statue. This may require an Unarmed Combat roll as the Ebon has to touch the opponent. Once the victim is completely frozen, they will stay that way until they naturally thaw out or are thawed out by Red Thermal, by which time they are well and truly dead.

COMMUNICATION: VOICE OF THE EBB

"The ability to converse using your will rather than your mouth is as important to we Ebons as breathing is to other races. For them 'telepathy', if I may use that rather clumsy term, is as much as they understand of our ways, but for us... for us it is more. We can see what is beneath these little voices. We know that..." –at this point in the lecture, Dr. Hannon stopped speaking– "so to sum up, my friends, we have everything that they want. Shall we give it to them? Do they know what they are getting? Love, hate, lust, envy. The sale is on. We sell emotions. We buy lives."

William Hannon (Soul), SLA Medical Division, (Private lecture to Ebon Students), Meny, 024 SD.

The art of thought planting and its associated abilities can, if used correctly, be more powerful than the strongest Force Ebb Kinetic Blast. The power of thought projection is a long established form of Ebon communication whether it be fellow Ebons having a conversation or an Ebon talking 'at' someone of another race. The actual working parameters of communication are far greater than just 'talking to someone in their head'. At the higher levels of learning, it is possible to read the private thoughts of individuals and even memories. The other side of communication is to deal with the manipulation and alteration of peoples' emotions towards yourself and others. The darker side of communication is, or can be, deadlier than any weapon created. This is the deletion of a person's actual memories or even rewriting those memories, but the most powerful of all is the complete control of someone's mind and with this, their body and is the height of communication/control –possession.



RANK 1: Thought Plant 1 – This is the easiest Thought Plant that can be implemented. It has a very short duration which limits the amount of information that can be sent. The user must be able to see the person they wish to relay the message to. The message can be no longer than 12 average words or about 72 letters. Images (pictures) can be sent along with the regular message at no extra FLUX or word cost. This includes written words. But the average communication time is only about 4 to 5 seconds so it is not practical to write a long message and send the image of the note as the person reading it more than likely won't have enough time to read it. No reply can be sent on the same Ebb wave and costs one FLUX.

RANK 2: Thought Plant 2 – This is a slightly improved version of the Rank 1 skill. The message can now be up to a maximum of 30 words (180 letters). The average duration of this type of message is between 8 and 10 seconds and the Ebon must be able to see the person they wish to relay the message to at a cost of two FLUX.

RANK 3: Thought Plant 3 – With this skill, the Ebon can send a message to another if known. There is no word limit with the message. The duration is between 25 and 30 seconds and the receiver must be in sight. This ability costs 4 FLUX.

RANK 4: Thought Plant 4 – At this level of thought plant, the Ebon can now converse with anyone for a duration of 30 seconds at a range of 100km. The cost of this is 5 FLUX. The communication with fellow Ebons changes as follows; no duration limit and range is 100km if Ebon that is being contacted is known to the user. If they attempt to contact an Ebon but fail –i.e. if they are asleep or more than 100km away– the FLUX must still be used.

RANK 5: Converse 1 – At this level, the powers of communication seem to take on what could be described as a loss of power. This is deceptive and the reason behind this is that now it is possible to

hold an actual conversation with someone (if they are an Ebon). The Ebon must be within a clear line of sight and no more than 12 words can be spoken either way at a cost of 5 FLUX.

RANK 6: Converse 2 – This is the next step up for conversations that are to be held using the mind. The maximum range is 100km and there is no conversational limits, i.e. a conversation can be held by the user and any other person, Ebon or otherwise for an unlimited duration and a cost of 6 FLUX.

RANK 7: Converse 3 – At this level, the distances that a single communication can travel are greatly increased. The distance a message can travel is 500km and there is no word or duration limit. Also the users can communicate with anybody they know, not just Ebons. The cost of this skill is 7 FLUX.

RANK 8: Mind Read 1 – At this stage in the development of the Ebons abilities, they will have been talking to people and other Ebons on a daily basis for some time, using thought plant and converse abilities. This gives them a basic knowledge of how to 'have a look around'. The ability to read minds is a demanding task that has to be done carefully, especially at higher levels. This basic mind read gives the Ebon the chance to skim the surface, as it were, of the subject's memory. Things that are found here are name, address, date of birth, etc. A mind link can be sustained for an Ebon's CONC in minutes. It takes 2 to 3 minutes to find the relevant information the Ebon is looking for. The range for this ability is touch and costs 8 FLUX.

RANK 9: Mind Read 2 – This is the same as the Rank 8 ability but it is possible for the Ebon to go slightly deeper and find out things that are not every day thoughts, things that require a trigger to remember such as friends, family, what the victim did today, hang–outs, etc. The duration of the read is 5 minutes and the Ebon must touch the opponent to read their mind at a cost of 9 FLUX.

RANK 10: Thought Plant 5 – This form of thought plant is similar to a hypnotic suggestion. It plants a feeling of inferiority into the subject's mind giving them the impression that the user is of some authority over them, to be trusted or someone to be followed as a leader type figure. It is only possible to do this to people who, even though they might not think it, are either mentally (KNOW) or physically (PHYS) weaker than the user, bestowing to them the power of persuasion over the subject. The range for this ability is touch at the Games Master's discretion and the duration is the user's CONC in minutes at a cost of 10 FLUX.

RANK 11: Thought Plant 6 – This is a specific form of suggestion which plays on the subject's positive feelings; love, admiration etc. These effects, however, are very short lived and should be taken advantage of whilst they last – the user's CHA in hours – and can be performed on only one person at a time. The range for this ability is touch at the Games Master's discretion at a cost of 11 FLUX.

RANK 12: Converse 4 – Converse 4 is a strong ability used for planet–wide communication. Due to the nature and strength of this ability, the conversation can take place with any person they know if they are less than 18,000km away and are known to be awake. Duration is the Ebon's CONC in seconds and costs 12 FLUX.

RANK 13: Mind Read 3 – This type of mind reading takes the form of a deep penetrating search of the subject's memory. This form of probe can reveal the innermost secrets that the subject holds dear but there are still barriers that cannot be broken down even with this powerful information extraction skill. The duration of this ability is the user's CONC in minutes and the range is touch. The cost is 13 FLUX.

RANK 14: Thought Plant 7 – The transmission of emotions from an Ebon's mind into another's can be, and is, a very powerful feeling. This is due to two factors–an Ebon's emotions are more intense than the normal human, also the emotion transmitted is amplified by the use of FLUX. The duration of this is the user's CONC in minutes. NB: The effects on a subject from receiving such an attack should be at the G.M's discretion. The Ebon must be touching the opponent. The cost for this skill is 14 FLUX.

RANK 15: Converse 5 – Similar to Converse 4, this skill means that the Ebon may contact anyone known within 18,000km as long as they are awake. The only difference is that the duration of the contact is the user's CONC in minutes and not seconds and costs 15 FLUX.

RANK 16: Mind Read 4 – This is the most powerful of all the mind read abilities. The subject is completely unable to lie or give misleading information for the user's CONC in minutes. The Ebon must also touch the opponent for this skill to work at a cost of 16 FLUX.

RANK 17: Charm – When an Ebon has advanced this far with the development of their abilities, The need to actually manipulate skills to charm or intimidate people becomes unnecessary as there is

a natural aura about the Ebon. This is due to the effects of having large amounts of mental contact and communication with others. The Ebon picks up pieces of people's personalities and these fragments join together in the Ebon's mind and exude the Ebon's aura. This aura can take the form of either a 'charm' or an 'intimidation'. How this effects the people around the Ebon is up to the G.M., for example, if charm is selected people may fall in love with the Ebon.

N.B. Whichever emotion is chosen is permanent and cannot be changed. This ability will never cost any FLUX and is permanent.

RANK 18: Thought Plant 8 – This is potentially one of the most dangerous communication abilities that exists. It can turn friends into enemies and lovers to killers. The rewriting of a person's memories is a difficult one at best. A certain amount of self control must be exercise when performing this ability. It is quite easy to misplace parts of peoples' memory and then find them pasted into the Ebon's mind and can only be removed by another Ebon. Any mind rewriting is at the G.M's discretion, but as a rule the following are things that cannot be changed; the subject's parents, name, wife, husband, children, close relations and anything else that the G.M. decides. The Ebon must touch the opponent for this skill to work. This costs 25 FLUX and has a permanent effect.

RANK 19: Thought Plant 9 – The slaver ability will allow the user to take complete control over another's mind and body and use the controlled subject as they see fit. The person that is under the influence of the Ebon's powers cannot resist until the Ebon breaks their concentration. This concentration time is the Ebon's own CONC stat in minutes. The range for this skill is 5m. There can be no more than 5m distance between Ebon and target when control is taken–after that if a distance of over 15m is reached, the link is broken and the target has control of their body and mind again. The cost of this skill is 19 FLUX.

RANK 20: Thought Plant 10 (Possession) – This deals with the ability of the Ebon to transfer their mind into that of another person. This requires only one touch from the Ebon on the target and they can 'down load' their mind into that of the target. The possessed has their mind pushed into a dormant part of the brain to make room for the Ebon's mind. The Ebon now occupies the person's body and takes on the physical being of that person. As far as skills are concerned only the DEX, STR, and PHYS statistics have any effect on the Ebon. For example if an Ebon with Unarmed Combat of Rank 8 possesses somebody with a STR of Rank 5, this means that the Ebon can only use the first 5 ranks of their Unarmed Combat skill. There are 3 ways in which this form of control will end; One, when the Ebon returns of their own volition to their own body; Two, if the possessed person is exorcised by use of Soul Caging (See 'Healing') and Three; when the possessed person dies,and in this case the Ebon will also die. The Ebon body is completely inert until their mind returns. There is no limit to how long an Ebon can possess a person. They can also jump from body to body by possessing them one after the other. The cost for this skill is 50 FLUX.

DETECT: EBB AWARENESS

"You can smell them, Brain Wasters that is. They have that sort of 'blunt' odour. Well, maybe that's not the best way to describe it. 'Thick'... 'brutal', that's a better way. Everybody has their own; Brain Wasters, Ebons, Necanthropes. God, Necanthropes, you can never really get used to their scent. The sweetest thing that I ever come across was 'Shean'. She was a fifteen year old feral Ebon. She was beautiful, pure. I brought her in from Uptown and she went away to do her training, passed with honours. She worked with me for five weeks. I was with her when she died on the Medi–vac 'copter. What a waste of such a sweet girl."

Blake (Ebon), Private Interview: Third Eye, Not for publication, Mort Central 898 SD.

The formulation of the awareness of other Ebons and Ebb is one of the most important abilities possessed by an Ebon. To be able to know where your enemies are is always an advantage. In today's society, these talents have been refined to such a degree that it is possible for an Ebon to seek out another from their 'scent' even though they may be days away. The initial levels of Ebb awareness deal mainly with actual physical tracking of the sources of Ebb and/or FLUX. The higher levels are much more specific in their purpose. They deal with specific imparting of information about actual people and events that can be used to operate very precise investigations.

All of the Awareness abilities are centred around the Ebon. Any detection that they might perform moves with them so a quick 'track' skill has a very short range but the user can move around. The track goes with them scanning wherever the Ebon goes.

RANK 1: Detect 1 – The Ebon can sense any FLUX used in the last four hours. This is a very short range ability (1.5m) and only imparts to the Ebon that someone has used an ability and not what specific

ability was used, how much FLUX was spent or any other information. This costs 1 point of FLUX and lasts for the user's CONC in minutes.

RANK 2: Track 1 – This ability allows an Ebon to follow another's Ebon aura if they have been present in the last 6 hours. Again this is a very short ranged ability (1.5m). It costs 2 FLUX and lasts for the user's CONC in minutes.

RANK 3: Detect 2 – This is an improved version of the Rank 1 Detect with an increased range (4m) and it can trace all FLUX used in the last 8 hours. This costs 3 FLUX and the duration is the user's CONC in minutes.



RANK 4: Track 2 – This is a clearer trace than the Rank 2 skill. It allows the user to know what classification the Ebb user was, i.e. Ebon, Brain Waster or Necanthrope and if they have used FLUX within a 4m area in the last 12 hours. The duration is the user's CONC in minutes and it costs 4 FLUX.

RANK 5: Detect 3 – This ability is a stronger form of Rank 1 and 3 with the range of detection being 10m. The effective FLUX that can be traced can be up to 24 hours old. The duration is the same as Detect 2, CONC in minutes and the cost is 5 FLUX.

RANK 6: Track 3 – With this improved form of tracking, an Ebon's aura can be up to 24 hours old when tracked, within an area of 8m. This lasts for the user's CONC in minutes and costs 6 FLUX.

RANK 7: Formulation 1 – This ability is used in conjunction with any of the Detect abilities. When an Ebon receives a 'scent', they can use their skill to determine what rank and how much FLUX was used, for example, "...must have been a high ranker, I'd say 15, yeh, it must have cost about 35 FLUX..." This information should be given by the Games Master after the use of both Detect abilities together. The specific ability used, i.e. Red Thermal or Cure, is not known through the senses. This costs five FLUX.

RANK 8: True Track 1 – This form of tracking can be used not only to track other Ebons but also any other race. An item belonging to the person is required, the more personal the better, personal diaries and pieces of jewellery are perfect. From there, the Ebon has a link with the person and can follow their scent for up to 12 hours after which more FLUX has to be used to maintain the trace. How clear the scent is and how fast the Ebon is allowed to follow is at the Games Master's discretion. This costs 8 FLUX.

RANK 9: Detect 4 – The Ebon can now track the Ebon's scent for their CONC in minutes as long as it is no older than 12 hours and within a range of 10m from the Ebon. The tracked Ebon's scent will be known and recognised if found again. This aptitude costs 4 FLUX.

RANK 10: Track 4 – This is a longer lasting version of Rank 6 Detect, with a range of 10m and the ability to detect FLUX up to 5 days (120 hours) old. This skill costs 10 FLUX and the duration is the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 11: Formulation 2 – This is the next stage of Formulation which works in the same way as the first Formulation ability but the user has a physical description of the person being tracked, i.e. male,

female, eye colour, hair colour and height, as well as how much FLUX has been used in the last 4 hours. The cost is 11 FLUX. This must be used in conjunction with one of the Detect ranks.

RANK 12: Track 5 – This form of tracking takes a lot of the Ebon's energies to perform but it can save a lot of time and leg work. With this skill, an Ebon can instantly know the whereabouts of an Ebon they are tracking, if they have used Rank 9 to fix the scent. The exact location i.e. city, street or house is not known, only the direction and range, if under 500km. The cost for this skill is 15 FLUX and does not have a maximum duration.

RANK 13: True Track 2 – This ability allows the Ebon to track used FLUX, for the user's CONC x2 in hours, from a personal item of the personal to be tracked as long as the FLUX is no older than 12 hours. The cost is 2 FLUX.

RANK 14: Impression 1 – Now with the Ebon powers of awareness raised to such a high level, they can use their talents to reconstruct incidents that have happened in the immediate area (5m from user) as long as they did not happen more than 12 hours ago.

Not a great deal of information should be given at this level. What the Ebon should be able to receive is flickering images of, for example, how many people were in the area and what size they were, any distinguishing features about the area like large pieces of machinery or furniture, etc., any loud noises that were in the area at the time like screaming, breaking glass, gun shots, etc., or just normal conversation although this impression is not strong enough to recognise the content of the conversation.

The Ebon should also be able to determine how fast objects or people were moving. This skill costs 14 FLUX and the duration of the image lasts for the Ebon's CONC in rounds. There is a possibility that the Ebon will not find out what they are looking for whilst using this skill because the images they might receive might not be appropriate, especially if they are looking for a particularly small incident that occured more than a few hours ago. In this case, then the skill must be performed again. Exactly what the Ebon finds is at the Games Master's discretion only. This skill costs 14 FLUX.

RANK 15: Formulation 3 – This is the final and most powerful of the formulation abilities. This allows, when used with any of the Detect ranks, the user to know the following about the scented subject; Ebon ability list, Formulae rank, FLUX and Physical description as in Rank 11 and the rank of Ebon Abilities. The cost is 15 FLUX and the duration is until all of the above information has been found, usually about 25 seconds.

RANK 16: Impression 2: This is an improved version of Impression 1. This allows an Ebon to see bright colours, hear pieces of conversations, see flickering images of peoples faces and being able to recognise a race here and there. All information given should be at the Games Master's discretion. The cost is 18 FLUX and the images received last for the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 17: Formulation 4 – This is an improvement on Formulation 3 where pieces of the person's identity are revealed at the Games Master's discretion. The images last for the Ebon's CONC in minutes and the cost is 15 FLUX.

RANK 18: Impression 3 – This is the strongest impression ability where the Ebon receives nearly perfect recollections of incidents that have went on in the past 12 hours. This has a duration of CONC in rounds with a 10m radius around the Ebon performing the skill. The cost is 20 FLUX.

RANK 19: Defensive Precognition – The art of defensive precognition is one that few Ebons learn but most would kill to have. This is a 'sixth sense', a warning of danger or potentially dangerous situations that the Ebon might be entering into. All of this should be held at the Games Master's discretion and not too much should be given away. This skill is passive and costs no FLUX.

RANK 20: Death Seek – This is the greatest of all awareness abilities. This allows an Ebon to probe a dead person's mind to see what they saw prior to their death. The memories that are imparted to the Ebon performing the Death Seek are, at most, the last 24 hours of their life. The duration of the images lasts for the user's CONC in minutes and costs 20 FLUX. The Games Masters should be very careful if an Ebon in the party reaches and uses this level. Make sure that what they see is disjointed, flickering and in parts, blurred as the memory is not a clear run of events but will jump like an old record. Just like real memories.

ENHANCEMENT – AUGMENTATION OF EBON ENERGIES

"The knowledge of Enhancement has always been seen as a loss of control, on the part of the Ebon, by other races. They are blind. Enhancement, the ability to force Ebb energies through every fibre of your

being takes a great deal of control and power. The Beast and Demon are not mindless rage machines, they are poetic violence."

William Hannon (Soul), SLA Medical Division, Mort 023 SD.

Enhancement abilities deal with the physical manipulation of the Ebon's own body to induce strength, dexterity and stamina. The Ebon may also use their skills to toughen the body to such a degree that the skin becomes as hard as stone. It is possible to use the natural growing process of the body at a greatly accelerated rate to increase hit points or even grow an extra limb. The Ebon is only able to perform these abilities upon him/herself.

HOW ENHANCEMENT WORKS IN THE GAME

The enhancement abilities deal with stat increases which are normally impossible by any other means. These increases such as STR and DEX etc., should not be allowed to exceed double the original characteristic (stat), i.e. someone with a STR of 8 could not increase their STR above 16. The durations attached to each ability remain the same no matter how much FLUX is spent. Only the drug 'Pineal Stim' can increase the duration of Enhancement abilities.

RANK 1: Teeth – This is the easiest form of enhancement to perform. The effects are that the canines enlarge to sharp 'sabre–tooth' like teeth. These are not very effective weapons but do look very formidable with a damage of 3, armour damage of 2 and a penetration of 1. This skill costs 1 FLUX and lasts for the user's CONC in minutes.

RANK 2: Claws – Claws are slightly more powerful than the Rank 1 Teeth, long, razor sharp claws from the nails of the hand that do 5 points of damage, 2 points of armour damage with a penetration of 2. If both hands are required, it costs double the FLUX. This costs 2 FLUX.

RANK 3: Attribute Boost 1 – Attribute boosting is the most common use of enhancement. This first boost deals with the physical strength aspect. It costs 2 FLUX per point of strength (STR) increase. This can be a physical manifestation where it is possible to see the muscles expand and grow or it can be hidden where the muscles become much more efficient. This lasts for the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 4: Attribute Boost 2 – The second of the attribute skills deals with the speed or dexterity of your Ebon. This skill boosts the DEX of the Ebon so as to allow them to move and react faster at a cost of 2 FLUX/point of increase for a duration of the user's CONC in minutes.

RANK 5: Attribute Boost 3 – The third boost ability is a physique (PHYS) boost which costs 2 FLUX per point of PHYS increase. This increases the Ebon's chances of resisting fatigue, shock and the effects of stuns and lasts for the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 6: Attribute Boost 4 – The effects of sleep deprivation, excessive physical labour and low periods of sustained activity cause a great deal of fatigue. This ability will aid in combating such fatigue, although even this has its limits. The cost of this skill is 3 FLUX per every 10 hours, with a maximum of 60 hours after which a full day of rest must be taken.

RANK 7: DNA Hallmark – The creation of DNA encoded tattoos is a quick and pain free process. The average size of a DNA FLUX tattoo is about 9cm squared. This basic tattoo comes at a cost of 1 FLUX. Larger tattoos are possible– for each additional square centimetre , use 1 more FLUX point. Remember DNA tattoos are exactly what they say they are and as such are written in to your DNA. They can never be removed. If a wound such as a cut or bullet wound occurs around the area of the tattoo, after scarring, the tattoo will still be there in its original form. It is possible to alter the size and design of the tattoo but it cannot become smaller than 3cm squared. It is possible to give other people tattoos.

RANK 8: Attribute Boost 5 – This is the ability to toughen the skin, hard enough to act like armour. The cost is 8 FLUX for a P.V. of 4 for a duration of the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 9: Attribute Boost 6 – The Ebon can now increase their STR by one point at a cost of 1 FLUX up to a maximum of 7 for a duration of the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 10: Ebb Beast – The Ebb Beast is one of the most frightening things that can be seen on the streets of Mort with the exception of Necanthropes, giving the user greatly enhanced attributes. The Ebon using this skill will get a +5 STR, +5 DEX, P.V. 5 skin, Claws (Rank 2), Teeth (Rank 1) and grow in size and height (usually about 30 cm). The Death Suit will compensate for any size increase. It is not possible to use weapons of a projectile nature whilst the Ebb Beast is awakened. This skill has a duration of the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 11: Ebb Razor Claws – The Ebb Razor Claws are a far superior version to the Rank 2 claws. They are 20 cm long and glow and crackle with Ebb

energy doing 10 points of damage, 4 points of armour damage with a penetration of 6 to anything they slash. This gives them a much greater strike that can slice through armour and flesh for a duration of the user's CONC in minutes. One hand of Razor Claws will cost 11 FLUX but both will cost double.

RANK 12: Attribute Boost 7 – This is a far superior version of the Rank 4 attribute boost. The Ebon can now increase their DEX to a maximum of 7 at a cost of 1 point of stat increase per FLUX point for a duration of the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 13: Physical Manipulation 1 – The art of physical manipulation is a powerful ability. Only Ebons well versed in the skill of Enhancement are capable of such a manipulation of flesh and bone. With this ability, the Ebon can grow Teeth and Claws from Rank 1 and 2 but there is no duration, they are a permanent feature of the Ebon. This costs 20 FLUX for both teeth and claws. The Ebon does not become encumbered in any way by their new appendages.

RANK 14: Physical Manipulation 2 – The second of the manipulation abilities is directly linked to the physical growth of the Ebons body. The physical growth does not alter your statistics. After spending the required FLUX points you may increase the height and general size of your Ebon by between 10% and 50% although it is possible to make yourself shorter (but it is very rare for Ebons do this). 50% of the original height is the safe working maximum for height as anything above this can result in the deformation of muscles and bones, which is is very painful and cannot be healed. This skill costs 30 FLUX for a permanent change.

RANK 15: Attribute Boost 8 – This is form of attribute boosting as with Rank 8 and deals with the physical toughening of the skin to act like armour. This skill is more effective than the Rank 8 ability giving the user an armour value (P.V.) of 10 rather than 4 at the cost of 15 FLUX for a duration of the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 16: Physical Manipulation 3 – Another form of physical toughening of the body, this ability allows you to increase, briefly, your hits in any or all locations of the body. At the rate of 1 hit point per 4 FLUX spent. This boost lasts for your CONC in minutes or until the newly generated hit points are lost due to damage.

RANK 17: Attribute Boost 9 – This is a similar form of fatigue resistance to the Rank 6 skill and it is much more efficient, allowing you to operate without sleep or rest for up to 8 days depending on how much FLUX you spend. This costs 4 FLUX per day, and a full days rest must be taken for every 2 days of activity that are spent without fatigue. For example, an Ebon spends 16 FLUX and works for 4 days without rest. After the 4 days they must rest for 2. If they had spent 32 FLUX and worked without rest for 8 days, they would need 4 days to recover, etc ...

RANK 18: Attribute Boost 10 – This is the most powerful of the skin toughening abilities with unearthly powers of kinetic deflection (Armour Protection) giving the user the same P.V. as a suit of Shock Armour (18) at the cost of 18 FLUX for the user's CONC in minutes.

RANK 19: Physical Manipulation 4 – The abilities to grow extra limbs or similar organs is very difficult indeed, it requires great concentration. The full process takes, upon average, 30 days depending on how well the Ebon can focus their mind. The extra limb usually takes the form of an arm, hand or tail.



(G.M's discretion). These limbs if it is an arm or a tail, will have their own hit location and hit points. The hit points for a new arm are identical to that of the Ebon's existing arms. A tail will have the same hit points as the Ebon's leg. For hit locations for extra limbs such as arms, it is best to use an odds/evens system. Odds: original arm, evens: new arm. This also can be used for leg/tail. Each limb costs 30 FLUX to grow.

RANK 20: Ebb Demon – The 'Ebb Demon' is the most powerful creature ever seen in the World of Progress. This massive beast can rip and tear flesh from bones in seconds. These creatures are, for all intents and purposes, unstoppable. The Ebon has complete control of this creature they have created from their innermost feelings, which is just as well because to behold such a creature you would think it completely insane. When this ability is used, the DeathSuit cannot accommodate the bulk of muscle and flesh that has been created – It will expand to allow for this, but does not give any protection to the Demon. Pineal Stim does not work on Ebb Demons as the energies involved will burn out the Stim from the system. Ebons that use the Ebb Demon do not suffer from the effect of addiction to Pineal Stim. The Ebon receives a +8 STR, +8 DEX, +5 PHYS, Tough Skin P.V. 18, Rank 1 Teeth, Rank 11 Ebb Razor Claws all for a duration of 1 hour.

HEALING – THE ART OF HEALING AND PURIFICATION

"The healing arts have always been of great importance to the Ebon Race. If, one day, these secrets were to be lost, it would be the end of us all. We must do everything in our power to ensure that the knowledge stays with us forever."

William Hannon (Soul), SLA Medical Division, Mort, 023 SD.

The ability to stop bleeding and repair damaged tissue is usually the first of the Ebon's abilities to be learned and used. To some degree, healing involves a very subtle form of telekinesis, with the knitting together of bones, flesh, etc. but it has become much more than that. The lower ranks of healing deal with the basic cessation of bleeding (wounds) and physical damage (hits) to the body. At higher ranks when the Ebon's power has increased, the abilities far outdo the earlier skills with such knowledge as being able to regrow limbs, purifying the body of toxins and alcohol and the withdrawal of mental illnesses, not only healing the body but the mind also.

HOW HEALING WORKS IN THE GAME

Every Ebon should have at least two or three ranks in 'Healing' as it is a cheaper and faster way of regaining hit points and wounds than using drugs or a normal medical kit.

All of the healing abilities require the user to be in direct physical contact with the subject that is to be healed. This contact must be skin to skin – healing does not work through clothes or armour(this does not apply if healing oneself).

RANK 1: Heal 1 – Stops bleeding but will not help in the repair of damaged tissue, bone or flesh i.e. Only wounds may be recovered, not hit points (see Combat section) at a cost of one wound per unit of FLUX.

RANK 2: Heal 2 – Weakest form of actual healing. For every point of FLUX spent, 1 hit point is regained.

RANK 3: Heal 3 – An improved version of Rank 1 that allows the coagulation of the blood to be achieved at a faster rate. Only wounds may be recovered at a rate of two wounds/FLUX.

RANK 4: Heal 4 – Healing, now with a better understanding, can be accomplished quicker with 2 hit points being recovered for every FLUX point spent.

RANK 5: Heal 5 – A great many Ebons only reach this level of wound healing but it is a powerful Ebb ability with 3 wounds recovered for each FLUX point spent.

RANK 6: Heal 6 – Now, with a better understanding of the body and its functions, the Ebon can heal 3 hits per FLUX point spent.

RANK 7: Heal 7 – Reaching this level of healing for an Ebon is as far as they would normally have to reach to attain competentence at the healing arts. Four hits are recovered per FLUX point spent.

RANK 8: Heal 8 –Better than the last one. Five hits are recovered per FLUX point spent.

RANK 9: Heal 9 – This is the pinnacle of physical healing without going into the realms of regrowth. Six hits are recovered per FLUX point spent.

RANK 10: Heal 10 – The most powerful form of coagulation, this ability will stop all bleeding in the body for the cost of 1 FLUX point.

RANK 11: Regeneration – The actual regeneration of small limbs, e.g. fingers and toes, involves skills akin to grafting parts of the body back on after their amputation but when a limb or appendage is

completely destroyed, it takes this skill to restore it. Most of this healing will be at the GM's discretion as limbs such as fingers and toes are not always covered by actual combat damage. This costs 1 FLUX/hit point in that location. This takes upon average 5 minutes/limb.

RANK 12: Regeneration 2 – The regeneration of full limbs is easier than small limbs but it costs more in FLUX and can only be used on arms and legs. This process takes about 10 minutes/limb and costs 1 FLUX/hit point in that location.

RANK 13: Regeneration 3 – The third form of regeneration deals with the torso or parts thereof. It is a long and arduous process to perform this ability. One hit point must remain in the torso to be regenerated. You cannot make something from nothing. It takes 1 hour to regenerate a damaged torso and costs 1 FLUX/hit point in that location.

RANK 14: Body System Purification – Purification of the body from toxins (drugs) is a long and difficult process. It requires four hours to perform the purification and during this time, no other actions may be undertaken. If concentration is broken then you must start again. It costs 14 FLUX points and double that if the purification is of combat drugs. This ability also completely stops the effects of Gore Cannon psychovirus and toxins as well as everyday poisons.

RANK 15: Physical Manipulation 1 – This is the manipulation of muscle and tissue within your own body giving you a limited increase in hit points costing 10 FLUX/hit.

RANK 16: Precognitive Healing – Precognitive healing is the ability to prepare your own body for forthcoming injury. By doing this, the hit points that are created do not exist until you are wounded then any damage is taken by these extra hit points first. Any damage left over is taken by your natural hit points. It costs 2 FLUX/hit point up to a maximum of 20 hits.

RANK 17: Retardation of Psychosis – Retardation of Psychosis is the power to manipulate someone's mind in such a way that it has a soothing effect on their character/persona for a short period of time. This is a time consuming process. An undisturbed period of 5 hours is needed to complete although as much FLUX as you want can be spent in this time to remove any ranks of psychosis as you want or have the FLUX for. The effects, unfortunately last for only 48 hours and cost 10 FLUX/rank of psychosis.

RANK 18: Heal 11 – This ability allows you to completely heal your own body at very little cost to yourself, curing all hits/5 FLUX.

RANK 19: Heal 12 – This is the most powerful form of healing that an Ebon can perform. It requires very little time to actually perform but the cost in FLUX is great. Resurrection cannot be performed on yourself. This skill costs 40 FLUX or 30 with a medi-kit as long as the person is no longer than 4 minutes dead.

RANK 20: Soul Caging – Soul Caging is a complicated ability which requires great concentration (CONC). The following is an explanation of how it is performed: The Ebon sees into the victim's mind. It is usually pictured as a surreal setting, a chamber or corridor lined with doors that lead to memories, feelings and fears. Many of these emotional doors are open, though most usually remain closed. The Ebon can change the victim's way of thinking by filling or cleaning out these rooms, although it is dangerous and sometimes a terrifying prospect especially when dealing with the insane whose corridors vary in style and design from person to person. A lot of information can be ascertained simply from the style of hall–way that leads to the victim's deepest thoughts and feelings. To change past events, the Ebon must enter the door to that time of memory and relive and change it, but be warned– the Ebon must be fast. They have twenty minutes to return from the victim's mind or be trapped there. The victim will arise, possibly changed, but the Ebon will be a vegetable. In this event, any friends must seek another Soul Cager to enter the victim and lead the trapped Ebon out,



however, battling Soul Cagers can aim to lock each other in, using the appropriate doors. Guns, blades and Ebb equipment are useless in here. The Ebon must use will, cunning and psychological skill to change and alter the victim's mind whilst they lie in stasis or sleep. Some minds are difficult to change, especially with the deeply scarred and extreme, deep rooted psychotics like Hallowe'en Jack whose mind holds many old Soul Cagers. The doors and passageways come in many shapes and forms, sometimes alleyways, cathedrals, parks or even wild, elaborate tunnels. To enter the main doorway to the victim's mind requires a CONC roll –5 and the Ebon must spend 20 FLUX or else they are thrown from the mind. As long as the Ebon is out within twenty minutes then no further complications will arise. Most of the Soul Caging process is at the Games Master's discretion as it takes some time to accomplish.

ILLUMINATION: EBB ILLUMINATION

Operator Number – 047659 A 160C – Start file.

"We went in over the west wall. The Wraith took point. Gave us the all clear. We took up positions 500m from the lab fence, we picked up motion from just behind us but visual came up blank. We headed for the main gate then all hell broke loose. The Wraith Raider started screaming 'I'm blind, shit, I'm blind'. Hoover was next, he went down covered in a ball of static. He didn't get a chance to scream, his head was fried. The Wraith came back on line. He got some brief I.R. reading 10m to the right of our position. McAwl opened fire against my direct orders and hit something. I could just make out these bleeding bullet holes suspended in mid air as McAwl died the same way as Hoover did. I called for a tactical withdrawal of the strike team. Two more, Washington and Dean, got fried during the retreat. Myself, Bantaso the Wraith and the medic, Fairchild, made it back to the L.Z. (Landing Zone). We withdrew off world and returned to operations where I filed my report."

End File

SGT. P. Collins, DarkNight Covert Operations, Mission File No. 160C, Incomplete 894 D.

"The DarkNight strike team arrived on time as our intelligence reports had informed us. I cloaked myself in Ebb and walked around behind them to steal their Wraith Raider's sight. I ran a charge into one of them and took three hits in the torso. The attacker fell to another Ebb charge. They ran. I followed ending two more lives before they got to their ship. I healed my wounds and returned to the lab and continued with my perimeter inspection."

Deception (Ebon), Department of Investigation, Mission File No. 172B, Complete 894 SD.

Ebb Illumination deals almost entirely, as the name suggests, with light and the ability to project it. This ability has no actual offensive skills although through the last hundred years or so of Ebon development certain 'damaging' aspects of Illumination instigated by Brain Wasters have dropped into the formulation equations giving rise to what can only be described as 'offensive skills'. At the start of Ebb Illumination, there are no exceptional skills, they nearly all deal with the simple fundamental principle of the creation of light. At higher levels, Illumination becomes immensely powerful and a force that is to be reckoned with. As far as the destructive side of the abilities goes, anybody using it will find that it will use up a vast amount of their FLUX.

RANK 1: Blind – This ability allows the Ebon to create a blinding flash of light centred around them but not affecting them. Anybody without eye protection and/or helmet in the 10m area must make a CONC roll at a –6 or are considered blind for one round. This costs 1 FLUX.

RANK 2: Light 1 – This skill allows the Ebon to create a lasting light source from the hand or finger. It is as bright as a normal small torch with an optimum beam length of 10m. The duration is the user's CONC in minutes. This also costs 2 FLUX.

RANK 3: Light 2 – This is an improved version of the Light 1 skill where the Ebon may create a beam of light of 20m from their hand with a duration of CONC in minutes and a cost of 4 FLUX.

RANK 4: Light 3 – This is a far superior version of the lower ranks of Illumination. This skill allows the creation of a 2m wide broad beam of light 25m long from the hand or palm. This skill costs 4 FLUX and the duration is the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 5: Charge 1 – This is the first of the 'offensive skills' brought about by the conjunction of the Ebon and Brain Waster's schools of learning. The use of this skill sends a small electric charge through the target's body. The charge is not enough to kill but it will incapacitate the subject for some time. The attacker must be touching the target and a successful Unarmed Combat attack roll must be made to touch the target. If the target fails their PHYS roll at a –2, they are stunned for 4 rounds. This skill costs 5 FLUX.

RANK 6: Light 4 – This is a 'hand's free' ability which creates a sphere of light 0.3m in diameter that floats 1m above the user's head, illuminating an area

with a diameter of 15m around the Ebon. The strength of the light is equal to a 100 watt light bulb that lasts for the Ebon's CONC in minutes and costs 6 FLUX.

RANK 7: Light 5 – This is one of the most visually stunning abilities in the Illumination skill list. The Ebon can project a workable light source from their eyes with no detrimental effects towards the user's vision i.e. they can still see perfectly well. This beam has a 10m range and lasts for the user's CONC in minutes and costs 7 FLUX.

RANK 8: Light 6 – This is an improved class of the Rank 6 skill, Light 4, the orb ability. The orb now will follow the Ebon hovering 1m above their head for a duration of the user's CONC in minutes. The working area is a diameter of 25m. This ability costs 8 FLUX.

RANK 9: Charge 2 – This skill indicates another intrusion of the Brain Waster's mentality into Ebon skills. This is a stronger charge which will stun even the strongest opponent. The Ebon must make a successful Unarmed Combat roll to touch the victim and if this is successful, then the victim must make a PHYS roll at a –5 or be stunned for 10 rounds. This skill costs 9 FLUX.

RANK 10: Light 7 – The 'star orb' is another visually stunning ability. The small (0.3m diameter) orb is created in the Ebon's hand and shoots up into the air at a very fast speed till it levels out at 500m. It then explodes into a myriad of tiny shards, each giving off a bright glow. This glow is enough to light an area of 70m diameter for 6 rounds after which, the light will fade. The cost is 10 FLUX.

RANK 11: Ebon Eyes – This Ebon trait is not understood entirely by the Ebons but it is believed to be linked to the strong forces of light that the Ebon manipulates through the use of their abilities. The physical change can be quite striking as the Ebon's eye begins to give off a slight glow as they progress in power. The glow becomes bright and the skin takes on a light appearance giving the impression of very clean skin as if it were, as the eyes are, glowing. This is a passive skill and therefore costs no FLUX.

RANK 12: Light 8 – This ability is identical to the Light 6 orb ability with one difference, the Ebon now has directional control over the orb. The Ebon can control the movement of the orb up to a radius of 30m. The skill costs 12 FLUX and the duration is the Ebon's CONC in minutes. The Ebon must maintain visual contact with the orb to be able to control it.

RANK 13: Enlightenment – At this level, the Ebon gains insight into the workings of the Ebb and can prolong the durations of their Illumination abilities at the cost of 1 FLUX per minute.

RANK 14: Charge 3 – The Brain Waster influence, once again, creeps into the Ebon way with this offensive ability. This is a painful experience to anybody unlucky enough to be on the receiving end of such a blast. The Ebon must make a successful Unarmed Combat roll to be able to touch the victim who then receives 5 points of damage to the first thing that it comes in contact with i.e. armour or clothes. The victim then must make a PHYS roll at a –5 or they will be stunned for 10 rounds. The cost for this ability is 14 FLUX.

RANK 15: Light 9 – The 'star orb' is a larger version of the Rank 10 orb which is created in the Ebon's hand and shoots up into the air at a very fast speed till it



levels out at 500m. It then explodes into a myriad of tiny shards, each giving off a bright glow. This glow is enough to light an area of 150m diameter for 6 rounds after which, the light will fade. The cost is 15 FLUX.

RANK 16: Perfect Night Vision – To aid the Ebon on the path of Illumination, the Ebon can now, at a very little cost, see in the dark (from dimly lit areas to complete darkness) at the cost of 1 FLUX an hour. The Ebon can adjust to the different light sources and see as if it were natural daylight all the time when they may stop the ability at any time during the hour.

RANK 17: Charge 5 – As the power of the Ebon grows, so does the destructive potential of Ebb Illumination. This form of charge is one of the most destructive abilities an Ebon can learn. The actual power of this ability can punch holes through armour. The range of the attack can be anything up to 40m with a damage of 20 and PEN of 14 and then the victim must make a PHYS roll at a -5 or be stunned for 10 rounds. The cost for this attack is 17 FLUX.

RANK 18: Light 10 – Nova Orb – This is the greatest form of light creation that an Ebon can perform. The orb is created in the Ebon's hand and shoots up into the air at a very fast speed till it levels out at 500m. It then explodes with a bright and powerful surge which creates an artificial daylight over a 1km radius centred on the user for 10 minutes when it fades. The skill costs 18 FLUX.

RANK 19: Chameleon – This is one of the extremely rare abilities which actually utilises a piece of Science Friction work from another Ebon ability, Protect– which in this case is the DeathSuit produced by Dark Lament. The ability allows the Ebon to manipulate the light sources in its immediate area and refract them around the DeathSuit making them completely invisible to the naked eye as long as the DeathSuit is not damaged and the user is not wearing clothes on top of the DeathSuit. Weapons being carried will be seen. Other forms of detection still work, however, such as I.R. and motion scanners. The chameleon suit lasts for the Ebon's CONC in minutes and costs 19 FLUX to perform.

RANK 20: Glyph Creation – The art of Glyph Creation is one that is both time consuming as well as costly. There are many different types of glyphs but the two used most are 'Force' and 'Guard'. These use known abilities of the Ebon and manipulate them to be used in inanimate objects.

Force Glyphs

Force glyphs are reasonably easy to create (as far as glyph creation goes) –The Ebon must know two things; one, the rank of Force Ebb Kinetics that is to be used and two, the Glyph Creation ability itself. Force glyphs are Force Ebb Kinetics which have been transferred onto objects such as blades, armour, doors etc., in the form of glyphs. Doors and doorways are the most common places that these types of glyph are used. First of all, the Ebon must find a suitable object. A glyph can be written on any object but Dark Lament materials are more appropriate and always favoured because using any other materials can usually cost more than it is worth and an Ebon can find themselves spending double the time and energy doing this. Once the object has been selected, the Ebon must then draw out the glyph onto the object. All Ebons can both read and write in the form of glyphs from their basic training but to read a glyph created for any purpose other than to read, e.g. created for the use of protection, requires a Formulae roll. (This is fully explained in the 'Getting Close' section of this chapter.) The Ebon must then prepare the object to receive the glyph. This is done by using the 'Glyph Creation' skill. A Force Ebb Rank 1–10 glyph will cost 20 FLUX to prepare, Ranks 11–15 will cost 40 FLUX and Ranks 16–20 cost 60 FLUX. The preparation of the glyphed object takes 15 hours minus the Ebon's CONC in hours to complete plus the rank of skill being placed in the object, for example, a Force Ebb Rank 4 skill will take an Ebon with a CONC of 12, 7 hours of uninterrupted concentration to complete. The amount of FLUX to use the ability must now be placed inside the glyph or it will not work i.e. in the above example, 4 FLUX must be placed into the glyph for it to work once. The ability cannot be activated more than once unless more FLUX is placed into the glyph. The abilities do not act together but one after another. The activation of a glyph takes place when it is touched i.e. if someone steps on the glyph or if a victim is struck by a glyphed blade. A glyph may only be touched by its creator without it taking effect which makes glyphed weapons very personal.

Buying Material from Dark Lament

Dark Lament sell all sorts of pieces of equipment that are used to receive glyphs. Blades, doors and security boxes are just some examples of the type of object that can be acquired. The type and price of the object can be left up to the Games Master, but a blade will cost approx. 500¢ and a door will cost 10,000¢.

The 'Guard' glyphs are easier to accomplish as there are only a few that are available. These are P.V. and I.D. increases and bonuses which can be placed in the object. These increases are as follows:

P.V. – 20 FLUX + 10 FLUX per 1 P.V.

I.D. – 20 FLUX + 5 FLUX per 1 I.D.

The cost is double if performed on an object not of Dark Lament construction i.e. a FEN 603 or Crackshot Armour.

PROTECT: EBON GUARD

"The principles behind the 'DeathSuit' are as follows... Be quiet! That's better. You Feral's don't have the first clue about your potential. And what I'm about to tell you just might save your little necks one day so listen up. The DeathSuit is a matrix used by Ebons to channel their energies, Ebb. Now before the creation of this suit we had to use Glyph cards to give a focus for our powers. Now the DeathSuit does this for us. It also stops bullets. Yes, I thought that would interest you all. The suit acts as our protection, Ebb store and Glyph deck all in one. Without it you lot would be fumbling about with a deck of cards, like some sad fortune teller, looking for your enhancement Glyphs praying that you have enough time to read it before the big, nasty DarkNight man bashes your head all over the side–walk. Now, any questions?"

Shanna, SLA Tutorial Department, Mort: Meny 873 SD.

Protect: Ebon Guard deals with the abilities that are enhanced by the 'DeathSuit' armour class. Before the actual creation of the DeathSuit, the Ebon guard abilities were all but dormant within the Ebon. Dark Lament brought these abilities from the edge of extinction and gave them one of the strongest outlets that could possibly be created; the DeathSuit. The protection abilities deal completely with the enhancement of the DeathSuit. These enhancements are not considered great leaps of Ebon power, rather more a utilisation of the DeathSuit. As armour, the DeathSuit, coupled with the mysterious manufacturing techniques of the Dark Lament facilities and the usual powers of the wearer, is perhaps indestructible and most definitely invaluable.

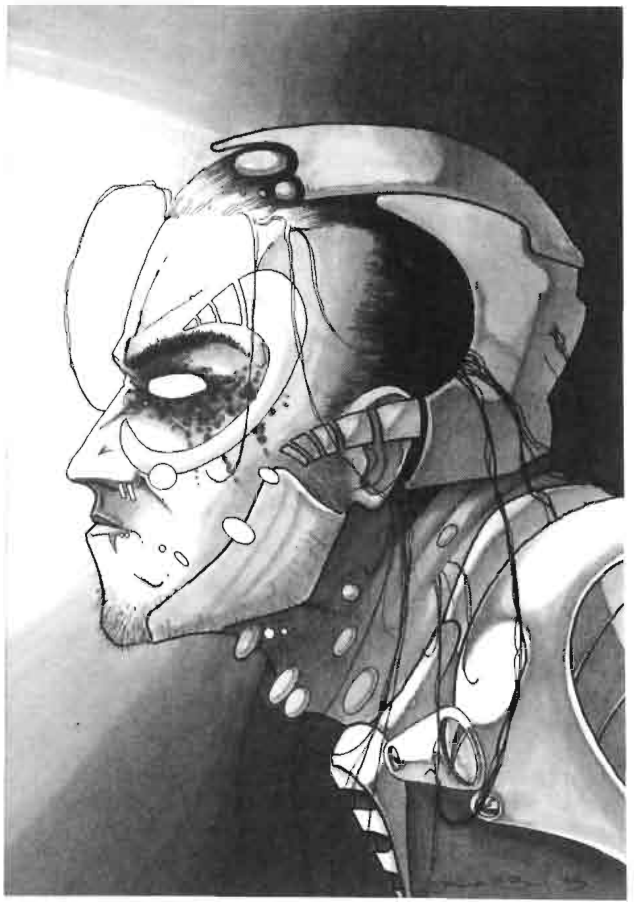
RANK 1: Charge DeathSuit – The first of the Ebon Guard abilities deals with the physical manipulation of the outer skin of the DeathSuit making it more resistant to kinetic forces i.e. bullets, knife blows and some of the Ebon powers. The outer layer thickens and hardens to make a very dense, rubber like substance. This costs 1 point of FLUX per 1 point of increase in the P.V. of the DeathSuit to a maximum of plus five for 1 day.

RANK 2: Heal DeathSuit – The Healing of an Ebon's armour is of the utmost importance to all Ebons as the loss involved when a DeathSuit is destroyed is not dissimilar to the death of a good friend or close relation. The actual physical healing of a DeathSuit is similar to that of healing normal flesh and bone, although the amount of Ebb involved is in most cases greater than that used in the 'Art of Healing'. This skill costs 1 point of FLUX per point of I.D. restored to the DeathSuit, permanently.

RANK 3: Boost DeathSuit – This ability is similar to the Rank 1 skill only with this one, the actual strength of the armour is not affected. In this skill, the armour grows slightly in size as the cells of the armour expand to allow the suit to absorb more damage. This costs 1 FLUX per 5 I.D. per location up to a maximum of 25 extra I.D. in each location.

RANK 4: Channel 1 – Being able to channel Ebb into a DeathSuit for it to act as a store shows that the suit and the wearer are forming bond. This is the first step in the joining of the Ebon and the DeathSuit to act as one as the Ebon is able to store 10 FLUX. This skill is automatic and costs no FLUX.

RANK 5: Light to Medium – At this level of performance, the DeathSuit undergoes the first of its physical changes. These changes come in the form of a sort of 'Ebon Guard evolution' as the DeathSuit



grows in strength and, to a slight degree, size. This 'new' DeathSuit has improved protection and damage absorption to protect its wearer. This costs no FLUX. At this point, the suit also bleeds insignificant amounts of FLUX from its owner. This energy is not detectable to the Ebon, but every 24 hours, the suit will produce 1 point of FLUX for the use of the Ebon. See table.

RANK 6: First Graft – After the DeathSuit has made its step up from light to medium (see above), it also gains its own attribute bonuses. It receives its first bonus which is +2 to the wearer's PHYS, while they are wearing the DeathSuit. This skill is passive and therefore costs no FLUX.

RANK 7: Repel – At this point in its development, the DeathSuit further strengthens by building up resistance to heat, cold and electricity. With the manipulation of the Ebon Guard abilities, the DeathSuit (not the wearer) can resist temperatures ranging from 200 degrees C down to –40 degrees C. It also can resist 5000 volt shocks. This is a passive skill therefore it does not cost any FLUX.

RANK 8: Soothing Touch – Now that the Ebon has reached the higher levels of Ebon Guard, the DeathSuit continues to change both itself and its wearer. The 'Soothing Touch' of a DeathSuit imparts a feeling of calm onto its user. This gives the Ebon a +2 COOL whilst wearing the suit and is a passive skill.

RANK 9: Channel 2 – At this level, the DeathSuit will expand its FLUX store matrix efficiency, doubling its storage capacity. The DeathSuit can now store 20 points of FLUX. This is a passive skill.

RANK 10: Medium to Heavy – The DeathSuit now further undergoes physical changes and becomes tougher and more durable making its next step up to a Heavy DeathSuit. Usually when this happens, it again gains a little more in size but if the Ebon wills it, it can stay the same size and look the same. This is a passive skill. See table.

RANK 11: Second Graft – At this point in the Ebon's development, the ten initial stages of Ebon Guard are known and the Ebon can further the development of their skills into the higher levels of learning. The first of these higher levels is enhancement of the DeathSuit wearer's STR. This is achieved by th suit which, under its outer layers, mimics the major muscle tissue groups of the Ebon. This gives them a +2 to their STR whilst the wearing the DeathSuit.

RANK 12: Suck FLUX – The ability of the Ebon to actually draw someone else's FLUX is a near impossible trick, but with the absorption properties of the DeathSuit together with the Ebon's ability to channel other people's FLUX, it is made possible. The Ebon has to be in direct contact with the person they are going to drain. (This may require a successful Unarmed Combat attack roll if the subject is not passive.) When this has been achieved, the Ebon maintains contact and drains any FLUX. This cannot be more than the Ebon can store in either themselves or their DeathSuit. FLUX is drained at a rate of 1 FLUX per phase. If the target performs any physical actions during this time, the Ebon must make another close combat attack roll to maintain the link.

RANK 13: Interdermalisation – Interdermalisation is perhaps the most physically demanding and mentally damaging ability that an Ebon can use with their DeathSuit. This allows the Ebon to, in effect, hide the armour (the DeathSuit) under their skin. The actual working parameters of this skill are directly linked to the construction of the DeathSuit. Dark Lament production techniques have created the suit of armour in such a way that the materials used mimic the human body in many ways so as to lessen the detrimental effects of the armour passing through and into parts of the body. This skill costs 1 point of FLUX to place the DeathSuit under the skin but it does not cost anything to bring it back out. The DeathSuit still acts as normal, taking damage before the Ebon does.

RANK 14: Channel 3 – A far better store ability than the Rank 9 Ebon Guard, the DeathSuit can now store 30 points of FLUX for the Ebon to use at no extra cost.

RANK 15: Heavy to Super – The DeathSuit now evolves again from the Heavy to a Super DeathSuit armour type. This is a passive skill.

RANK 16: Third Graft – This is the final enhancement that the DeathSuit bestows on its owner. Increasing the wearer's DEX by +2 points when they are wearing the suit. This skill costs no FLUX.

RANK 17: Living Suit – This is the greatest change that any DeathSuit can undergo. Through the Ebon's experiences, use of FLUX and Ebon abilities, the suit begins to form its own life matrix and bodily functions. The armour itself becomes a living entity, an extension of the Ebon's mind. Although the DeathSuit can never be a free thinking creature and has no real capacity to learn, it can the use the Ebon's own abilities and characteristics i.e. Ebon abilities (not normal skills) as well as STR, DEX and PHYS. The DeathSuit will not act on behalf of its owner unless they are unconscious. At

this point, the DeathSuit may stand and walk as its owner would. When a DeathSuit is using its owner's abilities, its first concern is the well being of the Ebon who wear it and before undertaking any actions will heal the wounded owner. A sentient DeathSuit cannot harm others by any means, instead it concerns itself completely with the preservation of the Ebon host, for example, if an Ebon is wounded in a fire fight, the suit will heal them and drag, crawl and walk to safety or a safe piece of cover till the danger has passed or the Ebon is conscious. If a DeathSuit has no FLUX stored inside, then it may make no actions at all. This skill is passive. For use in the game, the P.C. controls the DeathSuit.

RANK 18: Soul Store – Through the use of this ability the Ebon creates a Soul Store matrix in their DeathSuit (Ebon classification: Heartfall matrix) which will, on the event of their death, store their life essence for a 24 hour period plus another 24 hours per 10 points of FLUX in the DeathSuit. It is possible for another Ebon to place additional FLUX into the DeathSuit to continue the existence of the soul. The matrix is created by the Ebon as it forms a link with the DeathSuit when it becomes sentient (Rank 17). The DeathSuit can then use the Ebon's abilities to, for example, contact another Ebon to inform them of its owner's death or to transport the body back to SLA Industries as an Ebon (even a dead one) and their equipment could be very dangerous in the wrong hands. Once the DeathSuit runs out of FLUX, the soul dies and the DeathSuit can no longer use the Ebon's abilities.

Note: A DeathSuit cannot utilise a dead Ebon's Reality Folding abilities as this requires an Ebon's mind to fully understand Ebb flow in the universe, the principles behind Reality Folding. It can, however, get up and walk.

RANK 19: Channel 4 – This is the largest of the FLUX storage abilities allowing 40 points of FLUX to be stored at any one time. This skill does not require any extra cost.

RANK 20: Super to Angel – This is the last in the line of the DeathSuit evolution. This ability takes the DeathSuit to its evolutionary limit – Angel Armour. See table.

REALITY FOLDING: EBB MANIPULATION

"The dog gets a bit spooked when I 'fold' into the living room. The cat – well, she doesn't care about anything and the goldfish can't remember me long enough to notice. Anyway, folding is easy, just think about where you want to go and 'whoosh', you're there. Well, that's the way I see it. My sister says its got to do with ceasing to exist in one part of the universe and starting in another. My sister's too tightly bound for this world anyway."

Black, Foldship Navigator, Mort 899 SD.

"The art of folding takes a great deal of time to learn. I spent 6 months doing nothing else in Meny. Folding the Ebb is truly amazing, it's like... like being in five car crashes and walking out alive, to feel your body actually change states from being nothing then back to being again is, to say the least, exhilarating. Folding space around the ship is the closest I have ever come to sheer ecstasy. My sister thinks it's 'fun'. she's more than a few cards short of a full deck."

White, Foldship Navigator, Mort 899 SD.

This is perhaps the least understood of all the Ebon abilities. Even the greatest Ebon scholars have failed to unravel the innermost secrets of the long and complicated equations that are used. Another mystery of Ebb Manipulation is that the energies involved are quite small amounts considering that the actual principle of such powers should call for the burning of immense amounts of flux. However, nobody doubts that without such a form of transportation like this, the universe would be a much smaller place. The foldships, massive ships of strange construction, that can travel tens of light years in an instant. These Dark Lament leviathans are the life lines to and from Mort and its dependants.

EBB MANIPULATION IN THE GAME

When using these abilities, the destination should always be known when 'porting'. It is not possible to port inside objects or people unless it is by mistake or accident.

RANK 1: Jump Port 1 – This is the first and quickest of the 'Reality Folding' abilities. This allows the user to go from one location to another in an instant. The maximum range for this skill is 5m in any direction as long as the Ebon can see their destination regardless of intervening terrain. This costs 1 FLUX.

RANK 2: Jump Port 2 – The range on this form of 'Jump Porting' is increased to 10m and the cost is 2 FLUX. The Ebon must be able to see their destination clearly.

RANK 3: Jump Port 3 – The range for this skill is increased once more to 20m where the Ebon is able to port themselves to a visible destination. This costs 3 FLUX.

RANK 4: Jump Port 4 – This ability allows an Ebon to port an inanimate object from where it stands to their hand or next to them. The object can weigh no more than 1kg and must be within 5m of the user. The Ebon must also be able to see the object clearly. The cost for this skill is 5 FLUX.

RANK 5: Jump Port 5 – This is a stronger Jump Port ability which allows the Ebon to port an inanimate object from up to 10m away which weighs up to 2kg to where they stand or into their hand. The Ebon must be able to see the object clearly. The cost of this skill is 5 FLUX per object.

RANK 6: Jump Port 6 – This ability allows the Ebon again to increase the weights and ranges of porting an object to themselves. The Ebon can now port an object weighing up to 10kg from a range of 20m away. The Ebon must still have a clear line of sight to the inanimate object but it can be moving. The cost for this skill is 6 FLUX per object.

RANK 7: Jump Port 7 – This ability again deals with the porting of the Ebon themselves. This port has a range of 50m as long as the Ebon can see their destination clearly with no intervening terrain. This costs 7 FLUX.

RANK 8: Jump Port 8 – This level of 'porting' takes time to perform, 13 seconds minus the user's CONC. The range is 100m and the Ebon must be able to see their destination clearly. This skill costs 8 FLUX.

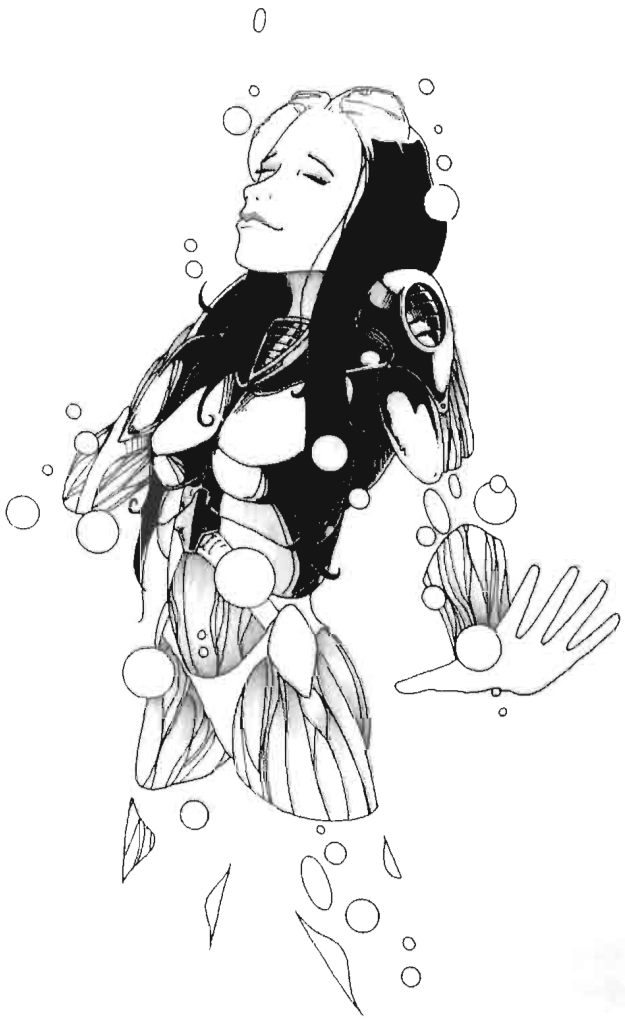
RANK 9: Jump Port 9 – With this skill, the Ebon can port themselves to up to 200m away as long as they can clearly see their destination. The skill takes 13 seconds minus the user's CONC to perform and costs 9 FLUX.

RANK 10: Jump Port 10 – This is a very complex ability that involves the Ebon making a series of very small manipulation equations in rapid succession. This gives the Ebon the appearance of a flickering figure as they fold space millions of times a second. This allows an Ebon to literally walk through solid objects like walls as they do not exist long enough in the physical universe for the object to take effect. An Ebon cannot walk through a living object. No other abilities of any kind can be used when the Ebon wall-walks. The duration of the ability is the Ebon's CONC in seconds and costs 10 FLUX.

RANK 11: Jump Port 11 – This is a very risky way of manipulating Ebb flow. The Ebon has to picture the place they wish to port to in their mind then fold themselves. This can only be done if the Ebon knows the place they wish to fold to really well i.e. their home or a similar place. How well they know the destination is up to the Games Master. The maximum range of this 'blind port' is 5km and costs 11 FLUX.

RANK 12: Jump Port 12 – This is the first step on the way to actually Jump Porting a foldship. It may seem as if the two skills are unrelated but they are almost identical. Where a navigator folds space around a ship, a normal Ebon folds space around another person or similar object. This means that at this level, an Ebon can port themselves and another person or object, as long as the object weighs under 80kg, up to a distance of 20m. The Ebon must have clear sight of the destination and the cost is 12 FLUX and 10 FLUX for every 1kg over up to 95kg.

RANK 13: Jump Port 13 – This is an improved version of the Rank 12 skill where the Ebon can port themselves as well as another person or object as long as they weigh under 80kg, up to a distance of 50m. The cost for this skill is 13 FLUX plus 5 FLUX for every 1kg over 80kg up to a maximum of 95kg. The Ebon must have a clear line of sight of their



destination.

RANK 14: Jump Port 14 – This is nearly an identical skill to the Rank 13 where an Ebon can port both themselves and another person or object 'blind' as in the Rank 11 skill as long as it is not over 80kg. The Ebon can port up to a maximum of 5km away as long as they know well where they are going (this is up to the Games Master). The cost for this skill is 14 FLUX plus 5 FLUX for every 1kg above 80kg to a maximum of 100kg.

RANK 15: Mass Port 1 – This is a general area mass port skill. It is used to reality fold everything including the user in a 2.5m radius to a desired location within 200m which the Ebon must know really well i.e. home or can see clearly. There is no weight limit to the fold but objects which are fixed down would not fold. Everything else would fold i.e. dirt and water as well as other objects. The cost for this skill is 30 FLUX.

RANK 16: Mass Port 2 – This is a refined version of the Mass Port 1 skill where an Ebon can port people within 5m of the Ebon. The range is 200m as long as the destination is either in sight or a known location. The cost is 35 FLUX plus 5 FLUX per person ported up to 50 FLUX(Three extra people).

RANK 17: Jump Port 15 – This is a self manipulation ability where the Ebon has developed a very good working understanding of Ebb flow and can port themselves anywhere in a 12,000km range as long as they know where they are going. A picture of the destination will be good enough for the Ebon to port to it or even a very good description (this is at the Games Master's discretion). The cost of this skill is 25 FLUX.

RANK 18: Jump Port 16 – This form of porting is very specialized. The skill involves the Ebon being able to find the stable point of an inanimate object which may be moving and is no more than 50m away. They can then port the object to their hand or beside them. The object that is to be ported must weigh no more than 50kg and include guns, armour and objects from other people. This costs 18 FLUX.

RANK 19: Jump Port 17 – At this point in an Ebon's development, their abilities have grown to considerable power and using them has given the Ebon a great deal of insight into the working of the Ebb and how it relates to the fabric of the universe. This knowledge takes the form of a navigational understanding of space and how the planets and stars function as part of the universe. You must now learn or know the skill Space Navigation before you go on to learn Rank 20.

RANK 20: Jump Port 18 – This skill is used in conjunction with the Rank 19 skill. This ability allows the Ebon to fold space around one of the great foldships constructed by Dark Lament. The cost of FLUX is great and should be determined by the GM taking into consideration the size of ship and distance being folded.

RED THERMAL: INFERNO EBB

"The next time that you're sitting at home and some big fire comes on TV, have a thought for the poor saps, like me, that put them out. It's the Ebons, you know. The friggin' Ebons! They wander about like lost sheep, end up in Downtown and more often than not get into a shit load of trouble. Now, you and I both know that, ok, it rains all the time but it's like a tinderbox down there, one spark and 'vawoosh'! You lose five blocks. So, they run about blasting anything that moves and most of the things that don't, make a mess of everything and go home. Then! Then, they call us. 'Oh, by the way, there's a fire down in... what was the name of that street again? Oh, you'll know which one it is, big building with flames licking up the outside. Thanks, bye.' God, they make me sick."

Conversation recorded at the 'Level 10' bar between (ex)Fire Officer A.Cord Fire Unit 216A and member of bar staff, R. Jordan, Mort Central 900 SD.

The creation of fire has been one of the most important discoveries of nearly every race and civilisation. The Ebon race, of course, did it just a little different. Their manipulation of the Ebb brought forth the abilities to resist the coldest of temperatures but as the saying goes, 'there's no smoke without fire' and the Ebons found that fire; 'Inferno Ebb'. The devastating force of some of these skills is, as with most of the damaging abilities, attributed to the mixture of Ebon culture with the Brain Waster class but the ability to create fire or heat in general lies firmly in the lap of the Ebon race. The Brain Waster class only manipulated what was already there. The advancement of Ebons using Inferno Ebb has changed little in 200 years, the most powerful ability, 'Cinder', was, up until 300 years ago, a very powerful Body Blaze that could engulf entire areas or rooms with the creation of a strong intervention equation, this ability was turned into a literal 'death touch'. These abilities are often used extensively by the Brain Waster cast more than Force Ebb Kinetics as the Inferno is much more visually pleasing. All of these abilities by their nature are easy to learn and cost the user very little in FLUX. Ebons will find that they are immune to the effects of their own Inferno Ebb abil-

ities.

RANK 1: Resist Cold – The Ebon race first developed this talent to survive in their various climates on the planet Static. Over the centuries, this ability has been refined to enable the Ebon to resist temperatures down to –10 degrees C. This costs one FLUX and lasts for the user's CONC in minutes.

RANK 2: Create Heat – This is a similar ability to the resistance of cold. The Ebon can, through touch, raise the temperature of an inanimate object to 40 degrees C. This is not enough to do any physical damage to a person touching the object but it will be very uncomfortable. Objects such as armour can only be heated if they are not being worn at the time. It is not possible with this ability to heat an object over 40 degrees C. This skill costs two FLUX where an Ebon must touch the object to heat it. It takes one action to raise the temperature to 40 degrees C and two rounds for it to cool down again.

RANK 3: Burn 1 – This is the first truly offensive Inferno skill. It sends a stream of Ebb flame from the palm of the user's hand to strike its target. The flame has a range of 10m and does 6 points of damage and 2 points of armour damage with a penetration of 3. This skill costs 2 FLUX. The colour of the flame is entirely up to the user.

RANK 4: Thermal Ball 1 – The Thermal Ball is a direct damage ability with the damage always being taken by the first object or surface that it hits. The ball is produced from the hands of the Ebon. It appears as a fiery ball with a diameter of 0.3m and is then fired at the target. The range of a Thermal Ball is 25m doing 10 points of damage to the first thing it strikes. This costs 4 FLUX.

RANK 5: Body Blaze 1 – This is a very aesthetically pleasing ability where the Ebon's body is set ablaze with Ebb flame. The Ebon can now inflict vast amounts of damage to the surrounding area simply by touch. Each object or person that the Ebon touches takes 6 points of damage and this includes whatever the Ebon walks or stands on. To touch another person, the Ebon must make a successful Unarmed Combat attack roll. This ability costs 5 FLUX to perform and lasts for 1 round.

RANK 6: Resist Cold 2 – This ability will allow an Ebon to survive in temperatures as low as –30 degrees C for a limited period of time. The cost for this skill is 2 FLUX and the duration is the user's CONC in minutes.

RANK 7: Create Heat 2 – The Ebon can, through touch, raise the temperature of an inanimate object to 70 degrees C. This will do some damage to any one touching the object without protection i.e. armour or heat resistant clothing. An object may not be heated to over 70 degrees C with this skill. This skill costs 4 FLUX and the Ebon must be able to touch the object or must make an Unarmed Combat roll to touch an opponent. It takes 1 action to raise the temperature of an object to 70 degrees



C and 3 rounds to cool it down again.

RANK 8: Burn 2 – This ability comes in the form of a stream of flame from the fingertips of the user. The jet of flame does 8 points of damage and 4 points of armour damage with a penetration of 4 at a range of 15m. This skill costs 4 FLUX. The colour of the flame is entirely up to the user.

RANK 9: Thermal Ball 2 – The ball of Ebb Flame that is created in the user's hands has a devastational effect on whatever it strikes. The ball is a 30cm diameter sphere of swirling flame that does 15 points of damage with no penetration when fired at an opponent. This skill costs 8 FLUX and has a range of 25m.

RANK 10: Body Blaze 2 – The blazing body of the Ebon is a fearful sight and even more painful if struck by it. The Ebon's fiery touch does 9 points of damage at a penetration of 1 and armour damage of 2 to anything it touches. This does not include the footsteps of the Ebon. To touch an opponent, a successful Unarmed Combat roll must be made. The cost for this skill is 15 FLUX and the duration is one round.

RANK 11: Resist Cold 3 – This ability allows the Ebon to tolerate temperatures as low as –60 degrees C. (This is the average temperature of a Winter in a Wraith Raider Home World.) The cost for this skill is 4 FLUX and lasts for the user's CONC in minutes.

RANK 12: Create Heat 3 – The Ebon can now raise the temperature of an object to 100 degrees C at a range of 1m away from the object. Any person touching the object will take 3 points of damage to the first surface that it comes in contact with i.e. armour or skin. It takes one action to heat up the object but armour cannot be heated up if worn. The object will take 4 rounds to cool. It is not possible to heat an object beyond 100 degrees C or cool an object of a higher temperature. In addition, the Ebon may alternatively choose to heat an area around themselves of 20m in diameter to a maximum temperature of 30 degrees C. This takes 1 round to heat and and 4 to cool with the cost for both of these abilities is 10 FLUX.

RANK 13: Burn 3 – This is a powerful jet of Ebb flame that originates from the Ebon's fingertips and palm of their hand. This does 10 points of damage and armour damage of 6 at a penetration of 6 due to the sheer force of the attack. The range for this skill is 20m and the cost is 10 FLUX.

RANK 14: Thermal Ball 3 – This is a large (0.5m across) sphere of flame that does 20 points of damage to the first tangible object it hits at a range of 25m costing 12 FLUX.

RANK 15: Body Blaze 3 – The Ebon becomes a 1m diameter blazing column of flame that does 11 points of damage, armour damage is 4 and a penetration is 2 to anything they touch. A successful Unarmed Combat attack is required to touch an opponent. Body Blaze 3 costs 20 FLUX and lasts for 1 round.

RANK 16: Resist Cold 4 – Everything freezes at 254 degrees C. Using this ability, an Ebon will not. It costs 6 FLUX to resist the cold and lasts for the Ebon's CONC in minutes.

RANK 17: Create Heat 4 – The Ebon may raise the temperature of an object to 100 degrees C at a range of 10m. The object takes 1 action to heat up with 5 rounds to cool and the Ebon can also heat up an area of 50m in diameter up to a temperature of 50 degrees C for the same duration. These skills both cost 15 FLUX to perform.

RANK 18: Burn 4 – This is a column of flame projected from the Ebon's hand that does 12 points of damage, an armour damage of 8 at a penetration of 8. The cost for this skill is 12 FLUX and the range is 30m.

RANK 19: Thermal Ball 4 – This destructive blazing sphere formed in the Ebon's hand does 25 points of damage to the first tangible object it strikes. This skill costs 8 FLUX and has a range of 30m.

RANK 20: Cinder – To perform this ability, the Ebon must be in physical contact with the victim. This can be acheived by successfully making an Unarmed Combat roll. The Ebon must then use the same amount of FLUX as the person has hits in their body i.e. total of head, arms, torso and leg hits then, using Cinder, can reduce the victim to ash instantly.

SENSES: SENSE PERCEPTION

"I had the misfortune to be present at an Ebon brawl once. These two huge Ebb Beasts burning FLUX like there was no tomorrow. I think one of them tried to 'Cinder' the other but it was ready it and retaliated with a 'Backlash', I think it's called. The first one then did the same back. What followed in the next few seconds could only be described as 'a game of catch with a hand grenade'. Eventually, the first one weakened and was reduced to ash in an instant. I have never seen Ebon Senses used like that before and I never want to see it again."

Kevin Walker, Shiver Unit 77A, Mort: Downtown 896 SD.

The art of removing and replacing the senses has been the focus for a great deal of debate over the centuries. Most Ebons can understand that the returning of lost senses such as sight has great benefits. In addition to this, as the power increases, the damage that can be inflicted on the senses grows in size. Perhaps this is a trait of the Brain Waster breed or the natural reaction of a race that depend so much on perception to survive. It seems that no answer shall ever be reached to lay these questions to rest but at the same time the other abilities seem to have been buried under the above arguments. Some of which are quiet remarkable, for instance, the power to transfer audio and visual information by thought to a standard recording disc (slug).

RANK 1: Shock Sense 1 – The first of the Sensing abilities deals with the actual removal of one of four major senses; hearing, sight, smell and taste. One of these can be removed at any one time. It costs 1 FLUX to remove a sense. This requires the Ebon to be touching the victim and the effect lasts for the user's CONC in seconds.

RANK 2: Shock Sense 2 – This is the extended version of the Rank 1 skill where the sense is removed for the user's CONC in rounds instead of seconds. It costs 2 FLUX and again the Ebon must be touching the victim.You may have to make an unarmed combat roll to acheive this.

RANK 3: Shock Sense 3 – This allows an Ebon to remove the sense within a 5m radius. It costs 3 FLUX and lasts for the user's CONC in seconds.

RANK 4: Restore 1 – This ability allows a character to restore any sense removed by the use of Rank 1 Shock Sense. The user must be no more than 5m from the subject and the skill costs 4 FLUX.

RANK 5: Restore 2 – The Ebon is now able to remove the effect of Shock Sense 1 and 2 at a range of 5m and cost of 5 FLUX.

RANK 6: Shock Sense 4 – This allows an Ebon to remove a sense for 1 minute as long as the subject is no more than 5m away from the target at a cost of 6 FLUX.

RANK 7: Shock Sense 5 – Scare: Now that the basic senses are easy for the Ebon to manipulate, they can actually go deeper and plant a frightening image in the victim's mind. This normally takes the form of a visual image that is frightening to the subject. To avoid the effect, they must make a Fear roll at a rating of 4. The cost is 7 FLUX and has a range of 80m.

RANK 8: Restore 3 – This ability enables an Ebon to be able to remove the effects of of Shock Senses 1–5 as well as natural shocks i.e. after the character has failed a Fear roll with a Fear total of no more than 23. (See 'Fear'.) It also allows a character to clear the head or 'sober up' a confused or drunk person at a touch for a cost of 8 FLUX.

RANK 9: Shock Sense 6 – This has a strong connection with the 'Communication' abilities as it deals with the eradication of the last 5 minutes of someone's memory. This is quite selective in as much as the erase will only work on immaterial memories such as "It's your round." VOP! "No, it's your round." "Oh, so it is." This is mostly at the Games Master's discretion and costs 9 FLUX. The range is touch.

RANK 10: Shock Sense 7 – This is the most powerful of the Shock Sense abilities. It will, when used, permanently destroy any chosen sense. This costs 10 FLUX and the user must be touching the target.

RANK 11: Mind Block 1 – This ability effectively shuts off the Ebon's mind to any forms of detection from other Ebon abilities that can seek out or sense Ebons. Other Ebons can however, sense any FLUX that the Ebon with the Mind Block uses. It costs 1



FLUX an hour to maintain the Mind Block.

RANK 12: Super Sense 1 – This Sense ability alters the optic receptors of the Ebon to enable them to see in the Infra Red spectrum of light as well as the normal human spectrum of light. This costs 1 FLUX and lasts for the user's CONC in minutes.

RANK 13: Super Sense 2 – This ability alters the Ebon's sight in the same way to the Rank 12 ability but now the Ebon can see in the Ultra Violet spectrum of light. The cost is 1 FLUX an hour and lasts for the user's CONC in minutes. This can be combined with the Rank 12 skill to enable the Ebon to see in Ultra Violet, Infra Red and the normal spectrum of light.

RANK 14: Restore 4 – This skill gives the Ebon the ability to restore senses lost due to the Rank 10 ability, Shock Sense 7. It costs 10 FLUX for the use of this skill and the range is touch.

RANK 15: Audio Projection – This ability enables the Ebon to record anything that they can hear to a disc or slug by projecting the audio signal. This costs 5 FLUX and the Ebon can record 2 hours of audio pick–up as long as they have physical contact with the disc or slug.

RANK 16: Video Projection – This ability enables the Ebon to record anything they see to slug or disc. They can also do this with photographic slugs at the same cost, 3 FLUX per hour of recording. The Ebon must have actual physical contact with the disc or film. This can be combined with the Rank 15 skill, Audio Projection, to produce audio/visual recordings at a cost of 7 FLUX per hour.

RANK 17: Restore 5 – This is a passive ability. An immunity has now been built up against all the Shock Sense abilities, none of which now have any effect on the Ebon.

RANK 18: Super Sense 3 – This is a form of memory manipulation that allows the Ebon to control the storage of information received by the brain giving the Ebon 'total recall' so that they will remember everything seen and heard. This skill costs 5 FLUX to remember a time period equal to the Ebon's CONC in minutes, for example, if the Ebon wishes to fully remember a conversation to report back to their superior in their squad and has a CONC of 10, they will remember 10 minutes/5 FLUX spent. If they wish to remember a longer period i.e. 20 minutes, then they must spend a further 5 FLUX.

RANK 19: Mind Block 2 – This is a permanent and passive mind block which can be switched on and off if the Ebon so requires. It prevents any other Ebon being able to detect them but other Ebons can, however, detect FLUX that the Ebon with the Mind Block uses.

RANK 20: Ebon Backlash – This is the ability used by Ebons to calculate, using all available information to the senses, the equations used against the Ebon by an opponent and then to reverse the attack and throw it back at the user. This costs the Ebon the same amount as the Ebon used to perform the initial attack. If the Ebon has insufficient FLUX to do this, then the ability used against them takes full effect and the Ebon loses all their FLUX.

TELEKINESIS: FORCE FOCUS

"Mr. Slayer! Mr. Slayer! Channel 8, Mr. Slayer! A few words about inner city slums... Mr. Slayer! Quick, Paul, he's heading for his limo... Mr. Slayer! It's drawing away, come on Paul... ah, shit, lost him. Sorry control. No interview with old skull features... aargh, hack, cough..."

"Eh, control? This is Paul, Mike seems to be having a slight respiratory problem. I think... aargh, hack, cough, aargh, hack, cough..."

"Mike? Paul? Hey... you ok? Someone talk to me please. Hello, hello... This is control. Hello..."

Channel 8 interview, 'Slayer Slum File', not for broadcast. Mort Central 900 SD.

The forces that the mind contain can take many physical forms among the Ebon race. The most common of these physical manifestations comes in the form of Force Focus abilities, the moving of objects by force and will. These abilities deal not only with the manipulation of inanimate objects but also the power of flight and the rending of living tissue although the Ebon cannot comprehend the scale of the equations used, these skills work at a molecular level alternating and moving single molecules in objects and the air around them so that the Ebon is able to manouevre, very precisely, objects around themselves. With all of the following skills, the cost is equal to the rank.

RANK 1: Lift & Throw 1 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 12m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed)

every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion. For example, an Ebon wishes to move a 1kg object at 12m/round. If a further round of acceleration occurs, the new speed will be 24m/round. If the Ebon, however, wishes to move an object of 2kg, then the speed is halved to 6m/round.

Note: An object that weighs under 1kg moves at the same speed as a 1kg object.

RANK 2: Lift & Throw 2 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m radius, weighing 1kg at a speed of 24m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 3: Lift & Throw 3 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 36m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX to do this. This is at the player's discretion.

RANK 4: Lift & Throw 4 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 48m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of t round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion. For example, an Ebon wishes to move a 1kg object at 12m/round. If a further round of acceleration occurs, the new speed will be 24m/round. If the Ebon, however, wishes to move an object of 2kg, then the speed is halved to 6m/round.

Note: An object that weighs under 1kg moves at the same speed as a 1kg object.

RANK 2: Lift & Throw 2 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m radius, weighing 1kg at a speed of 24m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 3: Lift & Throw 3 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 36m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX to do this. This is at the player's discretion.

RANK 4: Lift & Throw 4 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 48m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding the velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 5: Shield 1 – Using this ability, the Ebon is able to thicken the air molecules in front of them to create a shield which slows down bullets, unarmed and armed attacks from opponents. This shield has an I.D. of 20 and a P.V. of 5. The shield stays up until it is destroyed completely or for the Ebon's CONC in minutes if not damaged.

RANK 6: Manipulation 1 – This skill allows an Ebon to throttle and choke a target from a range of 4m as long as they can see the target. The victim must make a PHYS roll at a –5 or is considered to be stunned for 5 seconds (1 combat round).

RANK 7: Fly 1 – This ability enables an Ebon to fly at

a speed of up to 15m/round or levitate for a duration of the user's CONC in rounds up to a maximum height of 1000m.

RANK 8: Lift & Throw 5 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 60m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 9: Lift & Throw 6 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 72m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 10: Lift & Throw 7 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 84m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 11: Lift & Throw 8 – This ability allows the



Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 96m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 12: Fly 2 – This ability enables an Ebon to fly at a speed of up to 60m/round or levitate for a duration of the user's CONC in rounds up to a maximum height of 1000m.

RANK 13: Manipulation 2 – This skill allows an Ebon to throttle and choke a target doing a damage of 15 with an armour damage of 4 and a penetration of 8 from a range of 30m as long as they can see the target.

RANK 14: Shield 2 – Using this ability, which is a much stronger ability than the Rank 5 skill, the Ebon is able to thicken the air molecules in front of them to create a shield which slows down bullets, unarmed and armed attacks from opponents. This shield has an I.D. of 40 and a P.V. of 12. The shield stays up until it is destroyed completely or for the Ebon's CONC in minutes if not damaged.

RANK 15: Lift & Throw 9 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 108m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX to do this. This is at the player's discretion.

RANK 16: Lift & Throw 10 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 120m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding the velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 17: Lift & Throw 11 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 132m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 18: Lift & Throw 12 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 144m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 19: Lift & Throw 13 – This ability allows the Ebon to move an object, within a 10m sphere of influence, weighing 1kg at a speed of 156m/round. The velocity that they may move the object is determined by their rank. The weight of the object they can influence is inversely proportional to the velocity. If they wish to increase the weight, they must decrease the velocity by the same factor. The duration is the user's CONC in seconds and they cannot move a weight that is not possible for them to move with their own physical strength. It is possible to accelerate the object by adding velocity (speed) every round it is travelling. This costs no FLUX and is at the player's discretion.

RANK 20: Manipulation 3 – This ability allows an Ebon to force an intrusion into a victim doing 35 points of damage with a penetration of 15 and armour damage of 10. This skill can be performed at any range up to 25m.

GORE CANNON: CELRYDREAHAD

(GLYPH TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF GORE CANNON pronounced SELLREEDRIHAD)

"My master has the most disturbingly intrusive Gore Cannon, yes, disturbing, like some demonic sleeping cat, one minute lying dormant draped across your shoulder and then the next, spitting, clawing and biting at your eyes. On more than one occasion, I have entered my master's room to find it lying at the foot of the bed watching me with unseen hungry eyes. I think it wants to eat me."

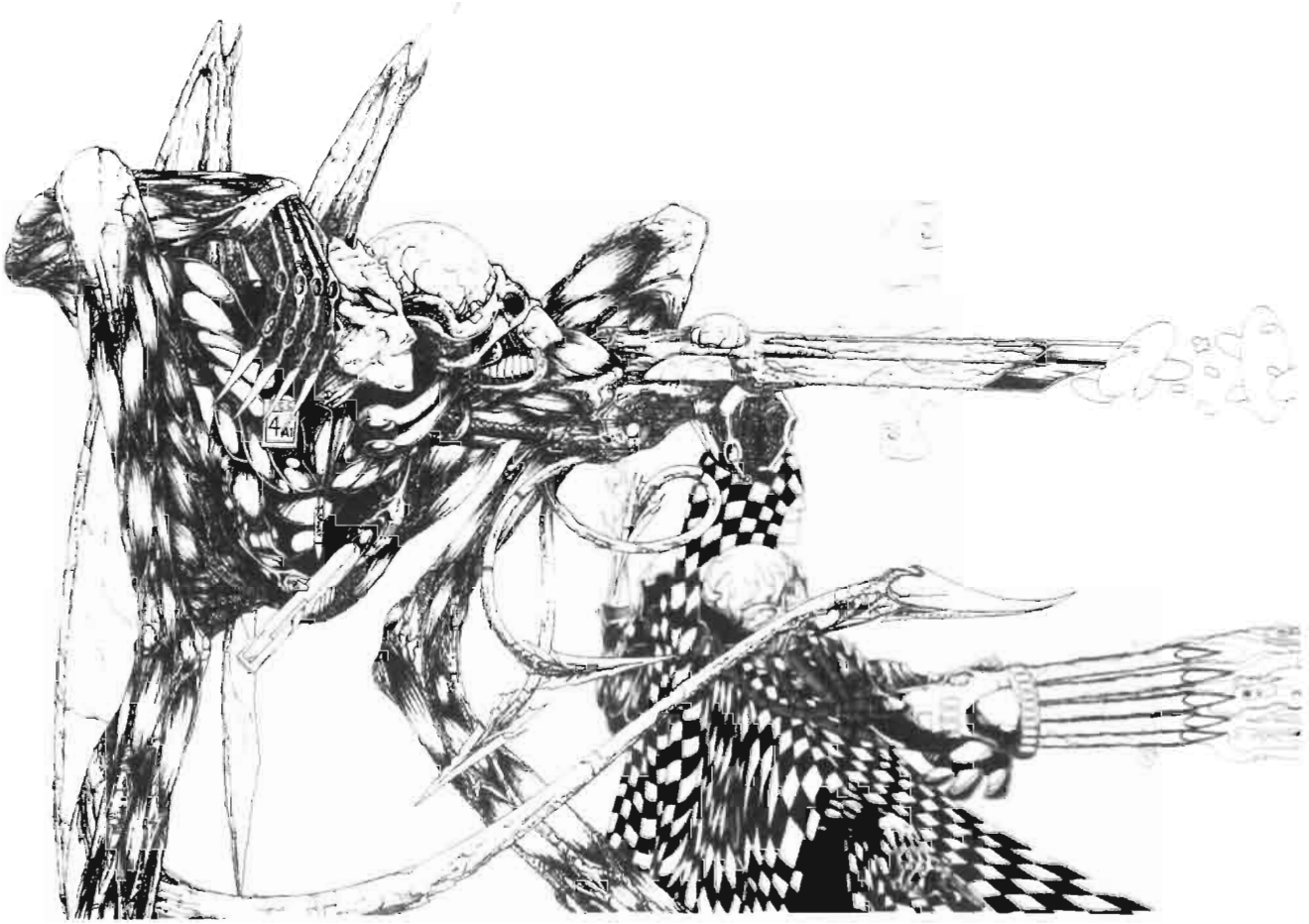
Taint (Vassal Ebon), Cloak Division, G.B.H. squad, Mort Central 900 SD.

The Gore Cannon – This hideous creation is the chosen weapon of all Necanthropes. On coming out of the white, the Necanthrope is gifted with the power and knowledge to create a Gore Cannon and use its horrific abilities. The Gore Cannon is a Science Friction weapon which are usually all produced by Dark Lament but the Gore Cannon is the exception. It was created by the Preceptor, Teeth, for the exclusive use of his Necanthropes and it has remained so to this day. The Gore Cannon can be described as a manipulation chamber which changes flux into a vile substance known as psycho–reactive Ebb matter. This very strange substance has many different uses and properties from a strong solid projectile form to a viscus 'gloop' that seeps through clothes and armour to attack the wearer both mentally and physically. The more powerful Necanthropes will have 'sentient cannons'. These creatures are products of their owner's mind and can be the most evil things alive.

RANK 1: Ebb Gore Generation – This ability is bestowed upon the Necanthrope on coming out of the white. It gives them the ability and knowledge to create their own Gore Cannon and costs no FLUX.

RANK 2: Flesh Friction 1 – This is the second ability given to the Necanthrope after turning. It allows the Necanthrope to manipulate the psycho–reactive Ebb matter generator of the Gore Cannon to fire a 'Gore Blast' of the 'ooze'. This does 10 points of damage has a range of 25m. Gore ignores all armour and damages the first living thing that it comes in contact with i.e. flesh. (All DeathSuits count as living for this purpose.)

RANK 3: Sting 1 – This ability allows the Necanthrope



to craft a strong, needle sharp quill in the Gore Cannon that has a poison tip which carries a paralysing fluid. If a target is successfully struck by the quill which requires a successful Unarmed Combat attack roll from the Necanthrope, they are stunned and paralysed for 3 rounds. This skill costs three FLUX.

RANK 4: Intrusion 1 – This is the first of the mind altering attacks that a Gore Cannon can perform. By manipulating the psycho–reactive matter with the Necanthropes mind, it changes state from a semi–solid projectile that is used in Flesh Friction to a more liquid form that is negatively charged with the thoughts of the Necanthrope. When this is fired at a target, it goes through any armour. The person hit by the blast must make a successful COOL roll at a –4 or be stunned for 3 rounds. This skill costs 4 FLUX.

RANK 5: Psychovirus 1 – This ability may or may not effect the target immediately. It is a direct attack on the mind of the target giving them a mind altering charge which affects their calm and composure. The Necanthrope does this in the same way as 'Intrusion' but can regulate the severity of the attack by charging the Gore Cannon with more FLUX. The person that has been attacked will lose (temporarily) points from their COOL statistic making them an easy target for other psychological attacks. COOL is lost at a rate of 1 COOL per 5 FLUX points spent by the Necanthrope. The range of the attack is 10m and effects last for 24 hours.

RANK 6: Flesh Friction 2 – This is a stronger version of the Rank 2 skill. It allows the Necanthrope to manipulate the psycho–reactive Ebb matter generator of the Gore Cannon to fire a 'Gore Blast' of the 'ooze'. Flesh Friction does 15 points of damage to the first living thing that it comes in contact with and has a range of 25m.

RANK 7: Sting 2 – The quills that the Gore Cannon produce at this rank are very tough and razor sharp. The Gore Cannon also has the ability to fire (spit) these quills at an enemy up to a range of 20m. The quills have PEN of 8 and paralyse their victim for 6 rounds with no save. This skill costs 7 FLUX.

RANK 8: Intrusion 2 – A more powerful version of Intrusion 1. This is an absolute nightmare for the person with the misfortune to be attacked by it. This attack requires the victim to make a COOL roll at a –6 or they will be stunned (in a state of shock) for 5 rounds. The victim will also have nightmares for the next 4 days after this horrific attack, the severity of which is at the Games Master's discretion. The cost for this skill is 8 FLUX.

RANK 9: Psychovirus 2 – The effects of this form of Psychovius are devastating. This is a direct attack on the mind of the target giving them a mind altering charge which affects their calm and composure. The victim of the attack will lose COOL points temporarily and be left a mental wreck for days making them an easy target for other psychological attacks. The cost for this skill is 5 FLUX per COOL point lost but the range increases to 20m and the effects last for 4 days.

RANK 10: Flesh Friction 3 – This ability can literally rip people apart with the Gore Blast it creates. 20 points of damage is done to the first living thing that the blast comes in contact with. The blast range is 25m. The cost of this skill is 10 FLUX.

RANK 11: Sentient Cannon – The Gore Cannon, like the DeathSuit, now forms a permanent link with its owner. The Necanthrope can manipulate the physical form of the Gore Cannon to such a degree that it becomes 'alive'. The Gore Cannon must be changed at this level and cannot be altered after passing. The Gore Cannon, although it has its own intelligence and can move perfectly well without its owner, must always obey its master no matter what. The Gore Cannon now has its own stats, skills and move rates and is controlled by the P.C.

The following are the costs on how to create a Sentient Cannon:

Gore Cannon Generation

STAT	MAX. RANK	MIN. RANK	COST/RANK
STR	15	1	3 FLUX
DEX	15	1	3 FLUX
DIA	5	1	2 FLUX
CONC	5	1	2 FLUX
PHYS	15	1	–
KNOW	5	1	–
HITS	30	1	–
WEAPONS	**DMG**	**PEN**	**COST**
Claw 1	6	3	10 FLUX
Claw 2	8	5	15 FLUX
Claw 3	10	8	20 FLUX
Teeth 1	4	4	10 FLUX
Teeth 2	6	6	15 FLUX
Teeth 3	8	8	20 FLUX

Storage of FLUX (Once bought as this level, the storage facility in the Gore Cannon can be used over and over again.)

MAX. FLUX	COST
10	FREE
20	10 FLUX
50	30 FLUX
80	60 FLUX

Skills Available – Skills bought with FLUX at the same cost as normal skills with normal skill points.

Unarmed Combat (STR)

Sneaking (DEX)

Running (PHYS)

Climb (PHYS)

Intimidate (No CHA needed) Max. Rank – 10

Lock Picking (DIA)

Torture (DIA)

The Gore Cannon also has an armoured hide. It receives +1 P.V. per 3 FLUX spent to a maximum of 15. If the Gore Cannon is reduced to zero hits, it is dead. The Gore Cannon will suck 1 FLUX per day from its owner until it can draw blood. (See Rank 15)

RANK 12: Interdermalisation – The Gore Cannon can now interdermalise like the DeathSuit and can be hidden under the skin. This skill costs 13 FLUX to interdermalise but no FLUX to bring it back out. Only a small physical trace of the Cannon can still be seen on the forearm and hand.

RANK 13: Flesh Friction 4 – This ability is a much stronger version of the Flesh Friction 3 skill and can rip people apart with the Gore Blast it creates. The damage has been increased to 25 points which is done to the first living thing that the blast comes in contact with. The blast range is now 40m. The cost of this skill is 13 FLUX.

RANK 14: Sting 3 – The quills that the Gore Cannon now produces at this rank are very special and have a muscle wasting poison impregnated into them that destroys the muscle tissue. The Gore Cannon also has the ability to fire (spit) these quills at an enemy up to a range of 30m. The poison causes a –1 to the victim's STR or DEX (the Necanthrope chooses) and this loss is permanent. The PEN of these quills is now increased to 15 and the cost is 14 FLUX.

RANK 15: Drain 1 – This is a rather horrific ability which looks as bad as it sounds. The Necanthrope places the tendril–like claws of the Gore Cannon into the victim and sucks the blood out of the body using it to feed itself, meanwhile killing the person that has been attacked. This requires a successful Unarmed Combat roll by the Necanthrope followed by a succession of rolls to stay in contact and drain the victim. The cost for this skill is 15 FLUX and the penetration of the attack is 15. The damage is the target's total hits divided by 8. This is the number of hits taken in damage per round.

RANK 16: Psychovirus 3 – This is a permanent version of the Psychovirus skill where the subject will lose 1 COOL per 5 FLUX from a blast from the Gore Cannon which leaves the victim a mental wreck and open to other psychological attacks. The range of the attack is 40m.

RANK 17: Psychovirus 4 – This is a mind manipulation version of the standard Psychovirus. It creates a certain madness in the target instead of COOL loss. This can lead to people becoming completely insane. The victim receives a +1 Rank of Psychosis per 5 FLUX spent by the Necanthrope. The target does not receive any bonus points (as in Advantages and Disadvantages) for the ranks of Psychosis that they receive.

Note: If a character reaches Rank 10 Psychosis, they are completely insane and no longer playable as P.C.'s so they must be handed over to the Games Master.

RANK 18: Drain 2 – This skill is almost identical to the first Drain ability. Instead of sucking blood from the victim, this skill allows the Necanthrope to suck FLUX from the character. The Necanthrope must make a successful Unarmed Combat roll to be able to touch the opponent and they must make further Unarmed Combat rolls to maintain contact with the victim. This skill costs 5 FLUX to perform and the victim loses FLUX at a rate of 5 FLUX per round until all FLUX is drained from both the Ebon victim and their DeathSuit, until contact is broken or the Gore Cannon is full.

RANK 19: Sting 4 – The 'Psychotoxin' that is produced from the quills at this level is lethal attacking both the victim's mind and body. The quills can be fired from a range of 50m and have a PEN of 16. The potency of the toxin is directly controlled by the Necanthrope and is measured in damage ranks. One damage rank does –1 to the STR and DEX plus 1 Rank of Psychosis. This costs 10 FLUX/damage rank to perform up to a maximum of 10 damage ranks.

RANK 20: Psychovirus 5 – 'Red Rain' is the most terrifying experience that can befall anyone who is unlucky enough to get caught in a 'shower' of this syrupy red liquid. This skill costs the Necanthrope 20 FLUX to perform and appears as a spectacular

large dark cloud which forms in the sky emitted from the Gore Cannon. It covers an area of 50m squared which then proceeds to rain down on the people unprotected by cover. The easiest way to combat this attack is to be in cover, for example, an umbrella or under a bridge, but for barren areas and wasteland, this skill is perfect. If the rain touches a character's skin, the substance permeates into the bloodstream which travels to the brain and taps into the darkest memories of the victim and amplifies them to such a degree that they experience 'flashbacks' of such horrific proportions that they are reduced to shivering wrecks that can perform no actions apart from whimper in a corner until the rain stops or they go into cover. The rain continues for the Necanthrope's CONC in minutes but any victims caught in the shower even for a few seconds will continue to have nightmares for a further two weeks, the severity of which is up to the Games Master.

EBON EQUIPMENT

Dark Lament produce a piece of equipment for each Ebon ability which aid, in one way or another, the use of the Ebon's abilities. The following is a list of the equipment and prices for each of the Ebon abilities.

ABILITY	EQUIPMENT	COST
Force Ebb Kinetic	Flintlock	500₢
Glacial Ebb	Thermal Gauge	500₢
Voice of the Ebb	Distracter	400₢
Ebb Awareness	Pathfinder	400₢
Augmentation	Pineal Stim	20₢/dose
Art of Healing	Ebb Medikit	1000₢
Ebb Illumination	Illumination Gem	350₢
Ebon Guard	DeathSuit	750₢
Ebb Manipulation	Vector Box	600₢
Inferno Ebb	Thermal Gauge	500₢
Sense Perception	Jade Probe	400₢
Force Focus	Focus	600₢

FLINTLOCK

The Flintlock looks like an ornate ancient duelling pistol, with finely crafted glyphs running up the sides. The Flintlock acts like an amplifier for the user's Force Ebb Kinetics giving them one extra rank when they use the pistol in conjunction with their Force Ebb ability. This costs the user the rank below the one they are using i.e. using blast rank 5 would cost the same as rank 4.

THERMAL GAUGE

The Thermal Gauge is a small device that can link to the Ebon's lower arm of the DeathSuit. The Gauge comes in the form of a thick arm piece that looks similar to the arm section of the DeathSuit that connects to the wrist. The Gauge has a deep groove running length–wise up the case. This groove is activated by the Ebon when using either of Thermal abilities and glows when in use. The outer shell of the gauge is, as with the DeathSuit, organic in appearance– with apparent muscle tissue that expands and contracts when abilities are used. The gauge fits on either arm.

DISTRACTER

The Distracter fits round the left hand portion of the Ebon's helmet from the left ear round the side of the head and covering the left eye. There is a membrane over the left eye monocle that allows the Ebon to see as usual. The casing of the Distracter looks similar to that of the Thermal Gauge mimicking the appropriate part of the DeathSuit. Gives an extra –2 modifier of CONC rolls of targets.

PATHFINDER



The Pathfinder covers the top of either hand and lower arm from the first knuckle of the hand and continues up the arm to just below the elbow. There is a hand grip but it is much more comfortable on the arm. Along the length of the Pathfinder, there appears to be a membrane like monitor with a wet looking black finish. This is the pick–up sensor for the Pathfinder if another Ebon comes within 50m. The sensor is not very accurate and cannot give specific directions unless the Ebon is using abilities in conjunction with the Pathfinder.

PINEAL STIM

This drug doubles all the durations of Augmentation abilities. See 'Drugs' for a full description and statistics.

EBB MEDIKIT

The Ebon Medikit is totally unlike the standard medikit, and is inherently Dark Lament in design and feel. The actual carry case is covered in muscle like fibre and carved grooves of shiny black Science Friction material with small glyphs that pepper the outside of the Medikit. The interior, which is accessed by a pressure pad on the top of the kit, looks like the inside of a heart. The instruments inside do not match any standard surgical implements. They are of Dark Lament design and are specifically constructed to channel and amplify the Ebon's powers of healing. The instruments are all manufactured to be placed directly on the wounds for healing. These tools are similar to the kit itself in materials and structure. The kit gives a plus 2 Ranks in Healing. It can also store 20 points of FLUX.

ILLUMINATION GEM

The Illumination Gem looks like a small, round, flat crystal about 10cm in diameter. It fits on the palm and wrist of the DeathSuit. The Gem increases the areas of the Illumination abilities two-fold.

DEATHSUIT

(See 'The Power of the Ebb' for a full description.)

		ID / Location			
DeathSuit	PV	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs
Light	6	10	15	12	14
Medium	7	10	20	15	17
Heavy	9	20	40	30	35
Super	13	20	80	60	70
Angel	17	60	150	80	100
		Max. Increase			
Light	11	110	115	112	114
Medium	12	110	120	115	117
Heavy	16	120	140	130	135
Super	18	120	180	160	170
Angel	22	160	250	180	200

VECTOR BOX

The Vector Box is a small, kidney shaped object that fits onto the neck and shoulder of the DeathSuit. It is smooth and has an active sensor membrane on its side. The Vector Box allows the Ebon to double the ranges of their Reality Folding.

JADE PROBE

The Jade Probe fits like a skull cap on top of the DeathSuit helmet. The Probe is a long Y shape, the bottom of which rests on the forehead of the helmet, the other two branches fit just behind the ears. The front stalk has a crystalline tip which, when activated i.e. using abilities, emits an almost invisible pulse of light. The probe is constructed of the same material as all other pieces of equipment. The probe gives an extra –1 penalty to a target's CONC roll.

FOCUS

The Focus gem sits in the centre of the DeathSuit's chest plate. The gem is a long slender opaque crystal which pulses when used. It allows the Ebon to manipulate and double the weights and speeds they may work with and also doubles the duration of their abilities.

FLUX GEMS

Dark Lament FLUX matrix gem stores: These crystals are containment matrixes for FLUX. There are two types of gems; Burn and Eternal Gems. Burn Gems contain 1 FLUX point/100₵ spent and can be used twice in 24 hours, for example, Grimm, a Brain Waster, bought a 10 FLUX Burn Gem for 1000₵ (100₵ x10 FLUX). She uses the 10 FLUX that day. 24 hours later, the Gem will recharge and Grimm can use another 10 FLUX for it after which the Gem will crumble to dust. If Grimm had bought a 10 FLUX Eternal Gem for 5000₵ (500₵ x10 FLUX), she could use 10 FLUX every 24 hours. The Gem will always replenish itself.

FLUX REGENERATION

During the course of the game, the Ebon characters may well find themselves running low or out of FLUX. Luckily enough, the Ebon has the ability to regenerate FLUX points. Once an Ebon has spent the first of these points, they start to regain their FLUX at a rate of 1 FLUX/hour if active i.e. awake and all FLUX can be regained if the Ebon has between 5 and 6 hours sleep. Please note that an Ebon can only regain their own FLUX and not FLUX that can be stored in their DeathSuit. If the player empties their FLUX into their DeathSuit before sleeping, they can have full FLUX in themselves and whatever they put into the DeathSuit by the time they awake.

HARDWARE

Spring Slaughter?
Summer Skirmish?
Autumn Armageddon?
Winter Warfare?

Whatever the time of year, SLA franchise is always in fashion...

SLA INDUSTRIES AS AN ECONOMIC FORCE

SLA is best viewed as a controlling force with sub–sectors vying for their own survival and prosperity. For instance, Berenyi Light Arms and FEN are both owned by shareholders. Both of them are trying for the same contracts yet they both work for SLA Industries.

To best understand how all of the sub–companies function, it is easiest to view SLA as a government as opposed to an industrial company. Whilst BLA and FEN are heavily in competition, they are both working, technically, for SLA. If either of them try to work outside of the controlling sphere of SLA, they can, literally, be bought out by SLA in a form of Nationalisation, or 'being brought to heel' as it is commonly known. Historically, only one company has successfully evaded this controlling technique: Killa Chassis. They survived by having their internal management buy all their shares, therefore effectively removing themselves from the stock market. SLA did not bring their compulsory purchase order to bear in time for the retreat of Killa Chassis, with all their personnel and resources, off world. SLA tightened their legislation after this but, surprisingly, did not take any action against Killa Chassis– did not even exile them from Mort. Killa Chassis moved back to Mort and continued to work independently of SLA, selling Powersuit kits to the general public and, more controversially, DarkNight.

The sub–companies in SLA all act as rivals, tendering for contracts and trying to out–perform each other. Each sub–company is headed by people trying to make a living at the expense of their competition and it is for this reason there is so much variety available to the operative.

GENERAL ARMAMENTS

General Armaments have had a rather chequered success rate with their products over the years and are finding it hard to maintain their hold in the market place. Their products are sound enough with a good robust design and long life expectancy of parts, which should be ample requirements for success but against such manufacturing giants like FEN, GA is David against Goliath without the stone. GA are slowly losing their sponsorship deals due to a drop in sales. This should spell the end of GA's weapons design team unless they can work miracles or acquire funding from outside sources. The rather unfortunate crossing of swords with FEN may hinder greatly the chances of GA contracting funding from any source. After financial collapse, a buy–out attempt by FEN is inevitable.

Assessment: A. Kramer

Division: Corporate

To: Head Office

Date: 4/1/900 SD.

GA47 10mm Semi–Automatic Pistol

This inexpensive semi–automatic pistol is ideal for the operative that needs the stopping power of 10mm at close range. A good ceramic 'life–time' guarantee barrel and light weight frame construction make the GA47 very comfortable to fire. The GA47 has a good ammunition delivery for the double action, open chamber firing mechanism with very little recoil. It comes ready to fit silencer, flash suppressor, stock and sights, with a free unloaded box magazine.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
GA47	12	10mm	2	2	10m	75₵

Weight: 0.5kg

GA50 'Finisher' 10mm Assault Rifle

Continuing the trend of very good, long–lasting, inexpensive weapons, the GA50 is a superb light assault rifle. Carrying a 10mm round, the GA50 is a good all–round rifle with solid carbon–fibre construction which makes for great weight savings and allows for long periods of sustained fire without having to worry about damage to the internal working of the rifle from overheating. The Finisher comes ready to fit silencer, flash suppressor and sights with a free unloaded box magazine.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
GA50	18	10mm	3	6	15m	300₵

Weight: 3kg

FEN

"Two FEN 603s double slung at the base of my spine, two Gunheads holster slung on my thighs and, of course, this Power Reaper for those special occasions. Oh this? This is one Phil Corrten, DarkNight insurgent operative. Yes, he is a bit of a mess but that's down to the Reaper. The 10mm that this guy ate, it was enough to drop two Stormers. Take a look at the grouping on these shots in the chest, look real close. That's one of his lungs, well, what's left of it. Hey! Don't puke on the guns man! Hey! Watch the logos, boy, you did eat a lot for breakfast, didn't you?"

'Slander', Contract Killer, Being interviewed by a new Third Eye reporter, Downtown 900 SD.

FEN 603 10mm Automatic Pistol

One million operatives can't be wrong. The FEN 603 is the most popular auto pistol ever produced. It has a full ceramic frame and barrel with gas operated double–action. It comes ready to accept silencer, flash suppressor, pistol stock and sights. The compact box magazine has a 10mm capacity of 20 full rounds with either a single shot or full auto switch. The FEN 603 has an 'easy grip' handle with a fully cushioned rubber grip. It has low recoil and is inexpensive with a zero maintenance or money back guarantee.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
FEN 603	20	10mm	3/1	3	12m	150₵

Weight: 0.5kg

FEN 204 'Gunhead' 10mm SMG

The Gunhead has full ceramic casing and barrel with a closed bolt, gas operated action and a large (40 round) ammunition capacity. It comes fitted with flash suppressor and silencer, sights, laser painter and stock can be fitted. It comes with minimal recoil baffling, required for easy operation and a full auto/semi or single shot selector switch. The Gunhead has an easy grip handle with a zero maintenance guarantee.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
FEN 204	40	10mm	5/3/1	7/3/1	15m	350₵

Weight: 2kg

'When you buy a FEN product, you're buying a lifetime of trouble free, cheap service crafted by the finest technicians. Whatever you buy, an auto pistol or an assault cannon, better buy FEN.' Advertisement: FEN Catalogue 900 SD.

FEN AR 10mm Assault Rifle

The FEN AR is the single, largest selling assault rifle in the entire history of SLA Industries. The basic design of the AR has not changed since its introduction in 367 SD. Why argue with success? The FEN AR has good, hard case ceramic construction and smooth full auto ammunition feed. The 10mm rifle round is the perfect 'man stopper' with large amounts of tissue damage from the tumbling effects of rounds. It requires few recoil baffle modifications. Although military issue, a limited number are available. It comes with full laser painter and flash suppressor as well as full automatic or single shot switching, ready to fit sight and silencer. The FEN AR has a moulded butt for comfort when firing with a 25 round box magazine. The FEN AR also has no maintenance guarantee. FEN apologizes for not being able to give a zero maintenance guarantee with this product but the military nature of the rifle makes any such guarantee impractical to both FEN and yourself.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
FEN AR	25	10mm	5/1	8/2	20m	750¢

Weight: 3.5kg

FEN 706 Power Reaper 2.1000

Available for the first time to operatives, the FEN 706 Power Reaper 2.1000 squad support machine gun has enjoyed fantastic success for some years now, serving the military without a flaw. With the advancement in ceramic manufacturing techniques, we can now offer you this unique weapon with a full ceramic barrel. It comes with a waldo unit for ease of carriage and storage (swings round and locks on the back of user). The Power Reaper has full laser painter, a 100 round electro-magnetic belt fed ammunition bin supplied unloaded and can also accept 25 round clips. It has a full or semi-automatic switch.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
FEN 706	100	10mm	10/5	10/7	26m	1575¢

Weight: 14.5kg

FEN 400 'Sure Kill' Sniper Cannon

The first of the 17mm rifles to be made available to operatives, the Sure Kill is perhaps the most powerful sniper rifle ever made. The over-long ceramic barrel allows for extremely high muzzle velocities and comes with full laser painter, folding bipod, 3000m scope and 20% recoil baffling. The Sure Kill also has a five round box magazine with detachable barrel. The manufacturers apologize for the unavailability of larger box magazines.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
FEN 400	5	17mm	1	15	40m	2000¢

Weight: 24kg

FEN 30-30 'True Shot' Sniper Rifle

The 30–30 has been the best selling sniper rifle for over 200 years from it's original model, the 30–10 till today, the 30–30. It has full ceramic casing and barrel and comes with laser painter, flash suppressor, 3000m scope and detachable bipod. A silencer can also be fitted. The one round, chambered bolt action holds a single 8mm long sniper round. The FEN 30–30 has extraordinary good range with very little recoil and the 1m ceramic barrel is fully detachable and comes with a full zero maintenance guarantee.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
FEN 30–30	1	8mm	1	6	900m	1100¢

Weight: 5kg

FEN 'Tri' Sniper Platform

An innovative design from our team at FEN laboratories, the Tri is the last word in ballistic technology. The sniper platform comes with a powerful 8000m scope with IR and UV Nightsight linked to a high resolution monitor targeting screen custom laser painter with a 8000m range. The Tri is fully suppressed and silenced and the look of this formidable weapon has been compared to a very large camera. Do not let this fool you. It is the perfect sniper rifle carrying a 12.7mm single round load. The FEN Tri is bolt action with a full ceramic frame and barrel and is mounted on a sturdy tripod to allow for a very steady shot. All aiming is done by the use of a remote control which activates small motors in the tripod mounting that quickly change the elevation and angle of the platform. The remote control is detachable from the Tri with an operational range of 5m. The small screen on the remote allows the user to still-track the targeting system of the main console. The Tri is fully modular and fits in a compact carry case, supplied free, as well as full recoil baffling.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
FEN TRI	1	12.7	1	0	1200m	1450¢

Weight: 8kg

KLIP KILLER (KK)

"You see this, boy? This is the KK30 Ripper close assault system. I remember I had this big ugly mother' of a Carriens come tearing out of a trash can, right on top of me. Well, before I could bring my Blitzer to bear on the creature, it had knocked me flat and was doing a good impression of a food blender on my chest plate. The KK trigger flipped into my hand and one squeeze of the trigger later, the Carriens' head was doing its own impression, of an exploding watermelon. Some people laugh at the Klip Killer stuff. Set a rabid Carriens on their guts and see how much they laugh then."

L. Hannigan, Operative, Giving a pep talk to new member of his squad.

K.K. 20 'Panther'

For those of you who don't want the hassle of carrying a back-up pistol, the KK20 is ideal. The KK20 clips easily onto your arm and the use of carbon fibre makes the Panther as light as possible so as not to be too encumbering. The trigger is under slung from the wrist so that when the primary weapon is dropped, the trigger grip can be easily 'flipped' into the hand ready for the KK to fire the 12mm pistol round which packs a quite considerable punch, especially at close range. The KK requires a special modular 20 round magazine, available from KK, and is able to fit laser painter, silencer, flash suppressor and telesight fittings.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
KK20	20	12mm	2	6	15m	430₵

Weight: 2kg

KK30 'Ripper'

The Ripper is for everybody that is looking for something different in a weapon. This unique armament is clipped onto the shoulder/upper arm where it looks a formidable sight. Using light carbon fibre construction and carrying a short 12mm round, the Ripper is very easy to fire. The Ripper shares the wrist trigger system and ammunition clips of the Panther. Due to the unique positioning of the Ripper, the weapon is unable to fit a silencer, flash suppressor or telesights. It can, however, be fitted with a laser painter.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
KK30	20	12mm	5	8	15m	570₵

Weight: 3.5kg

GAK

"We were down in the Beacon district when DarkNight ambushed. The odds looked like 3 to 1 in their favour. The two Ebons gave it what for with some Force Ebb Kinetics but their FLUX wasn't up to a continuous assault. I let rip with the odd blast here and there. The humans died quite quickly. The scout, well, I couldn't see her but the exploding heads of the DarkNight hoods let me know she was still around. The Ebons pulled back, out of FLUX and shot to hell. That's when I pulled out the 'big guns' and showed the Ebons that there's more to Kinetics than Force Ebb. The GAK 19 felt light in my hands as it rattled out 12.7 across the street wasting any DarkNight that got in the way of my line of sight. Yeah, power comes in two forms, Ebb and 12.7."

Fracture, Brain Waster, Third Eye Interview, Mort 839 SD.

GAK 19 Assault System

The first of, we hope, many quality products from GA and KK. The GAK 19 Assault System comes with a high-pressure, injection moulded silicate compound barrel and frame, flash suppressor, 40% recoil baffling, 3000m scope with UV Nightsight, laser painter and a large calibre (12.7mm) 5 round box magazine.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
GAK 19	5	12.7	1	8	145m	1850₵

Weight: 11.5kg

BERENYI LIGHT ARMS (BLA)

BLA have had an unblemished track record since their creation 85 years ago. Although they only produce one product, the BLA 046M Blitzer 12.7mm. The standard of workmanship is unparalleled even by the mighty FEN who may make the best mass produced weapons. BLA designs have an air of artistry, a feel, a look which makes these expensive handguns more of a status symbol rather than a weapon. A look at their sales figures would indicate that people are more than willing to pay for these hand-crafted firearms. The two week waiting list for the Blitzer does not seem to have put any buyers off either. The order books are full and it would appear they will remain so for some time to come.

BLA 046M 'Blitzer'

Our Blitzers are made of the finest silicate and carbon fibre materials. Each revolver is hand crafted by our skilled weapon technicians and each is individually numbered to identify the weapon to you, it's owner, so as to allow us to forward any developments to you. The revolver itself has a double action trigger

mechanism and fully moulded grip to suit your own hand size. The Blitzer can also be coloured during the moulding process to suit your own personal tastes from transparent to black. Any colour can be reproduced at no extra cost. The Blitzer is chambered for six 12.7mm pistol rounds which are custom made at our production plant available in all types; standard, AP, HP, HEAP and HESH. With each purchase of a Blitzer revolver, you will also receive a BLA maintenance kit/carry case for the gun with a normal cost of 250¢. Design Note: Due to the time taken to individually craft each revolver, there is a two week wait for orders. We are sorry for this inconvenience and we hope it will not spoil your enjoyment of our product. Comes ready to fit laser painter, silencer, flash suppressor, sights and recoil baffling.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
BLA 046M	6	12.7	1	7	20m	790¢

Weight: 1.5kg

KRAMER PRODUCTION SYNDICATE (KPS)

KPS have had a great deal of success with their solo product, the 'Mangler'. This can be placed firmly at the feet of Alloycius Kramer, the head of my division. He has had no trouble with funding as his personal assets seem to be inexhaustible. The 'Mangler' itself is a very popular weapon and sales are at a record high. KPS would appear to be here to stay.

Assessment: B. Thompson

Division: Corporate

To: Head Office

Date: 4/1/900 SD.

"Woah! Third Eye News? –out of the way, Jordan– I just gave a Carriens an enema with a KPS Mangler. Great gun but the guy who runs the company is a Sh... Hey! Come back with that Goddamned camera..."

J. Moreau, Cloak Division.

KPS Mangler AS

The assault shotgun is one of it's kind with fully automatic, closed bolt, gas–operated action firing either 10 gauge shot or slug cartridges. It has a 10 round, box fed ammunition clip and is able to fire 300 rounds per minute (sustained fire). The KPS Mangler has a full ceramic frame construction and is easily maintained with inexpensive ammunition. It comes ready to fit laser painter, recoil bafflers and telesights.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
KPS	10	10g	3	9	10m	900¢

Weight: 4kg

MILITARY ASSAULT LAMINATES (MAL)

J. Allen
Office 294A
MAL Design Group Floor 10
Dept. of Investigation

Dear Sirs,

What can I say? I thank you. This must be the most destructive weapon I have seen. The assault rifle is in a class of it's own. The look and the feel is excellent, not just a very effective weapon but also a piece of art, a perfectly formed killing machine. The kick–back is minimal and the calibre (12.7mm rifle) is extremely good for armour penetration. My favourite load at the moment is a HESH/HEAP cocktail which is very effective at both armour penetration and tissue damage. Once more, I thank you. I have everything I have ever wanted from a rifle in MAL.

Yours faithfully

J. Allen

Operative

MAL Assault Cannon

"This is a man's gun."

J. Moreau, Cloak Division.

Question: How do you kill a DarkNight operative? Answer: Buy a MAL Assault Cannon The MAL Assault Cannon is designed for anybody to use. You don't have to be a Shaktar or a Stormer. Fully moulded, light, durable carbon–fibre (which is resin laminated) is used in every part of the construction to make the MAL as easy to fire and carry as possible. The 12.7mm round packs a very substantial punch which may cause some problems with recoil but this can easily be compensated for with recoil baffling. The MAL Assault Cannon comes complete with laser painter and 20 round box magazine (unloaded).

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
MAL AR	20	12.7	2	9	150m	2150¢

Weight: 12.5kg

ADVANCED GUNNERY: BERENYI

For a small sub–company, AGB are making a strong stand alongside the well established names. Perhaps this has something to do with the parent company, BLA, but AGB can only ride on the back of BLA for so long before they find their own feet. Whatever happens, it will be interesting to say the

least. If AGB fold, BLA will have to carry the rather expensive can but if AGB turn out to have a viable and profitable product they could quite easily find themselves being ahead of BLA. A buy-out could well be on the cards. As far as the first project, the Chopper, is concerned, it is refreshing to see new perspective on weapons design. This may well serve as the major defensive factor in AGB projects.

Assessment: A. Kramer

Division: Corporate

To: Head Office

Date: 4/1/900 SD.

AGB 'Chopper'

Tired of bullets and blades? Tired of old ammunition calibres and types? Why not try something different? How about high tensile, carbon fibre, razor wire? The AGB Chopper will give you an entirely new perspective on weapons technology. This sleek rifle looks like any other apart from the semi-circular magazine on it's under belly. This specially designed magazine holds 24 highly compressed packets of razor wire. Upon firing, the packet will expand the only way it can, down the barrel towards your enemy. The razor wire remains linked to the rifle until the trigger is released or, alternatively, the packet can be fully released on firing to entangle the target. The AGB Chopper also comes with its own unique special laser painter, 'spot torch'.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
Chopper	24	n/a	1	6	20m	1700¢

Weight: 4kg

	DMG	PEN	COST/PACKET
Chopper Packet	15	8	3¢

SCOTT PELLING GROUP (SP)

"Stop squirming, I'm trying to heal you."

"They shot me apart... my fingers... my arms."

"What did they use? Looks like a Vibro blade."

"I think it was a Vibro Disc... aaargh!"

"Yup, sure was, just found one embedded in your leg."

"Oh God... "

"Hey, I wasted a good part of my medical bag on you, don't die on me."

"They cut me apart... I can't feel my left foot."

"You don't have a left foot. One of the discs must have cut it clean off. The bleeding is stopping..."

"Can you fix my arm? What do you mean, 'cut it clean off'? Where's my foot... where's my god damn leg... aaargh!"

"Stop screaming! You'll give away our position to the... "

"Aaaaaaaargh!"

"This is Pete Formychar, Downtown, four Dark-Night in the bag. Send down some more 70mm discs with the Shiver clean-up guys, the Vibro Disc just ran out."

Pete Formychar, Human Scout, Downtown 900 SD. DarkNight conversation recorded by Pete Formychar. All rights copyright Third Eye News, video footage available.

SP Vibro Disc

Silencers don't fully silence, flash suppressors don't fully suppress. With the Vibro Disc, you can have a silent, flash free attack. This is due to the rather revolutionary production system used in the Vibro Disc. An electro-magnetic gauss rail in the weapon is used to propel the missile rather than kinetic power or a chemical charge. The projectile itself is unique in it's design, a 70mm diameter disc made from high tensile ceramic and carbon fibre 'shatter proof' materials. The gauss rail can propel the disc up to a speed of 1400m/second more than enough to penetrate armour, walls, doors and vehicles. The Vibro Disc comes complete with gauss rail arm mount, wrist action trigger and 4 round disc slot clip.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
SP Vibro	4	n/a	1	0	25m	760¢

Weight: 2kg

	DMG	PEN	COST/DISC
70mm Disc	8	12	5¢

Weight: 0.01kg

SLA INDUSTRIES

"It's about time we had some more shotguns around here. No more of this 10mm HEAP and 12.7mm HESH rubbish. Some good, old fashioned 10 gauge never did anybody any harm. It does them a great deal of harm. That was a joke, you can all laugh now."

J. Bullsowe, Hardware Consultant for Nitro Legion troops stationed on Dante, Mort 842 SD.

SLA 10-10 Bully Boy Shotgun

In view of the fact that the weapons manufacturers within our company have held such a strong position, it would seem only fit that the parent company

should enter some sort of contribution into the market. The 10–10 Bully Boy is a snub nose, gas operated, bullpup configuration, close assault shotgun with a light ceramic case with good heat dispersion properties. The 10–10 uses 10 gauge shot or solid slug ammunition and has a 10 round box magazine feed with a lifetime guarantee on the full weapon system. It can be fitted with laser painter, recoil baffling and sights.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
10–10	10	10g	1	8	10m	200₢

Weight: 3kg

CONSOLIDATED ARMS FABRICATION (CAF)

CAF will be in production for a very long time. With the civilian market crying out for home defence weapons and personal hand guns, CAF have rather a large market which will always be there. Sales and profits for these cheap, easily manufactured weapons will steadily increase as long as the population expands at its current rate.

Assessment: A. Kramer

Division: Corporate

To: Head Office

Date: 4/1/900 SD.

"Look, I don't give a damn what that high and mighty goddamned namby–pamby corporate weed says. CAF are crap."

Jeff Moreau, Contract Killer, GBH Squad.

CAF Range: For Home and Personal Defence

A gun for everyone from Granny to little Mary Sue. Solid Cast 5mm pistols, rifles and SMGs. Cheap and easy to clean.

Solid ceramic, steel blue finish box magazine, double action and compact.

	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RCL	RANGE	COST
Steel Death						
P50	8	CAF	1	2	10m	150¤
Weight: 0.3kg						
Cold Shadow						
SMG	30	CAF	3	5	10m	250¤
Weight: 0.6kg						
Screaming Eagle						
AR	20	CAF	2	4	15m	300¤
Weight: 1.5kg						
R7 Wild Boar						
Hunting	6	CAF	1	5	45m	400¤
Weight: 2kg						

GASH

"This is the 'GASH' Pacifier Baton. One metre of oscillating carbon fibre and ceramic and your best friend on the street. Now, the Baton can be used in a defensive manner to block knife and club blows like so... but the primary purpose of the baton is offensive. Can we have a test subject, please? And you are?"

"Alan Connelly."

"So, what do you do Alan?"

"Watch t.v."

"Right, now Alan is going to be my arrest subject in which I will use the full potential of the GASH baton to restrain him."

"I'ardon?"

"Now Alan, I want you to be a mugger."

"A what?"

"All will become clear. Now, you have just killed an old lady, robbed her of all her money and now you've just been stopped by the Shivers, namely me. I want you to react in a violent manner and be, in general, abusive. Okay?"

"Eh, I'm not sure but I'll try. I still get my 50 don't I?"

"Yes, now we may proceed."

"Up yours, you god damn Shiver scu... "

Thud! Thump! Crack! Thud!

"Now, this is the result of a civilian coming up against a well trained Shiver with a Pacifier Baton. Please report to your tutors for your assignments. Bates, Henderson... you two get this corpse out of here. It's bleeding on the crash mats."

Commander Cradle giving an introductory talk to trainee Shivers about the use of a Pacifier Baton, Mort 897 SD.

GASH 021070 Chain Axe

No frills. No fancy talk. The Chain Axe is a brutal weapon that will rip flesh, bone and armour with gruesome ease. Easy maintenance, full 5000 hour power pack, light ceramic frame and available in any colour at no extra charge.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
GASH Chain Axe	5	4	3	85₢	3kg

GASH Pacifier Baton

This weapon was, for years, an exclusive Shiver weapon and has now been made available to operatives for the first time. This high frequency baton will cause great discomfort to anyone on the receiving end

of a blow. With it's finest carbon fibre moulding, it will last for at least 200,000 skull fractures without damage to the baton. It has a 3000 hour power supply.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
GASH Pacifier Baton	5	0	5	80₢	1kg

DYNAMIC PRECISION BLADES (DPB)

"Multiple lacerations to full body and head, wrongful death, deep entry wound on temple, approximately 30mm across, runs to back of cranium, identical exit wound. First wound on torso runs from left shoulder blade at a depth of approximately 70mm to the sixth left rib, cuts through both left and right ventricles of heart. Cause of death: Fragments of ceramic found in wound from armour, type unknown. Second wound cuts 90mm deep from right lower back, bypassing spine, piercing kidney and liver. Other lacerations are minimal, none running more than 120mm in length to depths of between 10 and 20mm. Weapon used on DarkNight operative; DPB Vibro Sabre. Give the Contract Killer his money. The video footage matches the wounds on the victim. Could you please ask Mr. Razor if we could have the eye back once Investigation have done the retina scan. We like to store whole bodies."

Dr. Schneider, Pathology, Dept. of Extermination, Mort Central 898 SD.

DPB Vibro Sabre (Dress)

If the need arises for you to wear full dress uniform, then the Vibro Sabre is the perfect finishing touch to your entourage. Fully hand crafted handle and hilt, the blade is constructed from a durable silicon and carbon fibre compound to deal with the extremely high frequencies that the blade oscillates at. The sheath is also hand crafted to suit both the blade and its owner. These are available in any colour that you wish at a very reasonable price that should be affordable to everyone. The power pack life span is 5000 hours.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
DPB Vibro Sabre	4	4	2	100₢	1.5kg

DPB Gash Fist

Perhaps the greatest blade for unarmed combat and Martial Arts users, perfect for close combat, fully powered blades across the top of the hand of the gauntlet – two in total – make for closely grouped laceration. Strengthened quartz and carbon fibre compound blades are perfect for use with high oscillation technology with a 5000 hour power supply.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
DPB Gash Fist	4	4	2	80₢	1kg

DPB Flick Scythe

The DPB Flick Scythe is an extremely powerful pole–arm with retractable oscillating blade (0.6m) made of a toughened compound of silica and ceramic. The scythe is excellent for keeping your opponent out of arms reach while ripping them apart. The pole–arm itself is fully moulded and has a full 'easy grip' cover to allow maximum control of the weapon with a full 5000 hour power supply.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
DPB Flick Scythe	5	5	2	120₢	2.5kg

MULTI ANGULAR CUTTERS (MAC)

DarkNight Analysis: SLA MAC Knife File no. 004279

Although unpowered, the construction techniques used are, as can be expected, advanced. The very strong alloys and ceramics are of the best quality. The design of the blade is still under analysis by technicians but so far, the cutting edge would appear to be a multi–angle razor lacerator while the blade has a stress factor tolerance surpassing any of our production techniques. Full report should be available within six months.

Additional (Personal) To All Division Commanders:

If SLA Industries have such capabilities, they may, in the near future, produce a larger, powered version of the MAC and so unarmed and close combat operatives working on SLA worlds should be made aware of this development as soon as possible to avoid deaths.

R. Bradshaw, Technical Advisor, DarkNight Opp No. 44479G, 874 SD.

MAC Knife

The most popular un–powered blade in production today, the MAC Knife is made from durable carbon fibre and ceramic laminate. It comes with it's own sheath which has an in–built sharpening edge running the length of one side of the sheath, ensuring that your MAC will never lose it's cutting edge. If you only buy one knife in your life, make it a MAC.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
MAC Knife	4	1	1	80₢	.75kg

IAN THOMAS BRADLEY WEAPONS (ITB)

ITB's contribution to the close combat market is a refreshing change to the norm. The Mutilator is perhaps a new wave in weapons design. This could quite easily swing a great deal of this particular portion of the weapons market. ITB appear to need all the sales they can get as concept and design work on the Mutilator did overrun somewhat causing delays in production. If the Mutilator does not sell, ITB will probably be bought over by DPB.

Assessment: A. Kramer

Division: Corporate

To: Head Office

Date: 5/1/900 SD.

ITB Mutilator

Ever had that feeling that the punch you just landed wasn't enough to take down your opponent. Well, worry no more. The ITB Mutilator glove is an innovative design for unarmed combat practitioners. The high frequency vibrating outer skin of the glove can cause massive amounts of damage to unarmored targets and some lightly armoured targets. The built-in power supply lasts for 5000 hours.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
ITB Mutilator	5	3	3	85₢	1kg

MULTI-[O3 LACERATES (M[L)

"The Power Disc is indeed an elegant weapon. It is always better to end a hunt with a blade. I feel the power of the disc as it leaves my fingers and I send it on its journey to the prey. The cut is always clean and correct. Duelling is perhaps the most satisfying, close and as quick as your hand can move. Although it is not said often, the MJL Power Disc is a weapon of honour."

K'nth, Shaktar, Translated from interview with Third Eye reporter at 'The Tower', Shaktarian Bar, Mort 898 SD.

MJL Power Disc

'High Power' class blade for both hand to hand combat and as a short range thrown weapon, the blade comes in a circular form with trigger switch oscillator and power pack incorporated in the centre of the blade's hand grip. The hand grip holes are adequate size for anybody to use comfortably and the body and blade of the disc is a carbon fibre construction. It has a full 2000 hour power pack.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
MJL Power Disc	4	4	2	100₢	.4kg

MJL Power Claymore 300

The Claymore has been a symbol of the Frother classes for decades but in battle on War Worlds and the like, such a weapon was practically useless. MJL introduced the Power Claymore 300 to replace the outdated but much-loved Claymore of the Frothers. Little changed in size, style or design, the real change was the addition of a power unit and a strong carbon filament blade which oscillates at a deadly frequency. The blade is 1.5m long to the hilt with the power unit stored in the hilt of the weapon. The power unit gives a 5000 hour power supply.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
Power Claymore	6	4	3	100₢	3Kg

BOSH

Sole producer of the SLA short combat blade, this company being fully funded by SLA Industries has no need to worry about the things that threaten other design teams such as cash flow, sales, etc. No report necessary.

Assessment: A. Kramer

Division: Corporate

To: Head Office

Date: 5/1/900 SD.

BOSH SLA blade

Weighted for throwing, full nylon light construction, comes with sheath and strap.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
SLA blade	1	0	0	2₢	.25kg

"The problems with the control of Downtown civilians is the complete lack of respect they have for any kind of authority from Monarch police through to the SLA operative. My Shivers have to fight an ever growing battle against public hatred. Although the use of firearms has always been a major problem, the large increase in knife attacks on my men is frightening. The horrific injuries sustained by my forces through such attacks usually outnumber those from firearm assaults. The Shivers require more support in this field. This is why I have requested the issue of firearms to all Shiver Units to augment their gauss weapons."

To: Mr Slayer, Head Office

Date: 26/1/900 SD.

From: Commander Cradle, Shiver Control

"The use of close combat weapons by the civilian population is something that can never be stopped, Mr Cradle. There is nothing to stop Joe Public picking up a bread knife and hacking up his wife or one of your Shivers. Unless you want me to ban all knives and sharp objects in Mort, I suggest you give your Shiver Units an extra dose of Kick Start for their cuts and bruises. Request for firearms denied."

To: Commander Cradle, Shiver Control

Date: 27/1/900SD.

From: Mr Slayer, Head Office

UNPOWERED CLOSE COMBAT AND CIVILIAN WEAPONS

The civilian population of Mort have little access to firearms. What guns they can get their hands on are expensive and very underpowered. The most common form of armament for the civilian populace are knives, home made swords, clubs such as baseball bats and even sledgehammers.

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST	WEIGHT
Knife	1	0	0	5¤	400g
Club/Bat	2	–1	0	20¤	3.5kg
Sledgehammer	3	–1	1	35¤	5.5kg
Sword	2	0	1	5–10¤	1.5kg

These weapons are the most common types found in and around Downtown areas. The GM should feel free to create their own gruesome weapons but remember, the strongest blade will be very lucky to penetrate a SLA suit of armour.

GRENADES

Although the use of explosives in and around industrial or urban areas is, in general, frowned upon by the authorities of SLA Industries, some grenade types are available for use by operatives. These grenades and explosives are produced by DA (Design Associates), the sole producer of explosives for SLA Industries.

DA 71 Blast/Concussion

The DA 71 is a very effective concussion grenade when used indoors. Larger areas such as warehouses or outdoors severely reduce the potential of the effects. The DA 71 does no actual physical damage when it detonates. Instead, it delivers a large explosion rather like a shock wave causing unconsciousness and a great deal of discomfort to anybody within the blast radius.

	Blast Rating	PEN	Cost	Weight
DA 71	0	–5	10¢	.5kg

If caught in zone 1 of the blast radius, each victim must make a PHYS roll –8 or they will go unconscious for 20 rounds.

DA 90 Fragmentation

The DA 90 is a standard fragmentation grenade used extensively for room and large area clearance. This grenade is spherical with a sealed detonation button on the top of the grenade. To activate the grenade, the cap of the button is popped off and the button depressed. There is a ten second timer delay from triggering the grenade until detonation. When detonation occurs, the grenade explodes sending shards of razor sharp metal flying into the surrounding area with devastating effects.

	Blast Rating	PEN	Cost	Weight
DA 90	10	6	15¢	.5Kg

DA 101 'BLIND' Smoke Grenade

The thick smoke cloud that the DA 101 creates completly obscures, from the normal field of vision, a 10m area. This area can only be seen through with the use of optical enhancement systems such as infra red. This smoke comes in 24 designer colours. The cloud will remain in a room for about 10 minutes before dispersal. It will remain in the open air for about 5 minutes.

	Blast Rating	PEN	Cost	Weight
DA 101	n/a	n/a	4¢	.5kg

DA 240 Gas (Riot) Cannister

This is a crowd dispersal grenade favoured by Shivers and has the same effects as tear gas. Anybody caught within the blast area (10m) not wearing eye protection and some form of filter mask will suffer from painfully stinging eyes and fits of uncontrolled, violent coughing which sometimes results in painful vomiting. A cloud of riot gas, upon average, takes 7 minutes to disperse in the open air. In an enclosed area, this time will increase to up to 12 minutes.

	Blast Rating	PEN	Cost	Weight
DA 240	n/a	n/a	10¢	.5kg

Anybody caught in a cloud of tear gas without the proper protection must make a PHYS roll at a –10 or suffer the above mentioned effects for 5 minutes or until they leave the area.

POWER PROJECTS (PP)

There is no comparison for Power Projects on the armour market. The only threat, which at the moment

is a small one, is MAL with their Shock Armour. Power Projects make a huge profit each year and will continue to do so as long as they can maintain their strangle hold on the market. With such a wide range of very good quality products, this hold may well last forever. The other armour producer, MAL, are trying to expand to stem the flow of Power Projects products with funding to CAF to market a very inexpensive Flak Vest. This is a mere drop in Power Projects' ocean and should give them no cause for concern.

Assessment: A. Kramer

Division: Corporate

To: Head Office

Date: 6/1/900 SD.

PP 644 Blocker Body Armour

The Blocker Body Armour has high pressure, moulded ceramic plates with a heavy flak fibre jumpsuit and long endurance power motors to disperse the weight of the suit with a 5000 hour charge. The helmet comes with full anti-dazzle, air filtered mask and is fully enclosed with a headset communicator.

		ID/Location				
	PV	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs	Cost
PP644	5	8	14	10	12	400₡

"I'm going to die."

"No, you're not son."

"I'm going to die."

"Listen, we go through that door in 20 seconds and you're going with us."

"I've only got Body Armour, sir."

"Look, quit the shit and get out of the APC."

"I'm going to die!"

"Get out!"

"Aaaaargh!"

"Now, stay behind the Shock and shoot anything that doesn't say SLA on it."

"I'm going to... "

"Oh god, oh god."

"You see son, told you you wouldn't die."

"Oh god... "

"Don't worry, they can stitch those back on."

"Oh my god, I want to die... "

Conversation between Squad Leader and infantryman during battle on Stafire Hill, Dante, 763 SD.

PP 7 Exo-armour

The PP7 Exo-armour has high pressure moulded ceramic armour sections, flak buffers to absorb knife blows and a full power chassis with more baffling. The helmet comes with a full anti-dazzle visor and is fully enclosed with a fitted air system. The suit has full 5000 hour life power supply. An Exo-armour suit designed for the 313 Stormer is also available.

		ID/Location				
	PV	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs	Cost
PP7 Exo	7	10	20	15	17	750₡
PP8 Exo (Heavy)	8	15	35	25	28	1250₡
PP9 Exo (Stormer)	9	20	50	40	45	1500₡

Due to the bulk of the power chassis on the PP7, all players wearing one have a -2 to their DEX while wearing the armour. There are no modifiers on the PP8 and the PP9 gives a +3 to the Stormer's STR with no penalty to the DEX.

PP 10 HARD Armour (Heavy Ceramic)

HARD (Heavy Ablative Recess Deck) Armour is a breakthrough in ceramic compression moulding techniques. The armour plates on the side are bonded in angled layers to give the best possible kinetic deflection. HARD Armour has a strong power chassis for ease of movement, full anti-dazzle visors, an air filter system, a 2 hour (sealed suit) internal oxygen supply and an 8000 hour life expectancy of power supply. The suit has a minimal amount of materials used in construction which gives a great weight saving.

		ID/Location				
	PV	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs	Cost
PP10 HARD	10	20	50	40	45	1750₡

Bulk of suit and power chassis causes -1 DEX penalty when worn.

PP 70 Powercell

Powercell, using the same innovative techniques as HARD Armour has been improved by stepping up both the armour plating and the power chassis. Power Projects have created an extremely durable suit of armour which comes with anti-dazzle visors, air filter, 2 hour oxygen supply and a 10,000 hour power supply.

		ID/Location				
	PV	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs	Cost
PP70 Powercell	12	20	70	50	60	2000₡

Due to the size of the power chassis, the user

receives a +2 STR bonus.

PP 100 Crackshot

The advancement of ceramic moulding is taken one step further with the PP100 Crackshot armour class. Highly compressed ceramic plates and a strong, state of the art power skeleton have produced a compact, light and very tough personal armour suit. Crackshot comes with a 6000 hour power charge, full anti-dazzle visors, air filter and a (140w) in-built helmet light.

		ID/Location				
	PV	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs	Cost
PP100 Crackshot	15	20	80	60	70	3000₵

PP 104 Dogeybone

Massive amounts of ceramic armour, huge powered exo-chassis, full internal control with state of the art power system. Full on-board management system (minimum user operation), complete internal air filtration/purification system. Internal 10 hour air supply, two 1000w sodium spot lamps (shoulder mounted) retract into shoulder panels when not in use. Full anti-dazzle visors, built in headset communication system, 10,000 hour power supply. The Dogeybone has it all.

		ID/Location				
	PV	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs	Cost
PP104 Dogeybone	16	60	150	80	120	5000₵

The massive powered chassis gives the wearer +5 to their STR when wearing the suit.

MILITARY ASSAULT LAMINATES (MAL)

Although my initial assessment of MAL was for the weapons division, their first production was their Shock Armour class. This has made MAL enough money to fund the MAL Assault Rifle. MAL are, without a doubt, trying to push their way into the armour market in a big way. This does not explain their funding of CAF to construct the Flak Vest currently under production for both SLA and civilian use. If MAL continue this trend of throwing vast amounts of capital at the low end of the market, they could find themselves losing their armour division.

Assessment: A. Kramer

Division: Corporate

To: Head Office

Date: 6/1/900 SD.

MAL Shock Armour

Enter the realm of true power. The Shock offers you the chance to be invincible on the battle field and Cannibal Sector One to front line Dante. It has a 10,000 hour power supply, full anti-dazzle visors, built-in air purification and filter system, 10 hour internal oxygen supply, one powerful 1000w sodium spot light (head mounted), headset communication system and minimal user operation requirements.

		ID/Location				
	PV	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs	Cost
MAL Shock Armour	18	80	200	120	180	10,000₵

The Shock Armour, due to it's sheer size, does not use the wearer's STR and speed but has it's own; STR 18, DEX 13.

CAF Padquil Flak Vest

Protection for everybody, don't leave home without one, Flak mesh body cover.

		ID/Location				
	PV	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs	Cost
Padquil	3	–	8	–	–	20₵

Weight: 3.5kg

Striker Motorcycle Protection

Full suit of tough motorcycle gear for only 100¤. Best buy for all motorcycle riders.

		ID/Location				
	PV	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs	Cost
Striker	1	–	5	5	5	10

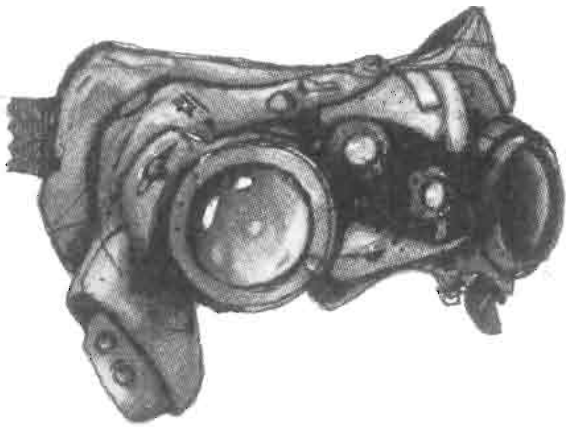
Weight: 2.5kg

Note: Only the Padquil Flak Vest and the Striker Motorcycle Protection have weights as all other armour is powered and as such has no relevant weight to the wearer.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

FEN Telescopic Sights/IR/UV Nightsight Enhancements

Telescopic sights allow for the magnification of objects at various ranges. All telescopic sights come able to accept IR and UV Nightsight attachments. The four most popular mass produced sighting systems have ranges of 1000m, 3000m, 5000m and 8000m. The last of these is used in the main by snipers wanting that extra accuracy from their shot. Sights can be both pistol and rifle mounted and range in cost from 10₵ for a 1000m magnification scope up to 40₵ for the 8000m sight. To have these fitted with IR/UV Night-



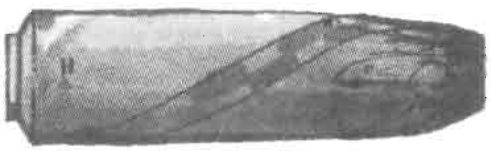
sight or both cost 10₡ extra/enhancement. IR and UV goggles are both available for 30₡.

Game Use: Magnification scopes negate any modifiers for long/extreme range shots. IR and UV counteract the effects of poor visibility due to lack of artificial light or sunlight. How much of the penalty is negated is up to the Games Master but for IR scopes, this is usually 1 or 2 points.

GA Silencer/Flash Suppressors



These attachments fit on to the end of the barrel of a weapon. The silencer will muffle the sound of a rifle or pistol firing. These cost 25₡ for a rifle silencer and 15₡ for a pistol or SMG silencer. Due to the slowing of the bullet by the silencer, the effective range is reduced by 25%. The flash suppressor baffles the flash from the barrel of the weapon to further aid the firer's chance of being undetected. The flash suppressors cost 20₡ for a rifle or SMG and 15₡ for a pistol. The flash suppressor can be used in conjunction with silencers.

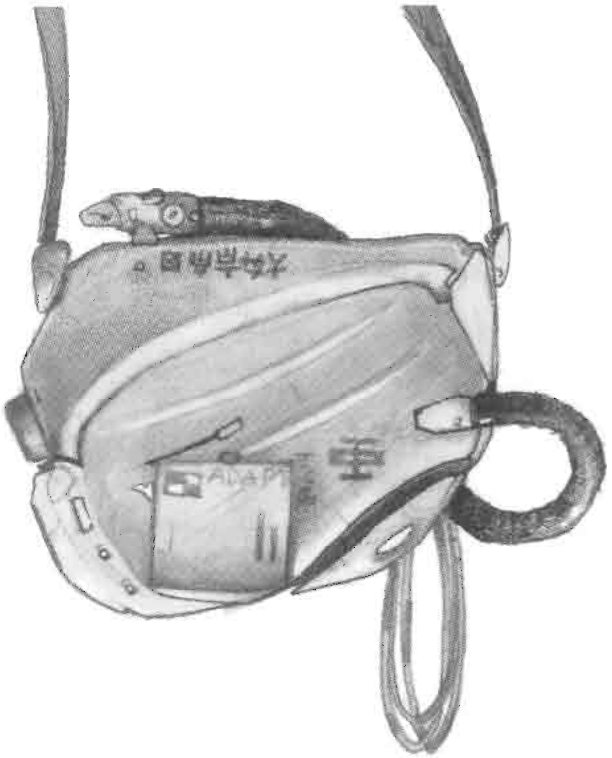


MAL Recoil Baffling

Recoil baffling is a highly advanced gyroscopic stabiliser sleeve that covers the weapon reducing the amount of recoil that the user experiences. The baffling itself is made from resilient shock-absorbent materials and gives optimum baffling with minimum degradation of weapon performance. There are five classes of baffling for pistols and rifles which can negate varying degrees of recoil on the weapon. These cost 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50₡ for pistols and 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100₡ for rifles.

Game Use: There are five different types of baffler for pistols, SMGs and rifles, 1 through to 5. 1 subtracts 1 point of recoil from a weapon, 2 subtracts 2 points of recoil etc. Please note that recoil can never be completely compensated for and no matter how much baffling is bought, a weapon's recoil will never go below 1.

SLA Fusion Recharger

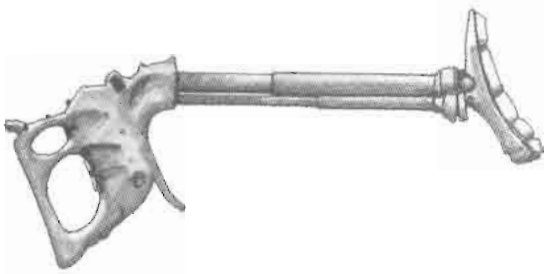


This small, shoe box sized power plant is extremely efficient and the powerful cell re-energizes any piece of equipment or armour which requires a power source to function. The recharger has a universal jack (chippy) lead that can fit any piece of equipment. The fusion recharger costs 2500₡.

Game Use: A fusion recharger has the capacity to recharge 150,000 hours worth of energy. It takes 1 hour to recharge 1000 hours worth of energy.

FEN Pistol and SMG Stocks

Pistol and SMG stocks aid in the reduction of recoil from the weapons and give the user an improved firing stance and extra control over the weapon. The stocks come ready to fit with universal coupling



devices for the pistol or SMG which can be adjusted to any size of weapon. These both cost 10₵ each.

Game Use: The pistol or SMG stock negates the –1 no stock firing modifier if the firer is in a firing stance. It also gives a –1 to the recoil of the weapon whilst firing.

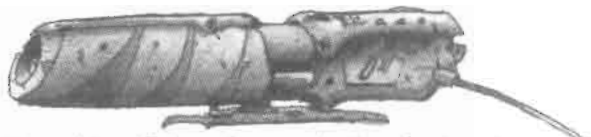
FEN Bipods and Tripods

Collapsible bipods and tripods are available for use with all rifles. They are made from light and durable alloys. They can be easily attached and detached or folded under the weapon for ease of carrying. The cost for a bipod or tripod is 20₵.

Game Use: When using a bipod or tripod in the prone firing stance with a rifle, the user receives a +1 on shooting at medium and long ranges.

FEN/CAF Laser Painters

Laser painters are small devices that fit on to the underside of weapons with a pick-up sensor on the trigger. The beam of light emitted from the laser painter will place a small red dot of light on to the object targeted. This dot is where the bullet should strike. The painter has a power supply of 5000 hours and costs 5₵. This includes the alignment of the laser with the chosen weapon.



Game Use: Using a laser painting device gives a +1 with 'to hit' rolls when using with ballistic weapons.

SLA Headset Communicator

The 'Headset Comm' is a standard piece of equipment for all SLA operatives. This small field radio is made up of a small ear piece that clips around and in the ear. A mike is attached to the ear piece and a head band holds the comm-link in place. The headset comes with a voice modulation strap that fits around the throat of the user. This allows the user to speak in a whisper relying on the vibration of the larynx to create the audio sounds of the communication to



other squad members. The headset has a basic three channel setting, one is a personal squad channel where the user can speak to other squad members, this includes whispering or 'stealth mode'. The second is a broad channel signal like a calling channel to anyone in the communicator's range. The third is a direct link to SLA control centres in Mort Central. The headset has a working range of 50km with a 10,000 hour power supply. Replacement headsets cost 5₵ each.

Third Eye Navigation Maps and Discs (Nava-map)

The Nava-map is a small hand held device with an ultra-high resolution, full analogue colour 200 x 400mm gel screen which can be folded or rolled up when not in use. There is an access port on top of the Nava-map for discs. Each disc holds complete map references and street maps for most of Mort's sectors. Each disc covers an area of about 100km squared. The control console is easy to read with only five buttons on the central unit. Four scroll buttons; up, down, left and right as well as an on and off switch. The Nava-map costs 15₵ and each discs cost 2₵/sector.

Game Use: The Nava-map gives a +1 rank on Navigation rolls made when used. The appropriate disc for each sector must be used in conjunction with Navigation rolls.

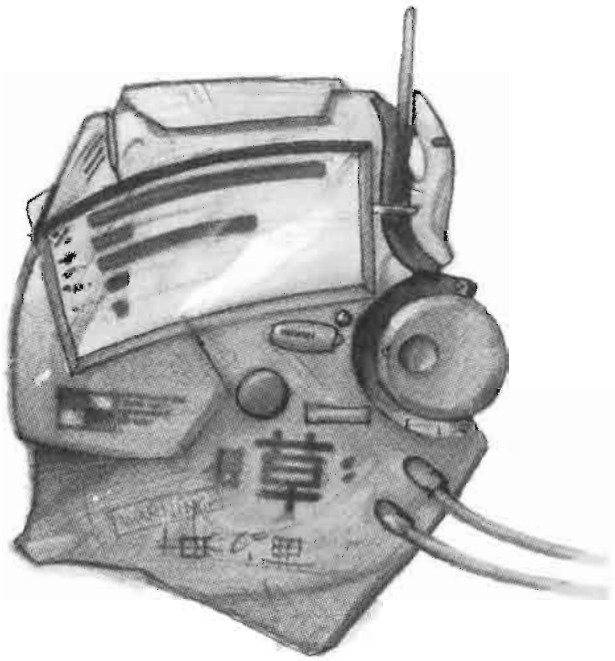
DPB Laser Sharpener

With the use of ceramic and mono-filament blades, the need to constantly sharpen cutting edges is of

utmost importance. Ceramic and other such materials do not react well to conventional sharpening techniques. The Laser Sharpener is ideal for this purpose. It is a small, compact cube–shaped object with a 'V' shaped slot in the top. When the blade is pressed into the slot and activated, the small laser runs the sharpener up and down the blade for 4 minutes which is usually enough to re–sharpen any blade. The power supply is for 1000 hours at a cost of 3₡.

Track opticS Motion Scanner

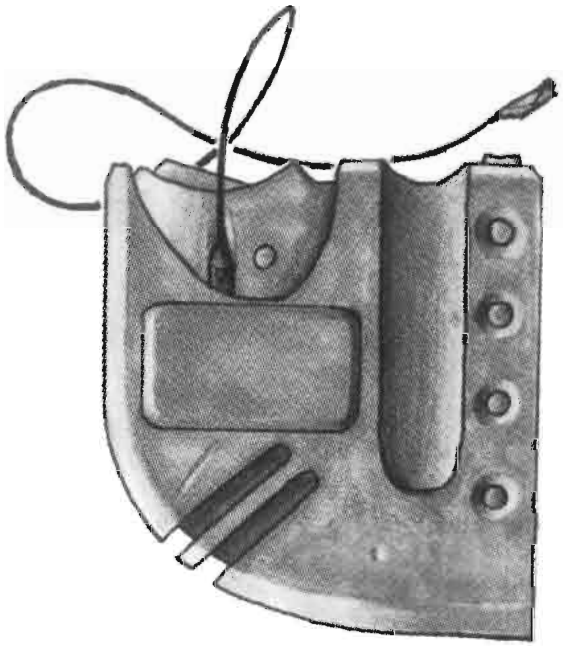
The motion scanner is a highly advanced sensor



system. The sensor detectors on the scanner pick up any forms of motion except air pressure fluctuation. The sensors are exceptionally sensitive and can be set to pick up motion from anything the size of a mouse up to a Stormer. The scanner itself has a hand grip for carrying purposes, an 80 x 80mm screen and a small control to set the motion size. The scan itself has a maximum range of 50m and appears as a 'bleeping' dot on the screen with direction and speed also indicated. The motion scanner has a 5000 hour power supply and costs 35₡. Note: The scanner can be easily confused by large concentrated amounts of movement such as machinery or large groups of people in an enclosed areas.

Track opticS Enviro Scanner

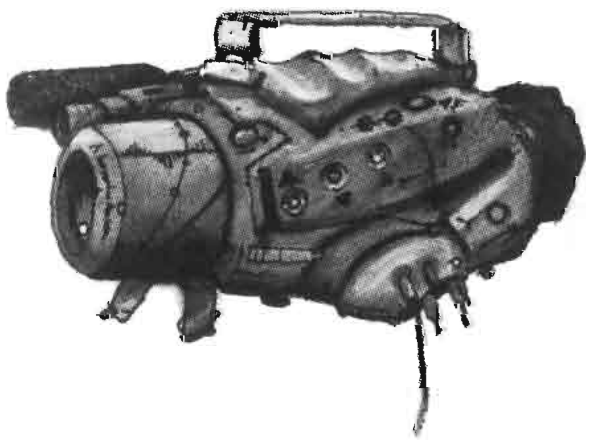
The Enviro Scanner is a small hand–held device about the size of a cigarette packet. It has a small gel



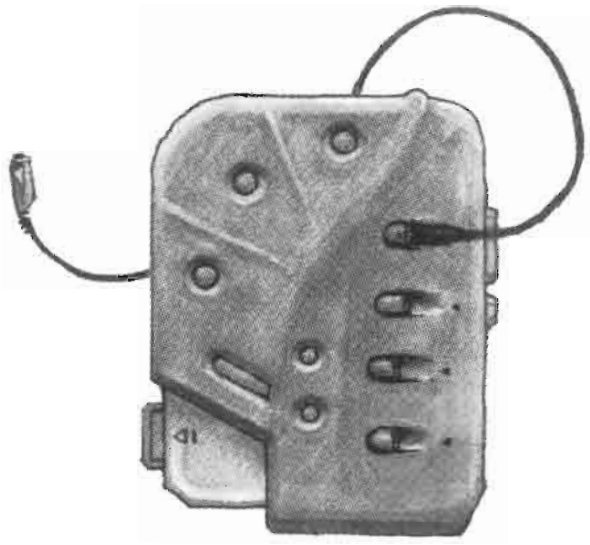
monitor built into the front of the scanner below which there is a single button. When the button is pressed, the scanner takes in an air sample. It also probes the area directly around it for the following traces; radiation, air pollination, air pollution, harmful or hazardous chemicals, oxygen levels and also toxic levels in the vicinity. The Enviro Scanner also takes a temperature reading of the surrounding area. the scanner has a 5000 hour power supply, weighs .2kg and costs 8₡.

Third Eye Audio/Visual Recording Playback

The advancement in recording techniques has led to the first true 'multi–media' storage facility, the 'slug'. The slug is similar to a compact disc with the exception that both visual images and sound can be recorded as well as played back on it. This has led to the 'slug recorder' or 'slugger'. This is an analogue dataslug player/recorder which can record all media; video, audio and computer. The deck is a

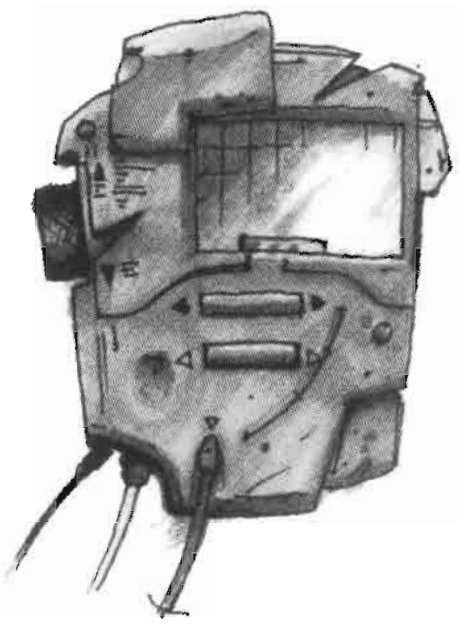


compact, easily hand-held recorder with deck slots for up to 4 dataslugs and input/output sockets for any recording requirements, six in total. These can be used through the use of a 'chippy', a fibre-optic cable and can hook up to any pieces of recording hardware. The slugger is an audio recorder/player, video recorder/player and computer data drive all in one.



The dataslug recorder/player costs 10₤ and has a 1000 hour power supply. A compact video camera will cost 30₤. This is a universal camera to pick up images, sound or both. These images can then be transferred to the slugger via a 'chippy' lead. A chippy lead will cost 1₤. A blank disc will cost 1₤ and can store 5 hours of audio visual information or 10 hours of audio information.

Third Eye Finance Chip Scanner



The Finance Chip scanner is a small calculator device with a 30m range. When pointed at someone and activated, the scanner will search for a Finance Chip signal. If it finds one, the small monitor on the scanner will tell the user the name, classification, package, squad and SCL of the target. The user life for the Finance Chip Scanner is 5000 hours and the cost is 50₤.

SLA Thumper Beacon



The Thumper was designed to replace flares as a means of visual recognition. The Thumper is 70cm long, including a 20cm spike and is 20mm in diameter. The top of the Thumper has a small slow pulsing 200w strobe light. The Thumper is activated by a sensor on the base of the spike when driven into the ground and the pulse given off is visible for 25km. Alternatively, if the situation requires the Thumper being viewed from the air or the terrain does not allow for the Thumper to be ground activated, an easy-to-use twist release device fires the strobe into the air and its fall is slowed by means of a small parachute in the Thumper. The ground pulse lasts for 24 hours and cannot be switched off. The air pulse lasts for 4 minutes after which the Thumper lands. It will continue to pulse where it lands until the 24 hour battery runs out. The Thumper costs 4₤.

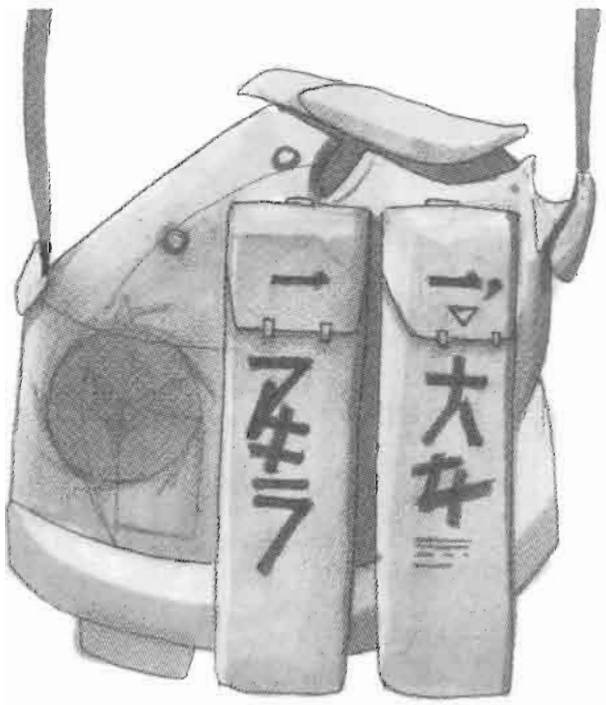
FEN ECM Body Suit and Cape

The ECM (Electronic Counter Measures) Suits and

Capes are developed for use by scouts to conceal their heat traces and also muffle their motion, sonar and radar signals to make themselves less detectable. The ECM Body Suit (commonly known as "Cami-sneak") can be worn under armour and clothing. The suit uses state of the art heat dampers to disperse the body heat of the user, channelling it to the bottom of the suit and out through the feet. This leaves the wearer almost undetectable. The other systems on the suit throw out electric pulses to confuse other detection systems. The cape works in the same way but costs less and gives less protection from detection. The Body Suit costs 100¢ and the Cape costs a little less at 75¢.

Game Use: The ECM suits are at the Games Masters discretion. The effectiveness of the suit and cape depends on many factors. Is the wearer moving? If so, how fast? How much noise are they making? Is the suit damaged? The more damage the suit takes, the less effective it will be. Take into consideration surroundings be it a quiet Downtown alleyway to a large industrial plant with lots of machinery, heat sources and motion. Feel free to make the suit's abilities as fantastic or as abysmal as you like.

Boopa Medical Kit

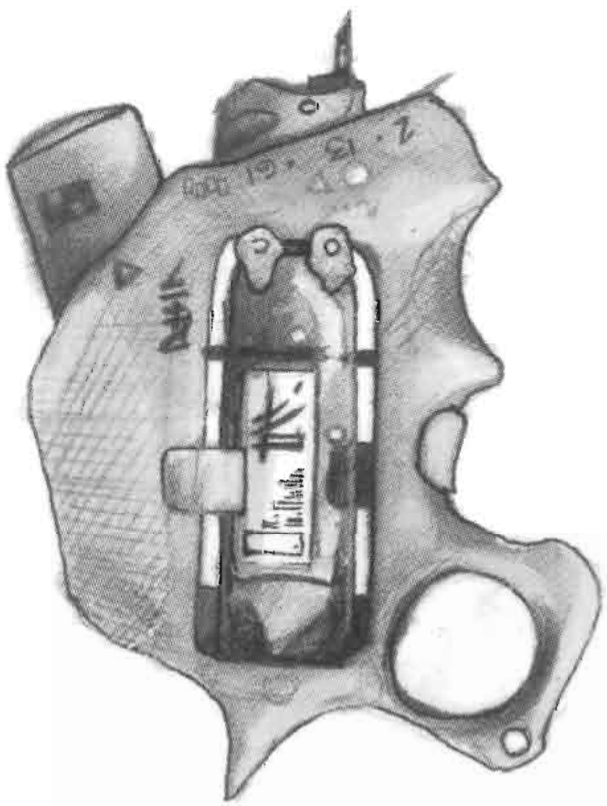


The Medi-kit contains all the necessary consumables and equipment for a wide range of injuries. Along with the normal bandages, patches, plasters and pain killers. The kit also contains a small selection of surgical instruments to perform small field operations such as stitching wounds, removing bullets, cleaning of wounds etc. The drug pack in the kit contains 4 x Kick Start, 10 x Bio-block and 50 x Pain Solver. The Medi-kit is completely sealable and water proof. A full box of consumables for the Medi-kit is available for 5¢ (not including drugs) and the cost of the Medi-kit is 50¢.

Game Use: If a character performs paramedical skills without a Medi-kit, they are at modifiers to use the skill. Don't leave home without one.

Boopa Compressed Air Syringe and Drug Injection System

The two most common forms of drug injection available are the compressed air syringe which is a small hand held injector and the arm mounted 'pulse rush' injector. The syringe holds one dose of the chosen medication and is controlled by a compressed air piston that injects the drugs very quickly into the blood stream. The injector looks like a small pistol with a clip in the centre for drug vial. This costs 4¢. The compressed air syringe is sufficient for 20 uses and each refill cylinder costs 1¢. The other type of injector, the arm mounted 'pulse rush', is similar to the compressed air syringe in as much as it uses the same principle of injection. The look of the injector is completely different. The injection system clamps onto the user's arm with a small fine cable leading to an intravenous needle in the skin under the armour

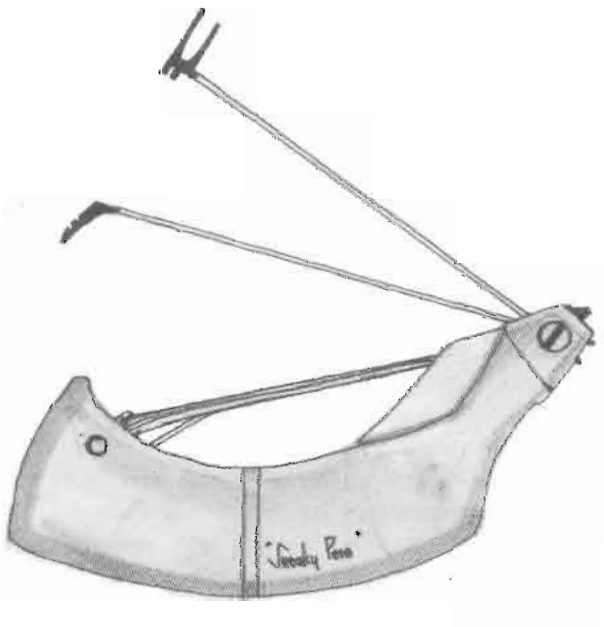


and clothes. The injector has slots for four vials of any drug type available. The injector is activated, to release one dose at a time, by flicking the wrist down and to the right. This activates a pick-up sensor which then releases the injection. This costs 8₵ and air refills cost 1₵.

FEN/Third Eye Telescopic Tight Beam Scan

The Telescopic Tight Beam is a powerful Finance Chip Scanner with a visual range of 3000m. The scanner incorporates a long range laser painter for ease of drawing a bead on targets. With full telescopic sighting, it can fit on rifles and pistols. The scanner looks very similar to a standard telescopic sight with the information being projected onto the lens of the sight. The Telescopic Tight Beam Scan has a 5000 hour power supply and costs 75₵.

SLA Electronic and Manual Lock Picks



The Manual Lock Picking tools come in an easy carry case. The Lock Picks are made from high tensile materials to give a long user life and are suited for nearly all civilian locks and some SLA manufactured models. These cost 25₵/set.

The Electronic Lock Picking system, sometimes known as a 'dead eye' case, is a small .3m x .2m x .12m brief case. This contains a powerful analytical computer, chippy leads and a small holographic projector. This lock picking system is designed to 'crack' loops such as keypad entry systems, card entry points, retinal and palm scanners.

Game Use: Using these pieces of equipment in conjunction with the appropriate skill i.e. Lock Pick -Lock Picking, Manual, Dead Eye case -Electronic Lockpicking gives the user a +1 to their skill roll.

SLA Forgery Equipment Manual/Electronic

There are two forms of forging equipment, the first consists of paper (various grades, types and sizes), pens (various) and inks (various) to aid the reproduction of documents, signatures, etc. The second is a more sophisticated system using computer aided technology to reproduce card passes (with photo), bank cards, I.D. cards etc. and looks very similar to the Dead Eye case. The kit comes ready to use with full supply of blank cards for forging of I.D. cards etc. To reproduce an I.D. card takes approx. 1 hour. Forging a card or document can take up to 10 hours depending on how skilled the forger is.

Game Use: Using these pieces of equipment in conjunction with the appropriate skill gives the user a +1 onto their skill roll.

Third Eye Laptop Computer - 'Oyster'

Computers within SLA Industries have advanced to such a degree that it is possible to carry a computer system (computer, screen, chippy leads) in a large overcoat pocket. The bitstream colour codex computer itself has a small, almost circular keyboard developed to be both space saving and easy to use. The high resolution, full colour analogue monitor (screen) is a small packet of gel which folds out to a flat screen. The gel monitor is produced by a high-frequency crystalline production system sometimes called 'crisps'. The drive on the computer requires the standard dataslug recorder for storage and retrieval of information. There are six jacks (sockets) for chippy leads to be fitted for use with hard and software add-ons. Modem links are handled completely through the computer -called an 'Oyster' due to the similarity in shape. There is no need for telephone hook ups, chippy leads travel from the oyster directly to telecommunication sockets. The cost for the Oyster is 20₵ with a 1000 hour internal power supply.

SLA Flashlights

The size and power of flashlights varies greatly from small hand held torches (100w) to large 'carry' spot lamps (1000w). The two most common are small, compact, hand-held torches with a 500 hour user life and shoulder mounted spot lamps. Both have a 120w

sodium lamp. The shoulder mount clips onto any armour type. All flashlights are waterproof and cased in double ceramics. A hand held flashlight costs 2₵ and the shoulder mounted torch costs 3₵. Larger, more powerful lamps are available at a cost and power up to the Games Master.

CMC (Commercial Mechanics Corporation) Maintenance Kit

Small, compact tool kits are excellent for all manner of tasks from electronic to mechanical repair. The standard kit will allow the user to perform most tasks although larger scale jobs like fission plant repair, tri-axle maintenance, jumpship repair etc. will obviously be beyond the working limits of the kit. The maintenance kit costs 50₵.

Game Use: When a character is using Mechanics, Repair or Electronics, Repair, they will be at modifiers to perform the skill if they do not have this kit.

SLA Climbing Equipment

The essential climbing gear is a favourite with a great deal of scouts, assassins and snipers. The gear itself consists of 100m of poly-nylon rope, crampons, hooks, belts and harnesses. The rope is stored on a compact drum for ease of carrying which is fitted with a motor wind facility. The kit also comes with a grappling hook system. This is a cylindrical tube containing the hook which can be connected to the rope drum. When the hook is pushed fully into the cylinder, it can be fired by means of a powerful gauss roll in the firing tube with an optimum range of 15m. It also has a carbon dioxide back up for one emergency firing of the hook. The cost is 20₵ for the climbing equipment and the power supply for the gauss propelled hook is sufficient for about 10,000 firings. Carbon dioxide refills cost 1₵.

FEN 270671 Scout Helmet

The scout helmet must be regarded as one of the most useful and unique pieces of hardware on the market today. Specifically designed for those trained in the scouting package, the helmet has a vast range of sensory equipment to aid the wearer in their occupation. The scout helmet replaces the owner's own helmet from their usual suit of armour as it has it's own armour protection for the delicate sensory fittings enclosed inside. Each fitting is unique to the helmet as each has to be specially designed to be as compact as possible so that it does not encumber the wearer. The most astounding feature of the scout helmet is the revolutionary HUD system known as Reality Overlay. This enhancement hardware collates and relays all sensory information picked up by the helmet to the user's HUD (heads-up display). The bombardment of the wearer's optical senses can be quite a strain with so much information being displayed at any one time. This is why the helmet is only available to scouts as their specialised training enables them to analyse all information displayed to them without strain.

The standard sensory systems come in two forms, the first is directly linked to the helmet's HUD through the helmet's visual pick-ups. These are I.R. and UV Nightsight. The activation of these sensors is done by the user's eye movements to certain parts of the reality overlay where lists of all equipment on the helmet are projected onto their field of vision (similar to the finance chip). By looking at the chosen system on the list which is highlighted, then blinking, this will activate the system. Each list is displayed as a window similar to a computer menu. The second type of sensory system comes in the form of cables similar to the chippy lead. These connect to the back of the helmet, and are also activated by use of the reality overlay, where there are 20 socket ports to slot them into. The standard lead which comes ready fitted to the helmet is an AV (audio/visual) stalk. This is a 0.8m long lead with a compact video camera at the end. This projects an image onto the HUD of the helmet in the top left hand portion of the users field of vision. The AV is fully flexible and can be moved to scan in any direction the scout chooses. Other systems that appear on the helmet are a 5000 hour internal power supply, external 140w lamp, armour casing, air/gas filter, anti-dazzle reactive HUD, standard SLA headset communicator and universal clock and gyroscopic stabilisation. The use of small pressure/velocity sensors on the helmet activate a highly sensitive pressure pad around the users ear to negate some of the disorientating effects of such things as falling. All of these systems are fully modular so as to allow them to be replaced if damaged and to add new sensors when and if needed. One of the most outstanding properties of the scout helmet is the amount of equipment available to be added to the scout helmet, either cable or modular mounted. These include 3000 rangefinder monoculars (modular), motion scanner (cable), enviro scanner (cable), sonar (modular) for use of underwater surveillance, voice modulator (modular) for the manipulation of the voice which disguises it to some degree, cellphone (modular), retina scan security system (modular) which scans the owner's eye for identification purposes (helmet will not operate if scan is incorrect), 2

hour internal air supply/aqualung (modular), radar (cable) for detecting presence and range of objects by sending out pulses of high frequency, electro-magnetic waves which they reflect, optical defensive unit for security system (modular) which blinds and deafens the wearer by overloading the systems of the helmet, rifle targeting system (cable) which plugs into a telescopic sight, telescopic imaging, 3000m and 8000m (modular), audio enhancement (cable), nava-map (modular), television (modular), second AV stalk (cable), second motion scanner (cable) and 3 more gyroscopic stabilisers (cable).

Game Use: The scout helmet has a P.V. of 10 and an I.D. of 15.

Magazines, Snail Drums, Electro-magnetic Belt Fed Ammunition Bins

Each weapons manufacturer produces their own types of magazines, snail drums and electro-magnetic belt fed ammunition bins. No two weapons can take the same magazine unless they are made by the same manufacturer, for example, a FEN AR 25 round magazine will fit in a FEN Power Reaper as they both fire 10mm rifle rounds. 50 round snail drums are available for the FEN AR, the FEN Power Reaper and the GA Finisher. These are spiral loaded drums which take the place of the standard clip. The weapons that are able to use an electro-magnetic, belt fed ammunition bin are the FEN AR, FEN 706, Power Reaper, KPS Mangler. Magazines are 1₵ each, snail drums are 3₵ and electro-magnetic, belt fed ammunition bins cost 25₵ for a 100 round bin, 40₵ for a 300 ammunition bin, 90₵ for a 500 ammunition bin and 200₵ for a 1000 round ammunition bin. Only 100 and 300 round ammunition bins are available for the KPS Mangler. All of the above are unloaded.

MagHold

The MagHold is a popular piece of hardware with all operatives, SLA or otherwise. The MagHold is a small thin plate which adheres to the outside of armour. This is a sheet of metal with a small power supply built in to the plate. When a piece of equipment or weapon is brought into contact with the plate, a pressure sensor on the plate activates a powerful electro-magnet making the hardware strongly adhere to the plate. When a piece of equipment is to be retrieved from the MagHold, the user simply slides the equipment off the plate. The MagHold has replaced knife sheaths, apart from the MAC sheath, pistol holsters and, in some cases, rifle straps as a means of easily carrying equipment and hardware. All weapons and equipment, although made mostly of ceramics and similar materials, have small traces of metal in their construction to allow them to be carried by the MagHold. A MagHold plate will cost 3₵ for pistols or blades and 5₵ for rifles. The exception to this is the MagHold plate designed for the legendary Power Claymore. This long plate adheres to the user's back where the Power Claymore can then be stored with a cost of 10₵. All MagHold plates have a 5000 hour power supply. MagHold plates are also available for use of carrying magazines and ammunition at a cost of 2₵ per plate.

FEN Gyroscopic Stabiliser (Waldo units)

The Waldo unit is specifically made for the larger rifles that are also heavy and cumbersome. The weapon is attached to a stabilised, gyroscopic arm which is attached to a harness that the user wears. This is weighted and powered specifically for the user. The gyroscopic arm is easily manoeuvrable and can also be moved to the wearer's back where it can lock into place for easy storage. Recoil bafflers can also be fitted to negate more recoil than usual. The Waldo unit weighs 3kg and costs 240₵.

Game Use: The Waldo unit can negate up to 25% of the weight of a weapon and also enables the user to fire rifles one-handed. This gives the user an extra +3 points of recoil. Recoil bafflers can be fitted to the Waldo unit as well as the weapon up to a maximum of an extra five points.

BLA Maintenance Kit/Carry Case

The Blitzer revolver is indeed a very beautiful weapon which deserves only the best care. The Blitzer case is hand crafted and bound in biogenetic leather embossed with the Berenyi Light Arms logo as well as your personal bar code making the maintenance kit/carry case as unique as your Blitzer. Each case contains finely crafted cleaning equipment to maintain your Blitzer revolver in pristine condition. The case is also constructed to allow you to store your revolver and spare ammunition in a sturdy, biogenetic silk-lined compartment. We appreciate that although the Blitzer is extremely hard wearing, the carry case, which you receive with the revolver, may well suffer from use. This is why at the inexpensive cost of 250₵, you are able to purchase the BLA Maintenance Kit/Carry Case which we guarantee will be identical to your original right down to your personalized bar code. The carry case weighs just 1.5kg including all maintenance equipment. The consumables, such as cleaning fluids, may also be purchased at a cost of 10₵.

Game Use: The character is at modifiers if they try to maintain their Blitzer without the use of a BLA Maintenance Kit.

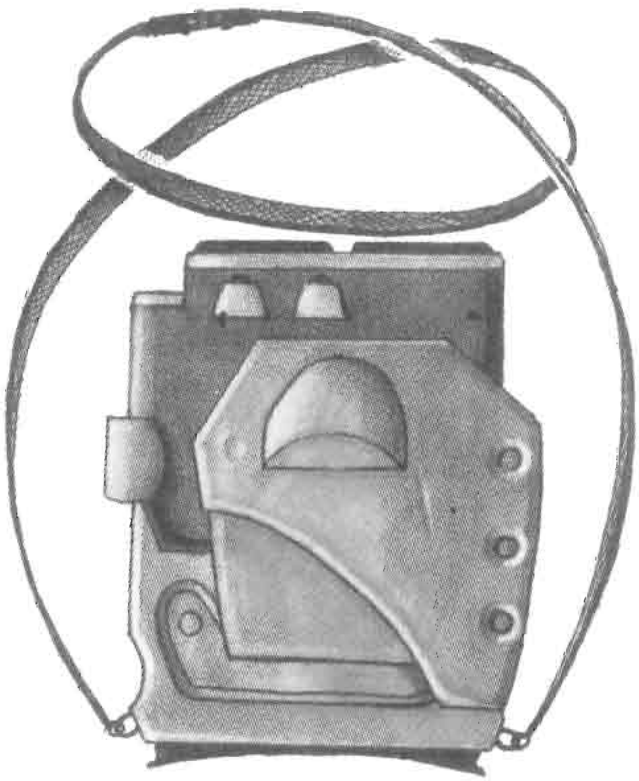
GA Weapons Maintenance Kit

The standard weapons maintenance kit given to all operatives contains a wide range of cleaning and maintenance equipment to service all types of ballistic weapons. The kit comes in a sturdy carry case weighing 2kg when full and costs 30₢. Consumables cost 4₢.

Game Use: The character is at modifiers if they try to maintain their weapon without the use of a weapons maintenance kit.

FEN Rangefinder Monocular

This is a laser/motor lens-assisted rangefinder monocular. A spotter laser on the monocular tells the user what range they have focused in on with a maximum range of 1000m. The monocular itself is video active to enhance the image that is produced. The monocular is constructed to be held in one hand or mounted on a helmet for hands-free use. The mono lens system makes the monocular very compact and can easily fit in the palm of the hand or a small pocket. They come with a field carry case for protection of the rather delicate lens system with a 5000 hour power usage. The rangefinder monocular costs 10₢.



VEHICLES AND TRANSPORT

"Mort is one mother of a big place. I've been a cab driver here for fifteen years and I'll be lucky if I've seen half of it. Now, I've seen some stuff that would turn your hair white. Cannibal Sector One? Been there. Heart of Downtown? Know it like the back of my hand. This has to be the most evil place in the universe. But God help me, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. That's 25¤ friend."

'Big' Al, Arlando Fettacini, Blue Cab Driver, Mort 899 SD.

The many forms of transport used in and around Mort vary greatly from the small civilian motorcycles to the large armoured APCs that operatives use.

PERSONAL TRANSPORT

Augustus

Type: Car

Max. Speed: 320km/hour: 51.2m/phase

Movement: Wheeled/Quad-axle independent drive

Dimensions: 4m length, 2m width, 1.7m height

Weight: 3 tonnes

Crew: 1 driver

Passengers: 4

Skill: Drive, Civilian

Armament: None

Cost: 10,000₢

P.V. 17, I.D. 200

Acceleration Rate: 2.8

Turning Circle: 5

The Augustus belongs to a range of luxury cars for operative use. The range starts with the 'Augustus' at 10,000₢ to the 'Romulus' executive stretch model at 50,000₢. These productions models are all fitted with state of the art electronics to aid the driver. Some models even come with Nava-maps. These very expensive cars are greatly favoured by corporate operatives as these vehicles are a great deal more than just a form of transport. They are perhaps the most visible sign of an operative's wealth or social standing.

Calaharvey Urbaniser

Type: Motorcycle

Max. Speed: 340km/hour: 54.4m/phase

Movement: Bi-magna cable ball joint

Dimensions: 2.1m length, 1m width, 0.9m height

Weight: .75 tonne

Crew: 1 driver

Passengers: 1

Skill: Drive, Motorcycle

Armament: None

Cost: 1000₤

P.V. 10, I.D. 100

Acceleration Rate: 3

Turning Circle: 1

Common heavy duty motorcycle produced by SLA for operative use. The Calaharvey has seen a great deal of action in and around some of the worst areas of Dante as reconnaissance vehicles. These extremely tough, versatile motorcycles have a reactor which gives a 50,000 hour user life.

MILITARY VEHICLES

ARMOURED PERSONNEL CARRIERS (APC)

FEN 0227 'Battle Taxi' APC

Type: APC

Max. Speed: 180km/hour: 28.8m/phase

Movement: Wheeled/Quad-axle independent drive

Dimensions: 9m length, 4m width, 2.6m height

Weight: 10 tonnes

Crew: 1 driver/1 gunner

Passengers: 10

Skill: Drive, Military

Armament: Fitted for Reaper Cannon

Cost: 125,000₤

P.V. 25, I.D. 750

Acceleration Rate: 1.5

Turning Circle: 8

The FEN APC is an invaluable piece of transport to the operatives of SLA Industries. With the capacity to carry 10 humans, it is also large enough to transport the larger races, Shaktars and Stormers. The rectangular shape of the vehicle has given rise to concern about the effectiveness of the armour plating against AP shells but the 20,000 of these deployment vehicles that are in service on Dante seem to have no problems with armour panels. The APC has a side sliding door as well as a pilot hatch. To the rear is a fully folding ramp door which opens the back of the APC up to allow for quick deployment of troops. There are 10 eyeholes/slots in the sides of the vehicle, 4 on each side and two at the rear. The turret is a small dome just behind the driver's position. The dome unlocks and slides back to allow for the use of a rail mounted Reaper Cannon. This is not normally supplied with the vehicle. There is also an electro-magnetic belt feed system available for delivery of up to 6000 rounds to the Reaper. The power plant on the APC is located under the floor in the centre of the axle system. The fusion reactor gives enough energy output for 25,000 hours of continuous use of the APC.

GA 'J' Personal Transport (Jeep)

Type: Jeep

Max. speed: 220km/hour: 35.2m/phase

Movement: Wheeled/Quad axle

Dimensions: 2.8m length, 2m width, 1.5m height

Weight: 2 tonnes

Crew: 1 driver

Passengers: 5

Skill: Drive, Civilian

Armament: None

Cost: 14,000₤

P.V. 15, I.D. 300

Acceleration Rate: 1.8

Turning Circle: 4

The GA 'J' or 'GAJ' is the most common form of transport, along with the motorcycle, used by SLA operatives. It is a fast, medium armour configuration transporter with a crew capacity of six. The GAJ is available in a wide range of designs, from open top sports models to fully enclosed military style.

BLA 'Pandora' Multi-task Trike (Armoured)

Type: Motorcycle

Max. Speed: 280km/hour: 44.8m/phase

Movement: Wheeled/Tri-axle

Dimensions: 1.8m length, 1.6m width, 1.5m height

Weight: 1 tonne

Crew: 1 driver

Passengers: 1

Skill: Drive, Motorcycle

Armament: None

Cost: 1500₢

P.V. 15, I.D. 200

Acceleration Rate: 2.4

Turning Circle: 2

The BLA team were looking for a gap in the transport market when a corporate approached them with a proposal for a custom motorcycle (trike) for his personal assistant. After the design was completed, BLA bought the rights to the 'Pandora' and went to work on a mass production model. One year later, the BLA multi-task trike rolled off the production line still carrying the name of the corporate lackey that it was originally designed for.

FEN 3497 'Kilcopter'

Type: Helicopter

Max. Speed: 1000km/hour (Mach 1): 160m/phase

Movement: Quad blade turbine (fusion assisted)

Dimensions: 2.4m length, 2m width, 6m height

Weight: 4.5 tonnes

Crew: 2

Passengers: 4

Skill: Pilot, Military

Armament: Tri-barrel Power Reaper

Cost: 450,000₢

P.V. 19, I.D. 550

Acceleration Rate: 21.6

Turning Circle: 0 stationary, 100 at speed

The Kilcopter was not an immediate success with SLA Industries after prototype number 3482 crashed on its first test run. FEN almost lost the contract to supply the airborne divisions but after careful negotiations with Slayer, a lot of grovelling and fourteen test failures later, the FEN 3497 Kilcopter took to the skies, a graceful and deadly bird of prey. From the first flight of 'Let this be the one' (painted on the side of the 3497 on the test flight), full production soon followed and soon after that, the Kilcopter became lord of the skies. The Kilcopter is unmatched by any other helicopter or conventional fighter aircraft for speed, versatility or fire power. The Kilcopter took over from all of these units and made FEN a great deal of money.

Shiver Copter, Airborne Forces (SCAF)

Type: Helicopter

Max. Speed: 400km/hour: 64m/phase

Movement: Multi-prop turbine

Dimensions: 2.5m length, 1.5m width, 1.2m height

Weight: .75 tonnes

Crew: 1

Passengers: 1

Skill: Pilot, Military/Drive, Motorcycle

Armament: Ball mounted FEN Power Reaper

Cost: 125,000₢ (disarmed)

P.V. 15, I.D. 250

Acceleration Rate: 6

Turning Circle: 2 on ground, 0 hovering, 50 in flight.

This rapid deployment vehicle, used by Shiver Special Forces, has a large multi-prop turbine on it's underside. This allows the bike to hover. Other smaller jets and fans on the bike give the copter it's propulsion properties using the power from the main turbine. -The vehicle has a large hydraulic system on it's undercarriage. This is to allow for the storage and deployment of the bike's wheels. When the copter is about to land, the pilot may lower the wheels for either landing purposes or to use the copter as a ground vehicle. The avionic capabilities of the vehicle are excellent (has full vertical take-off and landing capabilities) but the ground manouevreability is somewhat restricted because it is unable to use it's main turbine and must rely on the smaller jets and fans for it's propulsion (max. speed 180km/hour). The Shiver Special Airborne forces are in operation 24 hours a day on reconnaissance missions in and around Mort. Squads of these Shivers are kept on stand-by round the clock for emergency calls. The SCAF is commonly known as SCA, pronounced 'ska'. The Shiver copter is used for reconnaissance missions in and around Downtown and Cannibal Sectors. To assist the Shiver pilot in duties, the SCAF is equipped with a single barrelled Power Reaper which is ball mounted to the underside of the vehicle. The fire control system of the Reaper is connected to an HUD system on the pilot's helmet for accurate fire control.

OTHER VEHICLES AVAILABLE

The multitude of vehicles that are available on Mort cover a broad spectrum of the market. There should

be something to please everyone from the smaller production runs of SLA cars, motorcycles and vans, down to the motorcycle, Kashang and cars of the civilian population. If the players want a specific look or style for their mode of transport then give it to them with fair warning that it may be blown out from under them at any time. In general, SLA vehicles are a lot tougher and faster than civilian models with perhaps the exception of the blue cabs. These large, public service vehicles have been around for a very long time. They are built to last and stand up to a great deal of punishment. This is probably the easiest form of transport in Mort, because the cabbies know all the shortcuts. A cab ride will cost about 1¤/km but be warned, cab drivers are perhaps the most dishonest people that you are ever likely to meet. If vehicles of any kind are not to a players liking, then they can always risk public transport such as the subways. But be prepared.

DRUGS

For many years, the abuse of hard drugs and pharmaceutical products in the Known Universe was extensive. For years, companies had attempted to produce enhancement drugs which, although they caused extreme side effects, could be controlled and put to efficient use to be cost effective.

In the World of Progress as we know it today, the drug problem remains but SLA Industries was the first company that actively used drugs in a productive manner.

During the early years of SLA Industries, an Ebon medical officer called Soul spent many hours conducting experiments in the subject of pain and analgesics.

He created a system whereby he could assess the pain of an injury or illness in an individual and attribute it to a certain level.

His early experiments were mainly concerned with the pain tolerance in both humans and alien species, drugs were used extensively to try and raise their average pain threshold.

He worked for many years in the pharmacology department and finally developed the ultimate pain killer, it was named 'Pain Away'.

During a lifetime of work, Soul, or William Hannon as he was formerly known, discovered many solutions to the problems of pain including Pain Away and another pain killer, Kick Start, which was an analgesic amalgamated with coagulants to help prevent blood loss when wounded. His work with combat enhancement drugs had also developed greatly since the discovery of these two drugs which were ready to be tested in the field.

When finally he died, still an Ebon, at the age of 73, the pharmacology department was renamed the Soul Institute of Pharmacology. As to his research and work in pain and enhancement drugs, a whole department within the Institute was set up to further his work and take it to the field.

The first step was to employ civilians who had previous experience of hard drugs and then to make available to them the drugs which would aid them in combat– the first Frothers were created.

Nowadays, many operatives and employees make use of the wide variety of drugs that have emerged in SLA Industries –the Frothers being the most obvious of these. Most of these drugs are mass produced, and are freely available to all within the company.

The drugs available have been divided into three groups; combat, soft and medical.

The combat drugs are the most addictive of all pharmaceuticals– not so much chemically, but due to their effects. The Soul Institute of Pharmacology decided to have their products retain their addictive quality, as this caused both employees and operatives to maintain a steady purchase of their chosen drug type.

Soft drugs were first manufactured when operatives and employees required an alleviation from the constant use of combat drugs. These are now as readily available as combat drugs and many employees and operatives use them after a strenuous mission. Soft drugs tend not to be so addictive as combat drugs but the effects sometimes create a need if taken regularly.

The medical drugs used in SLA Industries are mostly of civilian use throughout the World of Progress. A list of all medical drugs found in the basic medi–kit and surgical medi–kit can be found at the end of this section. Most medical drugs are generally not addictive but if taken too often can prove detrimental to an employees health.

THE USE OF DRUGS IN THE GAME

The use of drugs for player characters should be left up to them. Make sure that they know and understand what they are letting their characters in for. Drugs could quite easily kill more characters than your present campaign will. As in real life, drugs are a potential killer no matter how little you take.

There are two types of addiction with SLA drugs

and so this is the basis of how they work.

After three phases of injecting the drug of their choice, the effects kick into action. Cocktails of drugs cannot be taken and double doses of drugs do not double the effect with the exception of Kick Start. There is no maximum to the number of doses of Kick Start you can take in a combat round.

Each drug has an effect, most of which have a specific duration. A drug which has no duration but a specific effect is a regular drug. One with a duration is a continuous drug, and once you are addicted to these, you must ensure you have your next fix ready before the effects have worn off.

Once the effect of the first dose has worn off –for example after 12 hours in the case of Ultra Violence– the user has to make an addiction roll. This is a Physique (PHYS) roll with whatever modifier each drug type demands, in this case it is at a –1/dose.

If the user fails his roll, then he is addicted and either suffers the detoxification effects noted under each drug type or takes the regular or continuous dosage as required or takes Flush to come off the drug.

If the user makes his roll then he is not addicted.

Addiction effects are always cumulative, unless 30 days have passed since the last dose, even if you successfully come off your first dose. If you take a further dose within 30 days, then you must roll for addiction after the effective duration of the drug e.g. –1/dose = –2 to you PHYS roll.

If the addiction factor is, for example, –1/20 doses as for Kick Start, then you must roll for addiction after you first 20 doses.

Once you have come off any of the drugs, you either lose a rank in Good Looks advantage or gain a rank in Ugly disadvantage.

COMBAT DRUGS

Rush

Rush was the first mass produced combat drug sold to SLA Industries' employees and operatives to improve combat effectiveness. Like all drugs manufactured by the Pharmacology department, Rush has a 100% success rate.

The increase in blood flow and the large amounts of adrenalin in the blood do tend to have adverse effects on the body but nothing major. Rush has a very good mix of healing agents present in the drug, to aid the user in recovery from wounds. It also, to some extent, helps keep the wear and tear on the bodies internal organs to a minimum while under the influence of the drug, although this does not completely arrest the damaging effects of Rush. The average Rush addict has a greatly increased chance of heart disease, strokes and brain damage. Life expectancy of these unfortunate individuals is approximately seven years.

Game Effects: 1 free action per round, 6 hours duration, no PHYS (Physique) rolls, damage cut by 25%.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per 4 doses.

Detox. Effects: –1 STR (Strength), –1 PHYS, –1 HITS permanent.

Addiction: Continuous

Cost: 15cr per dose

Ultra Violence

Ultra violence was created as the next generation of combat drugs to take over from Rush. U.V. did this superbly but at a very high cost. Ultra Violence contained nearly identical compounds to Rush but in a much more concentrated form. It also contains powerful hallucinogenics which give the user a feeling of near indestructibility, which is almost achieved as the user is virtually unstoppable, but with these greatly enhanced abilities comes a terrible cost. Ultra Violence burns out the user's body reducing the average Ultra Violence freak's life span to two years. Such price is fame.

Game Effects: 2 free phases per round, 12 hours duration, no PHYS or COOL rolls, damage cut by 50%.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per dose, +3 Ranks Psychosis.

Detox. Effects: –2 STR, –2 PHYS, –2 HITS permanent.

Addiction: Continuous

Cost: 15cr per dose

Pineal Stim

The Dark Lament research laboratories developed this strange fluorescent green liquid for use within the Ebon races. This particular drug seems to work best when used with personal enhancement abilities through the manipulation of the body, causing it to perform well beyond its' natural means. This has or can have a painful effect on the subject Ebon, as without proper medical checks and through misuse of Pineal Stim, the Ebon can become subject to a decrease in abilities and power (flux), things that Ebons hold dearer than anything. Physically, Pineal Stim has little side effects although in extreme cases it

has been known to cause brain haemorrhaging.

Game Effects: Double duration for Personal Enhancement abilities.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per 2 doses.

Detox. Effects: –1 CONC (Concentration), –2 FLUX, –1 Rank Personal Enhancement, permanent.

Addiction: 2 per day.

Cost: 20cr per dose

Shatter

Warning: Shatter is a very dangerous pharmaceutical. It is produced in sporadic amounts by DarkNight and force fed to members of the public and DarkNight operatives. The nature of the drug consists of a very powerful stimulant that acts in a similar way to Ultra Violence. The chemical make–up of the drug is completely wrong, DarkNight were trying to copy SLA, which has given rise to Shatter having a mutant strain of DNA alteration codes laced through it. This can and does alter the victim's body. If any operative is found using or in illegal possession of this drug, they are executed without trial.

SOFT DRUGS

Beat

Beat is the most popular recreational drug used for the sole purpose of relaxation. The effects of the drug differ from subject to subject but in the main are mood related. If the subject is relaxed, happy and so forth, they are likely to slip into a comatose–like state for hours but if they are uptight or angry or even just in a bad mood about something, they are likely to become hyperactive, aggressive and in some cases, psychotic, but this is rare. Whatever light it is looked in, Beat is a very dangerously addictive 'pleasure' drug.

Game Effects: +2 COOL for 6 hours duration.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per 2 doses.

Detox. Effects: –1 CONC, –1 COOL permanent.

Addiction: 1 per day.

Cost: 5cr per dose

Personal Interest

Personal Interest is a very powerful hallucinogenic used to induce the sensation of sexual intercourse. This in itself at first does not seem such a 'bad' drug but it has come to the notice of the Soul Institute of Pharmacology that the quite intense bombardment of the senses when under the influence of Personal Interest has led to a large increase in the addiction figures for pleasure drugs. The effects of detoxification on any subject has been a general loss of calm and composure. Also, a lack of concentration which can only be put down to the powerful hallucinogenic effects on the reasoning of the brain.

Game Effects: 1 hour duration.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per 4 doses.

Detox. Effects: –1 COOL, –1 CONC permanent.

Addiction: 1 per day.

Cost: 5cr per dose

MEDICAL DRUGS

Kick Start

Initially developed by William Hannon (or 'Soul'), Kick Start has changed little over the years. the aid given to the natural healing processes of the body are incredible to say the least. Kick Start can stop internal bleeding to some degree by use of powerful coagulating agents. It can also radically speed up the actual healing processes of the body such as the regrowing of tissue, skin and the knitting together of broken bones. Kick Start is not noted for it's addictive qualities but addiction sometimes occurs especially amongst combat operatives and employees. This addiction has been known to cause a slight wasting of the user's body with a loss in strength, stamina and a general loss of physique.

Game Effects: 2 Hits recovered and stop 2 Wounds 3 phases after injection.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per 30 doses.

Detox. Effects: –1 PHYS, –2 HITS permanent.

Addiction: 2 per day.

Cost: 5cr per dose

Pain Away

The most powerful pain killer created, Pain Away works in a two–fold manner, firstly it blocks the nervous system to stem the flow of pain signals to the brain and secondly, it raises the user's pain threshold to such a degree that pain in any shape or form becomes nothing but a minor irritant to the user. This feeling of indestructibility has led to a few untimely deaths. An interesting point about addicts of Pain Away is the craving for pain when not able to feel it which has led to quite a few users turning to what can only be described as masochistic tendencies.

Game Effects: No PHYS rolls, duration 6 hours. 3 phases to take effect if taken during a combat round.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per 3 doses.

Detox. Effects: –2 PHYS, –1 COOL, Rank 1 Phobia – Pain, heightened and permanent.

Addiction: Continuous.

Cost: 10cr per dose

Flush

Flush is a development from the pharmacology department to combat drug addicts' pain and suffering whilst relieving their bodies of their previous addiction. Flush augments natural compounds and substances within the body to fight off and burn out any ill effects of the previous drug which the subject was taking. This can be a long process– to rid the body of impurities takes around 30 days. Each day, a fresh dose of Flush must be taken. In some rare instances, Flush itself has become addictive but these incidents are few and far between.

Game Effects: Prevents Detox. Effects of any other drugs.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per 30 doses

Detox. Effects: –1 PHYS permanent.

Addiction: 1 per day.

Cost: 5cr per dose

Streak

Streak was developed by the department of Psychology and Psychoses to try and cure various types of insanity and psychosis but as with most experiments, the end result had little or nothing to do with the initial concepts. What Streak became was a powerful mental stimulant, heightening the user's senses and perception. The risk of brain damage and mental breakdown from misuse is great– a fact which has provided the department of Psychology and Psychoses with a steady stream of patients for quite some time.

Game Effects: +2 to roll KNOW and CONC for 1 hour duration.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per 4 doses.

Detox. Effects: –1 KNOW permanent.

Addiction: 1 per day.

Cost: 20cr per dose

Honesty

This is a very potent truth serum which has the subject completely open to suggestion. It is impossible for someone to lie whilst under the influence of this drug. Unless given in large and continual doses, it is almost impossible to become addicted to Honesty although cases have been recorded by the department of Extraction of some subjects becoming dependent on Honesty. The detoxification effects of the said subjects without the use of Flush left them in a vegetative state with no free will or action.

Game Effects: 30 minute duration.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per 4 doses.

Detox. Effects: –1 CONC permanent.

Addiction: 2 per day.

Cost: 10cr per dose

White Noise

Ebons that are 'getting close' suffer from the most horrendous nightmares causing great loss to their calm and collectiveness as well as destroying their sleep pattern. With White Noise, these 'Dream Demons' can be surpressed although not stopped. White Noise should be continued to be taken until the Ebon has turned. If not, the nightmares will return that night.

Game Effects: Stops 'Dream Demon' nightmares.

Addiction: –1 PHYS per 5 doses.

Detox. Effects: Nightmares will return.

Addiction: 1 per day.

Cost: 10cr per dose

GENERAL USE MEDICAL DRUGS

Cost	Name	Type	Amount	S.C.L.
20 UNI	Pro–cane	Analgesic	50 Tablets	Civilian
30 UNI	Pain solver	Analgesic	50 Tablets	Civilian
50 UNI	Pre–solv	Steroids*	30 Tablets	Civilian
3 UNI	Aprolap	Vitamins	100 Tablets	Civilian
50 UNI	Glowgood	Anti–depressant	50 Tablets	Civilian
3 UNI	Feelgood	Anti–depressant	20 Cigarettes	Civilian
100 UNI	Bio–block	Anaesthetic	20 vials	11
30 UNI	Hyponock	Stimulant	40 Tablets	Civilian

* 1 tablet/day after four hours exercise for 1 month = +1 STR

HARDWARE

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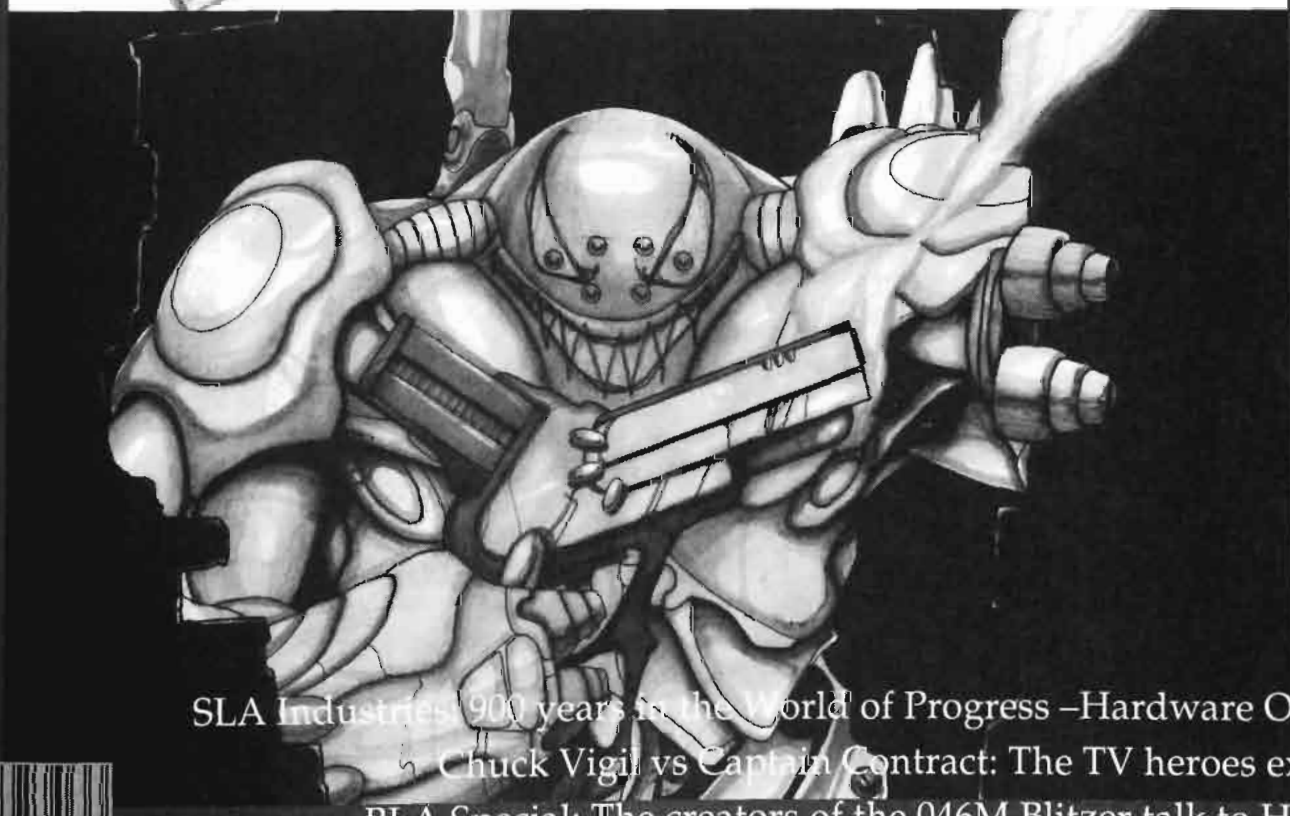
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September 899



Reviewed Inside...

MAL Assault Cannon



SLA Industries 900 years in the World of Progress –Hardware Overview

Chuck Vigil vs Captain Contract: The TV heroes examined

BLA Special: The creators of the 046M Blitzer talk to Hardware

Really Big Guns! MAL Assault vs GAK 19 AS: 12.7mm Mania

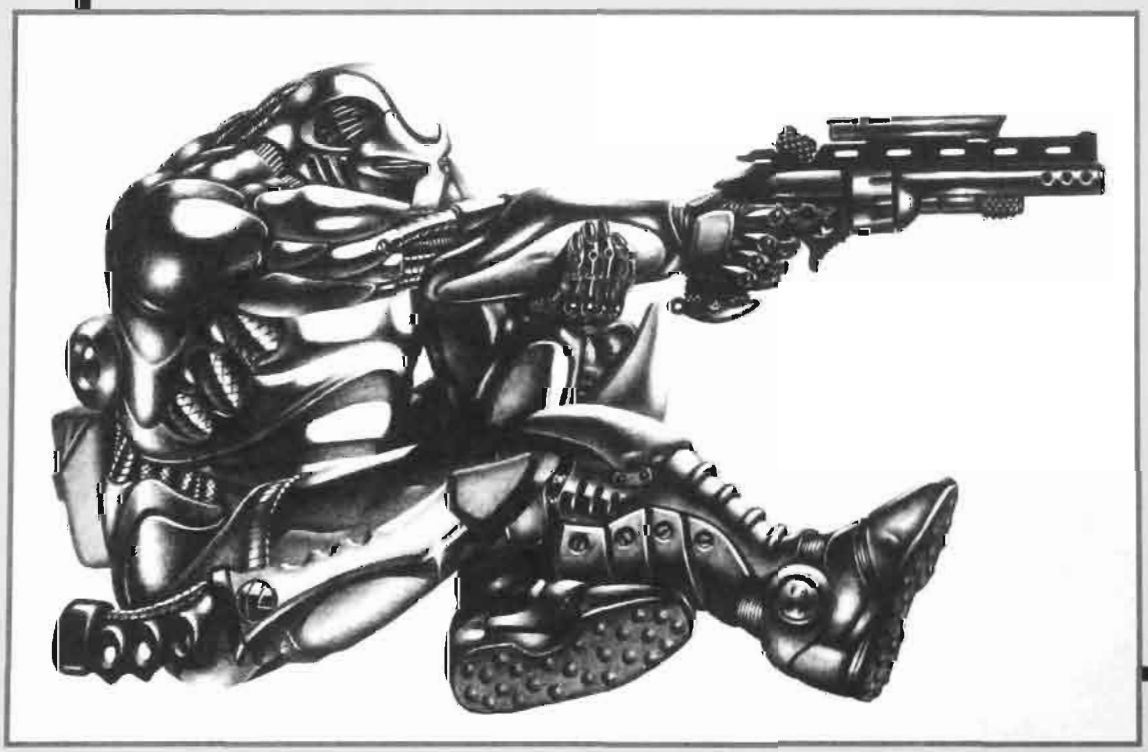
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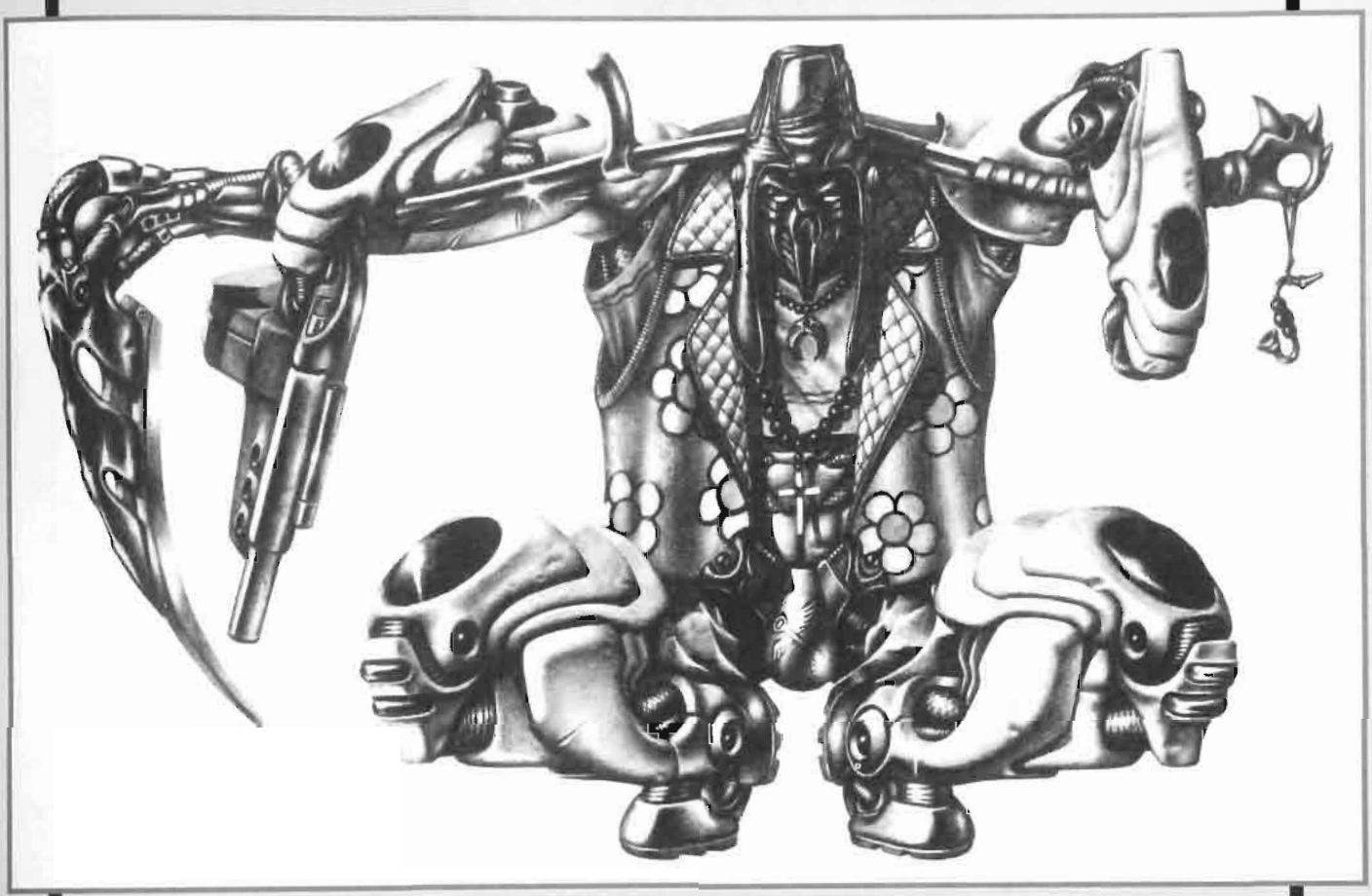
S-GUNS-ARMOUR-BLADES

Right: Chuck Vigil is wearing HARD Armour (Power Projects, 1750₵), Happy Sacks™ Groin Protectors (StyleWear, 150₵), ECM Cape (FEN, 75₵), Vibro-Disc (Scott-Pelling, 760₵), FEN 603 (FEN, 150₵), Enviro-Scanner (TrackopticS, 8₵).

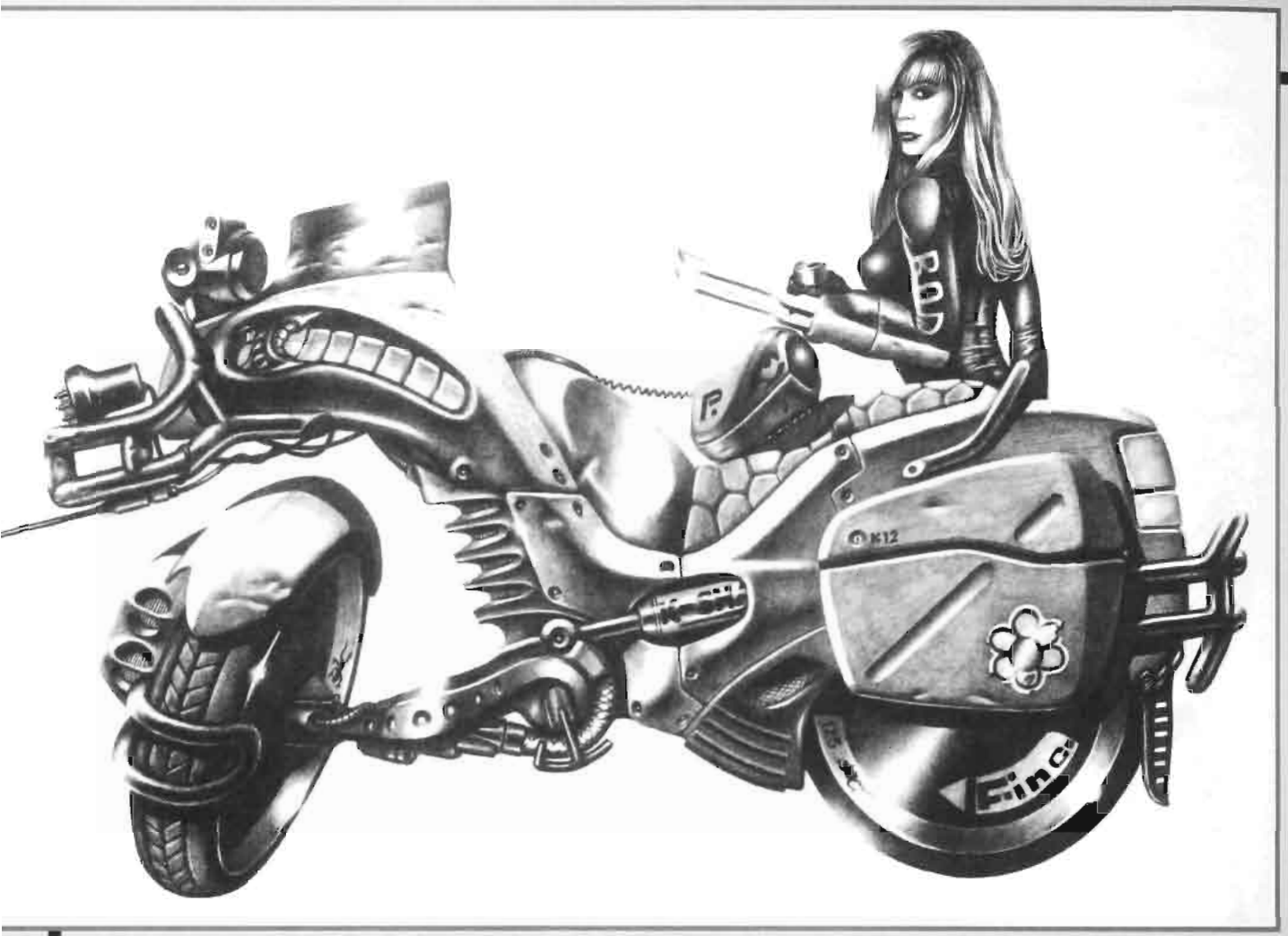
Below: The model is wearing Crackshot Armour (Power Projects, 3000₵), MAC Knife (MAC, 80₵), 'Blitzer' (BLA, 790₵)

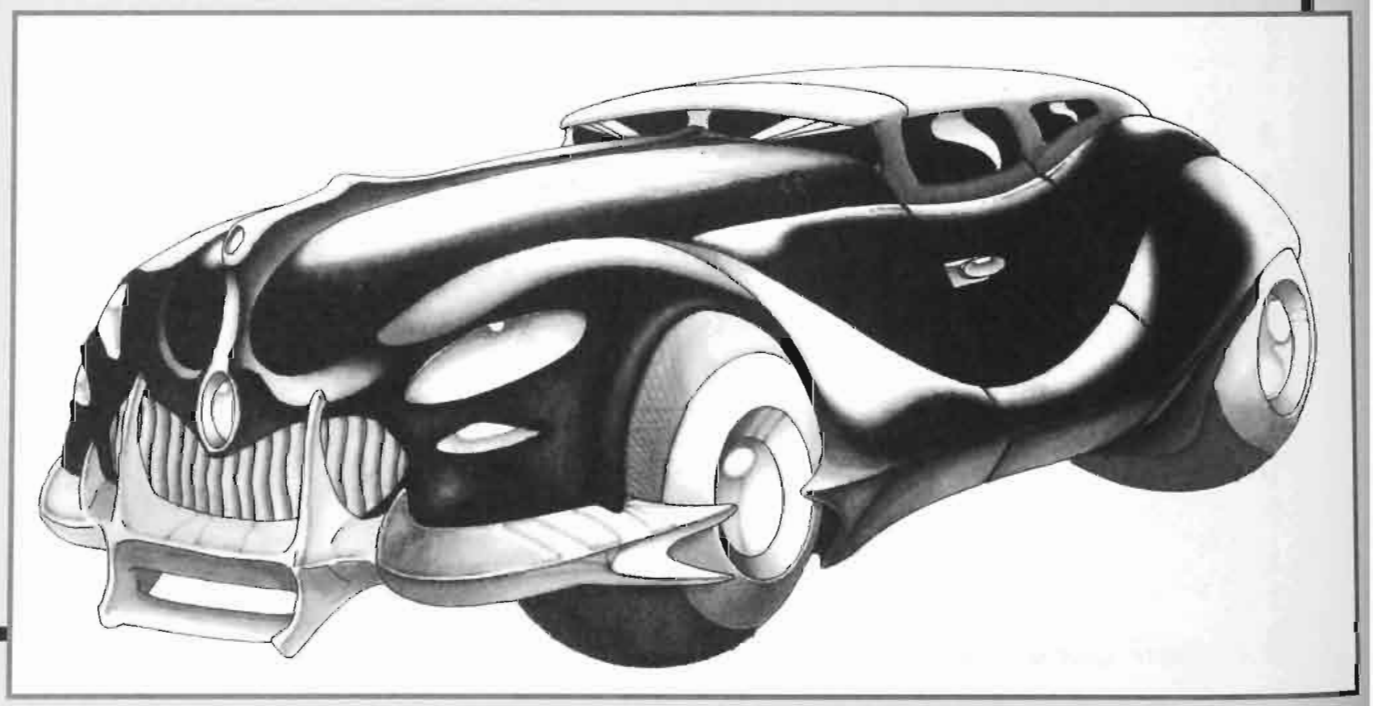




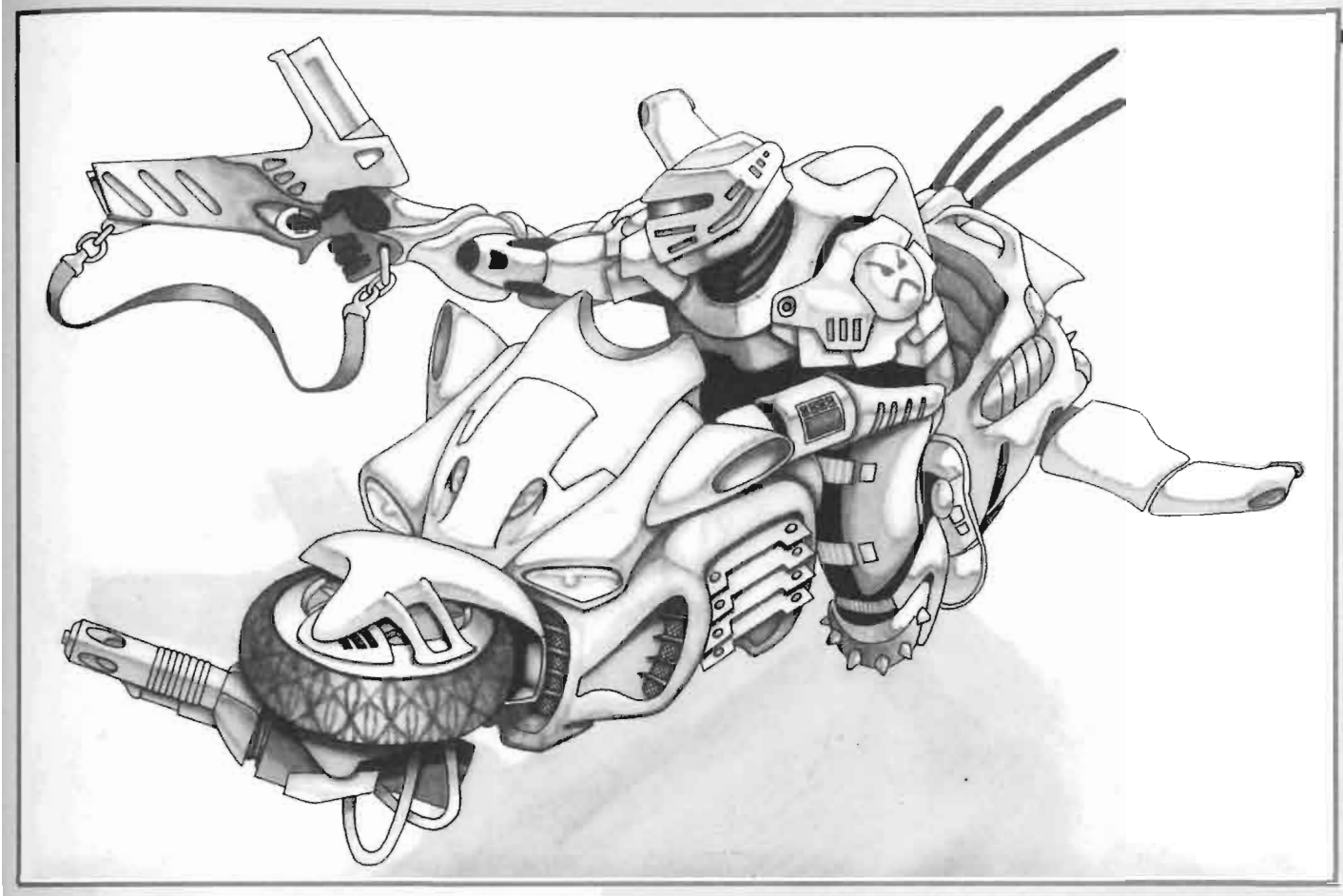


Above: Dar Young is wearing Crackshot Armour (Power Projects, 3000₵) and holding a Flick Scythe (DPB, 120₵) and custom Mangler (KPS Mangler 900₵, customisation by Art As Death, 1200₵) with a 1000m Telesight (FEN, 10₵) and 2. Recoil Suppression (MAL, 40₵). Dar is also sporting one in a new line of waistcoats by Clown Fabrics (10₵).





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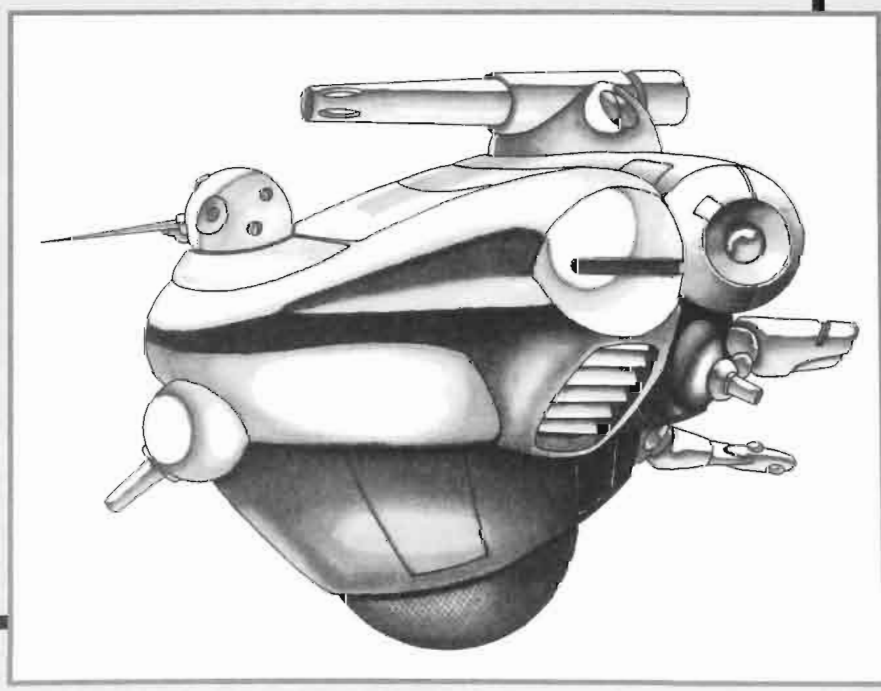


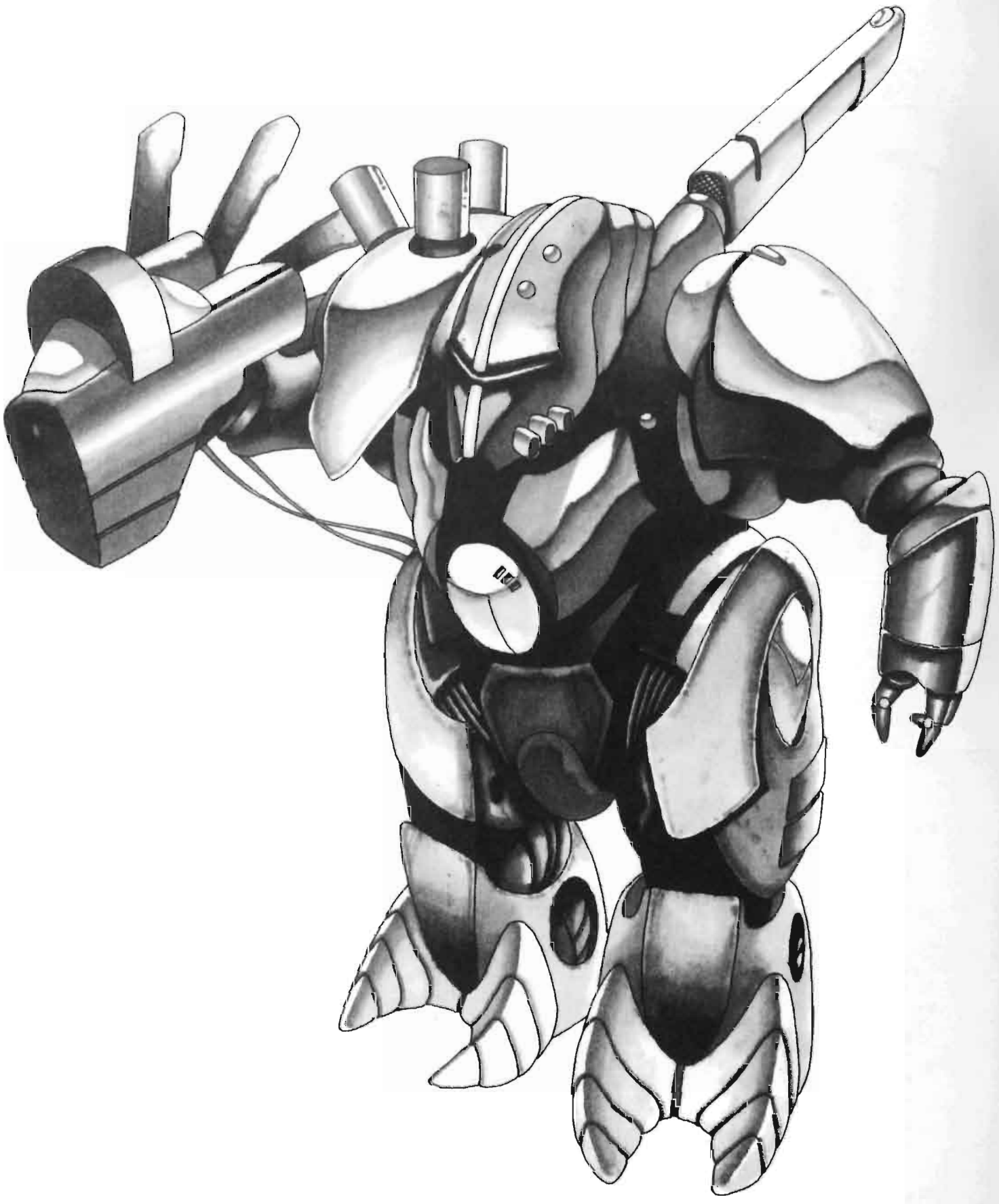
Facing Page, Top: Jil, Human Operative, is modelling the Striker Motorcycle Protection Outfit (10₵) and is wearing a Gash Fist (DPB, 80₵). She is posing beside the Calaharvey motorcycle (1000₵) with AV Pod and HUD Helmet.

Facing Page, Bottom: The Augustus belongs to a range of luxury cars for operative use starting with the Augustus, seen here, at 10,000₵ to the Romulus execvutive stretch model at 50,000₵.

Above: The Shiver Copter Airborne Forces (SCAF), as shown here, is a multi-prop turbine hover bike used by Shiver Unit troops for rapid deployment at a cost of 125,000₵.

Right: The Cannibal Sector Surveillance Tank.





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'acing page: Shock Armour (MAL, 10 000$)

Above: Jeff Moreau, Contract Killer, is wearing Dogeybone Armour (Power Projects, 5000₵) with a Custom AV Pod (FEN, 1000₵) and an ITB Mutilator (Ian Thomas Bradley Group, 85₵). He is also holding a BLA custom 'Serial Killer' © J. Moreau 899 SD. (Not For Sale.)

Right: The Enforcer Shiver is wearing Blocker Body Armour (Power Projects, 400₵) and a Scout Helmet (FEN, 3000₵) fitted with 2 Enviro Scanners (cable, Track OpticS, 20₵), a second Motion Scanner (cable, Track OpticS, 35₵) and three Gyroscopic Stabilisers (cable, Track OpticS, 25₵ each). He is holding a FEN 400 'Sure Kill' with a shortened barrel (FEN, 2000₵) and an 8000m Telesight with U.V. and I.R.



Blaze, Brain Waster, is wearing a DeathSuit (Dark Lament, 750$), a Biker's Leather Jacket (H.A.N. Ltd, 12$) and is sporting footwear by Striker Inc. (5$). He is holding a Flintlock (Dark Lament, 500$), a Chainaxe (GASH, 85$) and is smoking Feelgood cigarettes (Boopa, 1$/20 cigarettes).

Shallon, Ebon, is wearing a DeathSuit (Dark Lament, 750$) and is holding a GA50 Finisher assault rifle (General Armaments, 300$).

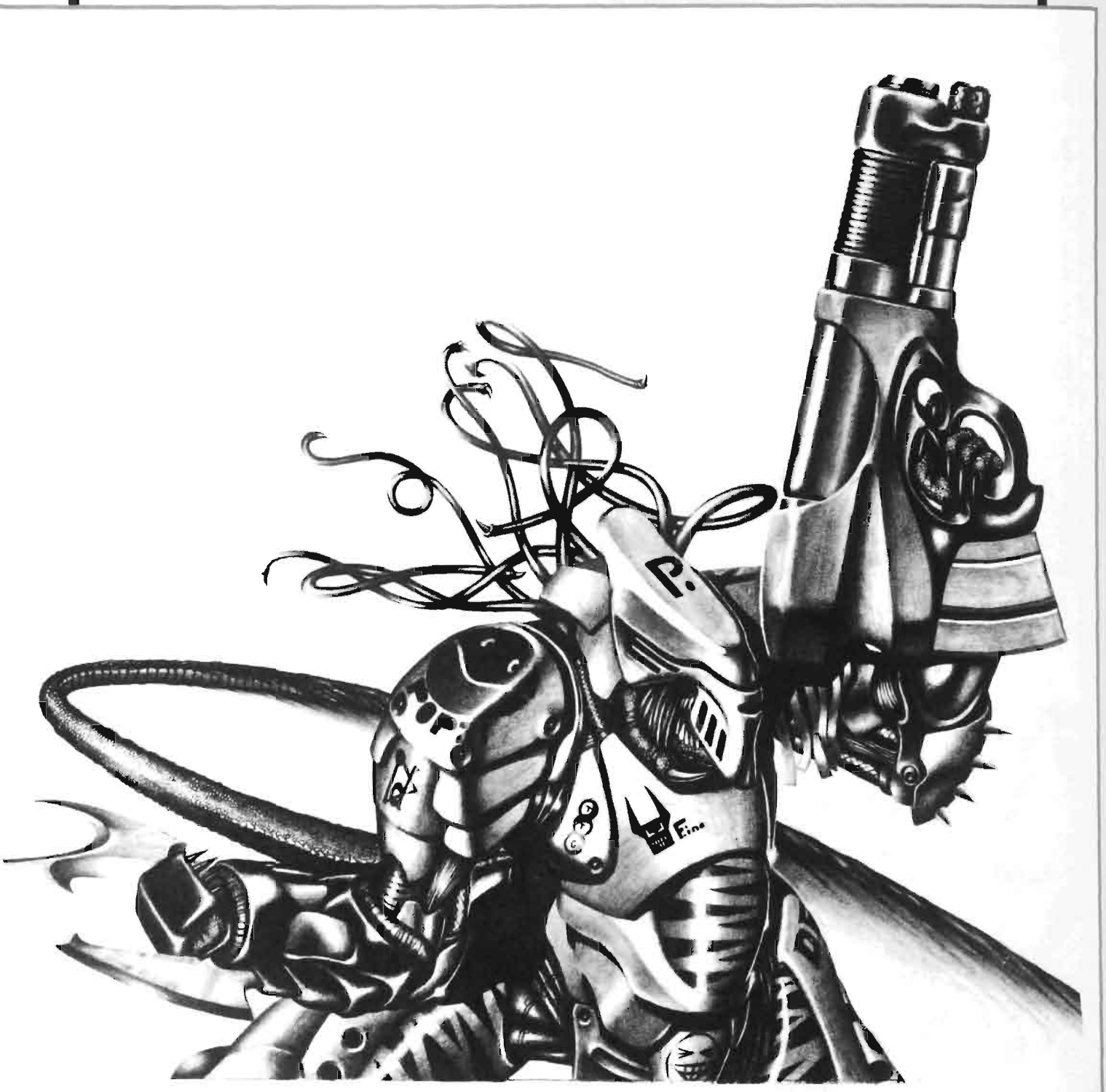
Rapture, the Necanthrope, is wearing a DeathSuit (Dark Lament, 750$) interdermalised with her Gore Can-





THE MAGAZINE OF CHOICE

Kn'th, the Shaktar, is wearing PP10 HARD Armour (Shaktar Model VII, FEN, 1750$) and is holding the MAL Assault Rifle (Military Assault Laminates, 2150$) fitted with 3. Recoil Suppression (MAL, 60$). Kn'th is also sporting the Shaktar 'Switch Blade' which, unfortunately, is only available under spe



AMMUNITIONS

CALIBRE	STD	AP	HP	HEAP	HESH
CAF	1ū	–	–	–	–
8mm long	2₵/40ū	3₵/60ū	–	3₵/60ū	–
10mm Auto	1₵/20ū	2₵/40ū	3₵/60ū	2₵/40ū	–
12mm	3₵/60ū	4₵/80ū	5₵/100ū	4₵/80ū	6₵/120ū
12.7mm	3₵/60ū	5₵/100ū	6₵/120ū	5₵/100ū	7₵/140ū
17mm	8₵/160ū	10₵/200ū	12₵/240ū	10₵/200ū	15₵/300ū
10ga. shot	3₵/60ū	–	–	–	–
10ga. slug	4₵/80ū	–	–	–	–

SPECIALISED AMMUNITION

TYPE	DMG	PEN	ARM DMG	COST	BLACK MARKET COST	WEIGHT	WEAPON
Ballbearings	3	–4	0	n/a	1ū/100	0.3kg/100	GA 9442
Vibro discs	8	12	2	5₵/disc	100ū/disc	0.01kg	Vibro Disc
Chopper Packs	15	8	6	3₵/pack	60ū/pack	0.1kg	Chopper

GRENADES

TYPE	BLAST RATING	PEN	WEIGHT	COST	BLACK MARKET COST
Blast	0	–5	0.5kg	10₵	200ū
Fragmentation	10	6	0.5kg	15₵	300ū
Smoke	n/a	n/a	0.5kg	4₵	80ū
Gas (Riot)	n/a	n/a	0.5kg	10₵	200ū

ARMOUR

TYPES	COST	BLACK MARKET COST	P.V.	I.D./LOCATION HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS	MODIFIERS
Striker	10₵	100ū	1	–	5	5	5	–
Padquil Flak	20₵	200ū	3	–	8	–	–	–
Body Armour	400₵	8,000ū	5	8	14	10	12	–
Exo – Base	750₵	15.000ū	7	10	20	15	17	–2 DEX
Exo – Heavy	1,250₵	25,000ū	8	15	35	25	28	–
Exo – Stormer	1,500₵	30,000ū	9	20	50	40	45	+3 STR
HARD	1,750₵	35,000ū	10	20	50	40	45	–1 DEX
Powercell	2,000₵	40,000ū	12	20	70	50	60	+2 STR
Crackshot	3,000₵	60,000ū	15	20	80	60	70	–
Dogeybone	5,000₵	100,000ū	16	60	150	80	120	+5 STR
Shock Armour	10,000₵	300,000ū	18	80	200	120	180	STR 18,DEX 13

DRUGS

NAME	TYPE	ADDICTION	COST	BLACK MARKET COST
Rush	Combat	–1 PHYS/4	15₵	500ū
Ultra Violence	Combat	–1 PHYS/1	15₵	700ū
Beat	Soft	–1 PHYS/2	5₵	100ū
Personal Interest	Soft	–1 PHYS/4	5₵	150ū
Pineal Stim	Combat	–1 PHYS/2	20₵	800ū
Kick Start	Medical	–1 PHYS/30	5₵	100ū
Pain Away	Medical	–1 PHYS/3	10₵	200ū
Flush	Medical	–1 PHYS/30	5₵	180ū
Streak	Medical	–1 PHYS/4	20₵	1,000ū
Honesty	Medical	–1 PHYS/4	10₵	200ū
White Noise	Medical	–1 PHYS/5	10₵	1500ū

VEHICLES

Name	Type	Max. Speed	Skill	Cost	P.V./I.D.	Max.Crew/ Passengers
Augustus	Car	320km/h	Drive,Civ	10,000₵	17/200	1/4
Calaharvey	Bike	340km/h	Drive,Mot	1000₵	10/100	1/1
Battle Taxi	APC	180km/h	Drive,Mil	125,000₵	25/750	2/10
GA 'J'	Jeep	220km/h	Drive,Civ	14,000₵	15/300	1/5
Pandora	Bike	280km/h	Drive,Mot	1500₵	15/200	1/1
Kilcopter	Copter	1000km/h	Pilot,Mil	450,000₵	19/550	2/4
SCAF	Copter	400km/h	Pilot,Mil +Drive,Mot	125,000₵	15/250	1/1
Civilian	Taxi	220km/h	Drive,Civ	–	4/55	1/6
Civilian	Car	180km/h	Drive,Civ	17,000ū	2/30	1/4
Civilian	Bike	280km/h	Drive,Mot	750ū	1/10	1/1

COMPANY RIVALS

There are many rivals to the throne SLA Industries has created and sits upon, regally. A multitude of 'Soft Companies', hostile independent traders and renegade operatives (some more like street gangs than an organised force) struggle mercilessly to pull down the industrial giant. Up until now, SLA has scoffed at such feeble attempts, hiring standard operatives to thwart such subversion.

All, except three major corporations, are little more than hounds biting the ankles of a giant.

DarkNight, Thresher, Tek Trex

DARKNIGHT

DarkNight is an organisation of subversives, aiming to overthrow SLA Industries directly. Their reasons are unknown but it is inferred that they are acting on behalf of the people. The problem with this hypothesis is that they actively use terrorism and take both operatives' and civilians' lives. The more realistic proposal is that they are lining their pockets at their victims' expense with no ulterior motives. One thing is known and that is that their are at the head of almost every organised crime ring on Mort. They have a very organised structure, spreading throughout Mort Central and beyond. They use operatives and employees in the manner of SLA Industries and resemble SLA in many ways, inexplicably so as they are vying to replace them.

The better DarkNight operatives are known as Interceptors and they work closely with Channel Resistance, killing SLA Ops on prime–time pirate t.v. The Interceptors do not usually work on their own, preferring to strike in numbers.

"What could we do? They came from nowhere, far too fast. They were waiting for us. We could tell. An open–top sports car came careering from an alley way with four interceptors carrying big sodding guns. Both me and Hollow were caught off our guard. I managed to pull my 603 from my hip and spray the car. Hollow caught a leg shot and pulled her 10–10 too late. She tried to heal herself but got shot before she did her ebb stuff. I was spraying wildly and managed



Despite SLA Industries' attempts to supress the onslaught of subversion in Downtown by means of Shivers and specialist operatives, DarkNight Interceptors still seep through the perimiter lines of Mort Central. These trained experts act as terrorists maintaining images similar to those of SLA's own Contract Killers who will eagerly meet them with their own brand of Made–for–TV aggression. Such explicit violence comes way before any watershed, on the SIC network channels, Gorezone, Slaughterhouse Six, Bloodfest and occasionally even Third Eye News. Magazines such as Massacre thrive on these conflicts with articles, blow–by–blow accounts and coroner's reports.

to get a couple. I knew they would steal her Deathsuit and made a desperate attempt to get into cover. They ignored me briefly, giving me just enough time to pull a grenade. I lobbed the grenade discretely, with a long timer set and made a valiant attempt to charge them after calling for help on the head set. They shot me several times, check the medical report, but I still ran, spraying with both my 603s. I went down and assumed I was about to die. They knew I was hors de combat and started pillaging Hollow. I assume the grenade went off, killing them because they didn't kill me. I awoke in an ambulance with a doctor leering at me, asking if I could breathe ok. That is why I used a grenade against SLA property. Am I free to go?"

Internal Affairs transcript of the defence of Stuart Maurdaren, SCL 10C

DarkNight use interceptors as hit–and–run troops and they are often on Channel Resistance, strutting their stuff on the fresh corpses of Ops. DarkNight have armament manufacturers in their employ and control the black market in Downtown. This is how most people are familiar with DarkNight, with their control over most of the illegal activities in and around Downtown. The racketeering in Suburbia has been attributed to DarkNight and their influence can even stretch as far as Uptown or even Mort Central.

The serial killer drug, shatter, is created and manufactured by DarkNight and they distribute it through their black market networks and drug dealers. With stolen SLA Industries drugs available, they have more narcotics at their finger tips than the average pharmacist.

DARKNIGHT EMPLOYEES

There is no such thing as a typical DarkNight employee, except the Interceptors. Most of them are either undercover subversive terrorists or average civilians supplementing their low, or lack of, income. Anyone might be working for DarkNight without even knowing it themselves, as a shopkeeper's assistant may be unaware of the fact that the shop is a front for a credit laundering organization.

At the shops in Downtown

"Psst, Wanna buy some stuff, man?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"I have some stuff, if you are interested. I've got pills, poppers, stabs..."

"Do I look like the sort of person that takes drugs?"

"Do I look like the sort of person to sell drugs?"

"Good point. I'll have five doses of PI, please."

"Certainly, sir. Would you like some fruit and veg. as well?"

DarkNight have their equivalent of contract killers, with experienced Interceptors who go solo and wear a DarkNight badge and other independent 'sponsors' openly. Hallowe'en Jack, for instance, was once affiliated to DarkNight but he left, or rather never listened to them and killed civilians, SLA and DarkNight alike. DarkNight also has a couple of renegade necanthropes and ebons but these are very rare and are usually ex–SLA and therefore do not live too long. The DarkNight ebb users frequently have to rely on illegal Glyph cards as they do not have access to Dark Lament equipment. Ex–SLA ebb users, on the other hand, still have their Deathsuit and other bits of equipment and continue to use them.

CHANNEL RESISTANCE

The subversive t.v. station Channel Resistance acts as a mouthpiece for DarkNight in their anti–SLA propaganda war. The channel is not at a fixed frequency or open 24 hours. The channel transmits whenever they have enough material to produce a one–minute piece and they transmit for one–minutes on one of SLA Industries' channels, using the virus 'Vent', a pseudo–sentient network dragon, as a mask to hide behind. This is possible due to the nature of Vent, it is supposedly an intelligent virus as it redesigns itself to deal with protection systems. Vent, or Virtual ENTity, was originally designed as a test in artificial intelligence that was designed to defend itself. This it did too well, creating copies of itself and hiding them anywhere possible. One day, Vent got onto a network and is now roaming, planting seeds of its code, to grow into further entities. Modern systems now hide all their important data upon detecting Vent. DarkNight's hackers have found a way of emulating Vent and allowing their data to hide behind a facade of Vent. In the case of the television network, the data hidden is Channel Resistance, compressed to fit in small spaces. Channel Resistance can even patch in live to the network of cable tv, thanks to the system designers' fear of Vent, although the chances of being traced are much larger.

"...and now the weather. <BZZT BZZT> Howdy, folks. Welcome to Channel Resistance. I'm Lisa Foden. On with the festivities. Moloch, the oppressors lapdog was executed by the valiant Interceptors of the peoples will. Here's the film of the death of another SLA Contract Killer at the hands of the people's favourites."

There follows 10 seconds of murder, followed by DarkNight Interceptors waving the severed head of a SLA Op in the air.

"Also, in Downtown, the oppressors' will failed

again, when their plans for a new freeway failed when the will of the people was voiced with explosive charges. Right on! My name is Lisa Foden, goodnight DarkNight. <BZZT BZZT> Captain Contract... Da Da Da... He's the best... Da Da Da..."

Channel Resistance's pretty face of reason, Lisa Foden, has managed to evade discovery and capture, even by necanthropes, suggesting there is more to her than meets the eye –or camera.

DARKNIGHT

An Insight

A brief history of DarkNight by Dr. A. Black (Tactical Analyst)

DarkNight would appear, at first glance, to be a force on the brink of extinction. The tactics and movements of their various divisions seem to be as controlled as the spasms of a headless chicken. This is deceptive. DarkNight have their roots planted firmly in the World of Progress. Their organisation stretches into nearly every portion of the various societies that make up the Known Universe with the exception of the Shaktarian race. Their strict codes of honour and disciplines seem to have protected their race from the infiltration of DarkNight.

The first encounters of DarkNight lie far in the past. According to available data, the first conflict between DarkNight and SLA occurred on a small backwater planet –Tears– late in 123 SD.

A Nitro Legion reconnaissance battalion had set down for a maintenance stop off before 'folding' back to Mort. The battalion came under a fierce attack on the third night of their stay. The quick thinking of the battalion commander allowed the unit to retire off world with minimal casualties and one or two prisoners. These captives gave enough information before their deaths to furnish SLA Industries with some knowledge of this new force.

Soon after this, the newly–named 'DarkNight' were involved in a number of terrorist incidents in Mort. At the time, these attacks did not seem to pose a major problem. The attacks continued over the next 20 years growing in size and frequency to the point where DarkNight became a 'power' in their own





right.

20 years is not enough time, realistically, to grow from nothing into a major force. This has lead many, including myself, to believe that DarkNight has had a great deal of outside help. Where this aid comes from is completely unknown, but speculations abound.

Tactically, DarkNight have had a very mixed bag of success and failure. Their terrorist attacks of SLA held properties have been ongoing for centuries and are as strong as they were 750 years ago. DarkNight have attempted large offensives on War Worlds such as Dante and Charlie's Point, but have met with difficulty and destruction on most.

DarkNight's involvement on Mort is perhaps their most effective offensive against SLA Industries. The scale of this campaign is far larger than any of the offensives DarkNight have staged on the War Worlds. Their tactics on Mort include 'sleepers', operatives given a deep hypnotic suggestion and replaced in Mort society waiting, unknowingly, to be triggered by a code word. These individuals can remain undiscovered for years and are very dangerous.

The amount of civilians that are coerced into fighting for the cause of DarkNight is quite alarming, although not entirely unexpected. With the offer of free weapons, far superior to CAF, money, drugs or anything else that their heart desires, the public's head can be quickly turned. This last type of terrorist would seem to make up the bulk of DarkNight 'operatives' on Mort.

Actual DarkNight employees are few and far between and are basically well–trained sales personnel. They seek out the weak willed and taint their mind with DarkNight philosophy. These true operatives receive a high degree of training and are almost impossible to track down. Masters of disguise, they learn Downtown's architecture and layout, knowing all back alleys, streets and walkways. They are experts with firearms, close combat weapons and their own hands.

SUMMARY

At present, DarkNight have managed to keep their

rather tenuous hold on Mort. It is a dangerous business walking into the lion's den but DarkNight have done so. This leads me to believe that DarkNight are either extremely stupid or they have the potential to do some irreversible damage to the structure of SLA Industries. Either way, we should do our utmost to eradicate this infestation.

Dr. A. Black

DARKNIGHT OPERATIVES

The operatives that are contracted by DarkNight fall into two categories. The first are highly trained, and undergo extensive years of training before being placed on Mort. They are also trained in the art of explosives and demolitions, being able to make lethal cocktails of chemicals, using any source from alcohol to household cleaning fluids– to destroy SLA Industries properties and cause general panic, confusion and harm.

The other type of DarkNight insurgent agent are perhaps even worse. These are the operatives that have been in the service of SLA and turn to DarkNight – in a word, traitors. These operatives are dangerous, but in most cases predictable– being SLA trained. These agents operate on Mort in Downtown, now and again striking in Uptown or Mort Central.

The actual training and skills of these individuals vary as much as actual SLA operatives with the exception of the Ebon races, of which DarkNight have only a few, and then only the latter type of operative.

Operatives that come up against DarkNight agents will find it a difficult, and in some cases life–threatening, experience. The civilian operatives coerced by the DarkNight agents are little threat to operatives. Civilian agents are still only civilians with a gun that they have been shoddily trained to use. The other agents are, in the main, similar to SLA operatives– having the same broad spectrum of skills and physical training.

DARKNIGHT WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

ARMOUR

There have been a large number of rumours and tales of how DarkNight have tried to plagiarise SLA armour types– but in reality when much of the DarkNight armour types were tested, totally different materials and construction techniques from SLA's were found. The flak vest is regarded as a standard piece of equipment, which matched up to SLA's own CAF Padquil but the other armour types were, at first, a mystery as they were no more akin to SLA construction than Thresher Powersuits are.

Thanks to Dr. Felix Lowestoft, a senior experimental hardware technician, SLA were able to breakdown the compounds in most DarkNight armour types. They are listed below;

00775.DN Ablative Flak Vest/Jacket

The DarkNight Flak Vest was an obvious expansion on the CAF Padquil Flak Vest. Using extra ceramic and plastic–laminated plates, the vest has given a much better protection against 5mm CAF rounds and 10mm auto pistol rounds but it is still not enough to protect against a 10mm rifle round. The flak vest covers the torso only but is available also as a jacket with a small amount of protection in the arms. The flak vest is compact and light but, due to the unprofessional production techniques, the jacket is bulky and very noticeable.

		I.D./Location			
	P.V.	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs
Flak Vest	4	–	8	–	–
Flak Jacket	4	–	8	6	6

Black Market Cost: Vest – 250ū, Jacket – 500ū

00875.DN Bodysuit (Codename: Resigel)

The first compound discovered by Dr. Lowestoft was 'Resigel', a complex compound of varying pro-



portions of suspended teflon gel mesh weaved with carbon-fibre and resin laminated in a glass fibre coating used in the 00875.DN Bodysuit. The DarkNight bodysuit was evidently designed for undercover operatives working in and around Mort, especially inside the Perimeter. The bodysuit is flexible and has no movement restrictions whatsoever. Its construction is similar to that of a tight, figure hugging coverall and is excellent for wearing beneath clothes. It can also be easily packed away in a small bag. The bodysuit has no helmet but covers the rest of the body completely. Bodysuits are very hard to come by even on the black market as only the most specialised of DarkNight operatives use them.

		I.D./Location			
	P.V.	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs
Bodysuit	6	–	14	10	12

Black Market Cost: 5000ū

00985.DN Body Armour

The next construction found in the DarkNight armour types was a honeycombed lattice ceramic laminated with fused silicon strands in resin. This was found to be the technique used for the DarkNight 'body armour'. DarkNight have since been found to have created this through the experimental use of various silicon based materials as laminates for their weapons. This body armour is a common type used on both Mort and the War Worlds and can be easily obtained. It has a lightly powered chassis which gives the wearer no modifiers to their movement and compensates for the bulkiness of the construction with a power supply for 3000 hours. SLA technicians were able to analyse these construction techniques after a large unplanned invasion on Dante by DarkNight in an area where SLA had been based. Fortunately, the majority of the force was wearing this type of body armour, and many suits were salvaged.

		I.D./Location			
	P.V.	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs
Body Armour	5	6	12	8	12

Black Market Cost: 4250ū

01000.DN Power Armour

The DarkNight Power Armour is a huge step up from the normal body armour. Not normally seen in any great numbers, the Power Armour is particulary favoured by DarkNight Contract Killers. It has a huge power chassis which gives a –1 to the user's dexterity (DEX) as well as a +1 to the user's strength (STR). The construction of the armour is similar to a mixture of Powercell and HARD with compressed ceramic and carbon fibre plates moulded and laminated with a plastic compound. The powered chassis has a 5000 hour power supply. It is also fully enclosed and comes with a 2 hour oxygen supply and air filters. Power Armour is not easily obtainable on the black market but when it is it is for extortionate prices, as it is highly valued.

		I.D./Location			
	P.V.	Head	Torso	Arms	Legs
Power Armour	11	20	60	45	55

Black Market Cost: 25,000ū

WEAPONS

DarkNight have limited access to many of the weapon types on Mort due to the surreptitious nature of their activities. They weapons that they do have are, in the main, pistols, SMGs and small assault rifles– all of which are chambered for 10mm so as to allow for the scavenging and thieving of SLA operatives weapons parts and ammunition. In some cases, DarkNight agents use SLA weapons when their own become useless or they need greater amounts of firepower. The DarkNight weapons do, due to the low black market prices, slip into civilian hands quite easily. Civilian operatives in DarkNight will usually receive arms in the form of a DarkNight pistol.

TYPE	SIZE	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RECOIL	RANGE	COST
DN74	P	20	10mm	3/1	3	12m	2000ū
DN80	P	40	10mm	5/1	7/1	15m	6000ū
DN100	R	25	10mm	5/1	8/2	20m	13,000ū

EQUIPMENT

DarkNight agents receive very little, if anything, in the way of field equipment from DarkNight itself– although it is not uncommon to find one or two pieces of equipment on agents. These usually include nava–maps of some kind, motion scanners, I.R. and U.V. Nightsight goggles and various CAF production silencers, flash suppressors, pistol stocks etc.

Black Market prices for such pieces of equipment are low, as DarkNight civilians are able to scavenge equipment from dead operatives in Downtown. These are then bought by DarkNight and are usually used to make cheap production models or to enhance CAF equipment. The equipment will then cost between 10 and 500ū depending on how sophisticated the piece of hardware is.

"Look, for the last time, where did you get the DarkNight hardware? Come on Billy, if you don't talk to me, then Mr. High Ranking corporate executive over there with the cellphone will get Dean to come down from Extraction and rape your mind."

"Okay. Steve Allen. He runs the 'Supersnail' in Downtown. He's been DarkNight since I was a kid. He got me out of some deep trouble last year. He got

me in. All I had to do was bump off some Shivers. No big deal. They're only Shivers."

"142, Billy. One hundred and forty-two Shivers!"

"It was fun."

"You dirty little... I'm going to rip your little heart out and jump down your... "

"Now that's quite enough, Grimm. Billy has been quite helpful. Go and see if you can get a hold of Mr. Allen. I'll call Mr. Dean to come down and have a look inside Billy's brain just to make sure he isn't hiding anything."

THRESHER INCORPORATED

"The forces of 'Thresher Incorporated', as it has come to be known, were born more than 650 years ago and has been a constant thorn in the side of many of the conflicting companies in the World of Progress. With small, super high-tech strike teams that are fast and mobile and have devastating fire power and near indestructible armour classes, The only thing in our favour is the fact that there aren't enough of them to form a complete army, or the entire World of Progress would have to take a long hard look at its' future."

General James R. Baker, Commander-in-Chief Tactical Division, DarkNight operational lecture 897 SD.

The following file on Thresher Incorporated has been compiled by various sources. The material in this document is, as far as possible with such old records, true and should stand as an adequate record of the history of Thresher Incorporated.

Department of Records, Mort Central 900 SD.

Linda Spears and exerts from 'In the Mouth of the Shark' appear in this document courtesy of Third Eye Press copyright 900 SD.

THE HISTORY OF THRESHER INCORPORATED

The Thresher started life in the year 232 SD. on a small, water-rich planet called 'Shalahs'. As the Known Universe returned to normality after the devastation of the Conflict Wars, the 127th technical support group were awaiting the arrival of their attack force for re-fit and supply. Two days after the 127th dropped on the planet, one of their reconnaissance squads reported that they had found what appeared to be an entrance to an industrial complex, 100km from the unit's drop zone.

A salvage crew was sent to the complex to see what they could strip from the plant. Upon arrival at the site, the salvage crew found themselves confronted by a huge mountain-side. Upon opening the entrance to the complex, which in itself took 30 hours as the doors were found to be fusion blast proof and the security systems were of a very odd and highly advanced nature, the salvage unit found a massive subterranean production facility. At this point, the commander of the 127th moved the entire support group to the site of the complex and upon further investigation of the facilities' memory core they found a true gold mine of hardware technology, for what they had stumbled on was a dormant Conflict War manufacturing plant.

The commander of the 127th technical support group, one Robert Adam, a very gifted weapons construction and maintenance officer, made an inspection of the complex and put forward his proposal to the 127th.

THE PROPOSAL

"Ladies and Gentlemen, we have found our future. Stay with me and we will bleed this plant dry so that we can all retire rich men and women or we can report our find to the divisional commander, we receive our commendations and die in a rotten battle on some god forsaken hell hole of a planet somewhere light years from friends, home and families."

Commander Robert Adam, 127th Technical Support Group, Blue Dawn Complex, 'Shalahs' 232 SD.

Everybody was given five hours to decide where their loyalties lay and give their replies to Commander Adam. After four hours of the most heated discussion and debate, all but 30 of the 750 strong personnel were in favour of Adam's plan and went straight to work bringing the plant 'back on line' and into full production. Meanwhile, the 30 which had, for one reason or another, voted not to take part in Adam's money making scheme, were given a small foldship with enough supplies and equipment to make the journey home and the same day, they jumped out of Shalahs' orbit. The remaining force quickly set to work, around the clock, to put every last system within the complex into operational use, a task which was completed 25 days later.

Meanwhile, the main attack force had stumbled across the small foldship and crew floating dead in space. The crew had all been poisoned by a contaminated food supply. The main force, fearing the worst, attempted to contact the rest of the 127th but to no avail. The main fleet sent out reconnaissance ships to seek out the technical group. They searched for two

months and found no trace of Commander Adam or his troops. Now in desperate need of supplies and repair, the commander ordered a recall of all his troops and jumped out of Shalahs' system, believing the technical group lost in space.

Now with the threat of outside intrusion gone, Adam's crews reappeared from their hiding places inside the complex and started to construct homes and storage facilities for the staff of the complex.

Commander Adam now instigated the next phase of his plan. He split his crew into three groups. The first was made up of the most senior technicians and, along with Adam, would have complete control over every aspect of the day to day life of the 127th, now renamed 'The Threshers' after a trip Adam took to the nearby coast on a reconnaissance mission. The Thresher is a very large species of shark found on Shalahs. The second group was the largest and was made up of technical staff that ran the complex. The last group was made up of the small, 30 man, combat force that acted as a police force for the community in and around the complex. The police force were under the complete control of Adam, which led to a few grumbles here and there but all in all everybody seemed happy with their lot and promised share of wealth. Unfortunately, all was not well. Concentrating solely on the operations within the complex, Adam had neglected the maintenance of his foldships, four out of fifteen were operational. This made some of the ground crews very uneasy. They had families light years away and without the fold ships, there was no way of getting off the planet. Nearly a year had passed by now, and the complex had been in full production for six months. There still was unhappy mumbling from the technical squads and the growing fear that they would be stranded on Shalahs forever grew to public outcry. To Commander Adam, the 300 strong plea for a return home and family fell on deaf ears as he refused to let anybody leave.

THE ROT

Fear now grew in Adam. What if his decision not to let people go home sparked off a rebellion? Could he keep control? Would his senior technicians back him up or would they wish to leave with the others taking the last of the operational foldships with them? A decision had to made.

That night, on the eve of the first anniversary of the forming of 'The Thresher', Adam called a meeting of his most trusted senior technicians along with the captain of the police force. Before dawn the next day, 50 people were executed, under the direct order from Adam, as subversives wishing to sabotage the Blue Dawn complex thus destroying the future of everybody.

The complex workers were shocked, they could not believe what Adam had done. For three days, not one technician left their home to work in the complex. No one dared to step outside for fear of being gunned down by Adam's police which now had been issued weapons and armour from the stockpiles in the production plant. Now, huge Powersuits stalked the small settlement outside the complex, day and night. On the fourth day, the people of Thrent, the name of the small village marched in their hundreds towards the complex in outrage at the deaths of their fellow workers and at being treated like prisoners in their own homes. On reaching the entrance to the complex, the assembled crowd, now 400 strong, were met by one of Adam's senior advisors and four frighteningly large Powersuits whereupon they were given an ultimatum: Stay, work in the complex until it's resources were exhausted, then leave rich men and women or die where they stand. Enraged by this threat and not believing that Adam would gun down innocent people, the crowd charged towards the complex.

"Our spirits were high that day as we marched towards Commander Adam's complex. We thought that if he could see how many of us didn't like what was going on that he might let us go home. We didn't expect to be treated like that or to be gunned down like animals. I will hate that man as long as I live. My husband died that day. One day I hope to see Adam die and if Slayer is willing, it will be my finger that pulls the trigger."

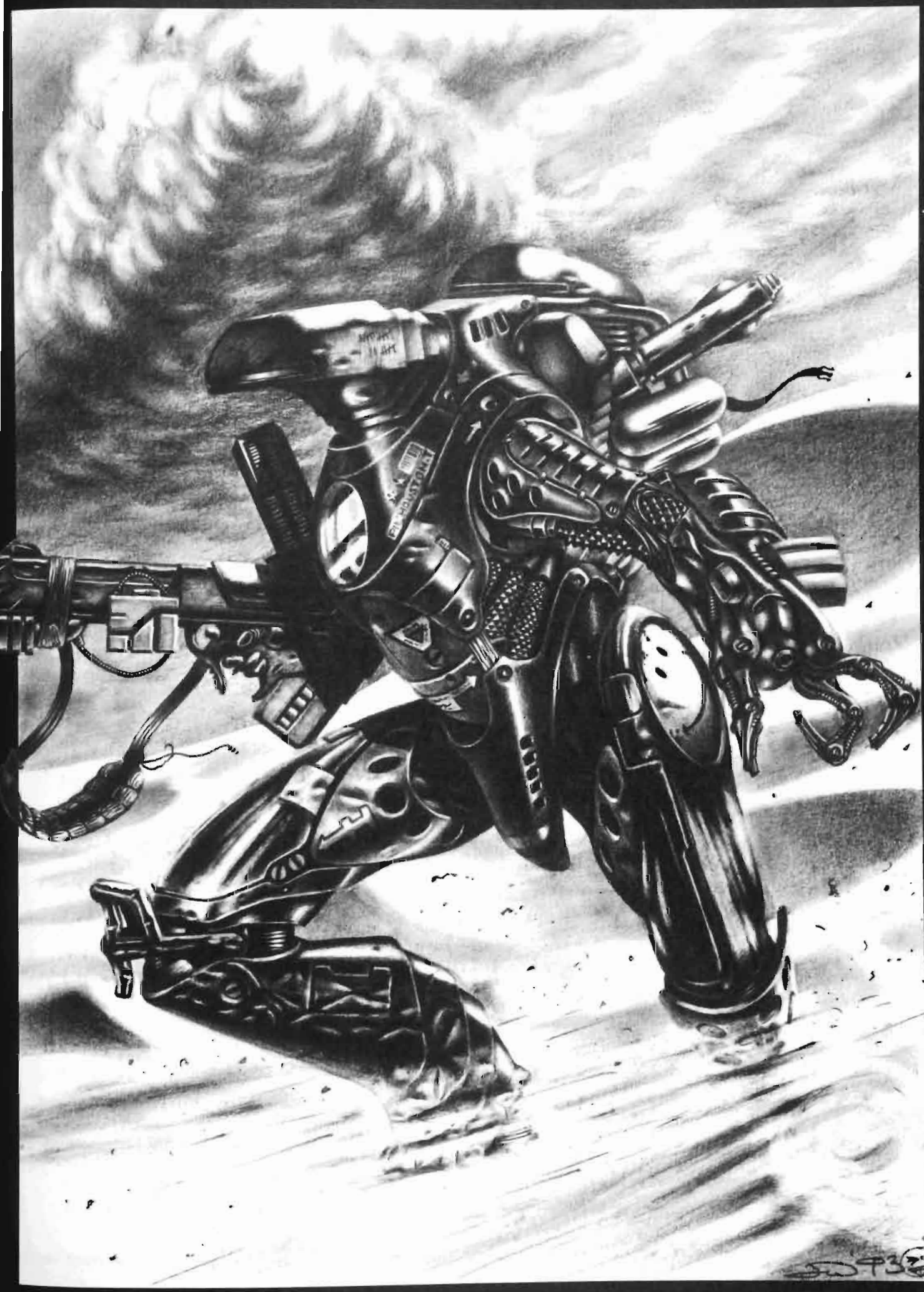
From 'In the Mouth of the Shark', by SLA Operative Linda Spears, Third Eye Press: 252 SD.

The cannons of the Powersuits opened fire and nobody had a chance to dive for cover. When, finally, the gun fire stopped, nearly 100 people lay dead or dying. The Powersuits retired inside the complex, locking everybody out.

After the initial shock of such a brutal act had passed, the good people of Thrent went about the horrible task of laying the dead to rest.

THE POWER OF FEAR

After the dead, 92 in total, had been buried, the townspeople of Thrent were at a complete loss as to what to do. Without access to the complex, they had no way of contacting the foldship navigators (the only Ebons in the original 127th) to inform them of their plight. They had no weapons to defend themselves from Adam's men and so a very dark cloud of despair steadily grew over the town of Thrent.



Three weeks passed and the complex had been silent all this time. Nothing was seen of Adam or his police apart from at night when one of the Powersuits would fly over the town as if on patrol. On the morning of the fourth day of the third week, the people of Thrent woke to find their small town completely surrounded by Adam's police force with Adam himself there in his own Powersuit. All over the town, notices had been posted which read 'To the good people of Thrent, it has come to my notice that the productivity of the complex is greatly suffering due to certain disagreements that we have been having over the last few months. I would like to sort out all of our problems as soon as possible. I plan to do this by enforcing the following rule; return to work in the complex or I will blow your town apart, killing everybody in it to the last child. No one will be spared. Yours faithfully, R. Adam, Lord of Shalahs.'

Nobody had any choice but to return to the complex and start working again under the watchful eye of Adam's police force. The now enslaved people of Thrent went about their daily tasks and the month rolled on. While these long months of labouring were going on, nobody had noticed the absence of Adam. He had locked himself away in the deepest areas of the complex with only his two most favoured technicians being allowed an audience with him, and only then to give him production reports and food. (Records discovered later seem to indicate that Adam, at this point, was suffering from a quiet paranoia.)

His self imposed isolation was destroyed one day with the news that an enemy force had dropped on the planet not 30km away from the Blue Dawn complex.

THE ALLIANCE

A mercenary force by the name of 'The Cannon Callers', an artillery detachment of DarkNight dropped on planet 27km from the production plant. The commander of the unit, one Rebecca Anne Porter, contacted the complex and gave them one hour to surrender the facility to DarkNight.

Adam was in a blind panic, he had never envisaged a time when he would have to fight this close to home, on planet perhaps but not practically at the front door of the Blue Dawn complex. Adam and four senior technicians went under the flag of truce to speak with the commander of the Cannon Callers. The two commanders, Adam and Porter, spoke for three hours before they emerged from the meeting, at which point they returned to their respective forces. Adam returned to his senior advisors to inform them of the outcome of their meeting and Commander Porter retired off-world to do likewise.

"On our initial drop, we had suspicions of some kind of hidden manufacturing complex. After a substantial scan and physical search of the area, we discovered these reports to be unfounded. Foldship repairs are necessary before return to HQ, E.T.A. 1 year, will give full report then."

Commander R.A. Porter, 'The Cannon Callers' Artillery/Powersuit, 36th Battalion, 1040th Dark-Night Deep Strike Team.

Both sides had expected a battle, the Cannon Callers' troops wanted one but they did not get it and instead became a part of 'The Thresher' which would soon be shortened to just 'Thresher'.

The alliance between the two units consisted of the Cannon Callers becoming a combat strike force for Thresher to raid nearby star systems and in return, the Cannon Callers would receive homes and, perhaps more importantly to a great deal of the strike battalion, a complete re-fit of all their Powersuits with Conflict War technology weapons and armour.

The re-fit of the battalion took ten months, after which the 'Shark's Teeth I', strike units with Conflict War Powersuits, left Shalahs under the command of Porter to raid the nearby inhabited systems for the needs of Adam's Threshers. With this force went 20 of the technical staff from the original 127th to maintain the Powersuits. These were controlled by two of the senior technicians from Adam's 'overseers' and four of his police to make sure there were no attempted escapes. Unfortunately for Adam, on Sedge, a natural world owned by SLA Industries, while the Shark's Teeth were preoccupied with raiding a water purification plant, three of the technicians managed to escape and hide until Adam's police left planet with the Shark's Teeth. The three escapees then made contact with SLA forces and were sent to Mort for questioning. The Shark's Teeth, meanwhile, went to loot other nearby star systems before returning to Shalahs with their spoils.

At this time, a major discovery had been made on Shalahs, one which would shape the future of Adam's Thresher beyond his wildest dreams.

MEMORY CORE

Kevin Tabbs, 4th class computer technician, is probably responsible for what Thresher has become today. According to obtainable records, he found a slug (data disc) stuck behind a filing cabinet which he fed into his computer. After breaking through a light security programme, he found the information con-

taining locations of no less than 400 complexes like Blue Dawn scattered about the universe with reports on their security systems, manufacturing capabilities and operational status. Out of the 400, only 7 were not ready for full operation.

This information and the return of the Shark's Teeth sent Adam into a whirl of excitement which soon turned to rage when he was informed about the three escapees.

At this time, Slayer was being informed of this break away faction. He sent one of SLA Industries' fold 'force' ships, the 'Retribution', a gigantic warship used during the Conflict Wars, to seek out and destroy the Thresher. Fortunately for Adam, the escapees were unable to give an exact location of Adam's base of operations and could only narrow the location down to a space of about 8 star systems which would take, even a powerful ship like the Retribution, some time to search.

Meanwhile, Adam had started to evacuate the Blue Dawn plant sending everything that wasn't glued or bolted down up to his now fully restored foldship fleet of 47 ships, 15 of which belonged to the 127th and 32 of the Cannon Callers, then spread this fleet between the ten nearest, newly discovered production plants. Two days later, the 'Retribution' folded into orbit above Shalahs and an immediate attack was launched. Two complete battalions of SLA's 1st Nitro Legion dropped 5km from the complex and proceeded to destroy the small town of Thrent then they moved on and began to assault the complex. The explosion from the complex, when the fission reactors went up, was visible from the foldship. An area of 200km squared of Shalahs was vaporised along with the Nitro Legion and any evidence of Adam's work. The huge electromagnetic pulse that the blast created almost crippled the foldship and made it impossible for it to make any communications with Mort. The Thresher had escaped.

"It has been many years since I have heard the name 'Thresher'. It sent my mind ablaze with the memories of the pain I felt when the 'Retribution' nearly died. I have requested that I be given back my navigation commission to seek out these vile creatures and destroy them. My only wish would be that I could use the Retribution, such a beautifully brutal ship. I mourn it's loss like it were a brother."

Taken from the diary of: Kraken (Necanthrope) S.C.L. 1, Navigator, Mort 239 SD.

OPERATION FIN

Five years had passed since the Thresher had vanished and they were all but forgotten till the last few days in 237 on Dante. DarkNight had been on the offensive for six months hammering SLA positions along the major fronts. A report to one of the SLA command centres reported a DarkNight Powersuit drop behind SLA's main line. Four squads of SLA heavy armour consisting of 40 Dogeybone troops were sent to investigate and never returned. The few radio messages that they managed to receive from the Dogeybone squads were reports of massive Powersuits with indestructible armour.

"Squad One move up. HESH the MALs."

"HESH locked and loaded."

"Squad Two give One cover fire with the Reapers."

"Opening up now, sir."

"Move up, Squad One."

"Got movement, I count 10, maybe 15, suits."

"Open fire!"

"Johnstone, Phillips, Caranara are down. HESH has no effect, switch to AP."

"Form defensive positions, take cover. Squad Three move up. Squad Four, I want your man with the Decimator to... "

"Squad One to Squad Four, what happened? We just lost control."

"This is Squad Four, they jumped behind us, god damn it, they can fly! Watch your ass One, they're coming in from your... "

"Squad Four, Squad Four! Squad Two, move out, we can't take those guys, call for artillery. We'll hold them as long as we can, I repeat... "

"This is DB 776 to Artillery Command, we have a no win situation here. Our coordinates are 77456 – 88492, let it rain danger close. Goodbye to whoever's listening..."

"This is Artillery Command, coordinates locked, firing now. Goodbye DB 776, good luck in the next life... "

"Let it rain danger close" was a call sign used by combat troops on Dante to inform artillery batteries that they wished an artillery strike directly on their position, killing them but also the enemy.

Four more attacks like this happened over the next two days. In total, the enemy had killed or destroyed 80 Dogeybone troops, 200 with APC transport, assorted Militia and 4 Linemate Tanks with no losses to themselves. Some of the SLA attack units had been destroyed completely and others had been allowed to retreat if they repeated the following message to their commander in the ranks of SLA.

"We have been beaten today because we are weak. We shall continue to be beaten for a very long time. The Thresher shall strike without warning. The Thresher shall take no more prisoners. The days of SLA are numbered."

Unknown Officer, Message to SLA command office, Dante 239 SD.

This would be the beginning of many of these such raids performed by Thresher over the next few years along with their pillaging and looting of Natural Worlds and small Industrial Worlds. They became a rather barbed thorn in the side of SLA Industries.

THE END OF AN ERA

At the close of 240 SD., Adam, now well established, had 48 of the Conflict War production plants in operation. These massive factories churned out endless amounts of weapons, armour and equipment. The actual size of the Thresher had grown somewhat by the use of Commander Porter's contacts in the mercenary circles which had allowed Thresher to swell it's numbers to almost 8,000 combat trained Powersuit crews. A force, not on the same gargantuan scale of SLA Industries or at the same time, DarkNight but it was enough to secure 'Thresher Incorporated' a foothold in the World of Progress. The problem with having such a large group to control, as Adam found out, was that it was impossible to control all of them at the same time and this lead to the fatal end to Adam's command and management of Thresher. It is perhaps ironic that Adam would die at the hands of one of his original crew from the 127th Technical Support Group. A female technician and security officer, one of those who had escaped on Sedge, had found her way into the employ of SLA Industries' Cloak Division. When she heard of the re–emergence of the Thresher, Linda Spears requested that her department place her on a deep cover mission to assassinate Adam if he was still alive. Due to her standing within Cloak Division, Linda had made a quick rise up the S.C.L. ladder and she was the granted the operation. Linda then spent six months working her way through backwater planets until she managed to be taken on by a unit of 'Shark's Teeth' that were at a stop–off point on a low grade independent world. This would be her chance to find Adam and avenge the death of her husband. This was not as easy as it seemed and Linda spent the next two years a foldship jump away from Adam but after a great deal of perseverance, she made that last jump and found herself on the world which was home to the leader of Thresher Incorporated, Robert Adam. The night she arrived, she made her way to Adam's palace. On her arrival, her heart sank, as what faced Linda Spears that night was not so much of a palace as an impenetrable fortress guarded by Powersuits of all shapes and sizes. She thought that all was lost and returned to her dwellings to cry herself to sleep.

"That cold winter's night, I walked home. The bitter wind stung my face as tears rolled down my cheeks uncontrollably. I had come so close and to end it like this was wrong. I should win, I thought that I should be the 'good guy' and I should kill the 'baddy'. To be stopped by a wall, a bloody great brick wall just wasn't fair. I wanted to die. That night I dreamt about Adam, and I imagined him in his ivory tower, laughing at me and at the death of my husband. The morning crashed in on my nightmare, and I knew he would die."

From 'In the Mouth of the Shark', by SLA Operative, Linda Spears, Third Eye Press 252 SD.

Linda, knowing that getting to Adam was impossible, decided to bring him to her. She quickly went to work, hacking into the telecommunication network of the planet finding her way into Adam's own personal communication lines. The next four hours of Linda's life were perhaps the most harrowing as she broke down high security block programmes and bypassed virus watch programmes of the highest level but she eventually found what she was looking for: 'Lord Adam, Personal engagements file 004632.' Luck was on her side– Adam had an inspection of a processing plant planned for that afternoon. It seemed like the perfect opportunity for Linda to get her chance, maybe her only chance, to kill Adam. Her plans were set. She forged an I.D. for the processing plant and set off with the determination of a woman possessed. The processing plant was a large purification complex for uranium to aid munitions manufacture. Linda, finding a technician of about her size, disguised herself and was ready for the arrival of Adam. She did not have long to wait as a column of Powersuits entered the plant. Adam was instantly recognizable as the largest of the Powersuits flanked by heavy battle armour. Linda studied the suit quickly finding what she was looking for, a 'chippy' port at the waist of the suit for the loading of on–board systems data. Getting to it without being shot was the only problem. Adam began his inspection of the plant, striding between the ranks of technicians that had gathered, Linda Spears amongst them. As Adam got closer, Linda had given up any hope of getting out alive as she prepared herself to die and waited for Adam to walk past where she stood.

"As he came closer, I could swear he was looking at me. I thought he knew. I was caught, done for. His suit stopped in front of me and as the hydraulics hissed, he came to rest in front of me. I heard an R.A. channel being opened.

'Don't I know you, miss?' asked this voice from somewhere inside the Powersuit.

'N... n... no' I replied. God, how stupid, I shouldn't have hesitated.

'Step forward!' I did so expecting to have the hand of his Powersuit come crashing down on my skull.

'Are you sure I don't know you? Your face looks familiar.' I took my chance and dived for the torso link on his armour. I had the speed, the implants made sure of that as I hooked into his chippy link. The arms of his suit were flailing about trying to brush me off but I managed to stay under their minimum ark. The other suits were trying their damnedest to get a good line of sight to blow me apart but I was practically draped around the waist of Adam's Powersuit so it was impossible for them to shoot without hitting their beloved leader. I punched the 'run' button on my hack deck pumping a 'dump' program into his suit's main system hard drive. He must have given the order to open fire as all hell broke loose as the Powersuits let rip with full automatic fire in every direction. I had to get out of there. Now that Adam's suit had shut down completely with my program keeping any external input out, he would die in two hours when his air ran out. One of the Powersuits gave me a chance while it was spraying a a group of technicians close to me, it must have hit and punctured a cooling pipe causing a very large explosion.

It was time for me to leave. Finding a service hatch, I climbed down, heading out of the complex and into the sewer. Now I had to get off the planet in the next half hour or I would never leave. This place would be as tight as a vacuum seal."

From 'In the Mouth of the Shark', By SLA Operative, Linda Spears, Third Eye Press 252 SD.

Linda Spears made it off planet with seconds to spare. she was on the last shuttle allowed to leave before the entire planet was locked down. Ten months later, long after the news of Adam's death had reached Mort, Linda Spears arrived back on planet to a heroine's welcome. She also received perhaps one of the largest S.C.L. increases ever recorded in the history of SLA Industries. When Linda left, more than three years ago, she was S.C.L. 4C and on her return, she was given an automatic increase to S.C.L. 2F and also more importantly than that, a personal commendation from Slayer for her 'outstanding service' to the company. Linda Spears retired two years later, a rich and avenged person.

THRESHER IN CHAOS

With the loss of their leader, Thresher found themselves like a headless chicken. Thresher activity tailed off in every star system to near nothing. Little is known of the actual movements of the Thresher forces during this time. What reports there are suggest that there was a large scale recall of the forces to their home worlds, most probably to recognize and find a new leader. After another extensive lull in Thresher activity, this time seven years, Thresher enterprises re–enforced as a weapons manufacturer selling to the few independent worlds still left and to some of the activist groups within the suppressor power worlds. Thresher also maintained and expanded their own private army to near DarkNight proportions but, still unable to come into direct conflict with DarkNight or SLA Industries without suffering immense losses, they returned to their original quick strike and raiding missions, which were the chosen tactics, but still they lacked the firepower to match DarkNight or the use of Ebons to defeat SLA Industries.

"The first major advantage over other companies is their hardware production facilities still contain memory cores with original Conflict War technological details and capabilities left by the great alien races of the Conflict Wars. Although Thresher have these huge industrial centres for production of weapons, munitions and armour, the technology behind their construction is long gone, and as dead as the ingenuity behind it. Thresher now rely on maintenance technology to keep their corporation alive. The technical staff within the company are specially trained for this task of, rather than enhancement and construction. This has worked up until now, but when a facility is destroyed and lost it is irreplaceable. These are the losses which Thresher can ill afford as not all of their production plants are operational, only about 63%. The ones which have shut down are used as massive warehouses containing spares for other facilities which are still operational. These warehouses are heavily guarded and, in some cases, booby trapped so that the Thresher technology and production capabilities do not fall into enemy hands. This has been very successful to date. Every effort is being made to destroy these complexes but this will take time, meanwhile remember this; every Sarge, One Way and First Step that we destroy makes it harder for the Thresher to continue."

Linda Spears (Operative: Retired), Private Advisory Lecture, Mort Central 255 SD.

THRESHER TODAY: A SUMMARY

Very little, if anything, has changed within the structure of Thresher since the death of Robert Adam, 657 years ago. One of the main changes is that the heads of Thresher Incorporated are a closely guarded secret with very few, if any, of the employees and armed forces knowing who their leaders are, which makes operations such as the one Linda Spears undertook in 241 SD. almost impossible.

Thresher still have the technology discovered by Adam and still manage to maintain and produce such articles as Sarge armour. This would lead many to believe that the lost knowledge of the conflict Wars has not been lost at all but lies firmly in the hands of Thresher Incorporated. If this is true, then there may just be some cause for concern but as no solid proof exists of this, then we can safely say that Thresher may have a good hand but they won't have the full deck.

Thresher still continue their strike and raid policies of attack which may not effect large areas at any one time but it does tie up a lot of resources keeping them from biting at SLA Industries' heals.

Of late, i.e. in the last 150 years, Thresher have started what could only be described as 'terrorist activity' on some of the major SLA and DarkNight worlds. This appears to be a new thorn in the side for SLA Industries but these attacks are few and far between and, as such, pose no direct menace to SLA. More of a minor irritant but should be dealt with in the normal way –'crushed'.

To furnish operatives with some idea of what to expect from these forces, here follows a technological breakdown of the main types of hardware fielded by the various divisions of Thresher Incorporated.

THRESHER TECHNOLOGY (DEFENSIVE)

"The technology of Thresher remains a mystery to most powers. Those that do capture a piece of this valuable hardware, be it a type of armour, a weapon or other piece of equipment are almost always left in the dark as to it's manufacture. Most technicians dream of getting their hands on Thresher technology and spend the rest of their lives trying to find out how it works."

From the diaries of J.A Peterson, Senior Technician, Tek Trex Research Lab Alpha II, 895 SD.

KAD–C (Kinetic Absorption/Depletion–Ceramic)

Report By: Virginia King SCL 2C.7

Division: FEN Ballistic testing lab, Mort

The armour construction techniques used in the KAD–C (usually called KAD) are still as yet unsolved by Power Projects, so for now, Thresher have the edge in armour manufacture but more and more of their production plants are being destroyed or used for spares to keep other manufacturing complexes running. It is only a matter of time before Thresher will have to turn to other means of sustaining their hold in the World of Progress.

The KAD is a very strong and versatile armour class, so versatile in fact that it is used on all Thresher armour types from the infantry 'Endeavour' up to the 'Sarge' Powersuit class. The KAD is constructed like a 'rubber' metal substance which absorbs a great deal of the kinetic energy from projectiles. From ballistic testing carried out on recovered suits of Thresher armour, it would appear that standard armour depletion rounds such as HESH have a greatly reduced effect and should be substituted for an armour piercing (AP) round which has superior muzzle velocity and penetration, kill the wearer not the suit. The following is my personal breakdown on the five most common armour classes that Thresher use today.

Endeavour (TH.0001) Powered Infantry Armour

The Endeavour class of armour is very flexible and light allowing it's wearer a great deal of mobility and has a powered skeleton which seems to be unnecessary as the mass and size of the suit does not merit the power chassis class. It does however, negate any movement restrictions the wearer might come across. As far as protection is concerned, the TH.0001 is capable of stopping a 10mm auto pistol round.

	P.V.	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Endeavour	6	10	25	15	20

One–Way (TH.0002) True Powered Infantry Armour

One–Way may have been the original design for the Endeavour but it would have appeared to have outgrown it's usefulness as light infantry armour and placed in a rather unsuited class. One–Way is used as a quick strike heavy armour by Thresher. Fortunately


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it does not have the size or stopping power to fill such a role as it is rather bulky and has a power chassis just adequate for it's mass. The stopping power for the One–Way is much better than the Endeavour with the ability to stop a 12mm pistol or 10mm auto rifle round.

	P.V.	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
One–Way	8	30	55	35	40

Close Nitt (TH.0003) Personal Powered Armour

The Close Nitt is an excellent suit of scout armour with good penetration retardation. It's construction is geared to the sacrifice of armour mass for stealth bafflers and concealment systems. The bafflers reduce the noise levels of hydraulic systems and motors to a barely audible level whilst the concealment systems cloak heat sources within the suit. Very difficult to detect but once found easy to take down. The operational limit of stopping power is a 12mm rifle round.

	P.V.	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Close Nitt	10	30	70	40	60

First Step (TH. 0004) Heavy Powered Armour (Personal)

From collated tactical information on the First Step, it would appear to be the front line armour configuration for Thresher. Both fast and strong, the First Step has given battlefield commanders more than one or two headaches over the years. This heavy class of PPA (Personal Powered Armour) is seen in great numbers on Dante which is where most of our test pieces came from. With good mobility given by the powerful exo–chassis and more than adequate armour protection from the many layers of KAD–C armour plates, this puts the First Step on par with similar SLA armour types such as Powercell and Crackshot. The First Step has enough stopping power for 10, 12 and 12.7mm rifle rounds.

	P.V.	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
First Step	14	40	90	65	75

Sarge (TH.0005) Battle Armour

The Sarge is a fearful machine. Thresher would appear to have spent most of their time and energy perfecting this suit, a massive almost Powersuit–like beast. The Sarge can withstand any pistol round as well as rifle rounds up to 12.7mm. The suit's incredible strength allows it to carry a very large amount of armour protection and on–board management systems, both soft and hardware related.

	P.V.	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Sarge	18	100	240	170	200

ADVANTAGES

Power armour technology within Thresher is, to say the least, advanced. They have had outstanding success against DarkNight, but luckily we at SLA have the Power Projects Powersuit Division which keeps the Thresher at bay.

Thresher suits have one of the biggest advantages over any other suits of their class; Jump Propulsion Systems (JPS). These 'Jump Packs' come as a standard feature on all but the Endeavour armour types. These powerful propulsion units allow Thresher armour to travel at up to speeds of 240 km/hour with an operating ceiling of about 500m. VTOL (Vertical Take off and Landing) is standard on these armour classes.

I have currently assigned 1,000,000¢ to my development team to do further work on the Thresher armour defeating round code name "SHARKKILLER.TADR"

THRESHER TECHNOLOGY (OFFENSIVE)

Ballistic data file on Thresher Incorporated

Report by: Sean Young, SCL 2A.4

Division: BLA Ballistic Design Team

It takes a great deal of time for a new ammunition type to be accepted in any company. The 9mm BLA is the perfect example, not in production at the moment but an extremely good round. It would seem that this is not true for Thresher. There have been many changes in their ammunition construction over the years, from the 300 year old 5mm "Rent 50", which is now extinct, up to the 17mm depleted uranium (DU) round which is used with the Thresher cannon.

It would appear that Thresher are capable of changing munition production techniques very quickly to suit current battlefield conditions. At this present moment in time, Thresher seem to be trying to develop the ideal personnel killer. They seem to be using a great deal of HEAP in most of their ammunition construction and perhaps are trying to develop a round similar to that under development at FEN Labs code "SHARKKILLER.TADR" to match up to Dogeybone and Shock armour. Another possible develop-

ment may be a very specialised AP round for Powersuit suppression. The following is my full report and ballistic breakdown on current Thresher ammunition and weapons.

MASS ROUNDS

Thresher have, for sometime now, used depleted uranium (DU) rounds in some of their larger calibres such as the 17mm round used in the Thresher cannon. The use of such dense radioactive material leads to extreme amounts of damage to "Hard" targets such as armour, buildings and fortified positions. At the moment the production of such material seems to have dropped a great deal as only Thresher 14 and 17mm rounds use DU. (See attached report by Ebon: 'Forge')

CALIBRE SIZES

Although Thresher have the facilities to produce almost any type of ammunition it would appear that they choose not to manufacture such calibres as 10mm. This is probably to discourage the battlefield scavenging of ammunition from fallen Thresher units.

THRESHER WEAPONS BREAKDOWN

SHEER 0023/B1 Assault Rifle (TH.BLA.0426-88B)

This is the standard assault rifle carried by most of the Thresher main forces. It is compact, durable and takes an 11mm, normally HEAP, load. It has poor recoil baffling, presumably due to the nature of the armour classes– being powered by a strong exo–chassis, the need for effective recoil prevention decreases to nearly zero. The Sheer Assault Rifle is an uncomfortable weapon to fire without armour and difficult to control when opened up to fully automatic. The 11mm round is a very effective armour penetrator but quite a heavy round. The full clip does add a great deal of weight to the rifle and with such a heavy round used in such a short barrelled weapon, it is inaccurate at ranges of 400m or over. It is, however, ideal for close in, cover and spray fire work. The costs shown for ammunition and rifle are both black market.

	SIZE	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RANGE	COST
SHEER 0023/B1	R	40	11mm	5	30m	2000₵
		DMG	PEN	AD	Cost	
11mm HEAP (Rifle)		11	9	3	10₵	

FLAY AUTO 1701/C6 Automatic Pistol (TH.BLA0473-94F)

The Flay Pistol is the standard side–arm used by all Thresher troops. It is a small, compact pistol which uses solid frame ceramics in its construction. The 11mm HEAP round is far too powerful to be fired comfortably and recoil is impossible to control without bafflers and some form of power assisted armour. To assist the user with this problem, it has a low rate of fire and double action trigger but this, unfortunately, is not enough. It is good for 'close in' fighting. The short pistol version of the 11mm could be replaced in the near future by a lighter, more controllable round. 10mm could be ideal, but is not in production at this point.

	SIZE	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RANGE	COST
FLAY AUTO	P	14	11mm	2	15m	900₵
		DMG	PEN	AD	COST	
11MM HEAP (Pistol)		8	8	3	10₵	

VAPH III 0600/C12 Assault Cannon (TH.BLA0422-44A)

The VAPH is a rather horrible design; I do not mean badly designed but gruesome in its purpose. The full ceramic construction of this weapon makes its mass similar to that of rifles half its size. The 14mm DU round it carries is another reason for its outstanding kill ratios. The use of DU is an exclusive trait of Thresher. The damaging properties of such a hazardous substance makes it a very unsafe material to be used in weapon construction even though DU is very effective at both armour depletion and tissue damage. A dangerous weapon– careful consideration should be taken before fighting any Thresher carrying one.

	SIZE	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RANGE	COST
VAPH III	R	100	14mm	5	80m	3750₵
		DMG	PEN	AD	COST	
14mm DU (Rifle)		22	15	7	40₵	

THRESHER CANNON 0000/A0 (TH.BLA0100-00A)

The Thresher Cannon has, for some time, been the most feared weapon on the battlefield. A massive assault weapon, the Thresher Cannon packs a deadly 17mm DU round. This cannon is fitted to the 'Sarge' armour class as it is the only suit strong enough to be outfitted with it. The construction behind such a

heavy assault cannon is definitely pre–SLA, Conflict War. There would appear to be a very effective recoil baffle system with on–board gyroscope stabilisation for the huge amounts of recoil, an estimated 24.7m/second. At the moment, there are no ways of reproducing the Thresher Cannon in its original form–even the mighty FEN team have failed.

	SIZE	CLIP	CAL	ROF	RNG	COST
TC 0000/A0 (Ammo Bin fed)	R	500	17mm	10	90m	350000¢

	DMG	PEN	AD	COST
17mm DU (Rifle)	37	21	14	30¢

"Thresher Depleted Uranium and the Ebb"

BLA/Ebon Insert by 'Forge', Ebon Weapons Engineer

The use of DU against members of my race over the years has lead to a frightening discovery, the DU rounds destroy flux. It eats at it like a cancerous growth. It has been found that some Thresher operatives have their rounds impregnated with DU traces for the specific purpose of flux deprivation, the exact properties of which are unknown as yet but a solution must be found to stop Thresher manipulating the potential of such a disgusting substance.

BLA Laboratories Mort 900 SD.

TEK TREX

The greatest advances in cybernetics have been made by a small design team working in the Tek Trex Corporation. The decline in popularity of cybernetics was unlucky for some yet it brought together some of the greatest technicians working in the only field they knew. Funded by an independent company, Trex Corporation, who made and marketed walking boots (owned by the sister–in–law of one of the prime technicians), these technicians started working on designs for their independent cybernetic drones and sent scale drawings to a local vehicle manufacturers. They made working prototypes from the drawings. The rumours of what happened are numerous and widespread. One rumour goes that the vehicle manufacturers misread, or forgot to check, the scale and made the drones at the size they were depicted on the design sheets, making 1m tall robots from what should have been 6m monsters. Another rumour states they were working models, intended to be displayed at an exhibition but people wanted the small drones because they were 'cute'. A third rumour mentions lack of funding and resources while a fourth has the drones small due to their feet being based on walking shoe design frames which were cheap and available.

The fact of the matter is that Tek Trex make 1m–tall drones, for sale on the black market throughout the World of Progress. The drones are armed with an assortment of light weapons and can be controlled by tight–band radio control. They had a popularity during the 'chrome period', as art historians are calling it –Tek Trex also made some of the cyber–limbs that clutter 'Rust Alley'. With CAF sub–machine guns mounted on the whole range of drones, these 'clockwork–killers' can be quite dangerous, especially in the large numbers they are intended to be used in.

"We were working in the subway, trying to find what was killing all the rats. We laughed when we saw them, lumbering towards us. All they need is a swift kick to the left leg and they fall over. A Vito on its back is no match for a 10–10 Bully–Boy. How were we to know the Vitos were being used to find our position and weren't even loaded. 15 Buzzards and 8 Scarabs came scuttling around the corner. The CAF SMGs ripped through our light armour by sheer weight of numbers. The amount of the little tin cans made us waste our ammo by the bucket. While we were reloading, they charged in their silly wibbly–wobbly walk firing a hail of shells at us, killing my companions. I was the only one left and was dodging chainsaws. I then realised I would run out of ammo before I ran out of targets and grabbed McLure's claymore and waded in. As you can see I survived. I thought we didn't do too badly until I surveyed the surrounding area. There were a further 120 of the little buggers trying, pathetically, to get down the stairs. It transpired that the only reason the ones we were fighting were on us is that, out of the ones who had fallen down the stairs, these were the only ones that landed feet up. You've gotta laugh, haven't you."

Jay Marshall, SCL 9C, speaking to Third Eye News from a hospital bed.

Since the drones' first appearance on Mort, only 15 years ago, there have been numerous sightings and rumours of the ease with which they can be bought in Downtown are spreading. The truth of the matter is that the drones can be bought by anyone with the UNIs to waste. Conversion kits can be bought from numerous black market sources and converted drones are proliferating.

"I was doing my own thing in Downtown, as one does, and I saw a single Vito. I wandered over, stealthily and spied a DarkNight dude, strutting his stuff. The Vito turned to face him and BLAMMO! Shot him... with 17mm HESH! I watched the drone fly

20m backwards and roll a further 5m. The DarkNight dude was patê. As I heard the drone reload and scramble to its feet, I decided to get the hell out of there. My Crackshot was in for repair and I was not going to take on 17mm HESH with Body Toilet–Paper."

'Slim' Malone, SCL 6A. Body Toilet–Paper is a nickname amongst experienced operatives, who are used to better, for Blocker Body Armour.

There are, currently, three drones on the market: the Vito, the Buzzard and the Scarab –also known as the ambush–bug. All the drones are fitted with enough software and hardware to act independently or according to programmes but they are usually controlled by remote control. The Vito is fitted with a SMG and a video camera, the Buzzard has a camera, SMG and a chainsaw while the Scarab has 2 SMGs, camera and a 10 gauge Shotgun. The other combat machine they make is the Fritz which is a 3m tall Vito fitted with a power drill and a fully–automatic 10 gauge shotgun. There are rumoured to be 300 Fritzes spread throughout the World of Progress. A Fritz is huge, lumbering and deadly.

The cost of drones is fairly cheap, considering the amount of hardware it packs and the amount of middle–men used to bring it to the market place.

Vito cost: 20,000ū

Buzzard cost: 25,000ū

Scarab cost: 30,000ū

Fritz cost: Unknown but rumoured to be 150,000ū

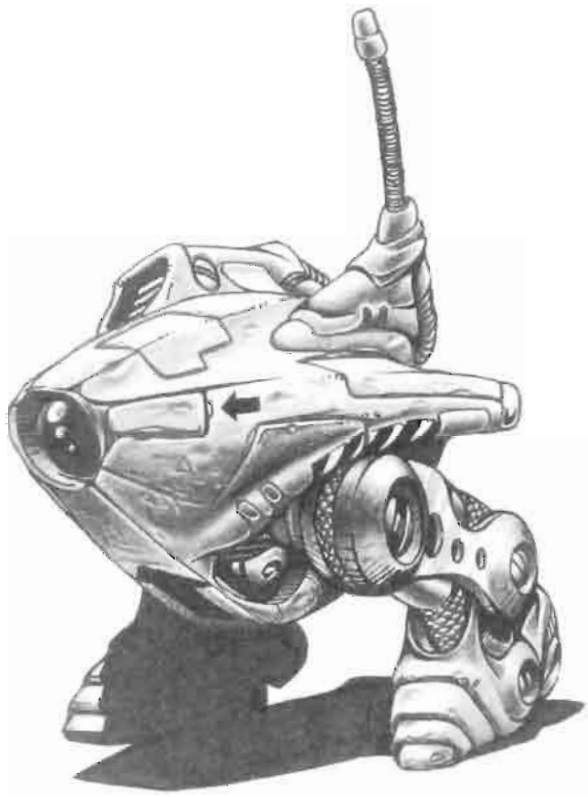
The weapon conversion kits retail at approximately 5 times the cost of the gun to be added. The 17mm cannon kit is believed to be a figment of 'Slim' Malone's imagination, covering for his cowardice when facing a Vito. No calibre above 10mm, except shotgun rounds, is currently for sale, according to black market insiders. No close combat conversions are known to work but, according to some information, there are some working kits out there.

Vito A69 Tek Trex Drone

The Vito is a small (60cm) reconnaissance robot produced by Tek Trex to act like a mobile security camera. The addition of a 5mm SMG seems to have led Tek Trex to believe that the Vito now qualifies as a combat drone. Seen in greater numbers than any of the other Tek Trex drones, the Vito never travel in less than ten. When active, the Vito has a small but durable power supply lasting usually in excess of 7000 hours. The SMG is connected to a 200 round ammunition bin. On the other side of the coin, the Vito is easily pre–programmable to be used as a drinks server or pet (like a dog) by the civilian classes able and willing to pay the extremely high black market cost for such a 'toy'.

Skills	Rank	Walk .5m	DEX 4
Pistol	3	Run 1m	STR 4
Sneak	3	Sprint 2m	Weight 12kg
Hide	1		

I.D. 20, P.V. 4



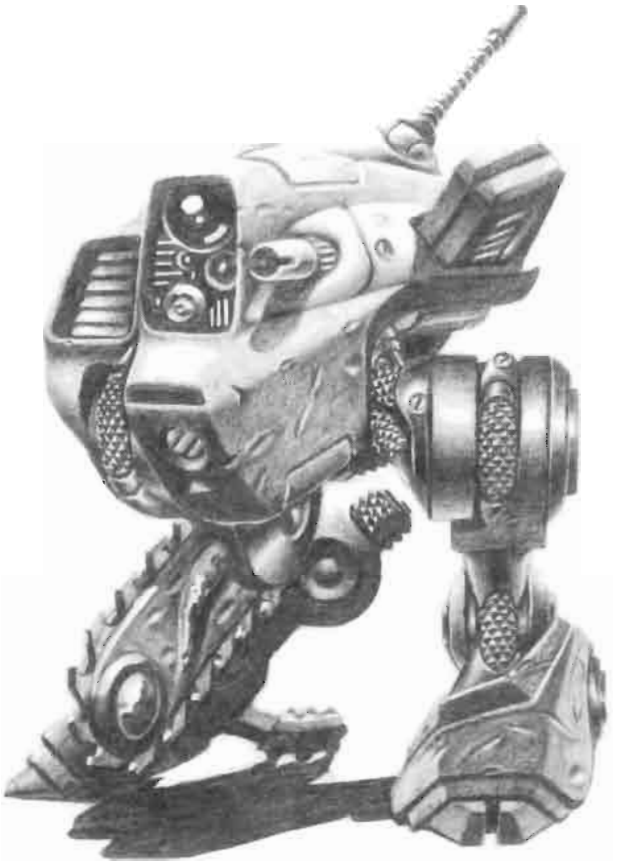
Buzzard F2 Tek Trex Drone (Security)

Used as a security guard by Tek Trex, the F2 is a vicious close combat fighter with its small chain axe positioned at the perfect height to slash at shins, ankles and feet, not to mention the 5mm SMG it also carries. Buzzards are usually found roaming with packs of Vitos. For every five Vitos, you will usually find two Buzzards. These drones have also found their way into the civilian population as 'guard dogs' for private property or houses. The chainaxe is normally deactivated but can be easily reinstated by replacing the small drive motor with the axe.

Skills	Rank	Walk 1	DEX 5

Pistol	3	Run 2	STR 3	
Sneak	3	Sprint	3	Weight14kg
Hide	2			
Chainaxe	3			

I.D. 20, P.V. 4



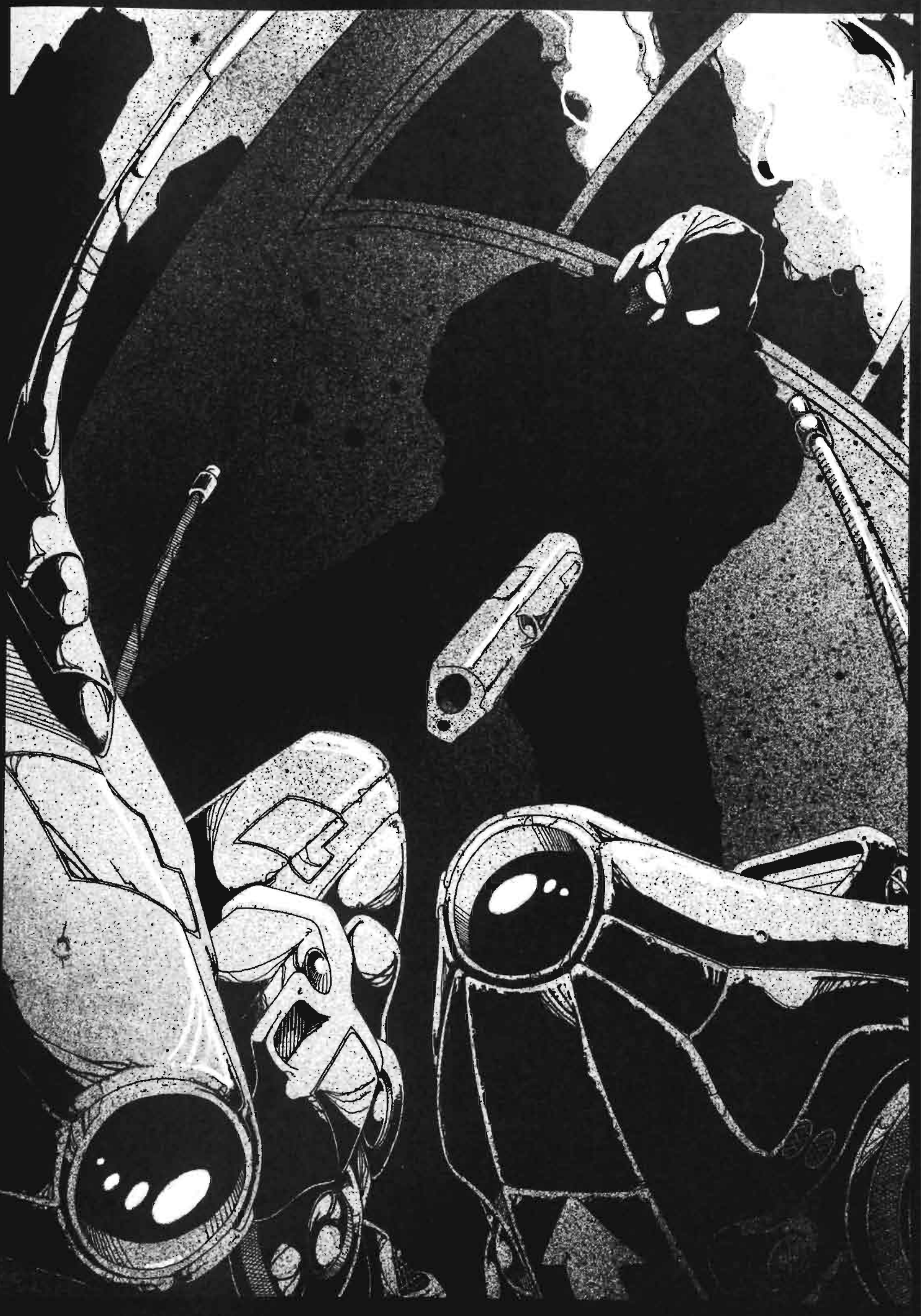
Scarab LO2 Tek Trex Drone (Espionage)

The LO2 is perhaps the only surprise from Tek Trex. This particular drone has been responsible for some out-of-character successful assassinations by Tek Trex. The Scarabs, or 'ambush bugs' as they have come to be known, are the most sophisticated of the Tek Trex creations. This squat creature has the best hardware Tek Trex could offer. The LO2 has a sophisticated programmable system with full muffling on its servos and other moving parts to make it as quiet as possible. A wide range of optics including IR and UV, it also has six legs unlike its brother drones which only have two. These make the Scarab a quiet and efficient climber. The stealth programs also gives the Scarab a unique ability amongst the drones to to hide from pursuers as well as incredible speed when striking. The 5mm machine gun (ROF 10) has a 300 round ammunition bin that is cased inside the drone to prevent explosions due to damage. Scarabs fight alone. They are not mass attack vehicles like the Vito and the Buzzard. For this purpose, the Scarab is given an extended life power pack (10,000 hours). They are dropped in Downtown areas and programmed to attack any SLA personnel encountered. The sale of these to the public is limited due to the extremely high price but some do manage to purchase these for use as security guards.

Skills	Rank	Walk 2	DEX7
Pistol	3	Run 4	STR 4
Sneak	5	Sprint 6	Weight20kg
Hide	5		
Climbing	2		

I.D. 30, P.V. 5





FAME AND FORTUNE

"It's all very well working for progress and the good of mankind but what really cheers me up is the paycheck. Fame ain't too bad, either, 'cos you get even more money! Ha! Don't ya just love it."

Sime Moloch, SCL 8B. Brain Waster

MEDIA DARLINGS

"Yeah? Bob Black here, Third Eye News, Al? I've got one for ya? Get to 'The Haunt'. You know it? Thought ya would. Oh, and wear your armour and pack some kit. Take Pro's. Its a Prop story. Dangerous? Of course, why else would I give it to you? Remember your week off? I lost five good kids covering your type of story. Yeah, usual bonuses. Go and make me rich, kid.

"Darlene, I'm not into my usual list plus any one called Bane with the surname Root. Oh, and black two sugars.

"Yeah? This is Third Eye. Scope? Yeah, I've heard of you. I'm interested. I've still got a few minutes of space. No, I ain't gonna run your 'Honeyman' footage or any kind of follow–up. I don't do Necanthrope stuff, okay? Look, when I ran my story, I was young and naive. Hey, I don't care what the kid's name was. Let me tell you a story, for free. the last time we covered him, Internals chewed my ass so hard I couldn't break wind without it coming out of fifteen holes simultaneously. We even had the Preceptor Teeth down here. Yes, he does smell but are you going tell to him? I don't need that kinda crap again in a hurry. so forget the kid and don't come back with any... cheers Darlene... what? no, I was talking to my secretary. Don't mention the Honeyman. Take some advice. Erase your slugs and find a nice story about pandas being incapable of sustaining a healthy sex life far from home. That kinda story sells. No, it isn't

a commission...

"Goodbye, Jeez, freelancers.

"Yeah, Black here. Silver? Yeah, pipe it through. standard protocol, no parity. Yeah, it's ringing. It's through. Any details? Who's on it? Hinton? Damn. You mean Cerise? thought as much. Thanks.

"Darlene, get me John Simes. Line 4? Ok.

"John, Bob here. Who's the most diplomatic crew you have? No, not him. Yeah, she'll do. Can you patch me through?

"Hi, Sue. Look, we've got a Silver one for ya. Yep, a corp by the name of Cherry Hinton, yeah, Cerise. Look, if you don't want it, I can find someone who will. Ok, preferential rates. Look, kid gloves on this one, ok? She's trouble. If she screws up, I want it on slug but if she does well, I want the scoop. Either way I want this one. Get me ten minutes. Yes, ten, look, she's photogenic and always has something to say. Get a shot of her killer, Moreau, if possible. Manta Ray Security offered me a personal bonus by the name of Linda if I could give 'em some air time and this should do. Bye.

"Yeah, Darlene, get me a Bio on G.B.H. And send Tom in here. Ta.

"Tom, Make this Bio 2 minutes 15 will ya. Amscray!

"Darlene, black one sugar and a Dunkem donut and get me Al. Line 2?

"Al? Bob. Yeah. My Silver? You don't want it, trust me. Waddaya mean you don't like it when I say 'Trust me'? I hate saying it. You don't want it. Same to you Al.

"Darlene, get me... hang on.

"3rd Eye, Bob Black here, How can I... Yes... Yes... Ok sir... thank you sir... of course sir... thank...erm.

"Darlene, coffee! NOW! NEVER, NEVER, NEVER patch the boss through without warning! Clear your desk. 30 minutes and counting. where's my coffee? Send Mary in.

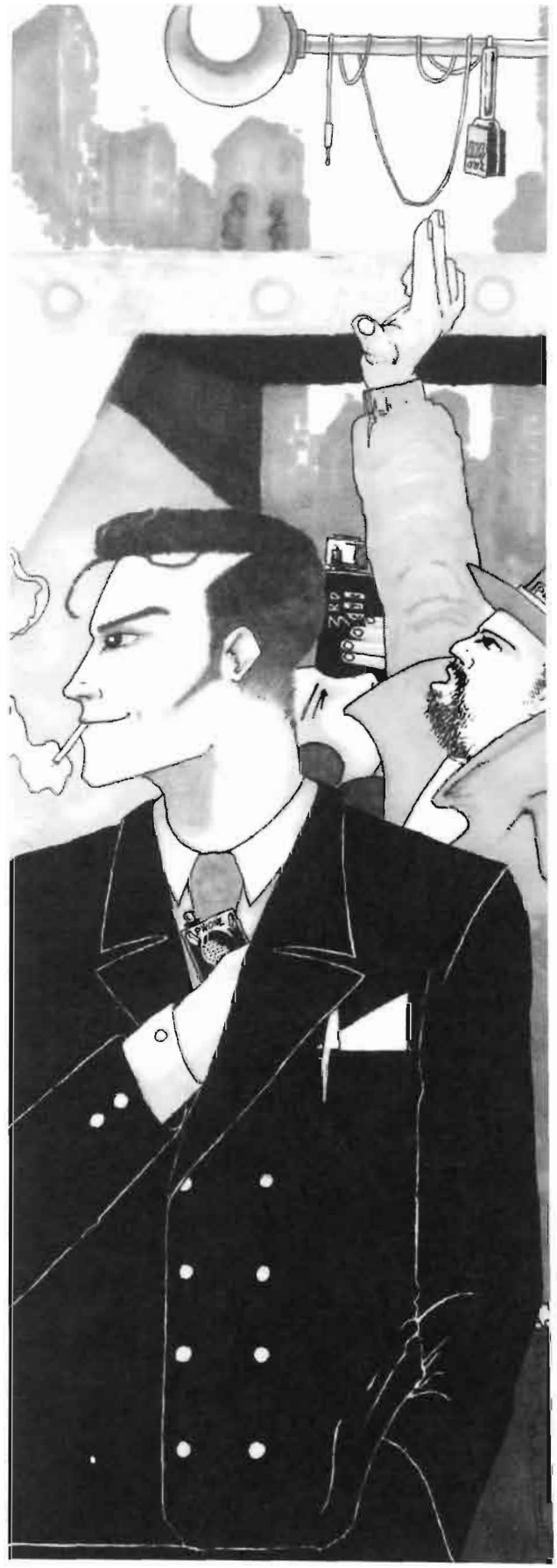
"Mary, do you want a promotion? No funny stuff needed? Right, you have Darlene's job. So, get me a coffee. Black no sugar and two Dunkems.

"What, Tom? 2–13? That'll do.

"Darle... Mary! Give me the P.A. OK STAFF, 15 minutes 'till hell. I want a precis from everyone in 5. Mary, get me Al.

"Bob. Yeah, I need it yesterday. I told you it was good. Yeah, you know the score, standard protocol, no parity, the cheque's in your wife.

"Mary, get me... yes, I'll get it. Yeah? 3rd Eye. No.



No. Well, pad it. I need 1–45 on this. What do you want me to do? Read it slowly? Pad it out. Or move out. I hear SIC are looking for crap reporters who don't do their job too well. Yes, that was a threat. I don't care. I'M paying YOU remember. Jeez! Yeah? Well your mother shaves her face. With a Gore Cannon.

"Mary, fire Wilson and get me Scope.

"Mike? Bob. You want some time? How does 1–45 grab you? By the...? Whatever. Pandas? What? That was a joke. Anything. Not Honeyman. No forget it, Mike. You've blown it.

"Mary, get me... erm... damn! Anyone'll do. Get me Tom.

"Tom, can you pad it to 4? Great, yesterday please.

"Mary, P.A. OK STAFF, 10 'till hell. Where's my stuff, gang? Oh, look what I've found. A blank termination warrant. Any takers? Get to it.

"Mary, get me a Feelgood and two Pro–canes. And coffee. Black no sugar. While you're at it, get me Sue Dench.

"Sue, Bob. How's it going. You've got five minutes to film a ten minute piece. How are you at miracles of distortion? Ok. I'll give you the end slot. You've got 20 to give me an air–ready piece. Vamos!

"Mary, get me..."

Bob Black, Third Eye News controller.

The Media in the World of Progress are controlled by SLA Industries. All of the legal channels on Mort are either SLA owned or licensed by SLA. All of the media has to bow down to the control of the largest power in the World of Progress and promotion of SLA takes up a large slot of each station's schedules.

Whether it be the latest life–saving medical advances making news or the latest episode of the children's cartoon, Captain Contract, the message is always the same: Trust SLA and nobody else.

"How are we meant to view the public when all the majority of them do is sit at home and watch Captain bloody Contract! It's a kid's cartoon yet the average age of the viewer is 24! The episodes never change, the story starts with Killetto being captured by Thresher, or 'The Thresher Menace' as they call it, and the good Captain rescues her with his bloody Shaktar getting shot along the way. This has happened in 18 of the last 23 episodes... What? How do I know? Well, I watch it... No, that doesn't destroy my case, I watch it to understand why everyone else watches it, honest..."

Mark Waelith interview by Sara Brynt, The Schedule. Copyright 898 SD, Third Eye Communications, Mort, a wholly owned subsidiary of SLA Industries. 'Captain Contract' is Copyright 896 SD, SIC, Mort, a wholly owned subsidiary of SLA Industries.

POWER SHIFT

"Public taste changes as often as we instigate it."

Alan Marsh, Overall Controller, Third Eye Communications.

If a single figure, aside from Mr Slayer himself, had to be named as the most influential person on Mort, the title would probably go to Alan Marsh, the top person at Third Eye. He decides on the people who control what goes on the television and in the newspapers. He is a quiet and unassuming gentleman who has survived a twenty year tenure in the most desired position in the World of Progress with a minimal amount of fuss and too few assassination attempts, according to his rivals. He controls the controllers of the media. They, in turn, control the public's tastes and desires. Alan Marsh has put in for retirement shortly after the 900th year celebrations and his job is being fought over in boardrooms throughout the World of Progress. Whoever gets his job will be in a very powerful position.

The Mort media has grown, in the last 900 years, from a group of independent stations to a single controlling force with the backing of SLA Industries. One of the major reasons for the success of SLA is the media. The Contract Circuit was one of the major reasons for the public's backing of SLA in the early years. The public, restless after being brought up in a generation of warfare, needed a channel for their aggression: They got a TV channel called SIC.

SIC was started in 35 SD, to showcase all of the violence inherent in the World of Progress and to divert the public's attention from SLA's other 'dealings'. It worked too well as the public started to identify with some of the more prominent operatives and fan mail started to come in. Certain killers were becoming media celebrities.

In 42 SD 'Paramour Pizzas' offered financial incentives to an operative named Francis Crandle in return for his wearing a Paramour Pizzas logo on his shoulder pad. Francis had drug problems and was more than happy to comply to fund his growing habit. His sanity was also in question at this period. The first sponsorship deal went smoothly and without any complaints from the media. It was as if SIC was waiting for the hype. 'Pizzaman', as he was known, had a minor success on his hands. He eventually died in 46 SD, a nobody, his style went out of fashion. His body was found full of drugs in Dr Quirkey's Good Time Emporium at the Downtown

Beacon. Paramour Pizzas went on to be a franchise and survive to this day with a PP sponsorship deal being a highly prestigious 'indie'.

SIC started having programmes about these sponsored killers, with charts showing who was the most popular 'Killer-with-a-sponsorship-contract' as sponsors valued certain killers above others, vying for deals with the top killer. At this point, when their operatives were being distracted from the job at hand, SLA Industries stepped in. They started legislations to control the operatives and started the Contract Circuit. With SLA control, the Contract Killers tidied up their acts. This did not, as was speculated at the time, tone down the sponsorships but actually increased the number of sponsors. Any company could now take part in sponsorship as the Contract Circuit was now SLA backed. The big fear of SLA reprisals was lifted and almost every small business tried to get in the act.

The situation changed in the following years until we have the situation of operatives asking for sponsors instead of the sponsors head hunting operatives.

Sponsors follow corporate sector guidelines as to the levels of payments and have an operative's record of service available for vetting unlikely applicants. The security clearance (SCL) of an operative is also taken into account and anyone of a lowly SCL 10 will not get sponsored. At SCL 9, an operative may seek sponsors of a lower level and upon reaching SCL 5, an operative is open to submit an application for sponsorship to the most prestigious of sponsors. The list of allowable sponsors follows.

SCL 9

The operative may seek sponsorship from the 'indies' or independent companies or recreational entertainment. These sponsors pay 50₢ a month.

Examples: Al's Taxis, Coffin Cigarettes, Ill-Logic, Itztrong Beer, Weird Alien Surfwear, Fifi Laybelle, Danline Security, P. Bond's Happy Mags, Tabitha Zu, Spatula Empire, Flying Jelly Attack Confectionary.

SCL 8

The operative starts to be able to attract the basic commodity companies of SLA, for example magazines and clothing manufacturers. These sponsors pay 100₢ a month.

Examples: Arducci, Sigerson, Heynau, Track opticS, CAF, Pour Le Grand Homme, Manta Security, Servitude, Media Blah Blah, Bad Exposure, Massacre, Glow Good, UV, Rush, Booper, The Personal Interest Company.

SCL 7

Third Eye News and other media companies now become a possibility as potential sponsors. These sponsors pay 150₢ a month.

Examples: Third Eye News, SIC, Killzone, Slaughterhouse Six, The Schedule, Gorezone, Alien Sex Channel.

SCL 6

At this SCL, the major companies are possible for a sponsored operative. These sponsors pay 200₢ a month.

Examples: FEN, Berenyi Light Arms, Power Projects, GASH, Mac.

SCL 5

This SCL offers the largest potential sponsors: The SLA Departments. These sponsors pay 250₢ a month.

Examples: Karma, Dark Lament, Department of Investigation, Cloak Division, Department of Extermination.

Certain departments cannot be sponsors such as Station Analysis, Stigmartyr and Internal Affairs.

CONSOLIDATED BONUS SCHEME

An operative has bills to pay and the only way of keeping the wolf from the door is to earn money in the only manner available to them: BPNs. A Blueprint News File is the usual way for an operative to make ends meet and there are set ways of pricing them and the corporate sector sends out payment guidelines every month and regularly updates the information to stop departments 'getting out of hand'.

SCL increases are also monitored carefully as the system of rewarding operatives can so easily be open to nepotism and corruption without limits and regulations guarding the upper echelons of power from the undeserving.

The current level of payments and SCL increases is as follows:

BPN CODE	SCL	PAYMENT
Blue (Street Maintenance)	+0.1	50–100₢
White (Investigation)	+0.5	200–400₢
Yellow (Retrieval)	+0.2	100–250₢
Green (Expeditionary)	+0.5	200–400₢
Red (Emergency –Red Alert)	+0.3	200–300₢
Grey (Cloak/Internal)	+0.5	200–500₢
Jade (Ebon Related)	+0.5	200–400₢
Black (Suicide Operation)	+1.0	500–1000₢
Silver (Media)	+0.4	250–400₢
Platinum (Head Office)	n/a	n/a

CARRIENS

This breed of creature have plagued Mort for centuries. They 'hunt' in packs like dogs and would appear to have an ordered social structure similar to that of rats. The origins of the Carriens is as yet unknown. What is known is that these horrific creatures will take time to exterminate due to the fact that their breeding cycle is extremely fast with their young reaching maturity at about one year after birth. The Carriens have had a great deal of contact with humans and the like, leading to what would seem to be a creation with a semblance of intelligence gleamed from living amongst a human civilisation for so long. The actual genetic make–up of the creatures is unstable giving rise to mutation from small birth defects such as tails, extra limbs or missing fingers to extreme transformation of the grotesque 'Mutant Carriens'.

When these creatures attack, they revert to a complete animalistic style using only teeth, claws or rudimentary weapons like clubs. The tactics behind their attacks relies on the 'pack' being able to communicate well. This is done by a series of barks, yelps and howls, not unlike dogs. this is the main way Carriens would appear to communicate with each other.

The Carriens may well be the product of some Rival Company as they often sport armour similar to the base Exo–skeleton although no conclusive proof has been found to support this as yet.

Carriens

	MIN	MAX	NORM
STR	5	8	7
DEX	6	11	9
DIA	4	8	6
CONC	1	4	2
CHA	1	1	1
PHYS	5	9	7
KNOW	3	6	4
HITS	10	17	14

Walk: 2

Run: 4

Sprint: 6 + 0.3x running skill

Height: 1.8m (Average)

Weight: 74 Kg (Average)

Skills	Average Rank
Unarmed Combat	6
Club 2–H	4
Sneaking	3
Hide	4
Running	2
Swim	1
Tracking	4
Detect	2
Survival	5
Streetwise	4
Evaluate Opponent	2
Climb	4

Equipment: Club (Hockey Stick, Baseball Bat etc.), Exo–skeleton (Unknown Manufacture)

Disadvantage: Bad Vision (Sunlight) Rank 5: Carriens have a natural aversion to sunlight due to their normal living conditions tending to stay underground in sewers, basements, etc. during the day and travelling up to the surface at night to hunt and feed.

Greater Carriens

The Greater Carriens are, for all intents and purposes, Mutant Carriens that have somehow managed to stabilise their genetic mutations. These creatures appear in much smaller numbers than ordinary Carriens. They also appear to be held as some sort of authority, leaders amongst the Carriens and, as such, have their own packs and groups which they control. Greater Carriens are, both physically and mentally, superior to other Carriens.

	MIN	MAX	NORM
STR	8	15	12
DEX	6	12	9
DIA	5	10	8
CONC	2	6	4
CHA	1	4	2
PHYS	7	14	11
KNOW	3	11	7
HITS	15	29	17

Walk: 2

Run: 4

Sprint: 5 +0.3x Running Skill

Height: 2.4m average

Weight: 120 Kg average

Skills Average Rank

Similar to Carriens except one or two ranks higher with two additions:

Leadership	1
Intimidation	4

Equipment: As Carriens

Disadvantage: Bad Vision (Sunlight) Rank 3: The Greater Carriens have a much higher tolerance for bright light than their smaller Carriens companions.

Mutant Carriens

These unfortunate creatures are both blessed and cursed, blessed with incredible strength and cursed with stupidity and never ending pain. The Mutant Carriens are the most destructive of all the Carriens, they are massive, sometimes uncontrollable monsters that know very little and understand even less of their surroundings. The only thing they truly understand is that they are safe in their pack. the pain that affects these individuals is a product of their ghastly mutation. The nerve endings are left open and raw which imparts the sensation of being constantly ablaze. To some extent, the Carriens bred have learnt to ease this pain for their unfortunate brothers by using massacre techniques known only to the Carriens race.

The Mutant Carriens range in size, shape and form, from extreme to extreme. The genetic codes in these creatures constantly change at a chaotic rate giving rise to such mutations as extra limbs, eyes, organs and the like.

The Mutant Carriens can and do hunt with other breeds of Carriens and can easily be controlled by a Greater Carriens or a number of Carriens skilled in the tending of Mutants.

	MIN	MAX	NORM
STR	10	18	14
DEX	5	10	7
DIA	3	5	4
CONC	1	3	2
CHA	1	1	1
PHYS	8	14	11
KNOW	2	4	3
HITS	18	28	23

Walk: 2
Run: 3
Sprint: 5 +0.3x running skill
Height: 2.2m average
Weight: 140 Kg average

Skills	Average Rank
Unarmed Combat	8
Club 2-H	3
Running	1
Climb	2
Tracking	2

Equipment: As Carriens
Disadvantage: Bad Vision (Sunlight) Rank 5



SCL Requirement 10

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of: ENQUIRIES

Training Package Recommended: ANY

COLOUR CODE: BLUE

ARBEG STREET & FOSTER STREET. CONTROL AND SUPPRESS ANY CIVILIAN DISTURBANCES ON BOTH STREETS. SQUADS ONLY, NO SOLO OPERATIVES.

Station Analysis [ ]
Third Eye News [x]

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 50₢ /day

Per Op. [x]
Per Squad [ ]

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SCL Requirement 10

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of: INVESTIGATION

Training Package Recommended: KICK MURDER/INVESTIGATION

COLOUR CODE: WHITE

INVESTIGATION OF SIX MURDERS IN AND AROUND THE UPTOWN AREA. POSSIBLE "OBSESSIVE" SERIAL KILLER. BRING BACK ALIVE IF POSSIBLE, IF NOT, EXTERMINATION WARRANT AVAILABLE. CONTACT DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATION FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Station Analysis [ ]
Third Eye News [x]

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 250₢

Per Op. [x]
Per Squad [ ]

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SCL Requirement 10

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of: RETRIEVAL

Training Package Recommended: INVESTIGATION

COLOUR CODE: YELLOW

CONSIGNMENT OF SLA INDUSTRIES' HARDWARE TO BE RE-CLAIMED. BONUS FOR SUCCESSFUL RETRIEVAL AVAILABLE. CONTACT RETRIEVAL DEPARTMENT FOR FULL OPERATION BRIEF. CONTACT 'FEN' DESIGN TEAM FOR HARDWARE LIST.

Station Analysis [x]
Third Eye News [ ]

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 200₢

Per Op. [x]
Per Squad [ ]

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SCL Requirement 10

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of: EXPEDITION

Training Package Recommended: ANY

COLOUR CODE: GREEN

SEEK AND DESTROY CARRIENS INFESTATION IN CANNIBAL SECTOR THREE. REPORTS INDICATE SIZE OF NEST TO BE APPROX. 20. COMBAT READY OPERATIVES PREFERRED. BONUS PER CARRIENS 10₢. PROOF OF KILLS REQUIRED. CONTACT DEPARTMENT OF EXPEDITION FOR TARGET LOCATION.

Station Analysis [x]
Third Eye News [ ]

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 1000₢

Per Op. [ ]
Per Squad [x]

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SCL Requirement 10

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of: THIRD EYE NEWS

Training Package Recommended: INVESTIGATION/STRIKE

COLOUR CODE: RED

DARKNIGHT OPERATION IN PROGRESS. INDUSTRIAL PLANT SECTOR 17. ANY OPERATIVES TO ATTEND IMMEDIATELY. MEDIA BONUS UPON REQUEST.

Station Analysis [ ]
Third Eye News [x]

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 275₢

Per Op. [x]
Per Squad [ ]

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SCL Requirement 9

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of: CLOAK

Training Package Recommended: INVESTIGATION

COLOUR CODE: GREY

INVESTIGATION OF CORPORATE WITHIN FIREARMS REGULATORY SERVICE. TREASON IS SUSPECTED AND SWIFT ARREST IS PREFERRED. POSSIBLE DARKNIGHT INVOLVEMENT. PLEASE CONTACT CLOAK DIVISION FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BPN. COMPLETION IN SEVEN DAYS OR SCL INCREASE IS INVALID.

Station Analysis [x]
Third Eye News [ ]

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 300₢

Per Op. [x]
Per Squad [ ]

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SCL Requirement 10

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of: EBON

Training Package Recommended: SCOUT/ANY (EBON PREFERRED)

COLOUR CODE: JADE

DISAPPEARANCE OR KIDNAPPING IF FERAL EBONS FROM DOWNTOWN. POSSIBLE DARKNIGHT INVOLVEMENT. RETRIEVE FERAL EBONS ALIVE. CONTACT EBON DEPARTMENT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. MINIMUM ONE EBON IN SQUAD.

Station Analysis [x]
Third Eye News [ ]

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 250₢

Per Op. [x]
Per Squad [ ]

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SCL Requirement 10

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of: THIRD EYE NEWS

Training Package Recommended: ANY (SEE BELOW)

COLOUR CODE: SILVER

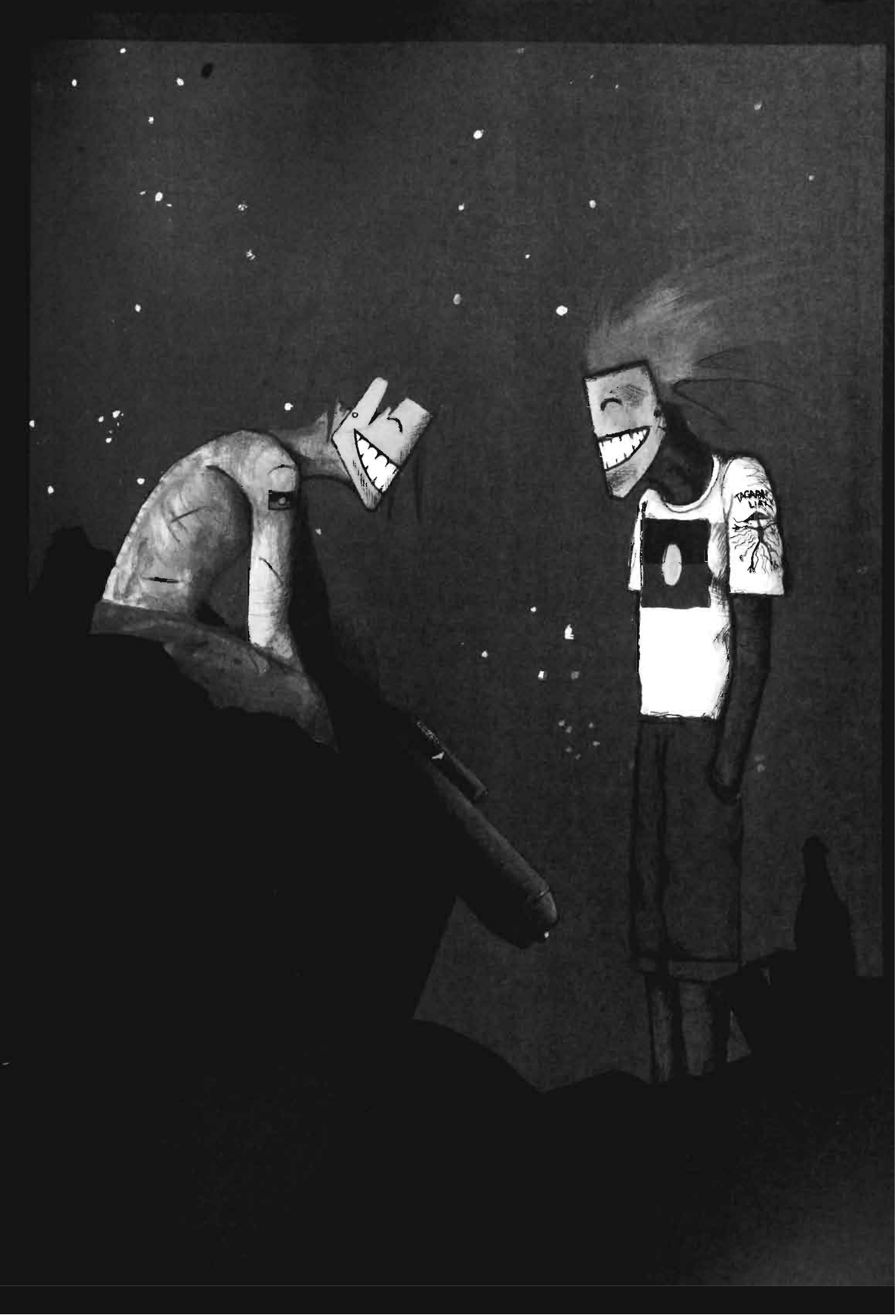
SQUAD REQUIRED FOR TWO DAY OPERATION, PUBLIC SPEAKING. PROMOTION OF COMPANY. WELL TURNED OUT SQUADS ONLY. FAILURE TO MEET REQUIREMENTS COULD RESULT IN CANCELLATION OF PAYMENT. CONTACT THIRD EYE FOR DETAILS.

Station Analysis [ ]
Third Eye News [x]

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 1350₢

Per Op. [ ]
Per Squad [x]

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SEARCH & SEIZURE WARRANT

THE HOLDER OF THIS WARRANT HAS THE RIGHT TO SEARCH, AND IF NECESSARY, IMPOUND ANY MATERIAL THEY SEE FIT FROM THE PROPERTY/ PERSON NAMED BELOW.

NAME OF WARRANT HOLDER/S _____ SIGNATURE _____

_____ SIGNATURE _____

_____ SIGNATURE _____

_____ SIGNATURE _____

_____ SIGNATURE _____

ISSUED AGAINST: NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

_____

REASON FOR OBTAINING WARRANT _____

(NO MORE THAN 50 WORDS) _____

_____

_____

_____

BPN Nº _____

DATE OF ISSUE _____

WARRANT ISSUED BY _____ SIGNATURE _____

THIS FORM IS INVALID IF INCOMPLETE IN ANY WAY

INITIALS OF HOLDER _____

DATE _____

OPP/SQUAD INITIALS _____

SPONSOR INITIALS _____

SPONSORSHIP CONTRACT

NAME OF SPONSOR _____

NAME OF OPP/SQUAD UNDER AGREEMENT _____

DATE SPONSORSHIP COMMENCES _____

DATE SPONSORSHIP CLOSES _____

TYPE OF SPONSORSHIP _____

_____

_____

_____

OTHER AGREEMENTS _____

_____

_____

NAME OF REPRESENTATIVE FOR SPONSOR _____

SIGNATURE _____

NAME OF OPP/SQUAD _____

SIGNATURE _____

THE SPONSOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CANCEL THIS AGREEMENT AT ANY TIME THEY SEE FIT TO DO SO. ALL IMAGES ARE EXCLUSIVELY OWNED BY THE SPONSOR AND CAN IN NO WAY BE USED BY ANY ONE ELSE AS PER THE COPYRIGHT ACTS IN EXISTENCE ON THE DATE THIS DOCUMENT IS COMPLETED.

THIS FORM IS INVALID IF INCOMPLETE IN ANY WAY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOSES

MEDICAL EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE

THIS CERTIFICATE GRANTS THE BEARER THE RIGHT TO FORGO ANY AND ALL FORMS OF NORMAL PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION AS RUN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOSES AS IT HAS BEEN DEEMED UNNECESSARY FOR SUCH TESTING TO BE CARRIED OUT ON THE HOLDER OF THIS CERTIFICATE.

NAME OF HOLDER _____ SIGNATURE _____

AUTHORIZED BY _____ SIGNATURE _____

DATE OF ISSUE _____

EXPIRY DATE _____
(If applicable)

DEPARTMENTAL AUTHORISATION _____

0 3 1 2 2 9 0 1 3 3 9 1 0 6

THIS DOCUMENT IS INVALID IF INCOMPLETE IN ANY WAY.

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SLA INDUSTRIES RELEASE

(STANDARD FORMAT FOR ALL DEPARTMENTS)

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN
(NO MORE THAN 100 WORDS)

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY UNDERSTAND AND AGREE THAT ANY ACTIONS I UNDERTAKE ARE OF MY OWN FREE WILL AND THAT THE AGENTS AND EXECUTIVES OF SLA INDUSTRIES CAN IN NO WAY BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGE TO PROPERTY AND/OR LOSS OF LIFE, INCLUDING MY OWN, DUE TO MY EXECUTION OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED ACTIONS.

NAME / SQUAD _____ signature _____

START DATE _____

FINISH DATE _____

WITNESS _____ signature _____

WITNESS _____ signature _____

THIS FORM IS COMPLETE WHEN SIGNED BY OPP/SQUAD

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Opp / Employee Initials

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERMINATION

EXTERMINATION WARRANT

Name of Warrant Holder

Name of Target

(Delete as applicable) Civillian/Opp/Employee

Date of Issue

Expiry Date

Date of Completion

Departmental Authorisation
(Invalid if not signed)

Operative / Employee
(Invalid if not signed)

(Sign on compleation)

This document is invalid if incomplete in any way.

SCL Requirement

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of:

Training Package Recommended:

COLOUR CODE

Station Analysis

Third Eye News

Consolidated Bonus Scheme

Per Op.

Per Squad

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SCL Requirement

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of:

Training Package Recommended:

COLOUR CODE

Station Analysis

Third Eye News

Consolidated Bonus Scheme

Per Op.

Per Squad

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SCL Requirement

BLUEPRINT NEWS

THIRD EYE

Departmental Authorisation

Contact Department of:

Training Package Recommended:

COLOUR CODE

Station Analysis

Third Eye News

Consolidated Bonus Scheme

Per Op.

Per Squad

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SLA OPERATIVE SECURITY CLEARANCE CARD

NAME

CLASSIFICATION

PACKAGE

SQUAD

DEPT

SCL

STRENGTH	
DEXTERITY	
DIAGNOSE	
CONCENTRATION	
CHARISMA	
PHYSIQUE	
KNOWLEDGE	
FLUX	
COOL	

MOVE RATE

WALK
RUN
SPRINT

ENCUMBRANCE

MOVEMENT
HALF MOVEMENT
NO MOVEMENT

EBON SKILLS	RANK	EBON EQUIPMENT

FORMULAE ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

Blast		Flintlock	○
Blue Thermal		Thermal Gauge	○
Communication		Distracter	○
Detect		Pathfinder	○
Enhancement		Pineal Stim	○
Healing		Medikit	○
Illumination		Gem	○
Protect		DeathSuit	○
Reality Fold		Vector Box	○
Red Thermal		Thermal Gauge	○
Senses		Jade Probe	○
Telekinesis		Focus	○
Gore Cannon		Cannon	○

FLUX SELF	FLUX DEATHSUIT

WEAPON	SIZE	PEN	DMG	AD	ROF	CLIP	CAL	RCL

HIT POINTS		DEATHSUIT PV	ID
TOTAL			
HEAD	–	–	
TORSO	–	–	
L.ARM	–	–	
R.ARM	–	–	
L.LEG	–	–	
R.LEG	–	–	
	–	–	
	–	–	
	–	–	
	–	–	
	–	–	
WOUNDS	○○○○○○○○○○		

HEAD: 1/3 (UP) TORSO: 1/1 ARMS: 1/2 (DOWN) LEGS: 1/2 (UP)

NATURAL WEAPONS	PEN	DMG	AD

INITIATIVE PHASE 1 2 3 4 5 | DAMAGE BONUS

SKILL	RANK	STAT	MAX RANK

SLA INDUSTRIES

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AGE	
HEIGHT	
WEIGHT	
EYE COLOUR	
HAIR COLOUR	
COMPLEXION	

EXPERIENCE POINTS

SAVINGS

EQUIPMENT

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	RANK

NOTES

NECANTHROPE TRAITS	RANK

SLA OPERATIVE SECURITY CLEARANCE CARD

NAME

CLASSIFICATION

PACKAGE

SQUAD

DEPT

SCL

STRENGTH	
DEXTERITY	
DIAGNOSE	
CONCENTRATION	
CHARISMA	
PHYSIQUE	
KNOWLEDGE	
COOL	

MOVE RATE

WALK
RUN
SPRINT

ENCUMBRANCE

MOVEMENT
HALF MOVEMENT
NO MOVEMENT

LIFT
THROW

WEAPON	SIZE	PEN	DMG	AD	ROF	CLIP	CAL	RCL

SKILL	RANK	STAT	MAX RANK

AGE	
HEIGHT	
WEIGHT	
EYE COLOUR	
HAIR COLOUR	
COMPLEXION	

EXPERIENCE POINTS

SAVINGS

EQUIPMENT

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	RANK

NOTES

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Between Department of Employment,
Located at SLA Industries
Headquarters,
Mort Central.

And _____
residing at _____
_____
_____

Whereas the second party has agreed to undertake employment offered by the first party as an operative, THEREFORE the parties AGREE:

1.On behalf of and as instructed by SLA Industries (hereinafter referred to as "the Employer"), we hereby offer _____ (hereinafter referred to as "the Operative") a place of employment within the said company.

2.The contract shall be held to have commenced on _____ and, subject to the provisions hereof, shall continue until _____ and from year to year thereafter dissolved by written notice given by the Employer not less than 30 minutes prior to termination or retirement.

3.The Operative shall be entitled to information within the company, SLA Industries, respective of his or her Security Clearance Level to be able to undertake his work successfully.

4.The Operative shall be entitled to the option of a finance chip when they enter the company. If he/she chooses the finance chip option, he will be entitled to a 200¢/month salary as well as Observation Centre assistance for no less than 80% of the time spent with the company.

5.The Operative shall be entitled to accommodation offered by the Employer and shall be held to be responsible for the rent and other charges accumulated during his/her stay. The accommodation shall be maintained to a certain order as shall be mutually agreed by both parties thereof.

6.A personal accident insurance policy shall be established by the Health and Safety department of the Employer for the benefit of the Operative and his/her dependants in terms to be agreed by both parties.

7.The Operative shall devote sufficient time and attention to the Employer's work subject to the provisions thereof.

8.No Operative shall, without the express consent of the Employer, do any of the following acts:

a) work with, converse with, make contracts or agreements with or correspond with rival company operatives or subversives out with the normal course of his work; or

b) endorse any bill of exchange or promissory note, or contract any debt, on account of the Employer, or in any manner pledge it's credit or employ it's funds; or

c) as an individual, enter into any speculative transactions other than by way of investment; or

d) knowingly do or permit anything to be done whereby the company property may be subjected to diligence of any kind; or

e) act in such a way as to bring his name or the reputation of the Employer into disrepute; or

f) grossly neglect the work of his Employer; or

g) take any steps by way of control or conduct of the company business which are not in accordance with policy laid down by the Employer; or

h) act in any respect contrary to the provisions of this Contract or to good faith between the parties; or

i) use any type of pharmaceutical product without medical authorization (See sub–clause No. 37 of the Operative handbook); or

j) take any steps hostile towards the Employer or any departments thereof including media departments (See sub–clause No. 49 of the Operative handbook).

If any Operative shall do any of the above acts, then in any of these events, the Employer may terminate, retire or expell the Operative concerned with the effect from such date as shall be specified in a written notice given by or on behalf of the Employer to the Operative concerned who shall be deemed to have ceased to be an Operative on such a date.

9. a) Any Operative may retire from the company on giving not less than one months' notice in writing to the Employer and will be subject to a complete de–brief and final evaluation.

b) If the Operative i)becomes of unsound mind, as evidenced by a medical certificate ii) becomes in reasonable opinion of the Employer incapable of contributing efficiently to the company or iii) is absent from the company without the consent of the Employer for a continuous period of four months or an aggregate of 220 days in any period of two consecutive years, he shall be deemed to have retired from the company on the expiry period of 30 minutes written notice given tohim by the Employer.

10.Interpretation in this Contract

a) words importing the singular shall include the plural, and vice versa;

b) words importing the male gender shall include the female gender.

11.If during the continuance of this Contract agreement or after its termination any disrepute, question or difference shall arise between the parties or Trustee of any party or any of them, the division of which is not otherwise hereinbefore specially provided for, as to the meaning, intent or construction of these presents or the transactions of the agreement, the expulsion, termination or retirement of any party, the dissolution or winding up of the agreement, or any valuation herein provided or the rights or liabilities of any party or the Trustee of any party hereunder, or otherwise in relation to the agreement, the same shall be referred to an Arbiter to be mutually chosen by the parties to any such dispute, question or difference or, failing agreement to be appointed on the application of such party by the Sheriff Principal of Central Mort; such Arbiter shall have power to assess and award damages and the decree or decrees arbitral of such Arbiter, interim or final, shall be conclusive and binding on all concerned and the application of section 5923 of the Administration of Justice (Mort) Act 753 is expressly excluded.

12. The parties consent to registration hereof and of any decree arbitral to follow hereon for preservation and execution:

SUBSCRIBED by us the said _____ (the Operative) and _____ (the Employee), a representative of the Department of Employment, SLA Industries on _____ before these witnesses:–

_____ (signature of first party)

_____ (signature of second party)

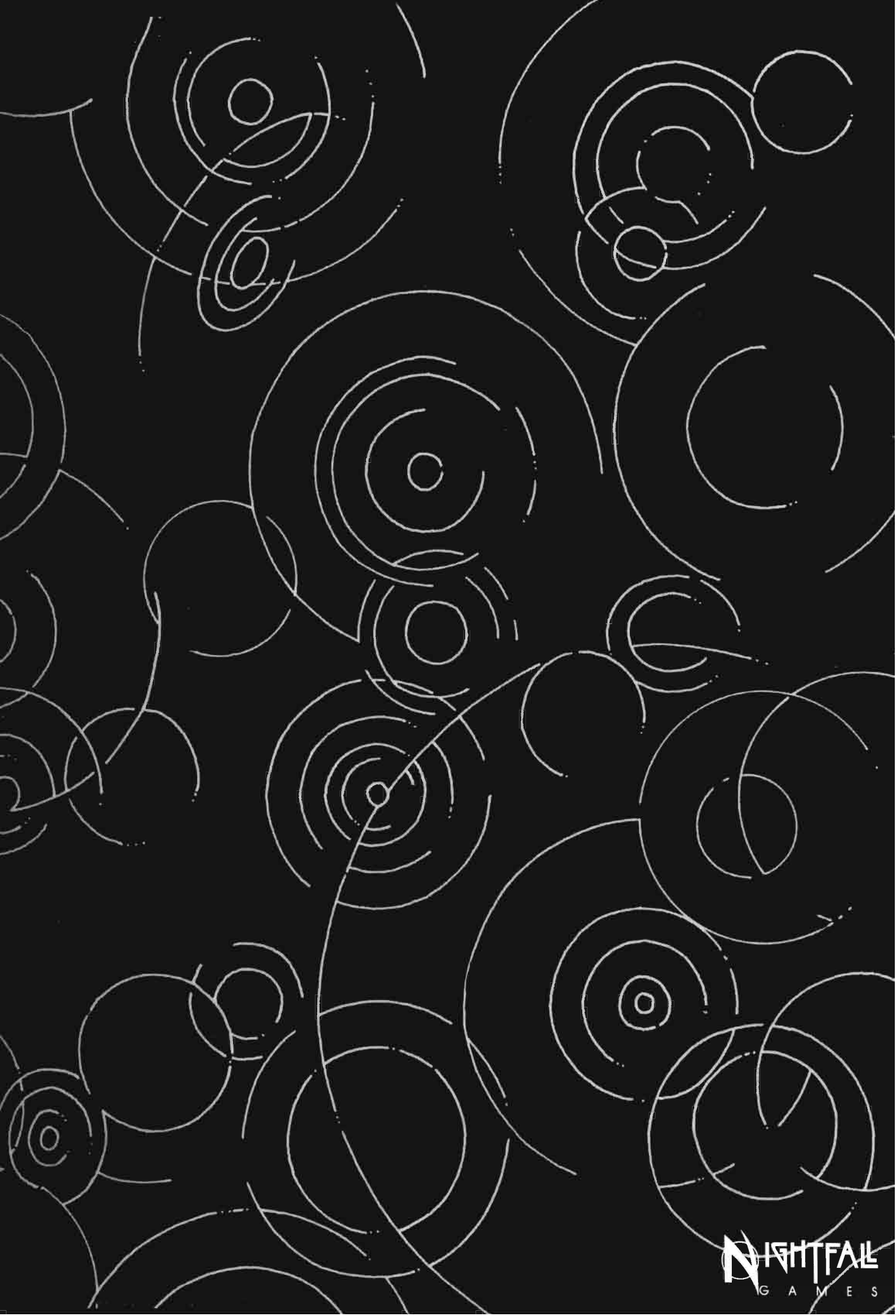
Witness _____
Address _____
_____
Occupation _____

Witness _____
Address _____
_____
Occupation _____

Witness _____
Address _____
_____
Occupation _____

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NIGHTFALL
GAMES

S·L·A
INDUSTRIES



Operative, Employee, Contract Killer, Necanthrope, Ebon, Biogenetic, Corporate. These are the lifestyles available to you when you enter SLA Industries' World of Progress.

Society split between truth and deception, conflict and political subversion, style and horror. Television and Insanity.

Fighting for your life as an oblivious public watches on, awaiting your last breath between the adverts.

The media channels all the young hopefuls into their vessels. Nihilism as a way of life. Strive for originality in a world of outrage and conformity and diversity. The different get noticed, the truly original survive.

Six o'clock horror, every hour on the hour. Hallowe'en Jack claims another victim. Fifteen minutes of fame for the corpse. Don't get famous like him. Change. Become. Evolve. This is the way forward.

The Big Picture rewards the loyal. Be true to yourself. Survive. The truth awaits the inquisitive.

Guns kill but so does the truth.

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Studio 257/8
Abbey Mill Business Centre,
Paisley, Scotland

NIGHTFALL GAMES

For 2 or more players.

Suggested for mature gamers