


Widows & Orphans

by Chris Avellone



HERO  **PLUS**™

Orphans & Orphans™

Version 1.0

by Chris Avellone

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Introduction

It is said that Fell's Point is a city of widows and orphans.

One night of chaos changed them from statistics to forces to be reckoned with. When night fell in 1990, the Fell's Point lost and dispossessed brutally carved out their territory in the city streets.

Years later, their stories are finally being told. They have opened their gates to allow you passage.

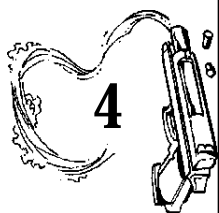
If loneliness is your soul companion, come to Widow's Peak, where the women of Fell's Point have established their kingdom and guard it against all

who would try and deprive them of their livelihood. In the shadows of the widows' influence, attempt to solve a bizarre murder that even the authorities fear to investigate.

Or if it is a fight you desire, seek out the orphans of Fell's Point, Clown Alley, who have lost their families, their mad king, and their way.

Both groups have their tales to tell.

And they want you to be a part of them.



Forward: Where This Thing Came From And What To Do With It

Prostitutes and clowns may not be something you expect to see in one book. That's okay. They were never intended to be complimentary in the first place.

The Widows and Clown Alley were originally scripted for a *Dark Champions* organization book known as *Shadow Syndicates* two years ago. As seems to happen, however, I got Steve Long-itis, and the manuscripts promptly swelled beyond the bounds of reason. They sat, distended pustules of kilobytes on my computer, too obese for a published book. *There goes more work that will never see the light of day*, I thought.

Then **Hero Plus** came along, and viola...here they are on diskette.

So now you have these two organization books in your hands: one book with a vice district filled with hookers, and the other book describing a bunch of clown crooks. What do you do with them?

Whatever you want, I guess, is the best answer. It's more in line with the grand Hero tradition of customizing your own world rather than having it dictated to you.

Take what you like from *Widows and Orphans*, tailor it to your campaign, and disregard the rest. Hopefully there's something you can use in these manuscripts.

Enjoy.

A Word Of Warning

Widow's Peak deals with mature themes, and GMs should be aware that using such subject matter in role-playing games requires a certain level of maturity and caution. Some players may find the subjects contained herein uncomfortable, and GMs should take this into consideration.

Sensitive readers, however, should also keep in mind that *Widow's Peak* is a work of fiction. Neither the author nor HERO Games condones any of the activities (well, except for police work and arresting criminals) mentioned in this book.

Dedication

To Andy "Buddha of Love" Mathews for the invitation to join the EROICA APA, and his subsequent invitation to become one of the contributors for *Shadow Syndicates* (you asked for it, Andy). Special thanks also goes to the following two people: Steve "Hero Golden Boy" Long for his extensive knowledge of prostitution (hmmm), for pointing my research in the right direction, editing suggestions, and for the Kalaripayit Martial Arts style, and to Mark "Meat" Arseneault, who took time out of his busy schedule to reality-check *Widow's Peak* and add his special "cop" insights, including formatting crime reports, some slang ("meat," "trick"), specific police investigation methods, and general criticism. Thuy Dang, Brad Reed, George Sedgwick, Tim Winkle and Chris Wright really had nothing to do with this book, but I like them, so I thought I'd mention them here. Take care, guys.

Abbreviations

Throughout the book, some supplements and campaign books are referred to extensively. For the sake of convenience, and to allow more new material to be presented, the title of the books have been reduced to the following abbreviations:

A	=	<i>Asylum</i>
DC	=	<i>Dark Champions</i>
I4I	=	<i>An Eye for an Eye</i>
JNL	=	<i>Justice, Not Law</i>
MR	=	<i>Murderer's Row</i>
UE	=	<i>Underworld Enemies</i>
UMA	=	<i>The Ultimate Martial Artist</i>

These references, whenever possible, include a page number for convenience.

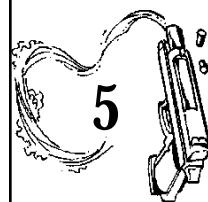
Note: All references to the "Champions Rulebook" in the text refer to the *Champions Fourth Edition Rulebook*.

Afterthoughts

There's two more things I better say, which may help you sort out some confusing stuff in the text:

1. As scripted, these two books are set in the fictional city of Fell's Point, a *Dark Champions* city south of Hudson City. Do not be alarmed. "Fell's Point" could just as well read Hudson City, New York, San Francisco, or the GM's own campaign city. For the sake of story (and to try and appeal to as many genres as possible), "Fell's Point" is assumed to exist simultaneously in *Dark Champions*, *Champions*, and *Horror Hero*.
2. In addition, while Fell's Point has a few paranormals running around in it, these paranormals (and their powers) play little or no role in the two books that follow. No great changes need to be made if you're running a Heroic level *Dark Champions* campaign.
2. My fellow EROICA APA member and pal, Tim Binford, designed the National Investigation and Law Enforcement Organization (NILE) that Agent Andersen is a member of in the *Widow's Peak* adventure. Tim is in no way responsible for the unorthodox procedures that Andersen engages in the adventure.

Though a summary won't do NILE justice (so to speak), it may clear up a few questions you have while reading *Widow's Peak*. Essentially, NILE is a federal bureau under the Department of Justice. It deals with crimes committed by organizations which are beyond the capabilities of conventional law enforcement agencies (i.e., Card Shark, the Master of Crime's Midnight Syndicate, Arsenal, and so on). NILE conducts regular surveillance of all known vigilante crime fighters and their opponents; in the past, this surveillance included inserting NILE agents (disguised as vigilantes) into the underworld where they could keep close tabs on costumed crime fighters.



Widow's Peak

"Mess with the Point widows, and the city will close its legs to you."

- Fell's Point saying -

PROLOGUE: Lonely Nights

In the middle of the night, the small room had transformed itself, becoming something of beauty. It no longer had walls, nothing constricting...it had *relaxed* and stepped outside itself.

The lighting had a great deal to do with it; the lights had been coaxed to such a slight glow that they caressed the center of the room, leaving the disjointed shadows jealous and broken at the perimeter, sulking in their own disarray. It was as if the broken things that lay beyond the light were inconsequential somehow, disconnected from the attention the figure in the center of the room received.

The two lights, held in inverted bowls atop large aluminum poles, appeared as twin braziers, gently licking the last of their coals and calmly settling into themselves. They grew weaker and weaker as the night stretched on, slowly spending themselves as shadows seeped into the chill left by the receding light.

The figure seemed content at this; she sat as a queen on a throne might sit, not acknowledging the care that had been taken in illuminating her still features; the figure paid homage and moved not a muscle, her hands folded on her lap, and her back rigid from the hard wooden chair that gripped her like a second spine. The thin red band that had been burrowed into the thick flesh around her neck appeared as a necklace in the soft glow, and there was the hint of a smile on her lips. Her eyes stared forward into death.

When the Fell's Point police came in the aftermath of this transformation, they failed to notice *her* and the care to which she had been committed. The shadows that lay broken beyond the light occupied their attention, as they seemed to promise the clues and the answers to what had happened. Disarray, violence, murder...these were the things that concerned them. These were things that they understood.

They assumed that she had died there, alone. That she had died there, a victim.

It was their first mistake. When I saw the pictures of the scene that had been taken when they arrived, it was her

smile that struck me as curious. It ate at me, that she should have been smiling as she was being murdered.

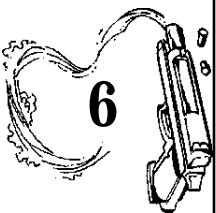
My name is Andersen. I am a special investigator for the National Investigation and Law Enforcement Agency; the following pages contain an account of my findings when I traveled south to Fell's Point to investigate the death of Deborah Cross, the head of the NILE Branch Office in Fell's Point.

I traveled there alone.

Author's Note: This adventure, its subculture source material, and the mini-locale of the Basin are designed so they can be slipped into any campaign city. As the adventure is scripted, it is set in the fictional city of Fell's Point, a Dark Champions city south of Hudson City. Fell's Point can easily be replaced with Hudson City, New York, San Francisco or the author's own campaign city, and there is no obligation to use the setting provided here. For more information on Fell's Point, see the upcoming *Asylum* source book.

Police Report: At 1215 hours, an unknown female complainant called FPPD dispatch to report a possible homicide at Victim's residence. Ofcr. (#357) was dispatched to investigate. Upon arrival, at 1223 hours, Ofcr. discovered the front door of the Victim's residence unlocked. After failing to contact anyone at the residence, Ofcr. entered the residence. Victim's body was discovered in a dining chair in the living room. Ofcr. observed red marks around Victims throat and neck. Ofcr. further indicated that the residence was in disarray and that many items had been broken/or scattered about. No witnesses or suspects were identified. FPC Coroner, FPPD Homicide Division, FPPD Public Affairs and Lt. (#12), North Patrol Day Shift Watch Commander, were contacted and responded to the scene, Forwarded to Detectives, Homicide Div., for further investigation.

Foreshadows: The PCs become immersed in the darker undercurrents of the city when the head of the NILE Fell's Point Branch Office is found strangled to death in her apartment; as the characters follow the leads throughout the city, they learn of the Fell's Point Harbor prostitutes and the carefully kept secrets of the Fell's Point underworld. Some of the ma-



terial presented in the following chapters is told through the eyes of a NILE “investigator,” Agent Andersen; this is done for narrative reasons only. If the GM wishes, the investigator’s notes can be used as handouts for the players as they travel deeper into the Basin, looking for the murderer.

Although the crime occurred in FPPD jurisdiction, certain strings have been pulled at the highest levels of the Fell’s Point government to let NILE take over the investigation (the person or party responsible for this is unclear). The ostensible reason for this is because a NILE agent was the victim. The real reason is twofold: one, NILE doesn’t trust the FPPD to handle the case on their own, and two, Ms. Cross and the NILE Office in Fell’s Point were conducting sensitive investigations on the peninsula that may have led to her murder. If NILE would trust the PCs to follow up on the murder, the PCs may be substituted for the investigator. In any event, the PCs may choose to follow up the murder on their own; as will soon become apparent, they (either in their public roles as police officers or federal agents, or in their Hero IDs if they are costumed heroes or vigilantes) are somehow tied into the strange events occurring in Fell’s Point.

The Tip-Off: At 12:15 PM, the Fell’s Point Police Department received an anonymous phone call from a woman who claimed someone had been murdered in apartment 923 of the Bayside Apartments. The woman sounded frightened but did not identify herself. A patrolman was sent to investigate and found the body at 12:35 PM.

Northside, General Information: Deborah was found in her apartment on the ninth floor of Bayside Apartments, a complex located in Fell’s Point North (also called the “Bayside” or the “Northside”), a quiet neighborhood on the tip of the peninsula. Bayside is only a few blocks from the western edge of the Harbor District (detailed below); despite its proximity to the Harbor, however, Deborah’s apartment is nestled in one of the city’s best residential areas, at the fringes of where the apartments give way to rows of red brick houses and tree-lined streets drifting west along the shore of Fell’s Point Bay. As the Northside makes it way east toward the Harbor, small factories, garages and used-car dealerships sprout up among the buildings. The neighborhood’s population is predominately white, mostly Jewish, with some ethnic pockets and middle class. This area is considered a “country club” by the FPPD; not much violent crime takes place here, a sharp contrast to the action precincts on the Southside and the Borough. The crime rate is low.

The Apartment

It is important that once the PCs arrive at the apartment the GM describe the murder scene exactly, especially the placement of the furniture in the dining room, kitchen and living room. This becomes important when the characters visit the Harbor Terrace Apartments, below.

Andersen’s Notes: (Throughout the Widow’s Peak, room descriptions are presented as Andersen’s notes solely for entertainment value; granted, the structure here is unrealistic (an investigator wouldn’t resort to the same word choices, use game terms, or compartmentalize the descriptions quite so neatly), but it helps break GM tedium in reading map keys and makes describing the scene for the PCs a little easier.

When a police officer (or in Andersen’s case, a glorified NILE desk jockey) types messages over the computers, officers and dispatch personnel often delete vowels from words or spell

things phonetically. It saves screen space, and it’s relatively easy to read. For a sample “crime scene description” as a real officer might type it.)

The Possible Entrances include the front door (unlocked; it was not forced), and if the intruder had climbing devices, such as a swing line or a high Climbing roll, they could have conceivably used the windows in the master bedroom, the sunroom or entered through the patio (as far as the patio is concerned, the intruder could have swung down from the tenth floor patio above or climbed up from the eighth floor patio below; the patio door was unlocked when the police arrived). The sunroom and master bedroom windows were not broken, but it is unlikely the intruder could have used them, as they do not open far enough to allow a human being to slip through.

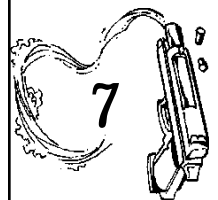
With the exception of Deborah’s, there are no fingerprints on the front door, the window sills, or the patio doors. There are no scratches on the patio ledge that would indicate a grapple hook was used to scale the side of the building. See *Patio*, below.

Foyer: The foyer is in disarray. The closet door is open, and the clothes have been pulled out onto the floor, some of them slashed open, as if someone was looking for valuables in the lining.

Laundry/Utility Room: The detergents, fabric softeners and bleach lie scattered across the floor in pools and white powdery dunes. The washer and dryer doors are open, and the clothes have been pulled out onto the floor.

Clue: [Sight PER Roll] There is a set of girl’s clothes on the laundry room floor. The blouse of white cotton with the initials “Dark Champions” embroidered in red cursive letters on the left breast and the accompanying red and green plaid skirt looks like some kind of school uniform, for a young girl of about nine or ten. Deborah has no children, however, and if the witnesses below are questioned, no one mentions ever seeing a girl entering or leaving the apartment. The outfit is one the victim was cleaning after she visited the Harbor Terrace apartment last week (see below). If the characters smell the clothes (Smell PER Roll, the uniform had not been cleaned before the murder took place), they will notice a faint musky scent about the skirt. It was as if the wearer took part in sexual activity while wearing it, but there are no traces of semen or vaginal excretions on the skirt. If the PCs ask, it is possible that Deborah herself could have worn the uniform, with considerable pulling and tugging (it looks like elastic lining has been added in several places, especially around the waist, chest and sleeves). It looks as if the uniform has been mended in several places.

Dining Area: The dining area is dominated by a heavy oak dining table, surrounded by three hard-backed wooden chairs, all pushed firmly against the side of the table. There are place mats for four, and a vase with flowers sits in the middle of the table, along with a pair of salt and pepper shakers. The



dining room table has not been touched, but the glass cabinets holding glassware and silverware lining the walls have been opened, and their contents lie in pieces across the floor.

Clue: [Sight PER Roll at -2 or PS: Appraiser] Some of the broken glassware looks valuable; considering how fragile it was, however, taking the glassware may have proved to be too much trouble for the intruder. [Deduction] Either that, or the intruder wasn't concerned with the valuables in the apartment.

* [Deduction roll, followed by a Sight PER Roll or a successful Luck roll] The vase of flowers on the dining room table has not been touched, not even to see if there was anything inside it. Characters may notice something odd about it (if they make a Luck roll, they knock the vase over). Taped underneath the vase is a tiny manila envelope, which holds a key to Deborah's Harbor Terrace apartment (see below). Wrapped around the key is a small piece of paper that reads "GHARd" (GHARd stands for the Grays Harbor Access Road, in the Harbor bordering the Basin; this was Deborah's spare key when she first rented the apartment, and she has never thrown the slip of paper away). For more info on the key, see "Clues," at the end of this chapter.

Living Room: Despite the mess, none of the furniture in this room has been moved; a black leather sofa is lined up against the east wall, its cushions turned over. Flanking the sofa are two small tables with tall lamps suspended on aluminum poles; the intensity of the lights is controlled by dials in the foyer. A large glass coffee table is set in front of the sofa, but it is bare. A heavy recliner sits in the SE corner of the room, with a pile of newspapers on the left side of it. Small pictures hang on the wall. A dark plush carpet covers the floor with an elliptical rug placed over it for good measure. Deborah was tied to a hard-backed wooden chair set in the middle of the floor, facing the sunroom. The chair she was tied to looks like it was taken from the dining room set.

The sunroom window provides a commanding view of the city. If the PCs arrive at night, they will see the entire city opening up beyond the window, all the way to the river that borders the opposite side of the peninsula.

Clues: The victim was secured to the chair by a leather band, perhaps a belt or even a thick purse strap (the straps are gone; the murderer took them when she left). The leather strap was probably used to choke her as well (ligature strangulation)...her face is congested, and a horizontal band, about an inch in width, is visible around her neck where she was strangled. There are no scratch marks on the victim's neck (Deduction: Deborah either did not or could not break free). The estimated time of death is eleven o' clock.

Although there is no sign of intercourse or rape, a coroner or forensic pathologist can determine (through the amount of vaginal lubrication) that Deborah was sexually aroused

either as the crime was being committed or shortly before.

[Sight Per Roll at -2] The newspapers by the easy chair have not been leafed through...ever. They don't even look as if Deborah read them [GM Note: Like the elliptical rug above, the newspapers are just for "decoration"...see the Harbor Terrace Apartment, below].

The pictures in the room are almost exclusively black and white photographs of someone's suburban house. If the PCs do some checking, they should be able to discover that the pictures are of Deborah's suburban home in Washington Dark Champions, where she lived as a child and later returned to as an adult. There are two ways they can discover this information: first, the license plate of Debroah's father's car is visible in one of the pictures. If the PCs check the DMV, they should be able to place the owner and where the car was registered (Washington D.C.). In the second option, if the GM wants to make it easier for the PCs, the pictures can be labeled in some form, either with a date and location on the back of the frame or the street and address of the house showing in one of the photos. If the PCs don't check out the pictures (in all fairness, there's not much incentive to do so), they may find out later on from the police, either through word of mouth or through hacking into the police database, what the pictures are of. There are no pictures of family or friends in the living room.

Any character with KS: Photography, PS: Actor or the Acting skill will notice that the lights in the room are almost set up for what looks like a photography shoot (see narrative, above).

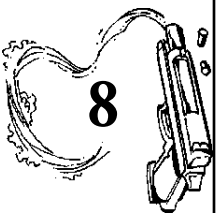
Guest Bedroom: This area has been torn apart. The mattresses have been moved, the blankets thrown off the bed, the pillows torn open, the dresser overturned, and the closet rummaged through. The dresser drawers have been pulled out, emptied and discarded on the floor.

Guest Bath: The cabinet above the sink has been pulled open and toothpaste tubes and shampoo bottles have been emptied into the tub. Nothing but spare towels and toiletries are in this room.

Kitchen: This kitchen cabinets have been searched, and their contents scattered across the floor. Tins and cans have been punctured with a can opener from one of the drawers, and their contents poured out onto the floor. The refrigerator and the icebox were open when the police arrived, and the food within thrown onto the floor.

Clue: [Sight PER Roll] The telephone in the kitchen has been taken off the hook, the receiver turned around and propped on its side. This is the trademark of the Black Cradle Call Girls after they have assassinated someone.

Master Bedroom: The door to this room is open slightly. Inside is a King-sized bed with thick blankets and large white pillows, and a heavy dresser with a mirror on top. This room has been meticulously searched; the pillows and the bed have been slashed open, and the dresser drawers lie upturned on the floor. The mirror has been ripped from the



dresser and the back of it torn open. A discarded jewelry box (empty) lies on the bed, its bottom torn open.

Clue: *A great deal of attention was given to this room; it has almost been turned upside down. It is not clear if the intruder found anything.*

[Sight PER Roll at +3 after a search] The victim's purse lies beneath a pile of clothes on the floor. It has been nearly torn in two; missing from the pile of items are Deborah's keys, her identification and her money. In one of the purse's side pockets, however (not readily noticeable unless the characters carefully examine the purse) is a single key. It is the key to the Harbor Terrace apartment, one which Deborah always carried with her; the spare was stored in the vase in the dining room (see Dining Room). [Sight PER Roll at +3 after a search] Not far from Deborah's purse, buried beneath several layers of clothes, are her laminated ID tags that identify her as a NILE agent. She needed these tags to enter the NILE office in the Harbor.

Patio: The door to the patio is unlocked. The railing has no scratch marks (which would suggest a grapple hook had been secured to it), and there are no other projections someone could use to secure a grapple hook to. There are no clues on the patio.

Master Bath and Closet: These rooms have been extensively searched, but there are no clues to be found here.

The following is how the crime scene description might be entered in the FPPD database:

Entr- Poss entry pts: frnt dr (unlckd, no frcd entry), balcony & ext. windows (none brkn). Climb tools/rope? Patio dr unlckd. Wndws don't open enuf for nel 2 enter. Latents taken frm frnt dr, patio railing + wndws. Pndg lab rslts No sign of climbing tool being used on patio/railing.

Foyer- Mess. Clst dr open & cloths scattered. Sum cloths cut open (poss psych/ment?). Unk if nething missing.

Laundry/Util Rm- Items spilled on flr. Srchg 4 sumthing? Poss sm item. Washr/dryr open, cloths on flr. Prof job? Non perishable item (metal/plastic?).

And so on.

The Victim

Deborah Jane Cross is a white female adult, 37 years of age, 5'6" and weighing 215 pounds. She was the head of the NILE Branch Office in Fell's Point and was transferred to the peninsula five years ago, after working for the CIA Directorate of Operations in Langley, Virginia. When she was young, she attended private schools in Washington (the uniform in the Laundry Room, above, belongs to one of these schools).

Deborah has no immediate family; when she was ten and living in Washington, they were murdered one night when the house (shown in one of the pictures in the Living Room) was broken into. The burglar shot her father and mother and then tied up Deborah while he was searching through the house (according to reports, he did not harm Deborah). The burglar was apprehended hours after he left the scene, was convicted and died in prison nine years ago. Deborah went to live with relatives in Washington, finished high school and college, and accepted a position with the Central Intelligence Agency after she graduated.

If the PCs check, they will learn that shortly after Deborah began her job in the CIA, Deborah moved back into her childhood home and set about replacing all the old furniture that had been there when she was a child. When she moved to Fell's Point, she had all the furniture in the house moved down to the Point at great expense.

* Under no circumstances will the CIA reveal what her position in the agency was. If the GM wishes to tie the adventure to the CIA, the CIA will hunt down and "erase" characters who ask too many questions about Deborah's position in the Agency.

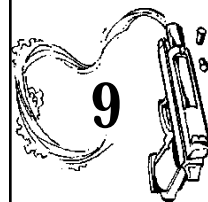
Deborah was secretly passing along information she gained in the NILE Office to the CIA throughout her career; the CIA had seen NILE as a tool for keeping tabs on potential "internal threats to national security." Once Deborah became the head of the NILE Office on the Point, she was able to pass along large amounts of classified information to the CIA with ease.

Alternate Victim Identity: The GM should replace Deborah with a similar DNPC or NPC from his campaign, perhaps a faceless or stereotypical bureaucrat, but with a "secret life" the characters had no idea even existed (see below).

Witnesses

Deborah's apartment (#923) was bordered by two other apartments; in apartment 921 lives Mrs. Heigel, an elderly widow in her fifties. She has a hearing problem (evident from the beige plastic hearing aids nestled in her ear), and she claims to have seen and heard nothing on the night of the murder; she was sound asleep and was not wearing her hearing aid. She knew Deborah only slightly; they occasionally made small talk while riding in the elevator but nothing more. She believes Deborah worked for the government.

In apartment 925 is David Harris, a Harbor area sales representative in his early thirties; he also claims to have heard nothing on the night of the murder. If asked about Deborah, he will mention (with a slightly annoyed tone) that Deborah was unfriendly and rarely spoke to him (in truth, Deborah was irritated with him because he made so much noise in his apartment, especially playing selections from his extensive reggae collection late at night with the bass turned way up). If the PCs check, they will find several complaints have been filed with the building manager by other members of the hall regarding the noise from 925, and there is also one complaint about Harris' "late night visitors." The anonymous complaint does not mention who the visitors are, but it was filed last month, so it cannot have been too long ago.



Apartment Security

Apartment Safeguards: The Bayside entrance is guarded by a small gatehouse with a crossbar that blocks the road; the gatehouse is manned by a security guard. It is possible to simply drive up to the gatehouse, place a resident keycard in, and the crossbar will raise. Only visitors and those without cards need to stop at the gate to get admittance.

Once entering the complex, everyone has a designated parking space in the underground garage, and the building's front door can only be opened by a cardkey carried by each resident. A camera is located above the entrance door. If someone gets locked out, they may call for a guard from the first floor and get a visual check to be let in.

The Guard on Duty: If the security guard at the gate is spoken to, he claims he saw Ms. Cross return to the complex at about nine o' clock (p.m.) or so. She was alone. If the PCs think to ask, he also mentions he saw Mr. Harris from 925 return to Bayside at about ten o' clock with a female visitor. The guard did not get a good look at Mr. Harris's visitor but states Mr. Harris frequently had female guests.

If specifically asked if he saw a taxi on the night of the murder (see below), he will mention that a taxi came to the complex late that night to pick up someone, but he couldn't see who the passenger was. He can identify the cab company (*Checkers*), but not the driver. If the PCs want to check the cab dispatch, they might be able to find the driver and question him about his passenger (see below).

Deborah's Car: There is nothing to be found in Deborah's car; it is still parked in its designated spot in the garage. Her government issue parking sticker is on the front windshield; she needed the sticker to park in the NILE garage in the Harbor.

The Cardkey: PCs examining the records of the night of the murder will see no "unauthorized entrances" (i.e., no one was locked out, there were no visitors asking to be let in to see friends or family, and no card keys are missing). The security guard stationed at the entrance that night claims Ms. Cross came home (alone) at about nine o' clock. If asked, he will mention her neighbor, "Dave," returned at ten, with a "hooker." He remembers this because Dave was drunk, was having trouble with the door and was laughing and carrying on (the guard at the gate, above, did not notice that Harris was drunk). The guard will mention (with a knowing look) that Dave frequently brings home women, hookers or no, back to his place. The guard claims the woman was a blond, wearing a lot of green, with this flimsy blue scarf around her neck and high-heels that clicked when she walked. He does not recall her leaving, but says this is typical; frequently they leave from the service entrance (see below) and take a taxi back to the Harbor.

Bayside Apts. Service Entrance: This heavy metal door in the underground garage leads into a dingy stairwell and up through every floor of the building. There are no clues in the stairwell or on the door to the ninth floor. [Sight PER] If the PCs examine the area around the service door on the first floor, however, they will find a small packet of Kleenex near the entrance, half of it pinched flat. [Deduction] It is possible that the Kleenex was used to prop the door.

on the couch.

Fantasy, the prostitute David Harris brought home came in with him at ten. They took the elevator up to 925, made love, and he called her a cab. Fantasy left his room at ten-thirty, leaving by the service stairwell down to the garage; once on the ground floor, Fantasy propped the service door open with the packet of Kleenex from her purse and then left quickly, entering a waiting taxi and driving out through the main gate at about 10:35.

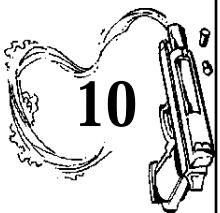
As soon as Fantasy left, a leather clad figure (waiting in the garage) entered the building, unpropping the door and accidentally leaving the small packet of Kleenex on the basement floor outside the door. She made her way up to the ninth floor to 923, used a copy of Deborah's key to enter her apartment, and then proceeded into the living room where Deborah was asleep on the couch. Tapping Deborah with a leather strap, the intruder woke her up; without protest or struggle, Deborah allowed herself to be tied to the dining room chair as the intruder searched through her house, looking for valuables. Once the intruder was through, she wrapped a leather strap around Deborah's throat and strangled her. Deborah died at 11:15 PM. The intruder then took the phone off the cradle, turned it around and left through the front door of the apartment, making her way down the service stairwell and out into the night. No one saw her leave.

GROUND RULES: Fell's Point

The following information is presented here for the GM if he wishes to use Fell's Point as the setting for the murder; there are some problems and ground rules in operating on the Point the PCs might want to be made aware of:

1. Wearing a mask in Fell's Point outside of holiday season is a Felony, so costumed vigilantes beware. Ironically enough, vigilantism is one of the only crimes actively punished in Fell's Point.
2. The Fell's Point police department and the judicial system are largely inefficient and corrupt. The police arrest only criminals who operate too openly, and the cops are more concerned with protecting their "pad" and their share of the bribes than clamping down on crime. For the most part, PCs will find that working with the law only creates problems; this is intended to heighten the tension and make the PCs feel that they are on their own in this investigation.
3. GM only: while paranormal characters exist on the Point, their existence is largely unknown to the public. Neither paranormals nor paranormal powers should factor into this adventure except in the most cursory fashion.

Listed below are some of the locations characters may go to look for clues:



the truth

Deborah returned home at nine, went in through the main entrance to her apartment and had some dinner. After she had cleaned up and put away her dishes, she took a nap

NILE History in Fell's Point: NILE's history on the Point has been less than spectacular. Two of their agents were killed in the line of duty while spying on potential paranormals in Fell's Point in the late eighties (whether or not the targets were actually "paranormal cases" were never confirmed; the targets subsequently disappeared and were rumored to have traveled north to Hudson City). The last NILE operative vanished two years ago and was believed to have been killed in the line of duty. These growing problems began to result in NILE being phased out of the Point under increasing local pressure and the unpopularity of "heroes" on the Point. There was talk of NILE being dismantled and absorbed by the CIA.

There were no NILE-sponsored hero teams on the Point. If the GM wishes to make one up, the group was forced to break with NILE in the late eighties from political pressure and increasing restrictions on the anti-mask law and then disbanded in January of 1990, a week before the Revolution occurred (also, see "Big Night" in the Clown Alley descriptions).

The NILE Office: The NILE Branch Office is located in the Federal Building in the Harbor district along with many other federal offices (including a CIA branch office; the CIA also has a facility on the peninsula, Camp Percy, where they train many of their agents). If the PCs have access to the NILE Computers, either through an exceptional hacking skill or through government Contacts, they may discover the following information:

* **Information from NILE Databases:** There has been a number of reports of the presence of paranormal powers in Fell's Point in the past few years, especially some patients interred in the Fell's Point Asylum. The existence of these paranormal cases is not known to the general public. Concrete evidence of paranormal powers has been confirmed in two cases: Price (*Underworld Enemies*, p.84, his great strength is widely rumored, but not necessarily believed. When he was admitted to a Fell's Point hospital in the Borough, however, after receiving multiple shotgun wounds from one of Divine's assassins, his superhuman strength was confirmed by doctors) and Sin (*Underworld Enemies*, p.19, whose paranormal "powers" are usually believed to be a delusion of his inflated ego; physicians who have examined Sin, however, have noticed his odd nervous system). Price's whereabouts are unknown. At the time of the adventure, Sin is believed to be interred in the Fell's Point Asylum.

* **The PCs:** Surprise, surprise...as the police will soon discover, Deborah was also investigating the PCs (it does not matter whether the PCs are police officers, intelligence operatives, street vigilantes or superheroes; when possible, she will have been investigating their Hero ID). The reason for her investigation is not clear.

Note: Even if the characters are not stationed in Fell's Point, the Fell's Point Branch Office was still investigating them. In fact, they received many faxes concerning the characters from the NILE Branch in the PC's campaign city and have spent several weeks looking it over. Once again, the reason for this investigation is not clear.

If the PCs have government contacts, they may hear rumors that the CIA is somehow involved (a common rumor, whether true or not). As it turns out, the CIA Branch Office on the Point (conveniently stationed in the same building as the NILE Office) requested Deborah compile files on the characters for the Agency. If the PCs somehow manage

to gain access to the NILE files, the GM should have the documents contain as much or as little information as necessary to motivate the characters to follow up on the Deborah's murder. It should be obvious once the characters look through the files that some of the information is missing, and there is a good chance the files were intended for blackmail purposes.

If the PCs anger the FPPD detective in charge of the case, he will use the existence of these files as probable cause and will accuse the PCs of having murdered Ms. Cross.

Nile Staff: The secretary and staff will say Ms. Cross was a nice boss. In reality, she was extremely straight-laced, moralistic, judgmental and somewhat petty in her dealings with others. While she always kept her word to others, she was frequently short on manners around the office, often telling others to "shut-up" or angrily insisting that they get to the point if their story was in danger of becoming long-winded. She occasionally became agitated during the beginning of the week, but this would usually straighten out as Friday approached. This information will only come out if the characters question the staff closely.

If the PCs question Deborah's secretary, she will inform them Ms. Cross began to receive strange calls a few days before her death. Deborah refused to return the calls. The caller was a businesswoman, who left her name as Eve. The secretary has Eve's number. Eve has called the office before, perhaps once every few weeks, but in the three days before Deborah was murdered, she called ten times.

Clue: Eve is a handle used by one of the Black Cradle Call Girls; Eve was calling to confirm Deborah's "appointments." If the PC calls the number, they will get a message informing the caller that they have reached the Black Cradle offices, but that "no one is there to receive their call." There is no company listed as *Black Cradle* in the Fell's Point telephone directory. If the PCs are police officers, they can request a "reverse" on the number: the phone company checks its records (either on computer or microfiche) to determine the name and address of the person the phone number is registered to. This takes anywhere from one to fifteen minutes to do the check. If the PCs do this, they will get the number for the Terrace Harbor Apartment, below. (Although this is not the Black Cradle office, the Black Cradle Call Girls have scrambler technology from the CIA that insures their privacy. The PCs will not be able to determine the location of the Black Cradle Offices by doing a "reverse," although they will know exactly where the Harbor Terrace Apartments are.)

If the PCs carefully question the prostitutes in the Hole, they may learn that Eve is a handle of one of the Black Cradle Call Girls, but the prostitutes are not sure which of the Girls it is.

Clues

Harris' Mystery Guest: Harris' hired lover was Fantasy, a streetwalker who works in the Hole (once the PCs decipher that she was a prostitute, they may have no choice but to look for her in the Basin, as that is where the prostitution activity in the Point is centered. Someone there is bound to know who and where she is for the right price). She may either be considered a suspect or a witness. If the PCs contact the taxi cab company that sent the taxi to pick her up, they have an excellent chance of finding the driver who picked up Fantasy and dropped her off in the Hole (see the next chapter). The *Checkers* Cab Co., like all good-sized cab companies, keeps a log of each driver's fares/stops and the pickup and drop off times; the information is recorded when the drivers call it in on the radio or when they turn in their log sheets at the end of the shift.

If questioned, Harris claims he drove down to the Hole to a restaurant called *Oslo's* to look for a little action. When he arrived, he was approached by Fantasy, who offered to be his girlfriend for the night; he agreed and they went back to his place. He never saw her before tonight, but he can provide a rough description of her (see *Fantasy's Appearance* section) and where he picked her up. He knows nothing else about her.

The Black Cradle: If the PCs question the NILE Secretary and learn about Eve and the Black Cradle, the PCs should eventually learn that the "Black Cradle" refers to the Black Cradle Call Girls, a prostitution ring on the Point. Anyone the PCs speak to can tell them that prostitution in Fell's Point is centered in the Basin (see below); it's common knowledge to those native to the peninsula that the Basin would be the logical place to look for a prostitute.

Deborah's Key: The key has a number scratched on it: 119. If the PCs found the key beneath the vase in Deborah's apartment, they will also find the thin slip of paper tied around the key that reads "GHARd." GHARd is an abbreviation for the Grays Harbor Access Road, a street in the Harbor district.

Investigations: Dragging The Harbor

Eventually characters will have to enter the Basin to follow up on the leads on the murder case; only by questioning the prostitutes in the Hole can they track down the Black Cradle Call Girls and begin to determine what is really going on in the Point.

Harbor Field Study

[Andersen's Field Report]

Re: Area Overviews: Fell's Point Harbor, the Basin and the Hole.

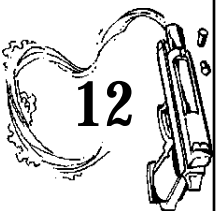
The Harbor: The Fell's Point Harbor area, the Basin and the Hole are three concentric "circles." The Harbor (short for Grays Harbor County) is the largest circle, composed of several square miles of land bordering Fell's Point Bay.

The Basin: The Basin area is a much smaller "circle" located in the eastern slice of the Harbor, and it is the center of prostitution in the city. The small inlet bay that has wormed its way into the peninsula has given this section of the Harbor its name.

Navigating the Basin is a nightmare if you're not familiar with the area; it is a dizzying network of back streets, all trying to make their way to the Fell's Point main thoroughfare, Fifteenth Avenue (also known as "the Miracle Mile" by the downtown residents). While these back streets are nestled close to the city's premier night spots, the fact these streets border the Harbor discourages most of the incidental through-traffic, and some streets in this area are closed to vehicles (this can prove to be a problem for car chases). The youngest prostitutes work at the far end of the quarter, down around the Central Railroad station; there is a certain amount of male prostitution in this area as well, and transvestitism is also common.

The Hole: The smallest section of the Harbor, the Hole, is a six block area nestled in the Basin; according to authorities, in January 1990, prostitutes in the area revolted, publicly executing fifteen pimps operating in the Basin and taking control of the Hole. Ever since this Revolution¹, the police have been reluctant to enter the Hole unless heavily armed, and then only in great numbers. They still patrol the Basin area surrounding the Hole, but the Hole itself is considered off-limits to the FPPD. The crime rate in this area is high.

¹The "Revolution" was a wide-scale riot that took place in Fell's Point in January of 1990 and mirrors the *Night of Villainy* that occurred in the Champions Universe; see *Day of the Destroyer* and *Champions Universe*. It is curious in that many Fell's Point residents have different memories of what transpired on that night and call it by different names; Clown Alley, for example (see their chapter) refer to the riot as the "Big Night," Widow's Peak calls it the "Revolution," the Idiot King dubbed it the "Feast of Fools," and for Crusader, it was "the Fall" (this was the first, true Fall he experienced before he was murdered in *Underworld Enemies*). The choice of names may be solely due to perspective, but many patients in the Fell's Point Asylum have other explanations for what transpired on the night and its impact on the Fell's Point underworld, which will be explained in the forthcoming *Asylum* campaign book.



Interlude One: Enemies Of My Enemies...

Haven

Who Do You Trust?

The following interlude is included to provide more background on tensions in the Basin, and also as a “fallback” for PCs having trouble gathering information on the Hole and its secret networks; there are several places outside the Hole and the prostitute subculture the PCs can turn to if they become stuck. One is the Haven woman’s shelter, the second is the FPPD, and the third is Fell’s Point pimps operating in the Harbor. The characters can gain information from any of these groups, although the agenda of each organization may not become apparent until the players piece together the history of prostitution in Fell’s Point. Any of the groups below can provide extensive information on the Widow’s Peak and the Prostitution Subculture in the Basin; the information is limited only by the roleplaying of the characters and the GM’s discretion.

Haven

Haven is a woman’s shelter operating in Fell’s Point (see *Artemis, Underworld Enemies*, p.50). They have conducted a number of reports and surveys on prostitution in the Fell’s Point Harbor and have long regarded the tolerance of prostitution by the local government as further proof of the systematic degradation of women taking place throughout the peninsula area (the FPPD has a somewhat different view toward the situation; see below). Characters doing research on Fell’s Point may run across these Haven reports and articles during their investigation; the sections below can be printed and used to give the adventure a little flavor.

Andersen’s Notes: Haven

“There’s no easy way out of prostitution.”

There was something about the way she said it that made me nervous. She sounded like she was drawing a battle line. And it sounded like she had drawn it many times before.

After finding a place to park in the Harbor and wandering the streets for about a half hour, I finally found my way to Haven, a three-story woman’s shelter set in the sloping portion of the Harbor district. It looks smaller because its walls are sagging a bit; you can see the bend in the walls when you approach the shelter from the side. The stairs were angled, too; it made it a little difficult to manage, mainly because there wasn’t a railing, and my prosthesis gets a little stiff sometimes. I’d lost

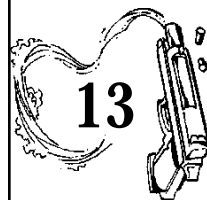
my left leg in an artillery accident way back when I was in the Marine corps, now I kind of hobble on as best I can. It’s not a problem most of the time. I’m just a glorified NILE paper pusher anyway, despite the “investigator” title. NILE wouldn’t send a real investigator to Fell’s Point, anyway.

They would send me. I’m kind of the East Coast whipping boy.

I’d made an appointment to see the head of Haven, Ms. Marinetti, ostensibly for help with my investigation; in actuality, I was hoping to be able to get some help from Haven on establishing a cover identity in the Basin while I conducted my investigation. From what I determined from my Basin field surveys (see *The Harbor Field Report*, above), being a NILE investigator was close enough to being a blood brother of the FPPD (at least as far as the public was concerned) and that alone was a good enough reason to avoid going into the Hole advertising that fact. Since I didn’t know exactly where Fantasy was, I’d need some time to look around and ask questions without raising suspicions. Haven was reported to employ several men and women, half journalists, half social workers, who made forays into the Hole to gather statistics and help women interested in getting out of “the life.” I was hoping I could either latch on to one of those Haven reporters or get permission to operate as one; at the least, maybe get a lead on where Fantasy could be found. No such luck.

The name plate on the desk didn’t list Ms. Marinetti’s first name. On the wall behind her were small pictures of places throughout the United States; little framed postcards, it turned out, nailed on to the wall. Looking out of place in the center of the postcards was a small picture, one of those reproductions you might find in an art gallery gift shop. It showed this woman, Greek by the look of it, with silvery white hair, a white toga and a bow and arrow. At her feet were hounds, looking ready for a coming hunt.

Ms. Marinetti didn’t even glance at the pamphlet I’d picked up before entering her office (see below); it was like somewhere along the line, she had memorized it. “Women in the Basin often have a number of problems, all of which must be addressed, all at the same time. For every woman on the streets who comes to us for help, Haven frequently has to build a separate support network.” Her voice had broken into a rehearsed speech, her words had the same hollowness about them like the lectures in Quantico on abnormal behavior. Charlie and I used to hate so much. If my expression showed it, Ms. Marinetti didn’t notice, continuing on, point by point. “In order to help a woman, it might be necessary for her to change her residence, set her up in school or work, get help for her drug dependency, break her ties with a pimp, deal with her debts before they can even move forward. All these things at once, sometimes.” She raised an eyebrow. “Fortunately, Haven employees have developed contacts in the



Fell's Point public health and social services who work specifically with these services in relation to the women. Nevertheless, we have also developed contacts in the Basin and spent a great deal of time gaining the trust of women working in the area. Not surprisingly, the trust is the most important thing. Without it, we will never be able to help them." Her voice sharpened noticeably in warning, and I immediately gave up the idea of drafting her help for a cover identity.

I thanked her for her time. As I rose from my chair, I nodded at the postcards on the wall, half to diffuse the tension, half out of curiosity. "Have you ever been there, to those places?"

"No." Her response, sudden and violent, surprised me. "I've often thought about going..." her face relaxed. "But no, I've never gone."

I suddenly felt uncomfortable, like I'd opened a can of worms. "Why don't you?"

"Because I don't believe in running away." She grimaced. "There's still so much to do here."

I stared back at the pictures, trying to think of something to say to cut the tension. I caught sight of the picture of the huntress with the bow and arrows again.

Angela followed my gaze, and her eyes hardened. "Is that all, Investigator? If so, I have a great deal of work to..."

I handed her my card. "Thank you for your time, Ms. Marinetti."

She nodded. I left.

As I was walking down the stoop, I felt dirty.

The following section is a segment of the *Haven* report on prostitution (*Haven's* leaflets and articles concerning their work with battered women is not discussed here; in the interests of the adventure, the following two handouts are geared toward prostitution only). The players may run across this information while doing library research in Fell's Point, otherwise this report can be found in a pamphlet at the *Haven* office in the Basin:

- HAVEN -

Haven was born as an extension of the war against prostitution.

The number of prostituted women per capita in Fell's Point is among the highest in the nation, approximately one prostitute per 52 sexually mature men; one prostitute for every 23 women between the ages of 17 and 35.

As part of the project, *Haven* volunteers seek out areas in the Basin where street prostitution is concentrated. The goal for this field work is to establish ties to the women who prostitute themselves and to gain their trust. At first, there was a great deal of skepticism on the street towards these strangers who had started to hang out on the street, and the *Haven* employees had to establish their credibility. It was important that they maintained professional confidentiality and that they were honest, kept their word, and were there when needed.

One Worker Quote, Listed in Report: "We try to be as honest and sincere as possible and talk about our attitudes towards prostitution and what *Haven* stood for. We believe in what we are doing, and we always try to keep the promises we make, even giving out our private phone numbers. If we promised to help out, then we accepted the consequences, even if it interfered with our private lives."

According to the article, *Haven* workers made an information leaflet about the project and passed it out to prostitutes in Fell's Point. Many of these leaflets are still floating around the Basin and the PCs may run across them during the adventure. PCs may decide to turn to *Haven* for help with their investigation. The *Haven* leaflet reads as follows:

- HAVEN -

LEAFLET

The Haven Woman's Shelter has run a counseling service for prostitutes since October 1977. We have our own office in the Harbor, where we can be contacted directly or by telephone at 1-800-TO-HAVEN, Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. We do not limit our contact to women who want to quit prostitution. We also have contact with many women who continue to work in prostitution and help them with their problems.

We maintain confidentiality.

You have probably noticed that many women are no longer at the Grays Harbor Access Road. We have close contact with a number of them. We help them in every way that we can so they won't ever have to return to prostitution. We have, for example, been able to provide and assist in economic aid in order to break with prostitution. We have found housing and helped women to find jobs or to start school. We have also been able to assist in establishing contact with psychologists and doctors. We have helped with taxes and other legal problems.

A number of women have had pimps. When women have cut contact with the pimps we have been there all the time, if the woman wants us to be. We can discuss which forms of help we can offer you, if you have a pimp and want to break contact with him.

We aren't moralists who only direct ourselves toward women who want to get out of prostitution. You are welcome to contact us if you want to remain in prostitution and have problems.

We have many crisis centers, support centers, plus a research program to explore ways of eliminating domestic violence.

We are here to help you.

Haven As A Contact

Despite the distrust Angela Marinetti has of outsiders, vigilantes and officers of the law in particular, she is aware of the Black Cradle Call Girls and the female prostitution ring operating in the Hole and would not mind seeing its leaders laid low; she sees them as responsible for destroying the lives of many of the women in their employ. If the characters are stuck and approach Angela with what they know, she may help them out, using information she gained while pursuing her vigilante activities as Artemis.

Furthermore, many *Haven* workers have done extensive field research in the Hole, and some of them were former prostitutes who now help out at the shelter, either taking calls on the hotline or working in the *Haven* dormitories. If the PCs should come to these workers for help, especially concerning the Widow's Peak and the Black Cradle Call Girls, these workers may be able to provide information to the characters, enough to put the characters back on the track of the Widow and her network. At no point will the *Haven* workers betray the confidentiality of prostitutes and women in the Hole.

The GM can limit the information *Haven* employees provide to the characters, giving out as much or as little as they wish; *Haven's* knowledge of the secret undercurrents in the Hole and the politics of the Basin is more extensive than the PCs might guess. At the least, *Haven* can give the PCs a summary of Harbor politics, including conflicts within the prostitute subculture, the history of their problems with the FPPD and the constant tensions in the Basin from the pimps that prowl the borders of the Hole.

Enemies Of My Enemies... The Law

Typically, prostitution is considered a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine or a short jail sentence. As a result, even if a prostitute is arrested and jailed, she (or he) will usually be bailed out and back out on the streets in short order. Many streetwalkers (who do not work the Hole) have been arrested in excess of thirty or forty times. The prostitutes in the Hole have a somewhat different working relationship with the police, however, and it usually requires a riot detail to sweep a corner of the Hole. Even then, the police do not patrol too deeply in the Hole for fear of injury or death.

Detente

Détente exists between most of the Basin prostitutes and the FPPD. As long as the majority of pimps and streetwalkers stay in the Basin, they are allowed to ply their trade. If they step out of line, they get stepped on, hard. There was some initial problems with Divine and the Glory Boyz, but after he was placed on the "pad" and made certain concessions about making his outer-Basin operations less ostentatious, the matter was laid to rest. The police have always held the view that some sort of adult entertainment zone is necessary on the Point to provide commercial sex for those adults that desire it (one police officer put it, "I can't think of a place where's it more necessary than on the Point; you'd think

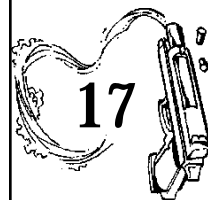
that this city was a giant sexual powder keg sometimes...") and reduce the costs to the criminal justice system (and the hassle to the police officers) of processing prostitutes. It was only when the hookers in the Hole went militant and territorial that tensions heated up in the Basin; now, anger between the two groups is so high that the police simply look the other way when a prostitute is raped or murdered in the Hole.

As mentioned above, in order to prove solicitation the police must be able to testify in court that they were approached and asked for payment for sexual services. The FPPD plainclothes division maintains a "pussy posse," a rotating detail of plainclothes officers from around the city that enforces the prostitution laws in the Basin and arrests prostitutes who solicit them. This task force was established in 1982 to patrol the Basin area, investigating and curtailing the activities of pimps and prostitutes; since that time, there has been a six-officer detail that patrols the streets, Monday through Friday, during periods of the night when prostitution is most likely. The surveillance is mainly done by two officers in a car who circle the Basin. They only make arrests in the outer rim of the Basin, unwilling to risk their lives should they be discovered to be cops while patrolling the Hole.

Though the FPPD finds the enforcement of solicitation laws to be a nuisance, it is often forced into action by complaints of citizens and the media (whenever a complaint is received, no matter if the location is on the "pad," an arrest of some sort *has* to be made and a report filed, to provide some evidence that the complaint was received and followed up on). While it is common for restaurant, theater and store owners in the Basin to pressure the FPPD to control street walkers and massage parlors (it's bad for business; prostitution usually carries other crimes with it wherever it goes, like "criminal behavior STDs," among them, drug use, larceny and organized crime), businesses in the Hole have learned to deal with prostitution or else, and they know not to complain to the police out of fear of retaliation by the Black Cradle Call Girls.

Animosity

The PCs may hear this from prostitutes on the street and disbelieve it at first, but the truth is the police don't care what happens to prostitutes in the Point. This is not necessarily the case for all officers, but there have been several cases of victimization and murder by roaming criminals and even escapees from the Asylum (mostly Sin and the Germ, see *Underworld Enemies*, p.19, p.66), with no noticeable action by the FPPD. When reporting rapes or acts of violence, prostitutes in the Point have gotten the run-around from the PD and the Plainclothes "Posse," and many of the attacks are passed off by the police as the "whore was asking for it," "what do you expect, breaking the law," and so on. Other less savory incidents involving the police have occurred, including officers doing a number on prostitutes in their cells or in the precinct back offices and bathrooms. Incidents such as these have been the primary source of hatred between the two groups and led to the armament of Widow's Peak; the prostitutes feel it is necessary to create their own justice.



FPPD Records

1968 is the first year in which it is possible to track down charges filed against pimps in the Fell's Point police department. During a departmental overhaul that year, the previous archives were disposed of, and it wasn't until 1981 when the FPPD got the computer systems on line and used them to register complaints and charges that it was possible to locate prostitution and pimping material through Find/Search commands. Characters looking for past history on pimping and prostitution on the Point will not find much in the police records.

Information

If the PCs get the opportunity to speak to the FPPD "pussy posse" and hit it off with the officers (usually with liberal use of the Bribery skill and a lot of money changing hands), they can find out a great deal of information on the prostitution subculture in the Basin, including the Black Cradle Call Girls, the Widow, Divine and other major operators in the Basin (see sample Pimps, in the *Pimps in the Basin* section below). The officers have been on the vice detail for many years and are willing to share their experiences with any character that approaches them with respect (as long as the character is not a journalist, social worker, or an attorney). If the characters are vigilantes or are disrupting pimp operations in the Basin protected by the FPPD, the characters will find nothing but trouble if the FPPD catch them. While the cops cannot pursue characters into the Hole, they can wait patiently for the characters to come out and then deal with them.

Enemies Of My Enemies... Pimps In The Basin

Introduction

The hostility between the pimps of the Basin and the prostitutes in the Hole can almost be felt in the air bordering the Hole; the history that divides the streetwalkers of the Hole and the Basin pimps is a bloody one, and it is likely that the characters will eventually be exposed to (or caught in between) the hatred the two groups have for each other during the adventure. The Basin pimps are always looking for a way to break the backs of the women living in "pussy town," and PCs may be able to turn to such unsavory figures as Divine (*Underworld Enemies*, p.57) for information or assistance in damaging Widow's Peak, although the price for their services may be more than the characters are willing to pay.

This interlude is included to provide a brief summary of the pimp subculture, along with some sample characters the GM can place in their own campaigns.

The Pimp

Asking a prostitute in the Basin if she has a pimp will only get the speaker in trouble. If the character raises the

question in the Hole, the character will become the target of verbal abuse, and perhaps even be attacked. Not only does the question reek of potential vice officers, but it is also an insult to ask prostitutes in the Basin if they are still held in thrall by male procurers. As tensions still run high after the Revolution (see *Andersen's Field Report* on the Hole, below), the character may find themselves attacked or stalked by potential attackers. The best thing to do after asking the question is to leave quickly and then come back in a few days after things have cooled down.

Pimp's Duties

A pimp steers customers to the prostitute, stays alert for trouble and dissension in his stable, handles deals with the police, makes payments to the "pad," posts bail and protects his girls from other pimps and prostitutes. The pimp essentially fulfills the role of a surrogate father (whether abusive or no) and lover figure. Pimps can pick up established "working girls," or they can "deal out" young girls (a term coined by the Sweet Sharks, see below) who have never been in "the life." Occasionally, the pimps pick up runaways, buy them clothes and food and turn them into "baby pros" in their stable. Originally many of the Fell's Point pimps worked on the fringes of prostitution as bellhops, elevator operators, or bartenders and then drifted into the profession.

Thick Of The Matter

Any member of the FPPD vice detail (most of whom have rotated through the Basin's "pussy posse") can tell the player characters there is not extensive pimp activity in Fell's Point. What little there is governed by Divine and a few "Sweet Sharks" (pimps from the Card Shark Diamonds Suit) who weren't killed or driven out of the trade years ago. While up to ninety percent of women *outside* the Hole (once again, these are prostitutes employed by Divine, Diamonds Suit "Sweet Sharks," or other operators) have pimps, *the majority of women in the Hole operate alone, and no woman in the Hole has a male pimp.*

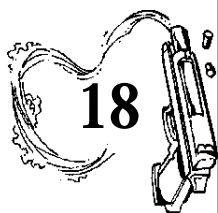
Two types of pimps are dealt with here:

The Stable Pimp

The "Classic Pimp," a stable pimp's stable is made up not of livestock, but of women. Stable pimps can have any number of women prostituting for them simultaneously; ten to twelve women was the average number of women in a pimp's stable in the Point, pre-Revolution; this figure still holds for the Basin pimps operating outside the Hole.

Stable pimps can be broken down into two types. One is the "Sugar Pimp" who sweet talks women into prostituting themselves. The Sugar Pimp slides his way into knowing a female, makes her fall for him and then nags her to turn tricks and threatens to leave if she doesn't do as he says. The second type is the "Gorilla Pimp" who bullies his women into prostitution. There are a great many more Gorilla Pimps in Fell's Point than Sugar Pimps; the intense amount of violence in Fell's Point seems to be bred into them.

Fell's Point Pimps are famous (or at least, were famous) for their ability to cynically latch their hooks into their women and keep them under a tight rein, both physically and psychologically. As Sweet Sharks like to say, a good stable pimp "knows all the cards and how to play them." When looking to add to his stable, the pimp targets a young girl whom he sees as naive, lonely and bitter toward the family she has just left, probably broke and without job skills. A pimp's preying grounds are the Fell's Point Orphanage, the Southside and Borough slums, and occasionally the train and



bus stations, waiting for a new “herd” to come in. When he spots a potential bright young thing, he slides up to her, all friendly and smiles, offering her a meal and a place to spend the night. He gives her compliments, gives new clothes, pays for her to get her hair done, after which it is only a matter of time (anywhere from a week or two) before the hammer falls. In the years before the Revolution, kidnapping and brutalization had largely replaced many of the “kinder and gentler” ways that pimps gathered their stables. Some of their crimes and abductions bordered on atrocities.

The stable pimp was the primary operator on the Point up until the Revolution; post-Revolution, they were ostracized from the Hole and now only operate on the perimeter of the Basin. Their profession demands a certain flashy, free-wheeling image, and they tend to dress in expensive clothes, drive expensive cars (PCs in the Basin may see large Cadillacs roll by, the driver honking at women he sees on the street) and keep “flash money” on their person to impress their customers and other pimps. Pimps tend to cultivate extravagant habits and tastes in keeping with their image and need the income derived from their girls to maintain their look.

The Sex-Club Pimp

The second type of pimp is the Sex-Club Pimp, who operates out of a particular sex establishment. Like the stable pimp, the Sex-Club Pimp has several women prostitutes in his employ, but there is rarely emotional attachment between the parties. The relationship between the Sex-Club pimp and his prostitutes are similar to that of an employer and his employees; for the most part, it is purely a business arrangement. Sex-Club Pimps operate out of short-stay hotels, night-clubs and casinos, and usually have a steady clientele. Sex-Club Pimps are also called “Club Pimps,” or “Joint Pimps” in Fell’s Point. Card Shark Sex-Club Pimps are called “Club Sharks,” whether they are affiliated with the Clubs Suit or not.

Divine is considered to be one of the largest “Joint Pimps” in Fell’s Point. He operates many dens of iniquity under the command of his Glory Boyz where commercial sex (usually coupled with drugs to enhance the sexual high) is available; these establishments are fascinating in that past the drab exterior, the clubs tend to explode with light and color, as if the character just entered the stage of a rock concert. See the examples listed for the Basin, below.

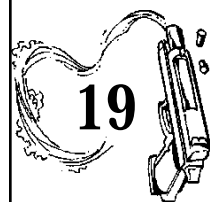
Pimp Statistics

PIMP STATISTICS: For Pimp Statistics, GMs can use either the Normal, Skilled Normal or Competent Normal templates in the Champions Rulebook, p.133-134, or any one of the three Thug Templates listed in JNL, pp.125-126. Pimps may possess some Dirty Infighting maneuvers, have a number of Contacts (Hotel Managers, Drug Dealers, one of Divine’s Glory Boyz, Businessmen, other pimps, and so on), along with Seduction 11-, Streetwise 11-, AK: Stomping Ground 11-, CK: Fell’s Point/Campaign City 11-, KS: Prostitute Subculture 12-, PS: Pimp 11-, WF: Knives, Small Arms, Street Weapons. Pimps usually have a high Presence, Psychological Limitation: Street Pride (see below) and Distinctive Features: Pimp (Easily Concealable, Recognizable). They carry a great deal of “flash money” on their persons and sport expensive cars and jewelry to maintain their freewheeling image.

Weapons: Pimps always carry a gun or a knife, especially in Fell’s Point (“where if the hookers don’t get you, the other pimps will.”) The typical combo is a knife and a handgun, the gun tucked in a shoulder holster or in the waistband of their pants. No matter what the weather, they will wear a jacket, baggy clothes (especially baggy pants, where a small caliber handgun can easily be concealed in the crotch), or a long sweeping coat to conceal this firearm; when out driving, their firearm will be close at hand should someone they be hit by a stickup artist while driving in their cars.

Psychological Limitation: Street Pride: The Revolution did nothing to kill the violence on the Point between the prostitute and her pimp; it only exacerbated it. Furthermore, a great many pimps now will simply not back down to the police, to prostitutes, to vigilantes or to *anyone* in public, refusing to let any character “walk on them” and becoming loud and hostile toward anyone who tries to do so. Most pimps on the Point are convinced the Revolution occurred because the pimps “back in the day” were weak, and they have no intention of letting it happen again. If the PCs drag a pimp to a private place where no one else is around to see him being questioned, the pimps are more likely to “turn” and tell the PCs what they want to know. They are usually more concerned about losing face than their lives when in public.

A selection of sample pimps are included below, after the *Meat* section. The sample pimps can be used to round out a street campaign.



Meat

"Meat" is slang for bodyguards. While the pimp himself is supposed to cover this action, many pimps hire local muscle to act as bodyguards for their stable, whether street gangs, outlaw biker gangs (these gangs would rarely work for black pimps, however, unless they were getting a large piece of the action) or local thugs (in Divine's case, his Glory Boyz are supposed to act as muscle for each other; messing with one of the Boyz will bring the other fifty or more in the immediate area down on the offender). Not all prostitutes have "meat," but the mere mention of one in the presence of a john usually is enough to insure a prostitute is not harmed by a customer; the *idea* of some massive bodyguard lurking nearby to protect the prostitute is enough to make johns think twice about harming a prostitute. Once the Revolution occurred in the Point, "meat" in the Hole were not dispensed with, just reorganized into more docile areas, such as bouncers or bartenders. It is not uncommon to see female meat in the Hole, usually dressed in baggy clothes, bulky enough to conceal the firearms they carry on their persons.

Meat Statistics: Meat are usually one of the Thug Templates listed in *Justice, Not Law*, pp.125-126.

Other Contacts

The following pimps may be used as adversaries or sources of information on events in the Basin.

Tambourine Man: An independent operator in the Basin, the Tambourine Man is noteworthy in that many prostitutes in the Hole would pay a great deal to have him delivered to them tied and bound and with good reason: a brutal thug, a gorilla pimp if there ever was, the Tambourine Man earned his name from his claim that he can strike any tune by beating the heads of his prostitutes with his fist. He is responsible for many brutalizations on the Point (he once flogged one of his prostitutes with a dog chain in front of a crowd) and bears a special animosity toward the Widow's Peak. When they took over during the Revolution, he lost a great deal of his territory, some of his best hookers, and they killed his brother in a drive-by shooting (they were gunning for him). Whenever he gets the chance, Tambourine Man arranges for a drive-by in the Hole to "shoot some bitches."

Mona: An incredibly tall drag queen with an outrageous wig and pancake face make-up, Mona is a transsexual pimp operating in the Basin (on the fringe of the Hole, near the Central Railroad Station) who has two to three men in "her" stable. Mona, while she has a smart mouth and a bitchy personality, is not inclined to violence. Although she takes offense easily, it is worth it to stay on her good side, as she is allowed to enter the Hole freely (her reputation and her contacts within the Hole allow her free passage) and has a Streetwise skill of 14-, AK: The Basin, 14-, KS: Prostitute Subculture 14- and several contacts, becoming a valuable source of information for clue-starved characters.

Divine's Pimps

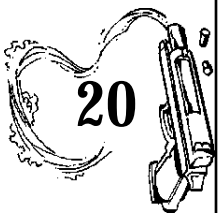
Three of Divine's stable pimps are listed below. Each of these pimps maintains a large stable of ten to fifteen girls (with some help from Divine's Glory Boyz "meat" clad in white leather and carrying automatic weapons). These three pimps are loyal to Divine.

Charmin' Harmon: Like an angel in white silk and thin gold chains that surround his neck like a halo, Harmon striding onto the scene is the sign that something major is going down. Harmon is known to treat his girls well, primarily

because his devilish good looks and personality allow him to sink his hooks into his "hoes" without having to raise a finger. Charmin' Harmon is planning to move his operation into a sex-club that Divine is opening in the Basin (the *Harmony House*), but this won't take place for another month or two. When it opens, it will become a prime drug distribution center to compliment its prostitution ring.

J-bird: A well-built mulatto, J-bird has a tendency to boast about the time he has spent in the "joint" for assault and battery, murder and rape. His criminal record is extensive, and the years he has spent in the Joint can be counted by the number of scars he has on his body. He has the complete Boxing Martial Arts package in addition to all Dirty Infighting maneuvers.

Knockin' Robin: Robin is a small, effeminate pimp with a quiet mean streak. He is an expert with knives. His name comes from the way he taps the side of his leg or the side of his car door when he is angry. The word is that Robin is one of Divine's "favorites," as the young man visits Divine's clubs often to meet with his mentor.



Chapter One: The Basin

Andersen's Notes

I did a few days of scouting in the Harbor area to get a feel for the area...and discovered enough to decide against pursuing an official investigation. According to rumor and several incidents that have made the Fell's Point press, the FPPD are unwelcome in the Harbor area. I strongly doubt as a NILE rep I would be treated any different. If I went in there looking for Fantasy, chances are I would be skinned alive before I made it three blocks. My talks with Ms. Marinetti at Haven (see notes, above) convinced me that I might be able to find out what I needed if I went in posing as a reporter or an author. Even though there was no chance of me being able to pull off a Haven cover, I had a semester or two worth of journalism at HCU. I figured I could pull off the "writer of a sociology text" routine and poke around the Hole without raising too much hell.

As it turns out, finding Deborah's Harbor Terrace apartment wasn't a problem. Entering the Hole wasn't a problem. Finding Fantasy wasn't a problem.

Getting out was.

The Harbor Terrace Apartment

Characters who discover the key in Deborah's apartment and scour the Grays Harbor Access Road (which covers a large stretch of the Harbor; a good few hours worth) looking for the lock the key belongs to, will eventually be rewarded. They will come to a seedy apartment block, the Harbor Terrace Apartments, just inside the Basin. The peeling paint and dirt walls lining the outside of the project rise to barely three stories in height, and a brick front courtyard leads from the street into deep shadows. In the darkness lining the interior of the courtyard are a series of small, dingy doors (like walk-in closets or coffins) that lead to the ghetto apartments within the project. The apartments are sagging and falling apart in many places, with narrow hallways, paper-thin walls and cardboard and metal security bars fastened on many of the windows. Once night falls, characters can hear the sounds of the Basin whores lining up on the streets, calling out to customers. The crime rate in the neighborhood is high, and PCs who leave their car unattended may come back to find it gone, with the car thieves waiting

to ambush them (also see *Local Color, Basin Gangs*, below). This area is frequented by two gangs, the Red Stockings and the Shaved Posse.

The small apartment is carefully arranged to look exactly like Deborah's home in Washington D.C. where her parents were murdered. It was important to Deborah that the House not be in a "controlled environment" where she would be safe from harm; she had to feel the danger of the neighborhood all around her.

Andersen's Journal Map And Key

Front Door: The door to the apartment is locked, but it can be broken down with ease (DEF 3/BODY 3). If the PCs have the key, they may unlock the door with no problem.

Main Closet: The door to the closet is closed. There is nothing hanging inside except a lone wire hanger.

Kitchen: The kitchen cabinets have a few pots and pans, paper plates and a plastic drinking glass, but nothing else. There is no food in the kitchen, and the refrigerator is empty.

Clue: There is a black rotary phone on the kitchen counter; despite the style, it looks brand new and has several modern features: beneath the dial are the Hold, Speaker and Redial buttons. By pressing Redial on the phone in the kitchen, characters will get the number of the Black Cradle Call Girls service (see below). They may speak to an operator or a message machine, depending on the time of day.

The Black Cradle Call Girls occasionally lease these phones to their customers. Frequently, these phones are bugged or have hidden cameras incorporated in their design.

Dining Area: The dining room table looks much too big to fit in the dining room; it looks like it was intended for a much larger room (such as the one in Deborah's Washington, *Dark Champions* childhood home). Nevertheless, the table obviously complements the three hard-backed wooden chairs that surround it (all except the one chair that has been pulled out into the living room and set down, see above). The dining room table has been covered with a red and white plastic tablecloth (like one might find in a diner), old place mats and a vase of plastic flowers, nestled next to a bowl of plastic fruit and a pair of empty salt and pepper shakers. Places for three (a single plate, glass, napkin and set of silverware) have been set, as if some family is due home for dinner at any moment.



Living Room: This area is the most fully-furnished part of the house, but for all the furnishings, it seems bleak and devoid of any warmth. Color has bled from the wallpaper, from the carpet and from the furniture, turning everything into a featureless gray, like some kind of black and white photograph (the photograph analogy is true; see below). Everything in the room is clean and moved around just to perfection. A sofa is lined up against the east wall, with an afghan draped on its back and a blanket stretched over its cushions as if to keep it from getting dirty. Flanking the sofa are two small night stands with brass reading lamps that can be turned on by pulling their chains. In front of the sofa is a small coffee table with old issues of *Life* and *Time* (the dates on the magazines are 1971 and 1972, respectively). An EZ Boy recliner (tipped back so its footrest has been extended) lies in the SE corner of the room, with a pile of yellowed newspapers on the left side of it (once again, 70s-issue papers). Small pictures of her family hang on the wall. A faded elliptical rug lies in the center of the room, with a hard-backed wooden chair set in the middle of the floor, apparently facing nothing.

This entire room has a musty smell about it, like an old folks home.

Examination: If characters make a PER Roll or a Deduction Roll, they will notice that the living room is arranged exactly the same way Deborah's apartment is arranged, except the furnishing are considerably older (sixties-seventies style). The hard-backed wooden chair in the center of the room has grooves worn into it, like rope or a cord was rubbed against its legs and back (this is where Deborah was tied up when she came here; she tried to struggle, and when the chair was knocked over, the cords and rope would bite into the chair). There are fibers on the rug and on the chair that match both the children's clothes hanging in the master bedroom closet and the school uniform that was in the laundry room in Deborah's apartment.

** Any character with KS: Photography, PS: Actor or has the Acting skill will notice that the lights in the room are set up for what looks like a photography shoot.*

Bath: The door to the bathroom is open. This room is nearly empty. The window shade over the toilet has been pulled down and the shower curtain has been drawn across the tub. Several layers of dirt encrust the enamel of the tub, and rust and mildew has crept around the edge of the drain, turning it a spotted brown. There are three fluffy towels in the bathroom closet, but there is no soap, hairbrush, shampoo and nothing in the cabinet above the sink or around the bathtub (when she took her "vacations" here, Deborah brought a travel bag of items with her).

Bedroom: The door to this room is closed. This bedroom is completely bare; there is no furniture, only badly-varnished floorboards and small pieces of torn wallpaper clinging to the walls. The window to this room is nailed shut and has a piece of cardboard taped over it.

Master Bedroom: The door to this room is open slightly. Inside is a king-sized bed with heavy coarse blankets, huge white pillows and a large dresser with a mirror on top. The bed is carefully made, and it is likely that someone slept here recently (Deborah, during her last vacation). The bedroom closet holds one pair of children's clothes, made for someone ten to twelve years of age. The fashion is sixties to seventies (Deborah dressed up as a small girl when she had her fantasy at the Harbor Terrace apartment, and she kept one extra set of childlike clothes stored here, carefully pressed).

Clues: Strands of Deborah's hair can be found on the pillow.

** The window to this room is closed and locked. It looks as if the glass was replaced recently. Characters examining the floor around the window will pick up small glass fragments on the floor. This window is where the "attacker" breaks in during the "crime."*

The Black Cradle Call Girls

It is possible that when characters press Redial on the phone in the kitchen of the Harbor Terrace apartment, they may be placed in touch with the Black Cradle Call Girls. If during "business hours" (GM's discretion), the PCs will be greeted by an operator who simply says "Hello?" If the PCs attempt to bluff the operator, she will ask them if they are regulars, then ask them their names and place of residence (she will do a computer check; if it comes up negative, she will inform the characters so). If their residence does not check out, she will tell the characters that confidentiality is maintained, and ask them again for their residence. If they lie again, she has the computer system ID the caller's residence and print it out. She then politely informs them she is sorry that she can't help them, hangs up and places the "crank caller" printout in her files for future reference.

If the characters provide a residence and a name that checks out or an appropriate cover story (a businessman that has come into town staying at a local hotel, say), the operator will ask them how they came to hear of this "service." This question is designed to screen out unwelcome or suspicious callers. If the characters sound confident enough (Acting, Conversation or Persuasion roll), or say that "Eve" or "Deborah" sent them" the operator will okay the caller, inform the characters of prices (using vague, non-incriminating terminology; the price is usually two hundred and fifty dollars, plus more for special services), tells them a girl is on the way, then hangs up.

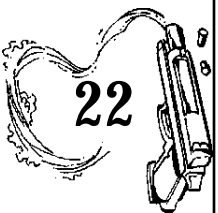
The characters may ask for Eve. The operator will check and see if she is available (GM's discretion: she may either be available immediately, or the characters may have to wait a few days. "Eve" is in high demand and usually has to schedule far in advance). If the caller is pretending to be Deborah, they will get Eve at whatever time they request her, although the price will be steeper, about five hundred dollars. Deborah had special tastes.

Proceed to the *Black Cradle* section, below.

Witnesses

The PCs may wish to question the locals about the apartment and its "tenant." The landlord (a difficult man to get a hold of) can confirm someone matching Deborah's description ("Jane") rented the place, and she has paid through for the next three months. She was wearing dark glasses and heavy clothes when she came to rent the place, like she was trying to be sneaky about the whole deal, but he

²The operator is unaware Deborah is dead. If the characters pretend to be Deborah (either a female PC or a male PC using Mimicry to fake a woman's voice), the Black Cradle operator will arrange for an "appointment" at whatever time the character requests. The characters can then wait for Eve to come to them (see Eve's entry, later on).



got a good look at her once when she came to the apartment. She showed up anywhere from once a month to once a week, mostly at night, and never stayed long. He may call the police if the characters break into the 119 apartment.

If the PCs question gang members, tenants or streetwalkers in the area, they may be able to provide some information if the characters are stuck. Otherwise, they know little or nothing of value, although they may lie if they think the characters would be good for the money. Some of the locals staying in the Harbor Terrace Apartments are prostitutes, and many take their johns back to the Harbor Terrace rooms to turn tricks.

Into The Basin

Characters looking for Fantasy or the Black Cradle Call Girls will have to travel to the Basin, and eventually, down into the Hole. The police, Harbor locals and underworld informants will all be able to point the characters there (“That’s the place to go if yer lookin’ for a hooker”).

Once the characters start asking questions, see *Snowball Searches*, below. If the characters are not discrete, soon everyone in the Hole will know what questions the characters were asking and who or what they were looking for. If the PCs have the misfortune to be mistaken for cops, the consequences could be disastrous (see the *Law*, above). Depending on the PC’s line of questioning (either subtle or brutally direct), they may be approached by streetwalkers willing to turn a trick (and secretly sell them information) or else be avoided by the hookers in the Hole as the PCs become targets for the Black Cradle Girls.

Common Knowledge

The information provided below concerns the day to day operations of Fell’s Point prostitutes so the GM (and the PCs) can get a feel for how prostitutes operate in the Basin. Much of the information is presented as excerpts from Andersen’s journals and recordings and can be used as player handouts. In addition, it is intended that this section be used as subculture source material for the GM’s campaigns.

Night In The Basin

The following description holds, no matter what night during the week characters enter the Basin; there is always some flurry of activity taking place on the narrow streets.

General Description for PCs: The Basin does not sleep. Once the dim red glow of the setting sun blisters over Fell’s Point, the Basin takes a deep breath and *awakens*, coming to life as the paved streets become veins for streams of cars and people pumped into the Basin and down into the Hole. As the skyline darkens and the street lamps flicker to life, the Basin becomes an urban symphony, with high, piercing catcalls,

howling cries, the occasional vulgarities and trilling laughter, all echoed by distant shouts and car horns. Throngs of people of every social strata are pushed together, shoulder to shoulder, from winos to well-dressed businessmen, and they force their way across and through the streets in droves, invading the Basin like refugees and carrying their impatient appetites with them. Traffic clogs the streets, and the spaces between the buildings are thick with human bodies and exhaust fumes from the cars trailing along the choked asphalt. Many of the cars in the Basin inch along slowly, the silhouettes of the drivers turning as they take long looks at the streetwalkers lining the thoroughfare; the silhouettes of the drivers have been fired red by the glowing neon and the taillight embers of the cars in front of them. Many times, the cars make square circles around the blocks of the Basin, picking and choosing from the selection of flesh that lines the streets.

Approaching the Hole, buildings become taller and press tighter against the streets, which become more congested with human and vehicle traffic, and all the sounds of the night, from the distant *thump thump* of the bass within the Basin night clubs to the shouts and catcalls from the herds of people filling the streets, seem to *swell*, until it is almost impossible to remember what silence is like without the throbbing background noise.

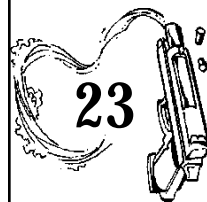
Basin Publications

There are a number of publications in the Basin that allow a customer and prostitute to avoid meeting on the streets. These “market mags” include a number of advertisements and personals, which usually can be reduced to “Young woman with apartment seeks well-off man.” If the advertiser engages in sexual practices outside vanilla sex, this is usually identified with codes and careful word choice within the ad.

Many prostitutes prefer this method of advertising because they can screen their customers; prospective clients reply to the ad by mail, the prostitute sorts through the responses to select her customers and then calls the numbers given in the letter. Most prostitutes prefer to accept the numbers of customers who leave business numbers, and not ones who leave the numbers for telephone booths (those who leave business numbers are usually more trustworthy); some prefer to accept numbers listed on the other side of the city, so there is even lesser chance of being recognized while working. These “market” prostitutes charge more for their services, anything from fifty to a hundred dollars, more if the customer spends a great deal of time with them or asks for special services.

Some sample “market” publications include *The Tenderbox*, *The Kiosk*, *The Hole Truth* and *Miss Lonelyhearts*, a personals column in *Out-Roads*, a Fell’s Point alternative newspaper (also see *Miss Lonelyhearts* in the *Asylum Bedtime Stories* source book). In addition, almost any of the Personals sections in the *Fell’s Point Dispatch* or the *Grays Harbor Times* newspapers contain the same kind of advertisements, though they tend to be more subtle than the other market publications on the Point.

Out-Roads, *the Kiosk* and *The Tenderbox* usually contain many sexual advertisements for Dens on the Point, including bathhouses, VIP lounges, steam rooms, all manned by any gender or ethnic persuasion, usually providing an outcall service for clients who prefer being pleased at home. Most of these places accept all major credit cards with “discrete billing” indicated somewhere within the advertisement. Other advertisements are usually for live sex lines, advertis-



ing anything from \$15 for fifteen minutes or paid by the minute, and many reviews of sex-books, videos, clubs and Dens around the Point can be found within the pages of these magazines. Most of these columns try to provide an accurate street-level guide to commercial sex in Fell's Point, although many topless bars, apartment-house bordellos and private clubs are not listed, either for reasons of space or the employer discretion; these places usually gain clients by word of mouth.

Locales In The Basin

Player characters, whether vigilantes or police officers, may find themselves in any of these locales during the course of the Widow's Peak adventure or while investigating underworld activity at other points in the campaign.

Topless Bars: Most of the Topless Bars in the Basin are open to the public for the price of a beer, and usually have a "look-don't-touch" policy (there are exceptions, including services offered by the managers and dancers on an individual basis); Gigis and B-Girls frequent these places, and several of these joints specialize in a dry-hustle/credit-card champagne rip-offs (mentioned in the description of Gigis, above), serving overpriced drinks without informing the customer of the prices, merely taking the customer's credit card and racking up the tab; these drinks can go as high as fifteen to sixty dollars if the buyer isn't careful. The design of these Bars usually consist of a center stage or runway down the center of the bar, with anywhere from one to four dancers performing at any one time, rotating in half-hour sets. These bars usually have pool tables and video arcades as well.

Sample Bars: Johnny's Topless, the Grind, the Babyface Lounge, the Carousel, the Cinema Paradiso, the Cabin, the Metropolitan Go-Go, and the Pussyfoot Lounge. The Grind, the Cinema Paradiso and the Metropolitan are all owned by Divine and are spread throughout the Basin.

The Grind is perhaps the greatest topless club in Fell's Point; there is a habit-forming array of attractions from drugs to some of the most beautiful women in Fell's Point dancing for the customers (anywhere from fifteen to twenty at a time around the bar), and a space-age sound system with nightly live DJ who pumps out a thundering rhythm as night falls on the Basin. Porn-star headliners and specialty nights make it extremely popular, and Divine has established a free buffet of flesh, lap-dancing and sexy, friendly waitresses that seem to encourage customers to spend while they can. There is a friendly but pervasive hustle in effect throughout the bar, and many of Divine's Gigis pump the customer's wallets with sex and drinks.

The Grind may be attacked by mercenaries in the Adventure Seed, *Stranglehold*, in the Epilogue below. Chastity (*Underworld Enemies*, p.60) has an apartment near here and sometimes dances in the Grind when not needed by Divine.

Porn Theaters: These establishments run from the extremely seedy, filled with pickpockets, winos and poor video-projection facilities to the professional theaters, which tend to have a cleaner seating area, with better sound and film projectors for crisper images. Films distributed by Divine, Widow's Peak, Ananias Topps and the vice queen Cleopatra find their way into these theaters on a regular basis.

Sample Theaters: The Golden Globes Theater (see *Smiley*, in *Clown Alley*), the World, the Cinema Circus, and the Venus.

Peep Show Emporiums: These establishments offer a combination of services which center around video, live and occasionally film peeps. Some contain one-on-one booths for

which a \$2 token buys about a minute's time, and while many of these emporiums are rip-offs, customers in Fell's Point attend them in droves, looking for a cheap thrill. Most emporiums sell magazines, tabloids, videos and sex aids, and have multi-channel viewing booths for customers either on the upper floors or in the back rooms.

Sample Emporiums: The Bullpen, the Fifteenth Avenue Adult Entertainment Center, Joy Boy and the Young Man's Fancy.

Bookstores: There are numerous versatile, well-stocked porn and magazine emporiums in the Hole, and they usually carry an assortment of sex aids and videos. Some of these bookstores are located next to Sex Joints and Clubs, especially those clubs that cater to eclectic tastes.

Sample Bookstores: The Late Date Bookstore, the Carnalville and Bookmarx's.

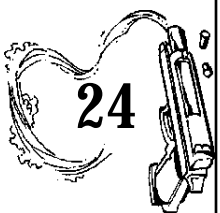
S&M Clubs and Parlors: This scene has always been booming in Fell's Point, fed by the Saittas (*Underworld Enemies*, p.30) and other operators in the Point; over the years this scene has been gradually changing in outlook, with sexual psychodrama with the emphasis on "drama" rather than the openly sexual (the Saittas were never concerned with the sexual aspects of S&M in any event). Many of these parlors offer a much more personalized and individual experience for paying customers. An initial entrance fee is usually charged for new customers (either that or a month membership fee), and some of the more sophisticated parlors maintain records of the customer's fantasies (with code numbers, not names, indicating their preferences) along with wardrobes and lockers for cross-dressing and infantile clients. Public humiliation on a center stage or private fantasies in designed dungeons on the premises are available, from whippings, paddling, spanking, foot-worship and mild electrical shocks and stimulation. Private sessions run anywhere from seventy-five to a hundred and fifty dollars, depending on the quality of the domination. The Epicurean is believed to own at least one of these establishments, but it is not known which one.

Sample Clubs: The Parlor (see *Vain*, *Underworld Enemies*, p.32) is one of the most venerable establishments in Fell's Point and sports three huge dungeons with numerous perks, including a human-sized doghouse, an electric chair and many other bizarre forms of torture and domination. Prices in the Parlor are double that of standard S&M Clubs and the clientele is often screened personally by Vain for maximum psychic stimulation. The Parlor is not light on pain; it is one of the most extreme clubs on the Point, and new members to the scene are not encouraged to go within its walls. Some of its clients who have entered its confines have never returned.

The Old World is one of the Clubs owned by the Epicurean, and he has used the devices within its confines to train many of the Black Cradle Call Girls in the erotic arts. It has a distinctly colonial feel about it, with no pretentiousness that is found in the newer, trendier clubs in the Basin. Nine small well-decorated dungeons complete the ensemble along with a center stage where well-trained (and famous) mistresses ply their arts.

Louis Saitta, the psychosexual killer Abandon (see the *Asylum Bedtime Stories* source book) was known to frequent these clubs before he was ousted from the family for his growing incompetence and emotional instability.

Short-Stay Hotels: These hotels ask no questions and see a steady stream of clients in and out of their doors on an hourly basis. Short-stay hotels are somewhat safer than taking one's



pleasure with a streetwalker in a Fell's Point alleyway, although some of these hotels are set-up to rob customers once they are within the walls and leave their bodies in the Drain for the police to find.

Sample Hotels: The Grand National, the Remington and the Palace (secretly owned by Manfred Saietta, Crave, see *Underworld Enemies*, p.36).

Swing Clubs: There was a rumor in Fell's Point that swing clubs were on the decline, but this has been exaggerated; as it stands, there are many on-premises and off-premises swing clubs in operation, all of which have a cover charge at the door of anywhere from twenty-five to fifty dollars, with group rates and membership fees depending on the club (the price at the door usually covers the buffet and two to three drinks in the Club). On-premises clubs usually provide lockers and showers with jacuzzis for its customers.

Sample Swing Clubs: The Two Plus Two, the Duet and Checkmate are three popular clubs on the Point; Duet is a newer, trendier club that has begun to set the pace for other clubs in the area. It is owned by Divine.

Boutiques: These all-purpose sex boutiques litter the Basin, carrying a wide array of lingerie, toys, tools and novelties, with both male and female accessories. Anything from dildos, love beads, ben wa balls as well as many potions and greases for the gears of love. Some of these boutiques focus solely on feminine products and outfits, while others cater to the Fell's Point S&M, gay and transvestite populations.

Sample Boutiques: The Emperor's New Clothes, the Leather Gates of Hell, the French Boutique, Belowground, and Adonis on the Pine.

Gay Movies and Burlesque: Fell's Point, with a large indigenous gay population, has a number of theaters that offer all-male porn and or strip shows. These places tend to be rather unsavory, being filthy, dismal and riddled with many of the criminal element who use these nightspots as drug-trafficking and male prostitution centers.

Samples: Vandyke's, EZ Central, TLC, and Left of Base.

Body Rub: Body rub parlors cater to customers who desire sensual, full body massages given by beautiful hostesses. Many of the Basin's massage parlors are manned by Latino women. Prices vary; the cost for a half hour ranges from \$60 to \$65 to about \$90 for an hour session. The cost of extras include \$20 to \$25 for topless, \$30 to \$50 if the hostess is nude or in lingerie and \$25 to \$30 for prostrate manipulation. Most of these places prefer to schedule appointments in advance, but walk-ins are always welcome.

Samples: The Balance, Classic Touch, the Bodyworks, Tasha's Palace, The Lady Fingers Salon, the Tenderloin and the New Sensations Massage Parlor. Some of these clubs have been known to deal in drugs for their customers, available for those who are willing to pay the price, including such fictional drugs as *Pixie* and *Pink Lady* (see *I4I*, pp.44-45), either injected into their customers or worked into the skin during the massage.

Asian Spas: These spas are mostly filled with Korean slaves and women imported from the Southeast. While customers expecting a geisha-like experience will usually come up short, the hostesses can be extremely sensual for the right price. Usually, there is a forty dollar fee at the door, plus tip, then anywhere from \$120 to \$160 for a "complete." Included in the price are amenities like a prone body shampoo, sauna and body rub. Many of these spas will perform outcalls, and all major credit cards are accepted, with discrete billing.

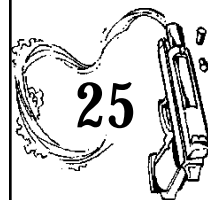
Sample Spas: The Society, the Four Seasons House and Mujin. There are a number of these spas around the Basin and in the Hole.

Dens, Specific: Three Dens in the Hole are of special interest here: they include the *Eros Center* (nicknamed the "Erogenous Zone," or the "E-Z"), the *Palais d'Amour* and *Jo's Place* (a combination restaurant and brothel; many Gigs employed by the owner work the restaurant, sometimes taking their clients to rooms in the basement or upstairs, while other prostitutes work in the narrow rooms just beyond the inner doors of the restaurant). The women in these Dens have registration cards and are given regular medical check-ups by a doctor who comes two or three times a week.

Of the three, the *Palais d'Amour* is known to be somewhat mechanical in its operation; in the spartan rooms where the customers take their pleasure, a red light flashes on the wall when the customer's time is up (usually an hour), and the next one comes in, like a conveyor belt. Nevertheless, the *Palais* is known to cater to eclectic tastes (including sadism and masochism which takes place in the basement, along with less savory types of sexual conduct not known to many of the customers) and provide exceptional service in the time permitted. The reason for this is that the *Palais* is one of the carnal houses secretly owned by Manfred Saietta, the Don of the Saietta Family (see *Underworld Enemies*, p.36), and he often comes to the *Palais* to use the surveillance gear and one-way mirrors to observe the clientele and torture them. The Widow is aware of his bizarre tastes and feeds them, although she finds Manfred a disturbing individual.

Some prostitutes in the dens have a problem with their operation in that there is no pick and choose policy with the prostitution; you can't screen customers, and you're at the mercy of the client and the Den Mother.

Rap Booths: Rap Booths are scattered throughout the Basin and the Hole. The set-up is simple; the prostitute and her customer occupy separate booths, screened off by a glass wall. They talk via telephone for as long as the customer is willing to pay. The more money he spends the longer they spend in sexual banter and disrobing. There is no actual touching; sex is through masturbation. Some of the Rap Booths in the Hole are used to relay information to the Widow's agents and contacts. A contact or operative enters the booth and depending on what the girl in the booth says or does (the message is rarely a straight forward one; it is usually a combination of body movements), they carry out the Widow's instructions. PCs may be asked to go to one of these rap booths to arrange for meetings or gain information from the Widow while they are pursuing an investigation.



Street Walkers

Andersen's Notes

When I saw them lining the streets, testing passers-by with invitations and come-ons, I felt like I'd entered some kind of primitive mating ritual; the Basin street walkers sport exceptionally bright clothes (lurid red and yellows predominate, lashed fast against legs and hips), plastered-on makeup and wear cheap jewelry that jingles and rattles as they walk, their jewelry keeping tempo with the click of their heels. It seemed like every man and woman in the world had gathered in the Basin that night, all looking for a brief encounter coupled with the exchange of green, and then return to their homes or to the concrete pavement and brick walls of the Basin.

I was here, looking for a Fantasy.

My eyes slid over the street walkers, comparing, disregarding and moving on. I began to worry that I would never find her in this mass, and many of the women who matched my gaze watched me suspiciously, perhaps reading cop in my face and movements.

Then I came to Oslo's and spotted Fantasy, standing by the curb.

Seeing her was like getting punched in the stomach.

Street Walkers

The street walkers are the prostitutes characters are most likely to encounter when they enter the Basin. They are the least attractive and lowest paid of the prostitution subculture but often turn more tricks in a night to make up for the larger sums paid to call girls and Gigis (see terminology, above) in Fell's Point. Finding a street walker is far from a problem; occasionally a car trailing down the street rolls to a stop, the window rolls down, and a prostitute comes forward. There is the brief exchange of words, and the street walker gets in and the window slides up. The streetwalkers either satisfy their clients in their cars, or take their customers back to one of the many short-stay hotels in the Basin designed solely for this type of activity.

In Fell's Point, a great many streetwalkers are armed (see *Prostitute Templates*, p.???) and are openly hostile any character resembling a police officer; if the character is a cop (or acts like one; Vs beware), they will be attacked *en masse* by hookers. As a general rule, the street walkers in the Hole are the most dangerous. Prostitutes working in the Basin outside the Hole are still controlled by their pimps and tend to be more docile, content that their pimp will handle any trouble with customers or the law.

Costumes: The characters will see quite an array of streetwalkers in the Hole, some of them dressed as super-heroines and villainesses; a survey of the Hole may turn up the Velvet Phantom (*IAI*, p.123), American Beauty, Dark Angel, Quantum and Solitaire, all with a little something more than a casual interest in the player characters. (**Note:** although American Beauty (*Golden Age of Champions*),

Quantum and Solitaire (*Champions Rulebook*) are superpowered, four-color characters and technically don't exist in the *Dark Champions* universe, the *Champions* comic book and TV series are sufficiently well-known enough so that these "fictional" characters are in demand by customers...also it helps reinforce the *Champions* "fall from grace" theme for really dark campaigns). Famous female vigilantes and heroes may be propositioned as they walk through the Hole, mistaken for prostitutes by customers on the street.

Turning Information: If any hooker agrees to sell the PCs information, they will do it outside the Hole (inside the Hole, they are likely to be reported speaking to the characters and be punished; see *Defense Systems*, below; someone *will* be watching the characters once they enter the Hole). The best way to get information out of a streetwalker is to pretend to buy a trick, go to a hotel outside the Point, and then have a conversation. The streetwalker will always request money (a lot of it) up front before "turning" information to the PCs. They would prefer to do a trick for additional money if the PC is willing.

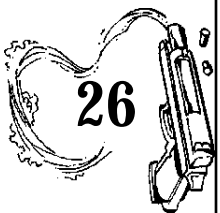
Snowball Searches: Word spreads in the Basin. If the characters drop a line they're looking for someone, the word will get around to the person eventually; friends talk to friends talk to friends and so on until everyone in the area has a version of the story. Conducting "quiet" investigations in the Basin will be difficult, especially if the character is male, but a quiet investigation is necessary. If a character is not careful, they may cause the entire Hole to "freeze up" and no one will talk to the character.

Nevertheless, the character may also draw so much attention that one of the Black Cradle Call Girls is sent to deal with him. GMs can use this option if the PCs are running into dead ends.

Information: The PCs may question the Basin street walkers working outside the Hole about the Black Cradle Call Girls, but the street walkers cannot offer a great deal of information on the Call Girls. They know the Black Cradle operates out of the Hole and command a high price, but not much else about their activities (although they will be able to tell characters the generalities of how call girls work; see the *Black Cradle*, below). The street walkers will lie extravagantly if they think that they can get more money out of the characters by doing so. None of the Basin prostitutes know of Fantasy, if the players describe her.

Streetwalkers in the Hole are much more likely to have heard of the Black Cradle Call Girls, but they are frightened of talking about them. If the PCs "fake" a trick to get information, however, they may be able to convince the prostitutes to talk. A number of prostitutes in the Hole know of Fantasy and can tell characters that she usually works the street outside *Oslo's*, a restaurant in the Hole.

It is possible to "bug" a prostitute without her knowledge (say, slip a bug into her purse or on a piece of cheap jewelry), but sifting through her conversations will be time consuming. PCs may be surprised by how much time streetwalkers have for idle chit-chat.



Andersen's Journal: Fantasy

Journal: This can either be written in Andersen's journal (without the narrative details) or turned into a recorded conversation, say, if the GM wants to turn these narrations into "tapes" for the PCs to peruse. The following notes are taken from a conversation between Agent Andersen and the streetwalker Fantasy in a crowded restaurant in the Basin, Oslo's.

Walking up to Fantasy was harder than I thought; she reminded me of a woman I had met while I was working in the FBI. The resemblance was uncanny, even down to the hair style and color. It bothered me so much I wasn't sure at first if I could approach her, but as it turns out, she solved the problem for me. As I was staring at her, she turned slowly, but just fast enough so she caught my gaze. She had flashing green eyes, almost a marine green, but sharp enough to make the resemblance that much stronger. She raised an eyebrow as we locked gazes.

"You lookin' for a friend?" she said, her words laced with teeth. "Or you just lookin'?"

I heard myself offer to buy her a drink. I don't remember my exact words, but it was something to that effect; I was still studying her.

She shrugged, like it was all right with her, she didn't have anything better to do. "In here okay?" She nodded at the restaurant behind her, a one-story dimly-lit place, where shadowy figures could be seen gathered at the table, paired by gender, sharing cigarettes and whispered conversation. The word *Oslo's* was carved into the sign above the restaurant in red cursive letters, flushed red by the light of the Hole.

I agreed. We made our way inside.

We snagged a table, and we got to talking. I introduced myself using my cover and offered to pay her just to sit and answer my questions. She stiffened a little at that, but I guess she figured questions about prostitution were harmless enough, especially what she took to be free money and a lot of it.

I couldn't get over the resemblance; it was still there, lurking in the back of my mind as I begin to ask her questions, slowly at first, then with more frequency as the night wore on.

Fantasy lit another cigarette, then squeezed the match, snuffing it. The smoke wafted up from the bent match, and I waited for her to continue.

"You know..." Fantasy's words rolled out slow, almost lazy, then began to pick up speed. "Most people think that like, it's some intense experience doing a trick and all." She took a drag on her cigarette and tapped it against the ashtray lightly, letting the embers drift to the bottom. "I don't think they realize just how out of it you are when

you're doing it. I mean, it's nothing personal...you don't really give a shit about the john, and he doesn't really give a shit about you...he doesn't even really demand anything most of the time. I mean, you take a taxi down to the Hole, right, you stand there, then a car stops...nothing more to it than that." She shrugged. "I mean, they're a lotta cars down there that are just down there to look, right, but enough of them stop. So anyway, you get in the john's car and you ask him, does he want a trick?" Her voice began to take on a sing-song tone. "He does, he says what he wants, and you tell him, well, it costs *this* much...that's usually fine with him. So you tell him where to drive, he yanks down his pants, and it's over in a few minutes. It maybe takes, what? Ten to fifteen minutes from the time you get in the car 'til you're back again, turning tricks. Thing is, they keep coming back again and again, no matter if you're the ice queen through it all, they don't really care..." Fantasy shrugged. "They're just emptyin' themselves anyway."

"What is it like?" I asked. I had already had two drinks, and I felt a little flushed, but I was curious. "The trick, I mean."

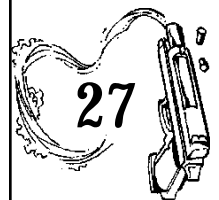
Fantasy shrugged again, in that routine, dismissive way. The light green strap of her bra slipped from her shoulder and lay against her arm.

"Well..." she sniffed and rubbed her nose. "He stops, anna I look in, ask him if he's looking for some, he says he is, we hit on the money, then he says he wants to go to his place." She shifted slightly and leaned forward. I found myself watching the bra strap hanging there, wondering for a moment if it was some kind of snake. "And so I says sure, but you have to drive me back...it's extra if I gotta take a cab back. He goes, fine with him. So we drive to his place up in the Harbor, down in the cellar, to this tiny room in the back." She frowned, as if annoyed. "He was *really* slow. That's the worst. I wrap a rubber on him, and he starts going at it like a snail..." she sighed, exasperated. "So I go back, we make small talk, then I come back here and wait until someone else shows. Same old, same old. It gets kinda boring."

"For them or you?" I asked.

"For me, of course," she said, smiling crooked, like she hadn't done it in a while. It was almost a smirk. "Long as they're with me, they never get bored." Fantasy's smile faded, then she leaned forward. "You know, it's not that these guys are ugly or anything...we get johns from the University, from Southside, from the Bay..." she shrugged again, and her bra strap slipped down farther. Absently, she tugged it back up to her shoulder. "They just get this idea that sex in the Basin and the Hole is more exciting." She raised an eyebrow, skeptically. "Whatever they think, I guess; it's good for business. Sometimes they're so hyped up when they show it doesn't take more than a minute or two." She shook her head in disbelief.

I didn't reply. Fantasy coughed, ground out her



cigarette in the tray and sipped her drink to smooth her throat. She gave another cough, then continued.

"They all aren't like that, though. You get these other johns who don't want a trick they just, like, you know, wanna talk to you for a while." She shrugged again, then nodded, like in understanding. "Like you, sort of, but not really. They ain't authors or reporters or nothing, they're just lonely, y' know?" She frowned at me for confirmation, her brow wrinkling over her eyes. I nodded, cradling the drink in my hand.

"But some of them can get a little too weird sometimes. They lecture, or talk about their lives, or something." She reached into her purse and drew forth a pack of cigarettes, tapping one into her palm. "Some of them are really screwed up."

Anderson's Notes: The Price Of The Trick

Haggling: Many of the prostitutes have their own theory about dealing with customers. They either feel that they need complete control during the bargaining process* or else while negotiating, they let the john talk as much as possible and get a feel for how much they can charge and what they can and can't do. The approach varies from prostitute to prostitute³.

Cost of a Trick: The cost of a trick is roughly proportional to the street value of drugs, usually crack or heroin. Most prostitutes in the Basin shift between shots and tricks, a drug-blasted cycle that consumes many of the streetwalkers in the Hole.

While prices have varied over time, the relationship between the prices (whether straight vanilla sex, restaurant hook-ups vs. streetwalker tricks or whatever) usually remains stable. They remain stable for a reason; prostitutes who go below the price are "closed out" of the market or otherwise disposed of. Since cheap prostitutes wreck things for the others working on the street, the "traitor," the "dollar whore" is threatened and chased away. The woman is not allowed a second chance; she is ostracized from then on. If the whore returns, she is badly beaten, sometimes killed.

According to Fantasy, a prostitute can earn just as much in almost every area of prostitution because of the time involved. A street walker who turns tricks quickly can get the same amount of money as a prostitute who works out of a restaurant (a Gigi) or sex club and turns only a few tricks (or even one trick) a night. There's always a market for every level of sex on the Point.

Tricks are anywhere from ten to fifteen bucks on the Point, usually twelve in the Hole, becoming more expensive the farther one gets from the center of the Basin; as a rule, hookers in the Point are inexpensive ("Not even the johns have much money to throw around," Fantasy remarked). A vial of crack usually commands ten to fifteen dollars, and some prostitutes (those without pimps) will take drugs instead of cash as payment for their services.

Note: Many prostitutes, if asked by PCs, will lie about how much they charge for a trick because they believe that a high

price somehow justifies their behavior. In Fell's Point, a high price frequently justifies anything.

Anderson's Journal: Continued: First Trick Of The Day

"The first trick of the day is the worst." Fantasy tapped her cigarette in the ashtray again. "Waiting for tricks, that's the hardest part. I don't stand there longer than ten minutes if I don't get a trick...if nothing's shown up by that time, I get pissed off...I want to slash their tires, or throw a rock through their windshield when they drive by." Fantasy glowered at the ashtray, then looked at me with her flashing green eyes. "Who needs 'em anyway?"

Anderson's Notes: Prostitute Activity and Schedule: The majority of prostitution in the Basin takes place in the middle of the week, between 6 PM and midnight, with occasional peaks of activity during Saturdays and Sundays. According to most of the streetwalkers in the Basin, Tuesday and Thursday are the easiest days on the street, followed close by Sundays. For some reason, Saturdays are hopeless; the Fell's Point weekend is family time, at least until fathers get home from a family outing or start getting restless toward the end of the work weekend. Nevertheless, a john is usually available at any time during the day or night. There is always a sexual hunger brewing somewhere on the Point, and the Hole never lacks customers.

Number of Customers in an Evening: Three to five is normal, and ranges anywhere from none (rare) to thirteen or fifteen (also rare). A bad night is one or two tricks.

Protection: Some the prostitutes in the Basin demand their customers use condoms, even for blow jobs. The concern with preventing sexual disease varies from prostitute to prostitute.

Anderson's Journal: The Length Of The Trick

Fantasy took another drag and let the smoke trail from between her lips, then coughed again.

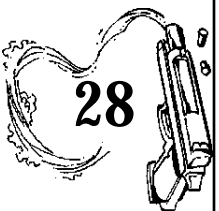
"So tricks don't last too long?" I prompted. She glanced at me again, as if remembering I was there.

"Nah," she said. "Any trick that takes more than fifteen minutes is a long time; most johns, they're really worked up before they even show up in the Basin...the ones that drive around in the cars are already so horny that some tricks don't last more than five minutes."

Fantasy smiled, ruefully.

"A half-hour is an extremely long time, and all the while you're sitting there, thinking, 'Man, this guy is going to take forever.'"

I didn't say anything. The thought crossed my mind if any of my previous lovers had felt that way, then I pushed the thought away; it was a dangerous path to wander down, and one that really didn't lead anywhere I wanted to go.



³This is especially true for "City of Sin" prostitutes, who believe any lack of control will be construed as a weakness; screw or be screwed, as it were.

Defense Systems

Support Group Warning System: For the most part, the prostitutes in the Hole are under siege (see *Pimps*, above). They cooperate and look out for each other. Individual streetwalkers characters see on the streets of the Hole are usually part of a much larger group that works together, anywhere from three to five prostitutes plus some “meat” (at least one bodyguard; see *Meat*, in *Pimps*, above) that loiters on the street, on a roof or in a nearby club who packs the heavy artillery, anything from a submachinegun to an assault rifle.

When the streetwalker turns a trick, she lets the others know and at least one of her support group takes a good look at the car and the guy. Part of the prostitute slang (Language: Prostitute Slang) includes subtle signs that tell other prostitutes when there is someone they shouldn't go with, usually hand signals or a gesture made with a piece of jewelry or purse. Outside the Hole, this support group is much less structured and effective; the pimp is supposed to serve as the protection and the muscle should one of his stable be hurt or abused.

GM Note: A prostitute's girlfriends are the most important instigators and teachers, and they stick together. When accosted, hassled or traumatized, they “watch” for the offender, and if they find him, they will hurl stones at his car, shoot at him, or even turn his car over and chase him through the streets, trying to stone him and kick him in the crotch. If accosted, the streetwalkers usually shout “Rape!” which brings their street friends and any local meat in the area running, armed to the teeth. Any offenders dragged down into the mass of women are usually dumped into the River (the “Drain”) and their bodies are washed up on the shores of Fell's Point Bay to be found later by the FPPD when they make their routine patrol.

Gigis

The Hierarchy

As mentioned before, streetwalkers compose the lowest level of the prostitute subculture, not counting the crackheads that will turn tricks for small amounts of drugs (and though they are relentlessly hunted down and kicked out of the Hole, they persist throughout Fell's Point like roaches). The next level of the Fell's Point prostitute subculture consists of the “Gigis,” prostitutes who work indoors, either in sex clubs or in restaurants in the Basin set up to cater to adult tastes. There is a great deal of hostility between the streetwalkers and Gigis, both in and out of the Hole.

Gigis: It's not often that streetwalkers come into sex clubs and restaurants in the Hole that allow prostitution such as *Studio 40*, *Jo's Place* and *Oslo's*; it's a more demanding environment, and the last thing the Gigis want is to have their territory “contaminated” by streetwalkers. While the street prostitutes are usually left in peace when they do come inside (although there is a bristling in the air), the street walkers usually leave quickly. Gigis wear better clothes and make-up, and are considered to have more style, the ability to make conversation; as Gigis see it, streetwalkers are too sleazy and coarse to be working indoors. In addition, as drugs are supposedly not allowed in most sex clubs and restaurants, many

owners use this as an excuse to kick street prostitutes out.

Gigi, Statistics: GMs should use the statistics for “Street Walker, Weak” in the *Prostitute* section below, but give the Gigi a higher COM (12), a higher PRE (11 or 12) and the Acting, Conversation and Persuasion skills. Some of them may have Familiarity with High Society. They do not usually carry weapons; when they do, they are easily concealable.

Andersen, Investigation Notes: There are some barriers between the prostitution that the streetwalkers do and the indoors prostitution the Gigis do; each group has their own “turf” which can be broadly defined as outdoors and indoors, and tempers flare if these lines are crossed. There have been fights, but according to Fantasy, not many; it's an unspoken rule they don't become (too) violent among themselves. I wonder if this is true. Fantasy says there tends to be more friendship and camaraderie on the street, but there's a lot of competition in the restaurants, and the streetwalkers and the Gigis call each other names. Fantasy says street walkers don't like to go into the bathrooms at *Jo's Place*, for example, because it is a Gigi workplace, and the street walker may run into the “professionals” in the back and get into a fight.

Andersen's Notes: Gigis

Note: The following “transcript” is included as an example of how Andersen's narrations can be transformed into audio recordings to give to players as “handouts.”

[Straight Recording. Background noise of *Oslo's* is present; there is the clinking of glasses, laughter and light talking with mood music playing in the background. The sounds of the street can be heard outside, cars honking and street walkers shouting out to each other.]

Fantasy: [Slight huff] Street work is better...there is no real danger of being recognized, but when a Gigi works indoors, there's more risk...I mean, when you work indoors, you have to give more of yourself, wear sexier clothes and underwear, wine and dine and all that crap.

Andersen: Don't they pay more?

Fantasy: Well, no shit! [Exasperation.] But the customers expect more. You have to play-act, it has to be like a normal encounter, with all this talking, flirting, toasting and crap. Nevertheless, when you spend that much time touching base, you can usually pick out the nuts pretty quick...plus, like, the bartenders and other prostitutes working under the roof warn the others when there's some john they shouldn't go with....and like you can put a purse down on your chair to show it's taken if some bad name shows.

Fantasy pursed her lips in disgust.

“These Gigi girls...” the word rolled contemptuously off her tongue. She tapped her cigarette in the ashtray, then took another drag. “...they end up sucking off all these old pigs with fat wallets,” she said. “Me? I'd much rather be on the street.”

The woman at the next table turned at that, bristling. Her earrings swung from her ear as she



glared at Fantasy. "Sleazy street bitch..." the woman muttered, as if by way of a retort. I could barely hear what she said, but it had its desired effect. Fantasy's green eyes blazed, and there was a flash as her knife slid into her hand.

"Is that what your pimp says?!" she shouted.

Everyone in the restaurant turned in our direction; some of the women looked like they were ready to jump into the fight. The tension in the restaurant had been turned up so high it was scalding. Fantasy and the Gigi locked gazes, and Fantasy still had her knife out.

"I swear I'll scar you," Fantasy hissed, and I could barely hear her even though she was sitting across from me. "No john will waste his spit on you when I'm done "

Under the table, I reached for my gun.

The Gigi broke first, turning back to look at her table as slowly as she could manage without looking like a coward, and Fantasy lowered the knife as the Gigi turned. The restaurant slowly kindled back to life, the bartender still watching the two women, but he was soon lost among the customers. All I could think of was how many people must have seen me.

Fantasy's knife had vanished, and she was holding her drink and shaking her head. "Some of these bitches," she said between clenched teeth. "Give them an inch, and they try and walk all over you."

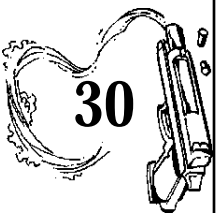
I nodded. My hand relaxed on the pistol and let it slip back into its holster.

Local Color

Listed here are a few of the other inhabitants of the Basin the characters may encounter during the adventure. They can be used as Contacts or Hunteds, much like the sample characters included in the *Pimps in the Basin* section.

Violin Man: The Violin Man is an elderly Vietnam veteran who plays his violin on streets throughout the Hole for spare change. He dresses in ragged clothes, including a faded Army jacket and a checkered cap shoved down over his head. He is a heavy alcoholic; characters who bribe him with alcohol or money may hear some of the rumors he has heard drifting through the Hole. While he is friends with a number of prostitutes, he has no loyalty to Widow's Peak and is willing to pass along a great deal of information for a modest price. As with the street walkers, he prefers to travel outside the Hole to dispense such information.

Basin Gangs: There are five prominent gangs operating in the Basin area, all of them with a high percentage of female members, anywhere from thirty percent (the Shaved Posse) to ninety percent (WITCH: the males in their gangs are mostly "hanger-ons" or boyfriends of members). The five premier gangs operating in the Basin include the Red Stockings, En Vague, the N.N., the Shaved Posse and Hail Mary's gang, WITCH (*Underworld Enemies*, p.70). They maintain a guarded truce with each other, with occasional firefights and border disputes with other gangs in the Basin or in the surrounding territories. None of these gangs maintain a standing inside the six block area of the Hole; it is simply not permitted, and the gangs are well aware of this. The gangs can be used as a violent interlude for an adventure that is bogging down in investigation details.



Interlude Two: The Prostitutes

A Pretty Prostitute's Progress

There is no quick and fast rule to composing the history of a prostitute; all the prostitutes in the Hole have had their individual initiations into prostitution. For the GM's sake, a rough history of a "common" Fell's Point prostitute is provided below. This section does not include information on the day to day activities of prostitutes (this is presented in the conversations between Andersen and Fantasy in the adventure section).

History

Most prostitutes in the Point are usually minorities who grew up in the Fell's Point slums (usually tenements in Fell's Point South, the Borough, and the Harbor). They had a troubled youth, either raised in broken homes or born out of wedlock and abandoned. Those prostitutes with family frequently had weak or abusive fathers (or another male family member or boyfriend); hostility toward the father is common, usually stemming from child-molestation and incest that occurred in their youth. Many prostitutes were initiated into sex by family members as early as ten to twelve years of age. Their adolescence is marked by being a member of a loose crowd, seeing the other prostitutes in the Basin at work and dropping out of school (usually with conflict with school authorities, poor grades and overly regimented school experience, say, at the infamous Fell's Point Reform Schools or at the Fell's Point Orphanage). Sometimes, young women are sold from the Orphanage or from Reform Schools directly into prostitution rings or training schools run by Divine or the Epicurean (a talent scout, slave trader and trainer of female slaves on the Point, see *Black Strap Suicide*, below). Other young women and men are available for purchase from the Baby Man

Prostitutes may fantasize about money and success, have had trouble keeping a job, and many have had unfortunate experiences with a husband or boyfriend. Any of these elements can be focused on when tailoring a prostitute's history.

Newcomer Corner: There is a "Newcomer corner" out by the Central Railroad Station, where most young prostitutes get their first johns, turning small-time tricks behind the

splintered fences and broken concrete walls that border the Hole (see *Fantasy*). Many older johns frequent these areas, even though the service is less professional or reliable. Many of them have been abused (such as getting "sandpaper handjobs"; the young prostitute tucks sandpaper in the palm and then gives johns a handjob they won't forget) or attacked in the midst of intercourse, but these crimes usually go unreported and are largely ignored.

Typical Career: A typical career in the Basin can be sketched out briefly here: the prostitute makes a debut on the street (usually down by "Newcomer corner"), followed by street prostitution for a year or two, then street prostitution supplemented concurrently by prostitution based in hotels, restaurants and sex clubs. Some prostitutes choose to move on the Personals such as *The Market* and the *Miss Lonelyhearts* Personal Columns (it's easier to screen the customers), and some work through the periphery of sex clubs.

Prostitution Templates

Two rough prostitutes templates are given below, for GMs needing to have their statistics in hand. These prostitutes can be used for prostitution rings in the GM's own campaign.

Street Walker, Weak

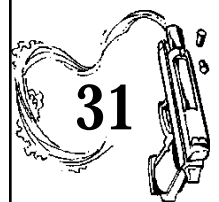
8	STR	10	DEX	11	CON	9	BODY	9	INT
8	EGO	10	PRE	10	COM	2	PD	2	ED
2	SPD	4	REC	22	END	19	STUN		

Powers and Skills: AK: Area of Operation 11-, KS: Prostitute Subculture 11-, PS: Street Walker 11-, Seduction 11-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 11-, WF: Knives, Street Weapons.

25+ Disadvantages: Any one of the following Psychological Limitations: Drug Addiction (which can also be Physical: see "Drug Addiction" in *Eye for an Eye*, p.45), Inferiority Complex, "Numb" (see below), Damsel in Distress, Monitored by Cruel Pimp (Mo Pow) 14-, Distinctive Features: Street Walker (Easily Concealable, Recognizable), some levels of Unluck.

Notes: These street walkers have a 25% chance of carrying a small weapon; if so, they do not know how to use it effectively (i.e., they have a Familiarity only). These "types" of prostitutes are not employees or businesswomen; they are prey, abused frequently by their pimps and customers. There is something haggard and broken in them, as if their spines have been snapped, and they turn their tricks as if pulled by wires. These are the prostitutes that readers of "Clancy Tech Thrillers" (*Without Remorse*) will be familiar with. Along "Clancyesque" lines, they are victims only and need to be "saved," frequently swooning into the arms of big, tough, gritty professional vigilantes and heroes who enjoy pumping bullets into cruel, evil pimps.

Weapons: Outside the Basin, a majority of prostitutes do not carry weapons; when they do, they are usually nothing more than common street weapons (prostitutes who carry firearms, at least on their person, are rare outside the Hole). Weapons include, but are not limited to: small lead weights concealed in the palm of their hands (either +1D6 or +2D6 HA Damage), many rings (brass knuckles, +2D6 HA), spiked heels (1/2D6 HKA + STR), hairpins, chokers, or knives (varies). Some also carry mace or pepper spray (oleoresin capscum). These sprays are usually considered a 2D6 Sight Group Flash, NND (Defense is Solid Eye Covering, +1), Limited Range: 2 Hexes (-1/2), 12 Charges (+0), OAF (-1) [60/24].



Street Walker City of Sin

10 STR 12 DEX 12 CON 10 BODY 10 INT
10 EGO 12 PRE 10 COM 4 PD 3 ED
3 SPD 5 REC 24 END 21 STUN

Powers and Skills: +1" Running (7" Total, not in high heels), the entire Dirty Infighting Martial Arts Package, AK: Area of Operation 11-, KS: Prostitute Subculture 11-, PS: Street Walker 11-, Seduction 11-, Stealth 11-, Streetwise 11-, WF: Knives, Small Arms, Street Weapons.

50+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Prostitute (Easily Concealable, Recognizable), Rivalry (Professional, Other Prostitutes in their Area), any other Psychological or Physical Limitations the GM wishes to bestow upon them (Psychological Limitation: Unnaturally Hostile, Cruel or Violent; Common, Strong), Hunted by Basin Pimps (As Pow) or an 11 or less.

Notes: These types of street walkers have a 75% chance of carrying a weapon; if they don't, they are *skilled* in Dirty Infighting (give them an extra Damage Class or two). Tougher, self-reliant and far more vicious than many of the males they encounter (or service), these females brandish weapons and tend to be ridiculously violent, able to shoot it out with the best of them, all the while decked out in fishnet stockings, leather corsets and armed to the teeth with knives, pistols and even the occasional submachinegun tucked somewhere within easy reach. These weapons are supplied by the Hanged Man (*Underworld Enemies*, p.40), so use the *Weapon Malfunction* Table (*Champions Rulebook*, p.198) to determine misfires and jammed weapons.

Suggested Weapons: Any sort of small, easily concealable (i.e., a +0 or +1 Perception Modifier) pistol or revolver from *Dark Champions*, pp. 86-88, or an Uzi, Mini-Uzi or Ingram Mac-10 submachinegun. Most of them carry knives, garrotes (necklaces) or brass knuckles (disguised as rings). Prostitutes and streetwalkers in the Hole usually carry any of the weapons listed for "Street Walker, Weak," listed above as well. Although it is not apparent on the surface, the prostitutes in the Hole are better armed than some terrorist groups the PCs may have fought in the past.

If the prostitutes in the Hole do not carry weapons on their person, there are usually weapons close by in carefully concealed stashes that they can reach into and fire at will. Occasionally, pieces of their costumes double as weapons, including garrotes, hairpins, rings, sharpened fingernails, stiletto heels, and so on, doing damage as listed for "Street Walker, Weak," above.

Almost every prostitute who carries a blade refers to it as "a pig-sticker." This is one of the many expressions of animosity toward the FPPD the PCs will find in the Hole.

Unspoken Rule: Prostitutes rarely carry weapons they do not intend to use. If they carry excessive and unnecessary weapons, the weapons may be turned against them by a violent or dangerous john. Some prostitutes have learned this the hard way.

The Psychology

The new clothes, the wig, the name, the make-up...you put away 'you' for a while, and put up this new person, this mask that takes all the damage."

- Fantasy

Fantasy explained to me there are some areas that are "off-limits" to customers, areas that are too personal to be touched. She didn't say it in so many words, but it turns out she protects her "self" by reserving certain parts of the body for uses other than prostitution.

"Say, the shoulders..." she said, offhandedly. "The touching stops there. No kissing or caressing me, either...and no touching my hair. No kissing my mouth, no necking..."

She frowned, trying to sum it up.

"It's like in Sunday school," Fantasy said, finally. "Cause, they'd say like, mouth is okay, but you can't go below the neckline." She drew a line across her neck, dipping it down just above her cleavage. "And like, in doing a trick, you turn it around." She made a flipping gesture with her hand, turning it palm up and then dragged it down her body. "See?"

"Hmmm," I said. I took a sip of my drink to cover my silence. She looked at me for a moment, then smiled.

"You like me, don't you?" she said, a little coy. "I can tell."

"Is that woman's intuition speaking?" I asked.

"No, just me," she said, a little sharply. "Plus that way you look at me when you think I'm not looking."

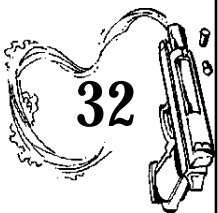
Psychological Limitations

Women's reactions to prostitution can have many similarities with the reactions of women who are survivors of incest and rape; feelings are burned out of the body, self-disgust, guilt, the sense of being a split personality become central in these women. Some prostitutes simply hide it better than others. Any of these may become psychological limitations for PCs or NPCs.

The Happy Hooker Myth: With exceptions (Chastity, *Underworld Enemies*, p.60), the "happy hooker," the prostitute who works for pleasure, is an uncommon occurrence in the Basin; prostitution is an economic transaction, not a fairy tale existence. Rare is the woman in the Basin who derives any sexual pleasure from prostitution (see Psychological Limitations, below), although many of the prostitutes, especially the Black Cradle Call Girls, are accomplished actors.

Money is the reason for prostitution. There is no woman in the Hole who prostitutes herself for any reason other than money, whether it is needed to earn a living or to buy drugs.

Identities: Prostitutes don't like the customers to ask about their private lives; it's none of their business. Complimenting the superhero/vigilante genre, most prostitutes in the Hole have working names, complete with their own wardrobe, hiding their "true selves" behind clothes and wigs. When working the street, prostitutes are not supposed to take any



initiative toward the customer; the prostitute lets them get her attention first, before they start talking to each other and negotiating. As a general rule, the prostitute reveals as little as possible about herself, and why she was earning money this way. Many have developed false names, aliases and street handles, and have a cover story memorized (i.e., she's a student from Fell's Point University who doesn't have money for her studies and her loan came in too late, so she's forced to work the streets). This alternate identity can lead to the following...

Psychological Limitation: Identity Crisis (Common, Moderate; this is not a Multiple Personality Disorder, Schizophrenia, or Dissociative Identity Disorder). There are some things that go with the career of a prostitute: for the most part, the prostitute does not allow the touching of important body parts, maintains non-participation in the transaction and doesn't allow the customer anything that has a personal meaning for her. The prostitute tries to create a clear definition between the "private" and the "public" self. If maintained over time, this can become psychologically damaging.

The differentiation between the prostitute's street handle and her private ID can be extensive. Some prostitutes have nightmares about being recognized, especially those women the Widow's Peak have turned into slaves. They usually have homes far away from the Basin, and they have a growing fear about working on the streets, constantly afraid that they may run into someone that they know. These women usually do not carry purses and IDs because they don't want to be recognized (if one of them should be murdered, it may make identification difficult; nevertheless, prostitutes outside the Hole who have been arrested a number of times are likely to have their "AKAs" listed in the FPPD records, along with other identifying features). They wear foreign clothes, talk differently and shun close contact; sometimes, they even go so far as to wear masks to cover their features, even though wearing masks in Fell's Point is illegal. This "Split Identity" may be the first stages of a Mask Complex, a Personality Disorder described in *Asylum*.

Prostitutes with this Psychological Limitation can be forced into becoming informants should unscrupulous PCs learn their real identity.

Psychological Limitation: Numb: (Common, Moderate) There are numerous defense mechanisms prostitutes use to maintain emotional distance from their customers, and sometimes they work so well and are maintained so long that they become a fixed behavior pattern. Some prostitutes "switch themselves off" when turning a trick, only to find that they can't turn themselves back "on" again during the day. Most of the prostitutes in the Point are psychologically damaged from their profession. Their sex life outside of prostitution is destroyed; in mild cases, the prostitute simply finds sex boring and monotonous, but in stronger cases, they block their sexuality out completely, becoming sexless, incapable of orgasm and even nauseous at the mention of sex.

Living Quarters

Most prostitutes have an apartment somewhere in the Harbor, if not immediately in their area of work (pimps usually require their girls to live with or near them). Most prostitutes who have their homes outside the Basin usually live there to get away from "the life" or may have a fear of being recognized as a prostitute while working in the Basin and spend as much time away from there as possible. The apartments of most streetwalkers are modern, one-room apartments (perhaps in welfare housing, in a hotel set aside ex-

clusively for prostitutes, or whatever), with a bedroom, kitchen and a window, usually out onto a fire escape or patio. They may have a roommate, either a live-in boyfriend pimp or another prostitute as a roommate. Use the template for the One-Bedroom apartment in *Justice, Not Law*, p.71.

The Black Cradle Call Girls live in areas all over Fell's Point (with the exception of the "Borough," an urban wasteland in the SE tip of the Point); many of them maintain more than one apartment for servicing special clients in the city, and these apartments are either located in Fell's Point North, the Harbor, or Fell's Point South (the "Southside").

The Widow and Prima Donna (see below) have at least one suite of rooms in the Hole itself. (These are the suites known to the public. There are probably many secret rooms and hideaways throughout the Hole that they can retreat to for privacy or for business negotiations. This does not include their other secret homes in the city of Fell's Point and on the peninsula.) As they are required to spend a great deal of time in the Hole on business, it is convenient for them to maintain quarters in the Basin proper. Donna also has an expensive apartment in Fell's Point North which she considers "home," and the Widow maintains her own home, the Estate, on the Northside, bordering Fell's Point Bay. Her estate is lush, beautiful and heavily guarded, and she holds many social events there, some of them in secret, importing many of her Black Cradle Girls and other women from the Hole and tailoring each prostitute to fit the needs of her guests. Many of the most powerful figures in Fell's Point are regular visitors to the Estate (see also *The Rim*, in the next chapter).

A Fell's Point Fairy Tale

I don't drink often, and I like to think I keep things under control. I don't drink to excess, and I'm always careful who I drink with.

The night with Fantasy, I kind of threw both of these rules out the window; I guess she kind of had me pegged in Oslo's. No loss, I suppose. I had never thought I'd pay for sex, but then again, I never thought I'd lose my leg in an artillery accident, either.

Oh, that's right, before I forget to mention it...I'm a cripple. It's really not a problem. Parking makes up for it.

Sorry. Bad joke. It's the alcohol. I couldn't tell whether Fantasy was humoring me or not when she laughed. But she was very gentle when the nights went low, and I forgot how much I paid; it didn't matter.

The window fan blew hot air into the room.

It had been a long time.

As we were lying there afterwards, Fantasy told me that she knew I wasn't a sociologist, or whatever the hell I'd called myself. She told me that next time, if I was gonna be a good cop, I should take more notes or take some acting lessons. And not to leer.

"I wasn't leering," I replied, kind of pissed at the insinuation. "You just remind me of someone."

"Uh-oh," she said and kind of withdrew a bit.

"I'm not a psycho," I said, suddenly feeling the space between us. "Trust me. I wouldn't hurt you."

"That's reassuring," she said, a bite to her voice. "Do you say that to all the girls?"

I was beginning to wish we hadn't started talking. "Why are you here?" I said, trying to change the subject.

"You paid me to be here." Fantasy shifted on the edge of the bed, scratching her arm.

I frowned. "No, I mean here in Fell's Point." I glanced at the walls of my hotel room, the ugly fan rattling in its plastic cage in the window, the heat in

the room, and the flaking paint. I turned back to her where she lay. "This is such a shitty city. You could go somewhere else, do something better."

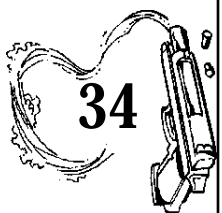
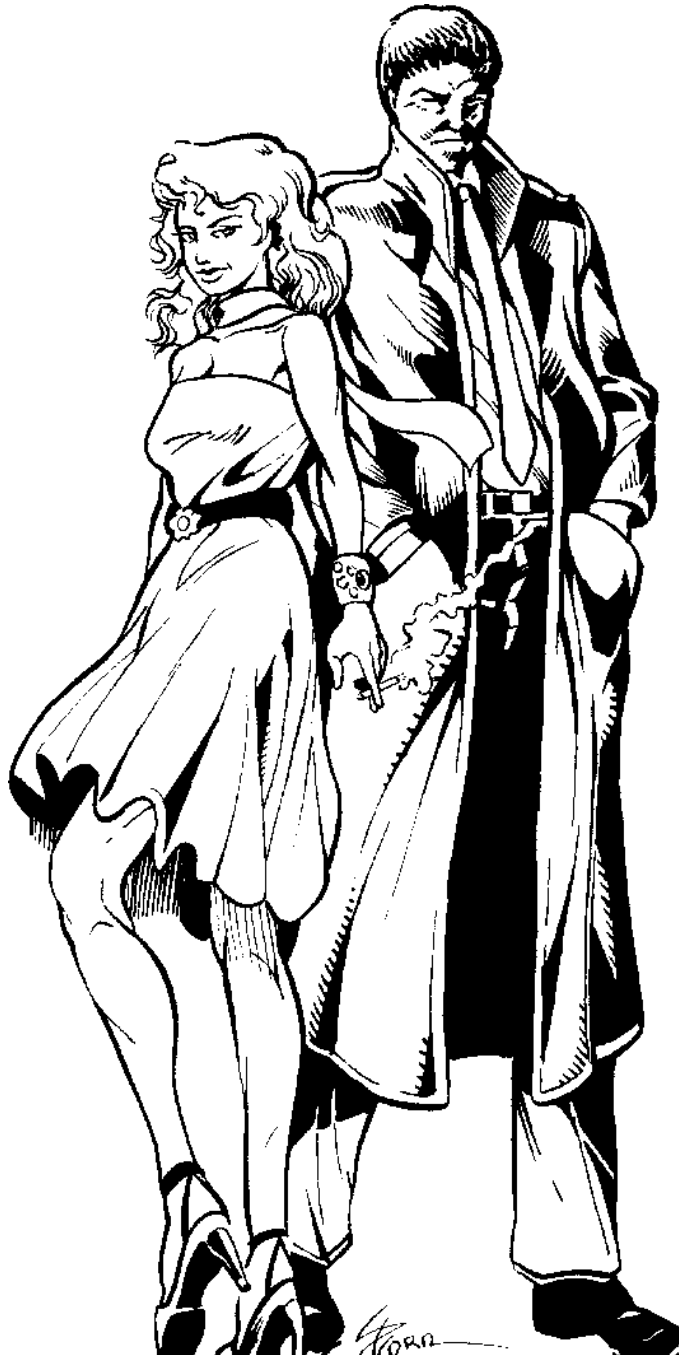
"Well, thank you." Her words were heavy with sarcasm. "Now why didn't I think of that?" She shrugged. "Don't you worry. I'm saving up. I got plans. I'm not going to be here forever."

I watched her face, and I knew, maybe intuitively, that she didn't really believe what she was saying. Her face had this helpless expression on it, that kinda hit me. It was like the expression I had seen in Ms. Marinetti's face at the Haven office. She was trapped.

"Were you born here?" I said, trying to prompt her to talk again.

She leaned back in the bed, and pressed against me.

"Yes," she said. "Yes, I was born here."



FANTASY

Author's Note: Fantasy is an example of a streetwalker PCs might encounter in the Hole. Other prostitutes can be designed quickly using her as a base, or by using one of the templates described in the prostitute section. The important thing about Fantasy is that she is willing to talk to characters (for a price) about the general layout of the Hole.

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
10	STR	0	OCV: 4		
11	DEX	3	DCV: 4		
11	CON	2	ECV: 3		
10	BODY	0	Phases: 4, 8, 12		
10	INT	0			
10	EGO	0	Costs		
12	PRE	2			
10	COM	0	Char:	19	Base: 50
2	PD	0		+	+
2	ED	0	Powers:	53	Disad: 70
3	SPD	9		=	=
4	REC	0	Totals:	72	120
28	END	3			
21	STUN	0			

Cost	Powers	END
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12 Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting

Maneuver **OCV** **DCV** **Damage**

Groin Kick

(Nerve Strike) -1 +1 2D6 NND (7)

Kick

(Martial Strike) 0 +2 4D6

Kidney Punch

(Killing Strike) -2 +0 1D6+1 HKA

(7) rPD in vitals protects.

1 Can use Knife with Martial Arts

4 Bauer .25 Automatic: 1D6-1 RKA, 6 Charges (-3/4), OAF (-1) [12/4] [6c]

7 "Pig-Sticker" Stiletto: 1/2D6 HKA (1D6+1 with STR), Armor-Piercing (+1/2), Blade Limitations (-1/4), OAF (-1) [15/7] 1 (2)

2 +1" Running (7" Total, not in high heels) 1/5"

Skills

3 Seduction, 12-

3 Stealth, 12-

3 Streetwise, 11-

3 AK: The Fell's Point Basin and the Hole, 12-

2 CK: Fell's Point, 11-

2 KS: Prostitute Subculture, 11-

1 Language: Prostitute Slang (Fluent)

2 PS: Prostitute, 11-

3 WF: Small Arms, Knives

5 +1 Combat Level with Hand to Hand Combat

100+ Disadvantages

15 Psychological Limitation: Heroin Addiction, Medium (Common, Strong)

10 Psychological Limitation: Low Aspirations and High Grandeur (Common, Moderate)

15 Physical Limitation: Heroin Addiction, Medium (Frequently, Greatly)

5 Distinctive Features: Prostitute (Easily Concealable, Recognizable)

- 5 Distinctive Features: The Red Hourglass Brand (Easily Concealable, Recognizable)
- 10 Monitored by Prima Donna (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area: The Hole), 11-
- 10 Hunted by any pimp or heavy operator in the Basin (Mo Pow, Limited Area: Basin), 8-
- 10 2D6 Unluck
- 15 Mystery ID (*Underworld Enemies*, p.5)



Background: Fantasy's childhood was spent trapped in a sagging Harbor shack down by the Central Railroad Station. Her mother was terribly overweight and spent much of her time prone upon the thick sweat-stained mattresses of her bed, only half-conscious of things around her. Her room was just down the hall from Fantasy's, but the large black door to her

room made the distance longer. It was closed shut like a coffin box, and its rattling brass doorknob was loose in its setting. When you turned it, it shook like bones.

The doorknob was so loose that her mother, in one of her states, had fastened a tiny string to it and ran it to her bedside. When she needed Fantasy to do something, she simply jiggled the string, and the doorknob would rattle in its frame.

come here darling I need you to do something for me

Sometimes, late at night, Fantasy could hear the doorknob shaking in its fastening like a rattlesnake. The sound frightened her. She always imagined the bloated form of her mother shaking there on the mattress like a foul black goblin, too heavy to move, too heavy to do anything.

When Fantasy was young, she used to draw an image over her home like a shimmering veil. In the veil's path, the shack was transformed. The paper-thin cardboard became great white castle walls, the splintery telephone and light poles outside became mighty trees, the gutter runoff from the Drain became a crystal lake, with glittering swans circling on its surface.

Fantasy became a little maiden standing at the door of her castle, inviting the rich and powerful to come to her palace in their evening dresses and tuxedos, welcoming them all with her arms outstretched. She would dance among them, her legs raised so high in the air it would look as if she glided about on one leg.

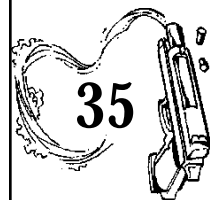
In private, Fantasy used to make up stories about herself and her life, how she would grow up and become a glorious princess, wealthy and rich and have everything she desired.

She became a statistic.

The irony of the Fell's Point Central Railway Station is that it goes nowhere.

Clumps of gray weeds have cropped up along the tracks and gravel and cinder, and you can see them just beyond the wooden fence that borders the train yard. The fence is a pretty sorry sight, filled with holes, some at eye level, some lower. It didn't really do too much to shield the empty train yard from the bordering streets, which were what fences were supposed to do, Fantasy thought. She supposed no one really cared.

The Station was shut down years ago, long before Fantasy showed up at Newcomer Corner; she used to hang out



there with her friends while they were skipping school. Fantasy had come there after one of the girls she knew, Darla, had showed her this shiny green plastic bracelet she had got just by doing “stuff” down by the corner for these guys. *It’s easy*, she had said.

Well, Fantasy wanted a bracelet, too, and if Darla could get one, Fantasy sure could.

So she waited there during the day in her faded jeans and white shirt that was much too small for her, as the cars drove by. Sometimes the drivers glanced at the children hanging out by the Station and slowed, but they didn’t stop. Not at first. Fantasy began to feel uncomfortable. Sitting on the fence creased her butt until it hurt, and she had an urge to simply leap off and make her way home. Darla could keep her stupid bracelet.

Then she thought about the slow rattle of the door-knob in her mother’s door and hesitated.

As she did, a long black Cadillac which had been circling the Corner slowed, then stopped. The tinted windows did not allow her a look at the driver, but the door cracked open and an old man stepped out. His hair was a thick gray, and while his features were harsh, his movements were very nervous and quick...and he was thin, much thinner than her mother. Between his two fingers, he held a crisp dollar. He was staring at her.

Darla gave her a swift kick, and Fantasy leapt off the fence and made her way toward the man, shaking her hips a little, like she had seen Darla do. A minute later, she was leading the man, dollar bill and all, behind the train yard’s wooden fence.

As Darla said, *easy money*.

Behind the fence, the railroad station stretched out, its rusting tracks stretching out down the Point.

Quote: *“Me? I wouldn’t mind being a hairdresser anna cosmetologist...maybe even a dancer, I got the legs for it.”* [Shows her leg, stretching it out.] *“I figure I can work until I’ve paid for school, then start saving up enough money for my own beauty parlor...”* [Ticks off the items on her fingers.] *“...I want a house and car and my own dressing room, with one of them walk-in closets...”* [Smiles, leans forward conspiratorially.] *“I mean, I know this one lady, right, she worked the Hole for ten years, now she’s 29, an’ she has seven hundred thou in her saving account...money you wouldn’t believe.”*

Personality: [Andersen’s Notes; Re: **Quote**, above] Of course, as I soon found out, Fantasy’s schooling isn’t going so well. And her drug use, which she somehow forgot to mention before, is extensive. She didn’t mention how much she has saved away for the beauty parlor, and I didn’t feel like asking. I see all the streetwalkers in the Hole, all of them eating in restaurants every day, wearing these expensive clothes that never seem to last, and to hear it told, what money they do put aside is spent on frequent vacations, usually to other sections of the peninsula.

It’s interesting, the way women like Fantasy don’t really aspire to anything that could be considered middle-class living. Their fantasies mostly have to do with areas where they’ve already picked up skills, like a dancer, hairdresser, or working a cosmetic shop, or in a clothes boutique. It’s pretty much the same, when they talk about their dreams. There are variations, sure, but they’re still pretty much the same.

After a while, I don’t want to ask Fantasy any more questions. Or anyone else in Fell’s Point for that matter. I never ask them where they want to go, or why. All I know, is that there are many people on the Point who talk and dream of leaving, of going away, but are really trapped there. Their lives have stalled on the peninsula, their personal gravity pinning them there like stones.

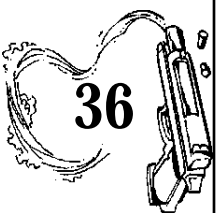
Powers/Tactics: Fantasy makes a good Contact for characters, and despite her constant dwelling on her addiction and dreamy aspirations of “making it,” she is friendly and open with those who show her the same respect and friendliness. She is skilled in firearms and knife-fighting and can defend herself if necessary. On occasion, she has robbed some of her customers, but as she claims, she only did so because she “didn’t like the look of them” or else they “insulted” in some way (“Just because I am a prostitute doesn’t mean I’m a whore,” Fantasy says, by means of a defense). She will not admit her past crimes (it could hurt business) unless a character seems like they would be sympathetic toward her.

Fantasy has suffered a great deal under her heroin addiction; her statistics were much higher before she developed her need for the drug (she used to possess the entire Dirty Infighting package as well as higher physical statistics). The longer her drug use continues, the more her skills and physical abilities will wane.

Thematic: Fantasy tells stories. Some of them are true. It is in keeping with her personality and purpose that she adds her own glamorous touches to events she relates to the characters, like she is creating some kind of urban fairy tale. When characters speak to her, they should sometimes feel like they are speaking to someone who is not altogether “there,” almost as if Fantasy is some kind of paper shadow or dream of something in the Hole. What she appears to be on the surface is not necessarily what is really there (see *Appearance* and the cosmetic changes Fantasy has made to her appearance). When possible, the GM should include elements of Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Steadfast Tin Soldier” when using Fantasy, portraying her as the ballerina in the white paper castle.

Appearance: At twenty-five, Fantasy has become a frivolous, permanent fixture of the Hole, a junkie who stands at the edge of the street, arms outstretched, her feet on tiptoe, eagerly awaiting the next customer that will lead her to her next hit. She is a Caucasian female of average height and weight, although she has tailored her wardrobe so that she appears much thinner than her actual weight and wears a cupped bra that emphasizes her small bust. Many customers have been surprised when she disrobes to find her frame average, even a little below average. Nevertheless, Fantasy has done more to attract customers with her deep green eyes (contacts) than her appearance, and she can be found almost anywhere in the Hole, typically dressed in an array of colorful garments (favoring blue and white over all others). Characters whose rest their hands on her abdomen may find a faint trace of scar tissue; Fantasy has a red hourglass branded on her stomach, just below her navel. If asked, she claims she got it as part of a dare several years ago while working in the Hole. She will not elaborate.

No matter what Fantasy wears, all her garments seem filmy, as if made of paper. Her dress is of the lightest gauze, fragile and complemented with a light blue scarf tossed about her shoulders. Her short black hair is concealed beneath a blond wig of straight hair that stretches down to her shoulders, and a shiny plastic bracelet is worn on her left wrist. The bracelet is heavy and bulky, and seems to weigh her arm down; there are track marks above her wrist from frequent heroin abuse.



The Steadfast Tin Soldier

There was silence in the room when Fantasy finished.

"Well?" she said finally.

"I don't know what to say," I answered. I didn't. Fantasy shifted next to me.

"Who do I remind you of?" she asked, a little insistent. She sounded angry with herself.

"What?" Suddenly, my thoughts were racing. So was my heart.

"You said I reminded you of someone. Was it someone you knew as a cop?"

"I'm not a cop," I said. "I'm a federal agent." I paused. "And yes, you remind me of someone."

"Tell me about it," Fantasy's voice was soft in the darkness; the bitter edge I had heard in Oslo's was gone.

"There's not much to tell." I found myself, like an echo. "You know, people assume, I work for NILE, that it's some big thing, but no; I'm more like an administrator than an officer. Desk jockeys like me, we're kind of low on the ladder. We just keep tabs on everyone, on everything and pass it along. We take action sometimes, but nothing like at the other agencies, like the FBI, say." My voice started getting heavy with phlegm, and I coughed to loosen my throat, and then without meaning to, I shrugged as if what I was about to say didn't mean anything. "When I was with the FBI, for example, we had this one assignment in Hudson City, we had found a witness to testify against some international figures moving into Hudson City. She was in a safehouse in the city with three of our agents." I coughed to loosen my throat again; the heat in the room was beginning to affect my sinuses. "And me," I added. "I was there, I had kind of arranged for her to testify and break these guys. We..." I shook my head. That wasn't right. "...I had promised her safety."

"What happened?" she said. I could feel her leg shift, press against mine.

"A hitman walked in and silenced her." I raised my finger and pulled back my thumb like a hammer. "Bang. All over."

"Did he kill anyone else?" She sounded quiet.

"No. Some of us got hurt; I don't think he felt we could've stopped him." I was silent for a moment, and I could hear the window fan turning in the room, doing nothing to dispel the heat. "He was a professional."

"Did you get a look at him?" Fantasy seemed like she was in awe.

His face, contemptuous.

"Yes." I said, keeping my voice level, but something stirred in me.

His face, contemptuous, as he saw me moving

stiffly on my bad leg. I never should have been there. I couldn't stop him.

His motions came so easily to him. He flipped me on my back, knocking the air from my lungs. Before I could breathe in, his foot lanced my shoulder and sent hot fire and numbness down my arm.

He grabbed hold of my shirt and lifted me up. There was a rush of air as he hurled me through the window and this shattering pane in my body as I fell to the alley below.

My sweat was sticky on the mattress.

The face, contemptuous as he saw me moving stiffly. His face, contemptuous.

I shrugged again. "I was worse than helpless. I lost her. No witness. No case."

"It didn't sound like there was anything more that you could have done," Fantasy said slowly, almost guardedly.

"I'd already done quite enough," I replied, and I could feel the old helpless anger burning in my throat, creeping up through me. "I should never have promised her that we could protect her. She trusted us. I was stupid."

The fan turned in the window, letting the warm breeze in. Next to me, Fantasy shifted again, her lips soft as she kissed my shoulder, then moved her hand across my chest to pull herself closer to me. "Did you love her?"

Her question was almost a murmur. We lay there in silence. She was warm, but I was the only one sweating.

"No," I said. "But I felt unfaithful to her."

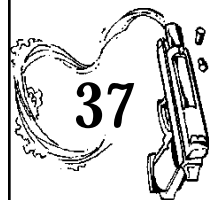
Fantasy's thin arms tightened around my chest, like she was trying to hold me together.

Agent Andersen

13 STR 13 DEX 13 CON 10 BODY 13 INT
13 EGO 10 PRE 10 COM 3 PD 3 ED
3 SPD 6 REC 30 END 30 STUN

Powers and Skills: +1 to All Perception Rolls, Walther PPK-S (1D6 RKA, 7 Shots, +1 OCV, -1 Range Mod), PS: Investigator 11-, KS: Federal Police Procedures 11-, KS: Criminal Law 11-, KS: Military Protocol 11-, KS: Organized Crime 11-, KS: World Criminals 11-, Perk: Federal Police Powers, Perk: Marine Rank (Corporal, Retired), Contact: FBI Agent ("Charlie," former classmate) 11-, Criminology 12-, AK: Hudson City 11-, Deduction 11-, Shadowing 11-, Stealth 11-, WF: Small Arms, Knives.

50+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Must overcome failure to protect Hudson City witness (Common, Strong), Psychological Limitation: Living in the Past (Common, Moderate), Psychological Limitation: Unorthodox Methods (Common, Moderate), Physical Limitation: Missing Left Leg (Infrequently, Greatly), Distinctive Features: Prosthetic (Concealable, Recognizable), Distinctive Features: Marine Corps Tattoo (Right Bicep, Concealable, Recognizable), Reputation: "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," (Limited Group: NILE and FBI) 8-, DNPC: Fantasy (As Pow) 11-, Monitored by NILE (Mo Pow, NCI) 11-, 1D6 Unluck.





Background: I have this picture of me when I was in the Marines, way back when. That's kind of a stupid thing to say. You never really stop being a Marine.

In the photograph, there, I'm shouldering my gun, eyes well to the front, and wearing the smartest black and blue uniform imaginable, red stripe up the side of the pant leg, the perfect American soldier. I was with the other twenty four, all lined up in a smart row like fools waiting to get placed in a metal box and shipped off to where we were needed.

I came home one night for my little brother's birthday in military dress, shortly after I was discharged. When I came into the dining room, he saw me and lit up, clapping his hands when he saw me, crying out "Soldiers! Soldiers!" like I was some giant action figure being presented to him for his birthday.

He gave me a hug, wrapping his arms around my leg. He didn't seem to notice it was cold, nor did he see the stiffness when I moved. His laughter was warm, though, and he was smiling brightly up at me, happy I was finally home.

He smelled like Christmas.

* * *

Ten years later, I was being hurled headfirst out of a three story window.

My body was rigid as a statue from the pain coursing through me, my gun hand extended, paralyzed from the shoulder down. There was this rush of air, this terrible feeling of my guts churning, the wet sound of my body striking the floor of the alley and the heavy clunk as my gun lodged in the bars of a gutter drain in Hudson City. It had fallen from my fingers and wedged itself barrel first between the iron bars of a sewer grate. I grabbed at it with my numb fingers, fumbled for it like a reflex because I couldn't think of anything else to do but grab the gun and shoot back at the intruder. It would not come free; it was more likely that I didn't have the strength. For all I know, I may not have even have made a grab for the gun at all. The doctors said I was in shock when they brought me in. I may have lain there, unable to act. Frozen just long enough for the image above me to be burned into my brain.

I remember hearing the report of several gunshots in the apartment above and flames licking at the edge of the window. Glass shards and timbers from the window lay around me on the floor of the alley, the cracks in the asphalt spreading outwards from my body, as if my terrific descent had broken the foundation below me.

I was in the FBI at the time, when I Fell. I was lying broken on the alley floor, my blood draining around me, as I heard her die in the apartment above. The gunshots sounded off like thunder, one by

one.

My leg, my polymer one, lay cracked beneath me. Rain began to fall on my face, slightly at first, then it became a torrent pounding against me; it must have looked like I was crying, but I wasn't. The report of the gun was still echoing in my head, and the flames spread on the upper story of the building as I watched the floor burn.

I remember the police, minutes later, scouring the floor of the alley, looking for my body. I was too weak to shout out to them. All I kept thinking was that somehow it wasn't proper to shout in uniform, even though I wasn't wearing one.

The ambulance came, and it took me in a stretcher, the ambulance dancing through the streets, its siren wailing. A shudder passed through me, even though I was trying to remain still. The ambulance passed beneath a bridge, and suddenly the ambulance was plunged into darkness; not even the interior of the ambulance was lit. I remember wondering why, why there were no lights in the interior of the ambulance. And then I realized it was because I was losing consciousness.

If she was only there with me, safe, then I could have borne the darkness. But she had died back there in the fire, and the darkness was so very cold and deep, like a river.

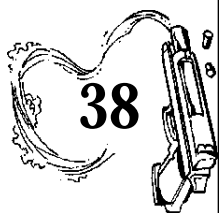
Personality: Andersen isn't a cop, as many of his colleagues would be quick to testify. A crippled bureaucrat with a gun, his superiors don't really expect him to accomplish anything in Fell's Point. Liberal with his descriptions and reports (due mainly to long hours of his youth wasted reading trashy detective fiction and his own questionable artistic flair), combined with his long history of unorthodox methods and angering his superiors, Andersen is unpopular at NILE. If the GM is using Andersen in their campaign, PCs may wonder at NILE's choice of Andersen to head the murder investigation, to say nothing as to why strings were pulled to keep the FPPD out of the picture.

The reason is political, and not even NILE fully understands the choice. Several NILE department heads, after delicate "negotiations" with the CIA, were persuaded to appoint Andersen to investigate Deborah Cross's murder. Andersen's unpopularity makes his conclusions suspect, his unorthodox methods are likely to undermine any case he has, and his long harbored guilt during his FBI days make him exploitable should he get too close to the real murderers in Fell's Point.

Rumor within NILE has it that this is the last case Andersen will ever have in the department. This rumor has left him with mixed feelings. On the one hand, he is sick of his career and the guilt he carries, and on the other hand, he is angry that he never had the chance to atone for his past failures.

Quote: [Spoken ruefully, sardonic smile crosses lips.] "*Onward, Andersen, Onward! For death thou canst not shun.*" [Shakes his head.] "*Pretty funny, huh?*"

Appearance: Andersen may have been handsome once, but the years have not been kind to him. Brutally cut black hair grazes his forehead, and his square face bears several deep furrows and pockmarks from excessive shaving. He has a Marine Corps tattoo on his bicep, and his arms and hands are large and heavy, like those of a boxer. He moves with a stiffness in his left leg from his prosthetic; he lost his leg during an artillery accident many years ago while in the Corps.



He wears long coats to cover his leg and maintains a somber expression at all times.

Andersen carries a *weight* about him, and his quiet unobtrusiveness is the only sign of loneliness in his features. A small silver heart lies on a locket around his neck, usually tucked inside his shirt.

* * *

My voice was thick with phlegm; I didn't mean it to be. It made me sound huskier than I liked.

"Why, you're a tin soldier," Fantasy said with a faint trace in her voice that I couldn't place. It wasn't humor, or ridicule, but recognition, and she whispered it softly, without smiling. Her hand trailed on my chest. I felt stupid. And drunk. In that moment, I thought I was going to cry, but bit it back.

All I could think of was the flames licking the edge of the upper story of the building and the echo of gunfire.

"You've lost all your color, soldier," Fantasy said, more quietly this time, and she stroked the side of my face, touching the beads of sweat that had gathered there. I stared straight ahead, up at the ceiling where the paint was cracked and flaking in the heat.

There in the bed, with the window fan that rattled and hummed in its plastic cage, lighted up by the red neon outside, I felt the most terrible heat. I couldn't tell whether it was genuine heat or whether it was the fire in my memory. I felt like I was melting away, but Fantasy's hand was cool on my chest.

She smelled like Christmas.

Chapter Two: The Hole

The Black Cradle Call Girls

The Black Cradle Call Girls know many (but not all) of the mysteries surrounding the Peak, but they are far less inclined to talk than the street walkers and the Gigis. The call girls tend to work either in protected brothels in the Hole or perform for the Widow's "special" customers. Aristocratic and aloof to the rest of the prostitutes in the Hole, the Black Cradle Call Girl charge their clients anywhere from \$1500 to \$2000 a night, netting upwards of almost \$150,000 per year. Many of the Black Cradle Girls come from middle-class backgrounds and service upper-style customers on the Point. They have been trained to make their clients feel important, attractive and virile, and many of them are accomplished actors.

Note: The statistics for the Black Cradle Call Girls are not the statistics for conventional call girls. The Black Cradle Call Girls have been trained to act as special operatives for the Widow; in this capacity, they have been trained in martial arts and surveillance (heightened perception). Standard Call Girls should be treated as one of the Street Walker templates, with PS: Call Girl, Acting, Conversation, Persuasion, Seduction and three Contacts at 11 or less added to their character sheets. Their combat skills are substandard to nil.

The Black Cradle Call Girls

10	STR	13	DEX	13	CON	10	BODY	10	INT
10	EGO	13	PRE	14	COM*	3	PD		3
3	SPD	6	REC	30	END	25	STUN		

* This is the lowest COM a Black Cradle Call Girl will have.

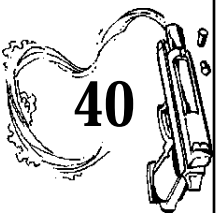
Powers and Skills: +1 to All Perception Rolls, +1" Running (7" Total, not in high heels), any one of the following Martial Arts Packages with all maneuvers: Commando Training, Dirty Infighting, Karate or Kung Fu, any three Contacts in Fell's Point at an 11-, AK: Area of Operation 12-, KS: Prostitute Subculture 12-, PS: Call Girl 12-, Acting 12-, Conversation 12-, High Society 12-, Persuasion 12-, Seduction 12-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 12-, Languages: The Black Cradle Code, Prostitute Slang, +1 Combat Level with Pistols and Hand to Hand Combat, WF: Knives, Small Arms, Street Weapons.

50+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Attractive (Concealable, Recognizable), Distinctive Features: The Red Hourglass Brand (Easily Concealable, Recognizable), any Psychological or Physical Limitations the GM wishes to bestow upon them, plus Monitored by the Widow or Prima Donna (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area: Fell's Point), 14- and Hunted by Divine and the Glory Boyz and/or Artemis (Mo Pow) on an 8 or less.

Notes: Working exclusively by telephone "dates," call girls get clients by word of mouth or by making arrangements with locals in the Point. The Black Cradle Call Girls are assigned clients by the Widow or Prima Donna, and are then allowed to expand from this base, provided they continue to give exceptional service to all the clients the Widow has chosen. The Black Cradle Girls either entertain clients in their own apartments in the Hole or do "outcalls" to clients' hotels and apartments (as they did with Deborah at the Harbor Terrace apartment). Upon retiring from "the life," a typical call girl can sell her date book listing client names and sexual preferences for thousands of dollars; with the Black Cradle Girls, these date books are generally returned to the Widow as part of the agreement for their service. Call girls suffer considerable risk by being alone with their clients (especially on the Point), and it is common for them to request the business cards of their clients to make sure that they are dealing with upstanding citizens.

Each of the Black Cradle Call Girls recognize that they are servants of the Widow and none of them will disobey an order from her. To recognize who they truly belong to at all times, no matter who their current master is, each has been branded with a red hourglass just below the navel. Whenever they are called in to service, they are expected to serve without hesitation or question; if they display any doubt or fear, they are dealt with by the Widow's left hand, Prima Donna.

It is not known how many Black Cradle Call Girls are employed by the Widow, but their reach and influence is extensive and they cater to some of the most powerful figures in Fell's Point. They are frequently enlisted as actors or participants in the fantasies of the Widow Peak's wealthiest customers (see *Special Services*, below).



Midnight Callers

It wasn't morning when I awoke, although there was a feeble light burning in the room. It came from the lamp on the night stand, its off-white lampshade giving the bulb's light a sickly cast. I was paralyzed with sleep for a moment, trying to remember where I was. My right leg itched and I scratched it, absently, and I felt this feeling begin to grow in my stomach, like a dull ache.

Fantasy wasn't there. I knew it, almost like instinct.

Simultaneously, I realized that there was a shadow just to the left of my vision, out of place in the light of the lamp, studying me. I glanced at it, my muscles tensing; the shadow had frozen in place as soon as I had moved.

It wasn't Fantasy; it was dressed in black and holding something in its hands like a weapon. As I turned, it lunged at me.

I reacted. I struck the shadow, clipping it hard, then I followed it with a strike to the abdomen, sinking it into the flesh beneath the ribcage. The shadow crumpled into itself. As it clutched its abdomen, I was up from the bed, limping on my good leg, reaching for my gun by the night stand. Within inches of grabbing it, the shadow's foot arched around my right leg and sent me tumbling to the carpet, knocking the wind out of me.

I remember lying there, gasping for breath, thinking how psychologically humiliating it was to fight in the buff, but I didn't dwell on it long, because she was already moving, rolling atop me, pinning one of my arms with her knee, and she slipped a thick cord around my neck, choking me. I struggled beneath her, as she tried to pin my other arm; my hand fumbled for her face, trying to push her off of me...then I was grasping at the cord, trying to force something between it and my throat just to breathe for a few seconds. The cord, the cord smelled like leather.

I could hear her cursing, muffled beneath the mask and static began to cloud the edge of my vision; I was having difficulty focusing.

My fist smashed upwards into the shadow's face and connected, again and again, desperate, and with the third blow, there was a low cry from the figure. The shadow relaxed her hold as if startled, and I shoved her as hard as I could, pushing her off of me. Her arm flailed outwards as she collapsed back onto the carpet, struck by the swing of her hand, the lamp fell from the night stand to thud into the carpet and roll, the rolling bulb throwing crazy shadows across the room. I remember fumbling for my pistol on the night stand and ripping it out of its holster, pointing it at her, my finger quivering on the trigger. I hadn't fired it at someone in years...but this time, my blood was pumping.

"Don't move." My voice was trembling, my arm

rigid, the gun pointing at her head. "Keep your hands where I can see them."

Her mask was gone and the fallen lamp, its light bulb freed from its shade blazed across the room, illuminating the fringes of her face; the rest of her features were turned away from me. She was crouched in the corner where I had hurled her, her hands outstretched on the floor where I could see them.

"Who the hell are you?" I said and risked a glance toward the door. "How did you get in?"

"I'm Eve," she said, an undercurrent of anger in her voice, a sheen of blood came from her nose, trickling down to the edge of her lips. "You called for me?! Remember, asshole?"

"Oh, yeah," I said. "I just forgot about calling you." I drew a blanket across my lower body, wishing I had some clothes. "Just like you forgot to knock."

She looked at me strangely. I suddenly noticed her outfit was pure black, like something a burglar might wear. "Pretty sexy outfit," I added. "Is that what you usually wear when visiting your victims?"

She didn't reply. I massaged my neck and glanced at the floor where a leather belt lay. It looked exhausted, as if trying to strangle me had taken something out of it. "Well, Eve, I sure as hell didn't call you, but I think we both know that." I turned from where the belt lay on the floor and stared at her, trying to get a feel for her strength. "You're the one who killed Deborah, aren't you?"

"No," her voice was low. She huddled there and her voice was almost hypnotic. "She just had special tastes."

"Oh, yeah?" I said. The gun was getting a little heavy, but I didn't relax my arm. "Did she enjoy you murdering her? Is that it?"

"No," Eve's face was expressionless. "Deborah wanted to be violated, she got off on it." Her voice dropped, almost meek. "That's what I thought you wanted."

I didn't buy her meekness for a second, but what she was saying was bothering me. "Violated?" I echoed.

"Criminally violated." Eve shifted slightly, her hands still where I could see them. The blood was still running from her nose. "It's nothing new here on the Point. Some people will pay a lot to have crimes committed to them."

"You're joking," I replied. But I believed her. It all clicked. It made sense, everything I had seen. That same sinking feeling I had when I woke up returned. Eve and I, we were alone. The other side of the bed, where Fantasy had been laying, was empty.

"Where's Fantasy?" The question came out as a snarl, and what came next surprised me. "Tell me now, or so help me, I'll kill you right now."

"I don't know where she is," Eve grumbled.

"Wrong," I said. "Try again." My finger rested carefully on the trigger, and I sat down on the bed, keeping a safe distance between us. "Start talking."



Eve

Eve is one of the Black Cradle Call Girls who entertained Deborah Cross. PCs, following leads from the NILE Office, may be able to track her down and question her. She will never meet with a character if the “date” seems like a set-up or ambush. GMs should use discretion; if the PCs role-play well, they can draw her in easily. If they are clumsy, they may tip their hand and receive visitors who are much different than they were expecting.

Eve is a black haired Caucasian woman, not more than twenty-five years old with a tall, powerful build, almost like that of a man, with a thick frame and heavy arms and legs. She has the standard statistics of a Black Cradle Call Girl (see above) with the Karate Martial Arts Package; for added protection, she carries a garrote disguised as a necklace, and a knife and a pistol combination concealed on her person when she meets new customers (or when she is putting an end to old ones).

Eve's Information

Eve knows all the events surrounding Deborah's initiation into the Black Cradle fantasies and can relate them to the character. She will not reveal this information except under pressure, however; otherwise, she refuses to speak and demands to be allowed to go back to work.

She knows the following:

1. Eve has been working with the Black Cradle Call Girls for many years; Deborah was one of her regular customers. They usually arranged meetings in Deborah's Harbor Terrace apartment. [True.]
2. Eve claims Deborah approached the Black Cradle on her own. [False. Deborah was referred to the Black Cradle Call Girls by a member of the CIA in Fell's Point. He claimed they provided excellent and discrete services for their clients. Shortly after Deborah approached the Black Cradle, the CIA operative paid the Black Cradle a premium to record Deborah's fantasies for the CIA black-mail records, in case Deborah ever decided to stop forwarding information from the NILE Office.]
3. Eve explains Deborah needed to be “criminally violated”; she derived pleasure from being the victim of a specific kind of crime (breaking and entering) and arranged for the Black Cradle to fulfill her fantasy for her. Deborah found her a house in the appropriate section of the Harbor, in a dangerous neighborhood free from public scrutiny (she had passed the Harbor Terrace one day on her way to work many years ago and fell in love with the area). While there, Deborah would dress in clothes she wore as a child (sometimes they were the clothes she wore while her parents were murdered in Washington) and then make an appointment with Eve to break into her house, dressed as a burglar. Eve would break in through the bedroom window, tie Deborah up to the dining room chair, then “search” the house for valuables, breaking items and turning things over until Deborah was satisfied. The entire thing took anywhere from fifteen to twenty-five minutes.
4. The reason Eve called Deborah so many times before the murder was because the Widow asked Eve to arrange a session for Deborah at the Harbor Terrace apartment. The Widow claimed she wanted to speak to Deborah there, but Eve does not know what the Widow wanted to speak to Deborah about or why. [True.]

5. Deborah refused to come to the Harbor Terrace apartment and provided no reason why. After her first refusal, she did not return any of Eve's calls. [True.]

6. Eve believes the Widow sent someone to murder Deborah in her apartment at Bayside. Eve does not really know who the Widow sent, but she suspects it was one of the assassins who works exclusively for the Widow (there are rumored to be several).

If asked, however, Eve will tell the characters Fantasy was the one sent to kill Deborah. [Half-True. Fantasy was just an accomplice. She did not realize that she was setting someone up for murder. She was instructed only to prop the service door at a specific time and then leave.]

7. Eve claims she did not kill Deborah; while she was often called to fulfill Deborah's fantasies, she had nothing to do with Deborah's murder. [This is not true. Although she will not bring this up except under force, Eve *was* required to steal Deborah's keys for an hour during one of their Harbor Terrace sessions, then return it to Deborah; she assumes the Black Cradle made copies of all her keys. Characters may deduce that one of these keys could have been used to enter Deborah's apartment on the night of the murder.]

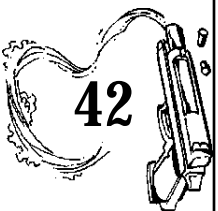
8. Eve claims she does not know why Deborah was killed. [True. She has a number of suspicions, but no evidence.]

Forbidden Fruit

Fell's Point has long been home to a number of people with peculiar traits and needs. The Widow has always suspected that this has something to do with the nature of the city itself. Some of the Fell's Point residents have distinct sexual problems that hint at a greater mental disturbance. There have been a number of strange customers who merit special services and fantasies (see *Special Services*, below), among them, “criminal violations” that bear strong similarities to domination. A character who stops a prostitute from robbing one of her customers may actually be interfering in a prostitute's normal work routine.

Criminally Violated: These specially contracted crimes have different intensities and can include break-ins, muggings and theft, whether in comfortable, real-world settings, such as in one's home, while jogging down a quiet city street on the Northside, or even in one's office after-hours. This is different from serving masochistic customers in that the prostitute rarely touches the customer, and instead, *intrudes* upon their private space, shouting at them, breaking possessions, all while allowing the customer to become aroused. This need to be criminally violated was a sexual turn on for Deborah and eventually lead to her death. The Widow has always felt that the intensity of violence coming from the media and the Fell's Point area has been channeled into a sexual turn-on by some inhabitants of the peninsula, giving them an emotional “charge” that some of them interpret as arousal.

Masochistic customers prefer to be hurt during the course of the crime, and the intensity of the crime is usually heightened to accommodate their needs. Rape, Assault and Battery and forcing the customer into doing humiliating acts are common, and far more people in Fell's Point prefer this level of service than characters might expect.



Criminally Violated and Voyeurism: Others get a thrill out of watching Widow's Peak commit crimes and pay them to do so while they watch. If the GM wants to add another witness to Deborah's extracurricular activities in the Harbor Terrace Apartments, one of these voyeurs may have been present (without Deborah's knowledge) when Deborah conducted her private escapades at her Harbor Terrace apartment. If this is the case, the GM should take care to emphasize the lighting in the Terrace apartment and perhaps even have characters make a Sight PER Roll to spot an apartment within line of sight of the Terrace apartment where someone could have been observing the scene. Inside this voyeur apartment are telescopes and observation equipment, including cameras with telephoto lenses and other items. If the characters stake out this voyeur apartment, they may catch one of the voyeurs who watched Deborah being criminally violated.

It is important to note that these sexual requests can go both ways; people can pay for the chance to commit crimes on others for their pleasure. All that is required is that the customer explain to the Widow's Peak exactly what they wish, and the Widow will provide the fantasy, at whatever intensity the customer is willing to pay. See *Special Services*, below.

Black Cradle Crimes

"I don't know what else you expect me to say," Eve said. She looked relaxed from where she was sitting on the floor, and she had put on an expression of self-assured arrogance that was driving me crazy. I knew she was lying, but she kept repeating it, like it was gospel. "Fantasy killed Deborah."

"That's bullshit and you know it. You just said as much yourself. This 'Widow,' or whoever, was behind this. She killed Deborah." I narrowed my eyes at her. "Maybe this Widow and I should have a talk, you think?"

Eve actually smiled. "Impossible. The Widow rules the Peak. She might as well rule Fell's Point for all the power she has. You'd be surprised what people will do for a fantasy." Eve's smile faded, and her voice dropped in a warning. "Look, you keep me here, and there's going to be trouble. You so much as touch me, you'll be killed. Keep pushing this, and Fantasy's coffin'll be lined up right along yours."

"So you do know where she is," I prodded.

"Maybe," Eve said. "And I know enough that if you keep pursuing this, she'll be found floating in the Drain by the cops."

"She won't," I said. "How do I find this 'Widow's Peak'?"

"You don't," Eve said stiffly.

"With you, I will." I leaned forward, my gun still pointing at Eve. "Enlighten me."

Crimes Of The Heart

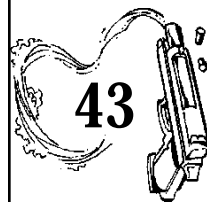
As far as most of the criminal underworld is aware of, the Black Cradle girls primarily engage in sexual conduct, although they are known to have an extensive drug ring in the Hole to support their prostitutes and their customers. Although they purchase many weapons to support their ground troops (the street walkers), they engage in no weapons trafficking on the Point, as this is the joint domain of the Count (the head of Card Shark on the peninsula, who controls the "pipeline" north to Hudson City) and the Hanged Man (see *Underworld Enemies*, p.40) who sells weapons to the prostitutes of the Basin. The Hanged Man does not object to prostitution in itself, but sees it as a breeding ground for many other types of crimes in the Point, so he monitors it carefully, concerning himself primarily with stirring up hostilities between the Basin pimps and the prostitutes in the Hole and causing the occasional gang war to burn out of control. He also finds he can keep tabs on prostitution, not only from his weapon dealings, but from Artemis' patrols in the Basin (*Underworld Enemies*, p.50). It is possible the Hanged Man was responsible for the Revolution that occurred in the Basin (there is no proof of this, although he did supply a number of weapons to the prostitutes in the Hole).

Drug Dealing: Most of the drugs that come into the Hole come from Divine. There is not a great deal that can be done about this situation; whatever psychological flaws Divine has, he has succeeded in wrapping his coils around the Basin and has successfully laid siege to the Basin's drug pipeline (this is not true of the Borough or the Southside, an area controlled by the crime lord Big Money); the only drugs coming in and out are through his distributors. The Widow has tried many times to get alternate suppliers, including Colombians and suppliers in Hudson City, but Divine has found and killed all of them within a month of operation, preventing the Widow from successfully circumventing his influence. It has always been a personal affront to the Widow's Peak that they must derive much of their power from Divine and his drug connections, and it is one of the few decisive victories that Divine has had over Widow's Peak.

In short, the Widow's Peak purchases drugs from Divine and distributes them to their lieutenants, then to their Den Mothers and madams, down to the street walkers, prostitutes and johns in the area. While the drug trafficking in the Hole will not come to an end if the PCs exterminate the Widow's Peak (if such a thing were possible), it will be thrown in disarray for a few days while the connections are reestablished. The lack of the FPPD vice officers in the Hole makes the drug dealing more open than elsewhere in the city; this also makes the Hole one of the Fell's Point premier nightspots.

The Widow's Peak confines their drug dealing to the prostitutes and customers in the Hole. They are not allowed to peddle drugs outside their territory. If they did, it would start a war in the Basin.

Super villain Escort Service: Several Fell's Point businessmen and criminal masterminds hire Black Cradle Girls from Widow's Peak on extended contracts to act as their escorts; it allows them to cut an impressive image on the Point. The Widow has been known to lease her girls to several members of the Mafia and to some costumed criminals from the Asylum and in the underworld. Each of her girls secretly report back to the Widow on what is going on inside these organizations and what their customers are planning, and



the Widow keeps the information filed away for potential use or distribution to other customers on the Point. The PCs may run across many criminals in Fell's Point and abroad who have a slinky *femme fatale* on their sleeve. It may take them some time to discover where they are coming from.

Spies and Information Net: The Black Cradle Call Girls and street walkers are primarily an information net for the Widow; with them, she is able to keep her finger on the pulse of Fell's Point. The Black Cradle Call Girls have most of the influential figures in Fell's Point in their date books and use their connections to these customers to gather intelligence. This information is either sold to inquiring clients or else used by the Widow to solidify her power base in the Hole. She rarely uses the information she gains to commit crimes or robberies, although she will pass along the information to other thieves, murderers and vigilantes who use the information for their own ends.

The Widow is primarily interested in keeping control of the Hole and protecting her girls; she has arranged for assassinations, blackmail and robberies to fight hostile takeovers and embarrassing revelations about her activities in Fell's Point. During the early stages of her empire, she resorted to the blackmail of several customers in Fell's Point to raise revenue to purchase weapons, drugs and to pay off the mercenaries she hired to help her free the Hole from the Basin pimps and train her Black Cradle girls in surveillance and combat. Since then, the sheer numbers of clients that pour into the Hole as well as payments for the Peak's "special services" has given them a powerful financial base. Only when the Widow feels it is necessary will she resort to blackmail and extortion to raise money for herself; she frequently supplies incriminating footage and evidence to others, however, for their own purposes.

The Black Cradle Girls primarily act as information gatherers and Contacts in a campaign. For the right price, characters should be able to find what they need to continue their investigation. The Widow has contacts and customers from all over the States and abroad, all of whom partake of the special services of the Peak when they visit the peninsula.

Slavery: The Black Cradle both exports and imports men, women and children from foreign countries and from places elsewhere in the United States; on the Point, they draft likely prostitutes from the Fell's Point Orphanage, from the Epicurean's Schoolhouse and from the Baby Man, who supplies children for the Black Cradle to place in their training schools. In addition, some customers who have been unable to pay for the services of the Widow's Peak have been offered the choice to pay off their debt by working in the Widow's Peak as slaves or tools for other customers (see *Skye*, below). Some have no choice but to accept the offer and are in constant terror of being recognized as they are working in the Hole (perhaps leading to the "Split Identity" disorder, mentioned in the *Prostitutes* section). In the past, the Widow has arranged to hide men and women from the authorities, only to turn them into slaves when they are drawn into the Peak.

All of the men and women, whether drafted or enslaved by the Widow's Peak, are branded with a red hourglass on their abdomen and placed to work in Dens in the Hole to service customers. Many of the Oriental Society Dens in the Basin are filled with slaves imported from the East; other slaves find their ways to criminal organizations across the world, where they are used to settle debts and establish ties with these organizations.

Special Services

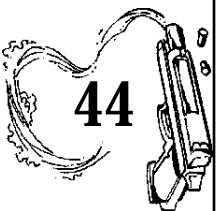
While the Peak's special sadomasochism clubs and bizarre pleasure parlors are known to several citizens in Fell's Point, these clubs are not the only range of services the Peak has to offer. For the right price, the Widow's Peak will create a "fantasy" for a customer, providing actors and prostitutes for any sexual or fictional encounter the customer desires. While the criminal violation that Deborah took pleasure in was one of these, her fantasy was limited by the amount of money she could provide and was quite clumsy compared to some of the pleasures and extravagances the Peak can design. Extremely wealthy customers can purchase elaborate fantasies on the Point, complete with dozens of actors, sets, locations and victims, all tailored to give them an emotional or sexual high.

These fantasies may involve unwilling partners; this has never stopped Widow's Peak. Whenever the promise of a large cash incentive is not enough to change someone's mind to join in the fantasy, they will either use disguise to mimic the victim or kidnap them as part of the "greater play." For example, a wealthy businesswoman may have a fantasy about tracking and seducing a vigilante. The Peak may either approach a vigilante on the Point for this activity, and either make an offer or kidnap them and force them to play the part, using whatever leverage they can to force compliance (either offering information important to the character or kidnapping their DNPCs). Sometimes these fantasies are excessively brutal and violent, and the participant does not leave the fantasy alive (See the Adventure Seed, *Victims in Paradise*, below).

The Friends Of My Enemies

Many prominent businessmen and the wealthy in Fell's Point do not wish the characters to catch on to the deeper activities in the Point, for fear of exposure and possible harm to themselves. They may hire mercenaries to deal with the characters or contact the Fell's Point Police Department and ask that the "situation" involving the PCs be looked into at once (also see the *My Fair Lady* adventure seed listed below).

Maintaining Anonymity: Black Cradle clients are blackballed if they leak to the press, and the Peak *will* find out if this occurs. The enormous expense of indulging one's fantasies eliminates most investigative reporters, and most of the police's upper hierarchy have contacted the Widow's Peak in the past for services, so they are not likely to encourage an investigation into their own indiscretions.



The Album: Sample Characters



Fancy

11 STR 15 DEX 18 CON 10 BODY 9 INT
9 EGO 12 PRE 16 COM 3 PD 3 ED
4 SPD 6 REC 36 END 27 STUN

Powers and Skills: +2 to Sight Perception Rolls, +1" Running (7" Total, not in high heels), +6 Lightning Reflexes, Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting (all maneuvers plus Eye Gouge and Legsweep) with +2 Damage Classes, three Contacts in Fell's Point at an 11-, AK: The Fell's Point Peninsula 11-, CK: Fell's Point and the Hole, 12-, KS: Prostitute Subculture 12-, PS: Black Cradle Call Girl 12-, Acting 11-, Conversation 11-, High Society 11-, Persuasion 11-, Seduction 11-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 12-, Languages: The Black Cradle Code, Prostitute Slang, +2 Combat Levels with Hand to Hand Combat, +3 Combat Levels with Pistols (Natural Marksman, NRA Certified), WF: Knives, Small Arms, Street Weapons.

50+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Attractive (Concealable, Recognizable), Distinctive Features: The Red Hourglass Brand (Easily Concealable, Recognizable), Psychological Limitation: Naive (Common, Strong), Psychological Limitation: Cocaine Addiction (Medium, Common, Strong), Physical Limitation: Cocaine Addiction (Medium, Strong), Monitored by the Widow or Prima Donna (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area: Fell's Point), 14- and Hunted by Divine and the Glory Boyz and/or Artemis (Mo Pow) on an 8 or less.

Notes: Not terribly intelligent and difficult to tolerate once past her obvious physical charms, Fancy is one of the rank and file members of the Black Cradle Call Girls, her most notable abilities being her marksmanship and martial arts abilities. She used to be a model in Fell's Point many years ago, but fell from grace after she offended one of her photographers and began to throw tantrums in studio shoots. She is usually armed with an automatic pistol or any sort of small, easily concealable revolver. Her flouncy frame, a rather annoying giggle, and her tendency to slight the others with her comments has made her less than popular with the other girls in Widow's Peak, but they would be more angered to learn that Fancy is sorry the Revolution occurred (although she keeps this to herself). Before the Revolution, her pimp did all the thinking for her, and now she has to plan more to make ends meet. Despite the protection the Widow's Peak, she still does not feel as secure as she did when she had a pimp.



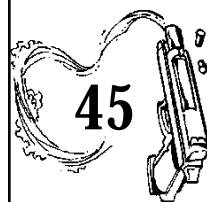
Opium

9 STR 18 DEX 15 CON 9 BODY 13 INT
15 EGO 12 PRE 16 COM 3 PD 3 ED
4 SPD 6 REC 36 END 27 STUN

Powers and Skills: +2 to All Perception Rolls, Martial Arts: Kalaripayit (all maneuvers, plus the Blades, Clubs, and Urumi Weapon Elements; see *UMA*, pp.37-38) with +2 Damage Classes, Find Weakness with Knifehand Strike 11-, any three Contacts in Fell's Point at an 11- **plus** three Contacts in the international arena 11-, Traveler, AK: Southeast Asia 11-, AK: India 11-, AK: The Fell's Point Peninsula 11-, CK: Fell's Point and the Hole, 12-, CK: Delhi 12-, CK: Bangladesh 11-, KS: Prostitute Subculture 12-, KS: Kalaripayit 12-, KS: The Espionage World 11-, KS: Indian Healing 12-, KS: Scents 13-, PS: Black Cradle Call Girl 12-, Acting 13-, Breakfall 13-, Conversation 13-, Contortionist 13-, High Society 13-, Paramedic 12-, Persuasion 13-, SC: General Medicine 11-, SC: Pharmacology and Toxicology 13-, Seduction 13-, Stealth 13-, Streetwise 8-, Languages: Indian (Native), English (Fluent with accent, although Opium will affect an accent if it turns her customer on), The Black Cradle Code, Prostitute Slang, +2 Combat Levels with Hand to Hand Combat, +1 Combat Level with Knives, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms, Syringes, Urumi.

50+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Attractive Indian Woman (Concealable, Recognizable), Distinctive Features: The Red Hourglass Brand (Easily Concealable, Recognizable), Monitored by the Widow or Prima Donna (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area: Fell's Point) 11-, Hunted by International Consortium of Execution (Ravshadra Singh) 11- and Hunted by Divine and the Glory Boyz and/or Artemis (Mo Pow) on an 8 or less.

Notes: Opium's name is taken from the near-euphoric states she can bring her customer to as she administers her gentle touch. She is a small Indian woman with a delicate, almost fragile appearance, smooth, rich brown skin and a voice like a waterfall. She is skilled with Pharmacology and a number of poisons as well as Indian healing techniques (see Steven Long's *The Ultimate Martial Artist*). She has full knowledge of the *Kama Sutra*. She is also skilled in Indian fighting techniques, as well as having access to a number of poisoned blades, including one needle concealed in a ring on the forefinger of her left hand. Opium has a delicious Eastern smell about her, an aphrodisiac that makes her victims think of cinnamon. She is far more dangerous than she appears.



Prudence

15 STR 15 DEX 18 CON 12 BODY 10 INT
10 EGO 13 PRE 14 COM 5 PD 3 ED
3 SPD 8 REC 36 END 30 STUN



Powers and Skills: "Chastisement" Gear as Weapons (various Entangles and HKA, see below), +1 to All Perception Rolls, Martial Arts: Wrestling with +2 Damage Classes, any three Contacts in Fell's Point at an 11-, AK: The Fell's Point Peninsula 11-, CK: Fell's Point and the Hole, 12-, KS: Prostitute Subculture 12-, PS: Black Cradle Call Girl 12-, PS: Dominatrix 12-, Acting 12-, Conversation 12-, High Society 8-, Interrogation 12-, Paramedic 11-, Persuasion 12-, Seduction 11-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 13-, Languages: The Black Cradle Code, Prostitute Slang, +2 Combat Levels with Hand to Hand Combat, +1 Combat Level with Clubs and Whips, WF: Knives, Small Arms, Street Weapons.

50+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Large, Heavily Built Woman (Not Concealable, Recognizable), Distinctive Features: The Red Hourglass Brand (Easily Concealable, Recognizable), Monitored by the Widow or Prima Donna (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area: Fell's Point) 11- and Hunted by Divine and the Glory Boyz and/or Artemis (Mo Pow) on an 8 or less.

Notes: Prudence is a tall, majestic woman typically dressed in tight white leather, with white riding crops, thin coiled whips with six lashes entwined at the end, white leather paddles and several pairs of white leather bracelets strapped to her belt. Her outfit is a glistening white ensemble, consisting of knee-high white leather boots with stiletto heels, a tight-laced leather vest with a narrow waist that rises upwards to strain against her ample chest. Long elbow length leather gloves with small metal studs around the wrists and fingers complete the array. Prudence is always wearing a stern gaze and her gray white hair is bound up in a bun beneath her white leather biker's cap, her hair impaled in place with a steel hairpin.

Quote: "Oh, you have been a bad little boy, haven't you?" [Slithering leather rasp of the whip as it uncoils from her belt.] "Now what did dear Prudence tell you about that? Hmmmmmm?"

Skye

9 STR 17 DEX 15 CON 9 BODY 13 INT
15 EGO 12 PRE 16 COM 3 PD 3 ED
4 SPD 6 REC 36 END 27 STUN

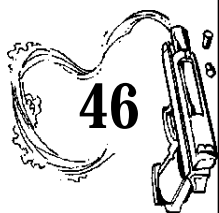


Powers and Skills: A Gadget Power Pool for Drugs and Chemicals carried on her person (30 Points), +1 to All Perception Rolls, Martial Arts: Karate, any three Influential Contacts in Fell's Point at an 11- **plus** six additional Street Contacts in the Fell's Point Harbor (mostly cops, drug dealers and pushers in the Basin) at an 8-, AK: The Fell's Point Peninsula 11-, CK: Fell's Point and the Hole, 12-, KS: Street Drugs and Pharmaceuticals 11-, KS: Prostitute Subculture 12-, PS: Black Cradle Call Girl 12-, PS: Pharmacist 12-, Acting 12-, Conversation 11-, High Society 11-, Persuasion 13-, Seduction 13-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 12-, Languages: The Black Cradle Code, Prostitute Slang, +1 Combat Level with Hand to Hand Combat, +1 Combat Level with Syringes, WF: Knives, Small Arms.

50+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Attractive (Concealable, Recognizable), Distinctive Features: The Red Hourglass Brand (Easily Concealable, Recognizable), Distinctive Features: Sky Blue Eyes (Concealable, Recognizable), Monitored by the Widow or Prima Donna (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area: Fell's Point) 11-, Hunted by Divine and the Glory Boyz (Mo Pow) on an 11 or less.

Note: Skye was a pharmacist working in the Harbor who fell deeply into debt with the Widow's Peak and was subsequently enslaved. The Widow saw her potential and soon elevated and trained her to become one of the Black Cradle Call Girls,

a position Skye has found far more lucrative and exciting than her former career. Skye takes her name from her deep blue eyes, creamy white skin and her extensive selection of pleasurable drugs and concoctions she can administer to her customers. These drugs are frequently created by Opium, and Skye has injected many of her customers with truth serums, sedatives and



poison in her two year career in Fell's Point.

Skye is one of the Hole's primary drug dealers. She has cultivated a lewd, available appearance, making her face so that it seems perpetually damp and mussed, and her lips open just enough to be inviting. She prefers wearing button down shirts that flare open almost to the navel, but closed just enough to hint at the sweeping curvature of her breasts. She maintains a knowing smile on her face, even in the throes of passion.

Quote: "*Skye's the limit, handsome...*" [Skye draws forth a syringe, smiles seductively as she fingers the needle.] "*Just settle back and enjoy the flight.*"

Sexual Relations

Crusader

Crusader had an "understanding" with Widow's Peak, and when possible, did not enter their territory without an invitation. He was known to meet with certain prostitutes to gather information, and it has even been rumored that during his relationship with Sally Anne Robinson, he was seeing one of the Fell's Point prostitutes, but this has never been proven. Crusader was usually more concerned with Divine's rising power on the Point and the porn lord's frequent childlike tantrums (and the many resultant deaths) rather than entangling himself with the Widow's Peak, who were more subtle in their activities.

The Rim

The Widow's Peak is not limited to the Fell's Point inner city; they have a number of carnal houses located in secluded areas outside the Point. These mansions and bungalows are usually be guarded by high-tech security systems (see *Corporations*, pp.65-68), dogs and several guards (who double as butlers, chauffeurs, cooks, lovers, slave-keepers and so on) who insure the master of the house is not disturbed while sating their appetite. This area beyond the city limits is considered to be on the "Rim" of the Hole, with rich bungalows with sweeping gardens, usually right on the water's edge (if the GM wishes, he can use the mansion template from the *Champions Rulebook*, p.C50 for one of these private estates). There are anywhere from five to twelve of these homes, not counting the Widow's Estate nor the homes of those upstanding citizens of Fell's Point who keep Widow's Peak prostitutes and the Black Cradle Girls on extended contracts to serve as slaves or masters. The Fell's Point Underworld has whispered the names of a few of the Houses on the Rim, including the Pavilion and the Villa, but they do not know where they are located or what carnal secrets take place past its white stucco walls and Renaissance arcades.

These exclusive pleasure houses cater to clients all over the Eastern seaboard as well as business guests that travel to the Point for conventions.

Some other homes located on the Rim that the PCs might visit include:

Divine's Home

Along a sweeping road amongst the backwoods of Fell's Point North, guarded by a white stone wall and an elegant gatehouse, lies Divine's sprawling mansion, complete with pool, five car garage and a multi-tiered personal studio that overlooks the bay. The flashing colors, glitter of the decor, combined with the angled windows and reflective surfaces illuminated with outside lights and interior track lighting give the house a heavenly glow when night falls. The kitchen and rooms in his house are huge, perfect for large parties and gatherings Divine holds whenever he releases a new album.

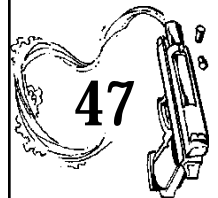
Player characters may visit Divine's house if they need information on the Widow's Peak, but there are some special rules to be followed while in Divine's home: no one except special guests are allowed to be dressed once within the walls; all of Divine's male and female servants are naked. They are required to walk with their heads bowed and on their knees at all times when not performing a specific duty in the house. If any of his servants make eye contact or try to speak to the master or one of the grooms, they are punished. His estate is guarded by a dozen hand-picked Glory Boyz (use Terrorist and Thug Level Three templates in *Justice, Not Law*, pp.126-7) dressed in white leather and armed with automatic weapons. Chastity and Felicity can usually be found here as well (see *Underworld Enemies*, pp.59-60).

Each of the guards and servants in the house are instructed to report any sign of impertinence from the others to Divine, so the offender will be properly punished. This has created a petty little circle of treachery within his walls.

The Epicurean's Schoolhouse

The Epicurean is a slave trader who operates on the Point (see his description in *Black Strap Suicide's* character background). Situated in Fell's Point North, the landscaping surrounding the Epicurean's home is an exercise in temptation and privacy. Just beyond the ivy-covered brick walls there is a narrow gravel path and sweeping driveways that lead into the thick screens of trees and foliage. Only when characters circle the paths surrounding his estate are they rewarded with the stunning view of his quaint Victorian House, nestled on a slope facing Fell's Point Bay and complemented with a series of terraces that gently step down toward the Fell's Point shore. The Epicurean's home is composed of twenty plush gently-lighted rooms with elegant furnishings, including a drawing room where he interviews his visitors as to their tastes and composes profiles on them to be sent to Masters and Den Mothers around the Point. The windows of the Schoolhouse are of leaded glass, difficult to see through, and the rooms are sound-proofed to muffle the cries of his victims and volunteers as they are instructed in the giving and receiving of pleasure.

The Epicurean is responsible for training several men and women (some of them who went on to be initiated into the ranks of the Black Cradle Call Girls) to serve as proper slaves in Widow's Peak. He takes great pains and pleasures in his teachings.



Prima Donna

Eve talked to me for a long time about the Black Cradle Call Girls, half of which I had trouble digesting, but she seemed to be skirting the issue...she told me nothing about finding Fantasy or how to get to Widow's Peak. She didn't seem like she had any intention of doing so, either.

She was starting to piss me off, and my gun hand was getting tired.

"I want you to call them and tell them I want to meet with them," I said. "Here. If they refuse, you and I will continue our discussion with the cops. I'm sure the police would love listening to you. Maybe you could swap stories."

Eve was silent, but her eyes narrowed.

"Look," I added. "First you try to kill me. Now you're making me angry. If I were you, I'd be real careful not to make any more mistakes." I nodded to the phone. "Call them now. Tell them I want to meet with them. And for your sake, they better not have hurt Fantasy."

Eve made the call. She said they would send a car for me in an hour.

I thanked her.

* * *

By the time the car arrived, I had finished with Eve.

As it turns out, that leather belt wasn't the only thing she was carrying with her. Within minutes, I had her bound fast with a bunch of items from her little black bag. After making sure the cuffs, the gag and the straps were on good and tight, I wrapped her in my trenchcoat and hauled her down the hotel back stairs. I saw one guy on the way up, but he didn't even give me or Eve, even in all her get-up, a second glance. Fell's Point is a funny place.

I tossed her in the trunk of my car and slammed it shut, then drove to the police station. On the way I checked to make sure I wasn't being followed...it didn't look like it. I guess they felt Eve wouldn't have had a problem taking care of an old crippled fed like me. Women. They think they know everything.

I drove my car into the police station lot and parked it. I figured they'd find her before she got too hungry. For good measure, I wrote a brief note, signed it, and stuck it with Eve's squirming body with a big READ ME FIRST! scrawled on the outside of it, in red magic marker. The note itself wasn't anything too complicated. Just that she was probably the one who killed Deborah Cross and had decided to complicate her life by trying to kill me. I figured it would be difficult enough for her to get out of the bonds and the implications of the note before the police were satisfied with whatever story she decided to cook up.

I took a taxi back and went up to my room.
I waited there for what felt like a long time before they showed.

* * *

I saw the car arrive from the window.

It was a sleek, black thing that rolled up to the curb; it glistened in the neon lights lining the street. I walked down to meet it; as soon I stepped from the hotel lobby, the chauffeur, a heavy, hatchet-faced woman, stepped from the driver's side and opened the back door of the limo for me.

The interior smelled thickly of leather; it was almost overpowering. I felt like I was entering a coffin.

When I climbed in, a little awkwardly, three figures were already in the limousine. Two were obviously bodyguards, large women with black jackets and shades over their eyes; they glared at me and immediately shifted positions to flank me.

The last, despite her smaller size and frame, seemed the most dangerous. She was reclining in the corner of the limousine, a cigarette clenched tightly between her lips. The glow of the cigarette did nothing to penetrate the shadows of her face, and she did not so much as grace me with a look as I was ushered into the limo. Her legs were crossed, covered with threadbare denim, and her off the shoulder silk blouse looked as if it was about to fall off.

The door to the street was still open, and the woman turned and nodded to the chauffeur, who carefully closed the door. Through the tinted glass, I could see the chauffeur walking to the entrance of the hotel, no doubt up to my room to look for Eve.

"You the Widow?" I asked, turning to the woman and trying to get a good look at her.

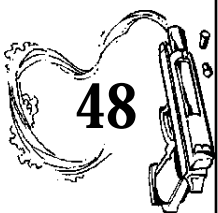
"Are you wearing a wire?" she replied sharply, as if she hadn't heard me. Her tone was a mixture of irritation and anger. "It'll go easier for you if you say so now." She made a nodding motion to the two women in the cab, and suddenly they pinned me.

"Look, I'm clean," I protested. "I—"

"Shut your mouth," she said, finally gracing me with her gaze. Her eyes were like ice. "Don't speak unless I ask you a question." The women began to frisk me thoroughly (and none too gently), pulling forth my pistol and tossing it to the third woman. She examined it critically, then snorted in a distinctively unattractive way. "Clean, huh?" She checked the ammo. "You're not even a good liar."

I didn't have much to say to that. They continued to search me, until there was a knock on the window, and the black glass slid down to reveal the face of the chauffeur. The chauffeur shook her head, looking grim.

"Get us out of here," the ice queen said, looking more angry than before. "We'll find out where she is." The chauffeur nodded, and the window slid shut. A few seconds later, I could feel the limousine begin to pull away from the curb, and I experienced a sinking



feeling in my gut. I had been very, very stupid. So, of course, the smart thing to do was to press my luck.

"I want to talk to the Widow," I said.

"You'll talk to me." Her voice hardened and her eyes, like ice, locked with mine again. "Where is Eve?"

"Look, I'm only going to talk to the Widow," I said. "So—"

The woman casually reversed her grip on the pistol and struck me across the face. It took a second for me to register what had happened...my eyes refocused, only to feel the hands of the bodyguards begin to exert a crushing force on my arms, pulling me upright and readying me for the next strike.

My interrogator's voice dropped to absolute zero. "I'm not asking again."

She didn't. But even as I dropped from consciousness, they still had no idea where I had placed Eve.

This was supposed to be a good thing, I recollected later. It probably saved my life.

Donna. They said her name was Donna.

It was the first thing that crossed my mind when I regained consciousness, my limbs on fire, my body covered with welts and aches. I felt terrible. Worse than terrible.

The bodyguards...they called her Donna.

I had been left hanging, my body stretched out with my arms held above me by two leather cuffs secured to the ceiling. It was hard to make the cuffs out, though, because my eyes were swollen shut...I could barely move my right eye without sending pins and needles through my skull. Above me, there was the creak of leather. My right foot was barely touching the floor, and my prosthetic was gone. I felt like a butcher's wet dream.

I was still alive, though, and my ears strained to make out what I heard behind me.

"Donna, we can't keep him here. She told us to take him to the Peak." The voice was quiet, insistent. "We can't—"

"We find Eve first. Our sister is more important." The ice queen, Donna. Her voice had an edge to it, like frustration. "He'll break. I just need another hour to finish the session."

An hour. I winced, and the chain *clinked* above me.

"He's conscious again," the bodyguard said quickly. There was the clicking of heels, and I saw Donna come around the edge of my vision. She looked angry. She was cradling a riding crop in her hand, letting it trail by her side like a cat's tail.

"You don't know what you've gotten yourself into, do you?" Donna taunted, but her smugness was all surface. Beneath her features, I could almost feel the heat. "You had to come down here, couldn't leave it to the pigs, had to be a good little bureaucrat." Donna's hand reached out, cradled my face, and then bit her fingernails into the open wounds on my cheeks, and I screamed. She smiled.

"By now, you must be regretting ever coming here, am I right?"

Her smile melted.

"They're never going to find you. They'll find someone, though. Someone they can't identify, someone to place on the books and forget about. The pigs in this town are like that. Careless." Donna tried to catch my swollen gaze, as if determined to keep my attention. "Me, on the other hand, care about you very much. I don't like loose ends. It's the little things that nag at me." Her crop tapped my groin meaningfully. "I'm sure you understand."

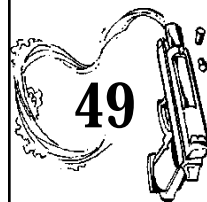
"M tryin' to." I

managed to choke out. My lips felt blistered, and they stung when I touched them with my tongue. Daggers shot into my lungs as I took a breath. "Wuh y'kill Kuh—"

"Cross?" Donna finished for me, and she took her hand from my face, letting my head hang. "Oh, you mean little Debbie?" She shrugged. "I didn't kill her."

"Wuh—Wuh-dow..." I gave it up. Even my teeth hurt, and I could feel the saltiness of my blood in my mouth.

"The Widow?" Donna's smile almost seemed genuine, as if the pain of speaking was finally pleasing her. "No, the Widow is no kind of shape for that sort of thing." Donna pursed her lips. "It's really more simple than you might realize. The government talks to us sometimes." Donna spoke quietly,



confident I would pay attention long enough to hear. "People like you killed her. They call the Black Cradle, drop the line that they are concerned about one of our customers. This time, they were concerned about Deborah." She snapped her fingers. "It is our job, to take away concerns, smooth the rough edges, take away the real world problems. Everyone is happy. Aren't you happy?" Her hand cradled my face again, moving my head up and down in a pantomimed nod, and spoke like she would to a small child. "Yes, you are, aren't you?"

I tried one last time; I had to know. "Hu k'lld er?"

"Who killed her?" Donna mimicked. "Why, Fantasy, of course, if you're so bound and determined to punish someone."

"N'uh." I shook my head, sending jolts of pain through my neck and skull. "F'tsy a victum."

Donna laughed, like steel being jabbed into me, then her mouth closed, her jaw settling into her features like a mask. "Oh, is that how you see it? Still nursing a guilt complex over the Hudson City incident? If you manage to 'protect' Fantasy, you can somehow make it all better?" She clicked her tongue, and the edge of her lip bent into a sneer.

"Eve," I mumbled.

"What?" she said, her eyes narrowing.

"Gon' think Ev'did et." Seeing Donna's expression change was worth the pain of speaking through my split lips. "Eve ginna fry."

"Where is she?" She hissed. "You tell me where she is."

I shook my head weakly. "Kil me, Eve fries."

"No pig in this town would dare prosecute her," Donna said, chewing on what I'd said. "They wouldn't dare."

"B'llsht," I spat. "Th' P'lice h'te yu."

"They don't even know where she is," she prompted. The facade was cracking; she didn't like the direction the conversation had taken.

There was something creeping into Donna's tone, and I strained to make it out. There was something there, something familiar; I could almost taste it. It may have been there all along, but I hadn't noticed. Stupid.

Donna's lips drew together in a line. "Eve didn't kill Deborah anyway. They have nothing on her." Donna's voice dropped, a little uncertain, and I caught what had been nagging at me before.

Donna was guilty of something.

If there was one thing I knew, it was guilt, and I was amazed I hadn't spotted it before.

I took a stab in the dark; I didn't have anything to lose. "You 'kil'd Kuh-ross." I licked my lips. "Wuh-dow don' kno 'bout et. Y'wanta kuhep it th' way. Yu in tr'ble." I tried to smile. It didn't work. But it had the desired effect. Donna's eyes burned.

My victory was short-lived. With the fire in her eyes came the riding crop. It lashed across my face, once, twice, then again until I couldn't even see Donna, only feel the leather plowing through my face.

After what felt like forever, the lashings ceased,

and there was a blind silence, broken only by my labored breathing.

"You're going to the Peak," she said, savoring each word. "There, you'll beg to talk to me."

She left me hanging, the slow click of her heels as she walked away, blood drops falling from the crop to form a trail behind her.

Prima Donna

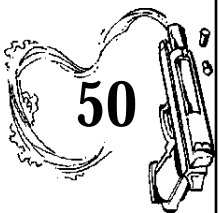
Donna is right; Eve did not kill Deborah Cross, although one of the Widow's government contacts (a CIA operative) did request that Deborah be "dealt with." Unfortunately, the Widow refused to take the measures Donna felt were necessary; the Widow thought the incriminating sexual footage the Peak had recorded from Deborah's fantasy sessions would be enough to keep Deborah in line for the CIA and told Donna to compile the footage and send it to the Widow's contact. Donna, however, anxious to please the mysterious government contact, felt it would be safer to kill Deborah. Taking matters into her own hands, she contacted Black Strap Suicide, the Widow's personal assassin (see below). Under the auspices of relaying an order from the Widow, Donna ordered Suicide to remove Deborah.

Donna, after telling Fantasy to arrange a means for Suicide to enter the building (the propped service entry door; Donna had already had Eve make copies of Deborah's keys so that they could get past Deborah's front door), Suicide went to Deborah's apartment. Deborah, thinking that Suicide's arrival was a sexual encounter provided by the Peak, submitted to Suicide's presence, letting her ravage the apartment until the end (which she never realized was coming, thinking it was all part of the fantasy. Thus, the smile on her face as one of Suicide's black straps constricted around her neck.) The torn and slashed furniture was merely for effect; Suicide was not actually looking for anything.

After Suicide left the building, she called the police to inform them that someone had been murdered in the Bayside apartments. She then went home to her family.

The Whys And Wherefores

Two things motivated Deborah's assassination; the tragedy is that both of these "motives" were due solely to paranoia and speculation. The CIA received word back from the Black Cradle Call Girls that Deborah had stopped coming to Harbor Terrace for her appointments. Although Deborah was simply tired of the fantasy (she needed a break from the constant routine in order to enjoy more it later), the CIA believed it was a precursor to a "break" from her role as a spy in the NILE Office. In addition, the CIA had heard rumors within Washington that the NILE Office on the Point was becoming obsolete and was about to be shut down (not true. The government would have kept a skeleton staff stationed in the Point, Deborah among them). Not having a place for Deborah in Fell's Point or in Washington (even though they had promised her she would always have a job to return to after her role as a spy in NILE was finished), the Fell's Point CIA decided she was a security risk. They informed the Black Cradle that they wished Deborah dealt with; the implication was that they wished her dead, but the Widow's blackmail would have been enough to handle the matter. Donna simply overreacted in an effort to please her government contact, and the situation grew out of control.



Donna

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
15	STR	5	OCV: 6		
18	DEX	24	DCV: 6		
15	CON	10	ECV: 5		
10	BODY	0	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12		
13	INT	3			
15	EGO	10	Costs		
15	PRE	5			
14	COM	2	Char:	78	Base: 100
6	PD	3		+	+
3	ED	0	Powers:	239	Disad: 217
4	SPD	12		=	=
6	REC	0	Totals:	317	317
30	END	0			
30	STUN	4			
Cost	Powers		END		

37 Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Eye Gouge			
(Eye Gouge)	-1	-1	3D6 Flash
Groin Kick			
(Nerve Strike)	-1	+1	3D6 NND (7)
Jab			
(Martial Strike)	0	+2	7D6
Kidney Blow			
(Killing Strike)	-2	+0	2 1/2D6 HKA
Spinning Kick			
(Off. Strike)	-2	+1	9D6
Sudden Disarm			
(M. Disarm)	-1	+1	Disarm, 35 STR
(7) rPD in Vitals protects.			
Use Martial Arts with Claws, Knives and			
Street Weapons			
+2 Damage Classes (Added In)			

Skills

- 15 Bases (2 100 Point Private Dens in the Hole)*
- 3 Well-Connected
- 1 Contact: Divine (*UNDERWORLD ENEMIES*, "Uneasy Truce," p.57), 11-
- 3 3 Contacts at an 11 or less (GM Discretion)
- 4 8 Favors (GM's Discretion, but all must be confined to Fell's Point)
- 20 Followers: 3 Lieutenants, Thug Type Two (*Justice, Not Law*, p. 126)
- 15 Followers: 2 Female Bodyguards (Terrorist Template, *Justice, Not Law*, p. 127)
- 5 Wealth: Well-Off
- 21 Vehicle (Armored Cadillac Limousine; Sportscar, *Dark Champions*, p.96)
- 8 +5 Lightning Reflexes
- 5 Resistance (5 Points)
- 3 Gambling, 11-
- 3 High Society, 12-
- 7 Streetwise, 13-
- 5 AK: The Fell's Point Basin and the Hole, 14-
- 3 AK: The Peninsula, 12-
- 3 CK: Fell's Point, 12-
- 3 Street Scholar
- 1 KS: Fell's Point Orphanage, 11-
- 1 KS: Fell's Point Underworld, 11-

- 1 KS: The Mafia (mostly the Tosconi Brothers and the Morelli Family), 11-
- 4 KS: Prostitution Subculture, 14-
- 1 KS: Street Gangs in the Basin, 11-
- 2 Languages: The Black Cradle Code, Prostitute Slang (Fluent)
- 3 PS: Criminal Lieutenant, 12-
- 4 PS: Prostitute, 13-
- 3 SC: Accounting (INT), 11-
- 1 SC: Pharmacology/Toxicology, 8-
- 5 WF: Small Arms, Knives, Claws, Whips
- 16 +2 Combat Levels with All Combat

100+ Disadvantages

- 10 Enraged if "Offended," (Common, see below), 11-, 11-
- 10 Enraged if Touched (Common), 11-, 11-
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Burning Ambition, the "Hunger" (Common, Strong)
- 20 Normal Characteristic Maximum
- 10 Distinctive Features: Attractive (Concealable, Recognizable)
- 5 Distinctive Features: The Red Hourglass Brand (Easily Concealable, Recognizable)
- 5 Reputation: "Uppity Bitch," the Widow's Lieutenant, Limited Area: Fell's Point, 8-
- 10 Monitored by the Widow (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area: The Hole), 11-
- 10 Hunted by any pimp or heavy operator in the Basin (As Pow, Limited Area: Basin), 11-
- 10 Public ID: Donna Burke
- 112 Villain Bonus

Background: The feeling of *powerlessness* can be sharp enough to tear at the heart of its victim.

It can be felt in the lash of a rod, in the bony ridges of knuckles in a vicious backhand, in the slow grinding pressure of a knee bearing down on your back. All of these are the instruments of discipline at the Fell's Point Orphanage. They are not instruments of learning...they are to break the spirit. The two have never been confused and have never been used in tandem within the bleak walls of the Orphanage dormitories.

Pride, insubordination, anger...when these things surfaced in children, they were dealt with quickly and harshly. These were all the enemies of order and discipline. These emotions bred rebels.

There are many stories told about methods of discipline at the Orphanage. Most of them are true. But for every story told about the Orphanage, there are many that remain untold. They simply would not be believed.

Donna Burke knew them all intimately. For her, the *powerlessness* was almost more than she could bear.

Donna was abandoned in Fell's Point. There is really nothing new in that; it happens. Donna simply refused to accept it; the anger burned in her so deep and so fierce, that she threatened to drown in it. If anything, it gave her strength. It also made her a target.

She was considered to be a "discipline case" by the staff, and they became determined to break her. They did not care for the contempt she seemed to hold for them, and for their



position. Again and again, they attempted to break her, with the rod, the whip and with other cruelties. With every blow, with every pain they inflicted, another flame was set in the timbers of Donna's heart, and her determination raged as her body became lush and full.

Through it all, the Hunger burned in her.

* * *

They eventually sold her; they would have nothing more to do with her. She was sold into the Basin, to serve her time as a *thing* for the entertainment of others.

A gaunt man purchased her, a man lean of face and with a touch so soft it might have been a razor. In the chambers of his Kingdom, he taught her to behave, cultivated in her social graces, how to lie when necessary, how to feign pleasure at the touch of the most foul that Fell's Point had to offer. Her pride amused him. Her rage fed the fires of his laughter.

This was a different torture, this ridicule. She remained helpless, but his entertainments chilled her and made ice of her heart. Venom replaced flame.

She waited to strike.

* * *

The Widow came to her.

Donna remembered her with awe, this woman that rested upon a divan carried by men. Although Donna had never seen her before, the woman recognized her. It seemed she had known Donna for a long time.

"You will be my weapon." Her touch was like that of a spider's spinneret. It smoothly cut the ice of her limbs and touched a candle flame to her heart.

The Widow left a dagger for her, a Widow's Sting, concealed in the folds of her bed sheets. The metal was hot in Donna's hands.

* * *

On the night of the Revolution, Fell's Point burned.

The masses took the streets, and for a single night, the world was turned upside down. In the streets of the Basin, women hunted their former masters, catching them and bludgeoning them to death, shooting them, killing all they could find.

Donna felt their hate run hot and deep, like magma beneath the stones of the Point. She felt fear...she *smelled* it. The dagger burned in her hand as she watched the door of her opulent cell, waiting.

The gaunt man came, and in his eyes Donna saw weakness. He asked for her to hide him, he begged her to let him rest within the cell.

No one knows of this place. Here I will be safe. Let me sleep, he pleaded.

Behind every word paraded images of pain, of every torment Donna had endured. They marched like flames, so many that it seemed the cell would catch fire.

"Fear not," she said. She raised the bed sheet from her bed, wrapped his trembling form within its folds.

I will reward you, he whispered. *If anyone should come stand at the door of the cell and ask if there is any man here, you shall tell them no.*

She agreed and let him rest on her bed upon which he had inflicted his torments. She watched his breathing slow, the lines of his face relax. Only when he had fallen into the folds of sleep, did she rise.

She drew the knife from beneath the bed and went softly unto his slumbering form. Raising it like a spike, she plunged it into his skull, so deep that it fastened him to the solid wood frame of the bed and pinned him like a spider.

He was asleep and weary when his death came. Motionless, Donna watched him die.

* * *

When the Widow finally came to her chamber, Donna spoke.

"Here is the man you seek." The Widow did not react. She spared but a single glance for the man that lay pinned on the bed and then looked upon the woman that had killed him. She did not speak to Donna of freedom, of liberation, of power. These were things that Donna had imagined the Widow would say to her, in reward for her act. When the form upon the divan spoke not at all, Donna regarded her. In the trade of gazes, she saw the figure upon the divan as something that would die as easily as the man that lay bleeding upon her bed. Then Donna herself would ride in a divan, be attended by others. At long last, she would have *power*.

In the streets beyond Donna's prison chambers, fires raged.

They paled compared to the Hunger that raged in her heart.

Personality: Donna is the Widow's lieutenant, a weapon the elderly woman uses against her enemies. Donna is not only obsessed with gaining power, but in using it to torment others as Donna herself was once abused. She sees the Widow's Peak as an instrument of her will, the ability to dominate both the body and fantasies of customers until they are willing to do all that she asks for a chance to experience the paradise the Widow's Peak has to offer.

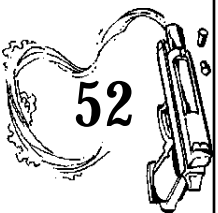
Donna, or "Prima" Donna as she is called behind her back, is the epitome of condescension and arrogance, having cultivated her own importance to such a degree that she is dismissive of anyone she meets who has nothing to offer her. She aids the Widow with her organizational duties; she has quite an eye for details, though she despises being a lieutenant and a second stringer and would gladly trade it all for a shot at running the show. Characters seeking to remove the Widow from her throne could get aid from Donna, but once the characters have served their purpose, Donna will betray them (surprised?). She is skilled in firearms, accounting and has almost as many contacts as the Widow does, mostly with male-led organizations within the city such as Divine and Crave (*Underworld Enemies*, p.36), much to the Widow's disgust. These males are using Donna to gain information on the Widow's Peak, with the secret hope of breaking the backs of the women living in "pussy town."

Donna spends an unnatural amount of time preening herself, taking care that once she is finished, she looks far more elegant and fashionable than she did before. Some attest Donna washes herself often because she feels dirty and unpleasant. It is a fact that she never gives of her body anymore, having risen beyond what she considers the rest of the "street trash." In truth, shortly after the Revolution occurred, she went frigid.

Donna does not like to be touched or grabbed and finds it terrifying to be humiliated by someone she perceives as weaker than herself (such as the Widow). This irrational fear stems from her background.

Quote: [Stretching languidly like a cat, her face hardened.] *"I scratch your back..."*

Powers/Tactics: Donna, unlike many of her fellow lieutenants, frequently enters combat, primarily to ease her growing frustration and rage as well as to exercise her power over others. Her years at the Orphanage carved her into a capable hand to hand combatant, and there have been many times when she has had to teach streetwalkers in the Hole a lesson



or two about holding out and betraying the sisterhood, chastising them with such zeal that it has left many of the Widow's underlings terrified of her. Sometimes these lessons last hours, but they never leave lasting scars or bruises on the prostitute, for Donna is a businesswoman: a lying whore is better than a scarred one.

When negotiating on behalf of the Widow, Donna always looks out for herself. She has been known to make secret negotiations and treaties with the Widow's enemies to further her own interests. The Widow is aware of all of them, but lets Donna have her petty amusements...as much as it gives Donna pleasure to maintain control and have her "secret network," the Widow permits it. Donna's treaties and secret contracts may come in useful some day.

Appearance: Donna is a Caucasian woman with pale skin, rich, red lips and eyes like two flecks of ice beneath her short, savaged hair. Donna's legs are one of her best features, and she accentuates them with a tight mini-skirt, black fishnet stockings and a semi-tuxedo with a bow tie. Her fingernails are like daggers, carefully trimmed, and even in the fury of chastising an offending prostitute she takes care to make sure her black hair is perfectly combed. A cigarette is usually nestled between her teeth.

Donna has a pair of silver rimmed glasses she wears when checking accounts, more for effect than anything else. Her eyesight is perfect. Her foresight is not.

Black Strap Suicide

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
20	STR	10	OCV: 8		
23	DEX	48*	DCV: 8		
20	CON	20	ECV: 4		
15	BODY	10	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12		
10	INT	0			
13	EGO	6	Costs		
20	PRE	10			
10	COM	0	Char:	130	Base: 100
7	PD	3		+	+
7	ED	3	Powers:	278	Disad: 308
4	SPD	15		=	=
8	REC	0	Totals:	408	408
40	END	0			
40	STUN	5	* Normal Characteristic Maximum		

Cost	Powers	END
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5 Invisible Effects (Normal Sight) for STR (Suicide's strength is not apparent to observers, +1/2)

44 Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting Plus

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Choke Hold			
(Choke Hold)	-2	+0	Grab, 3 1/2D6 NND (2)
Circle Kick			
(Off. Strike)	-2	+1	11D6
Disarm			
(M. Disarm)	-1	+1	Disarm, 45 STR
Dodge			
(M. Dodge)	-	+5	All Attacks, Abort
Kidney Blow			
(Killing Strike)	-2	+0	2D6 HKA
Legsweep			
(Legsweep)	+2	-1	8D6, Target Falls

Low Blow

(Nerve Strike) -1 +1 3 1/2D6 NND (7)

Punch

(Martial Strike) 0 +2 9D6

(2) rPD in Neck and Life Support:

Self-Contained Breathing protects.

(7) rPD in Vitals protects.

12 +3 Damage Classes (Added In)

27 Multipower (55 Active Points), OAF (Whip, -1)

2u 1D6+1 HKA (2 1/2D6 HKA with STR), +1 STUN Multiplier (+1/2), Armor Piercing (+1/2), No KB (-1/4), Cannot be used on an attacker in the same hex (-1/4), OAF (-1) [40/16] **plus** 3" Stretching, Gestures (Must have room to crack whip, -1/4), Linked (-1/2), OAF (-1) [15/5, **Total:** 55/21]

1u 1D6 HKA (2D6 HKA with STR), Continuous (+1), Armor Piercing (+1/2), No KB (-1/4), Must Follow a Grab Maneuver (-1/4), OAF (Whip as Garrote, -1) [37/15] 4 (6)

1u 4D6 Entangle, 1 Recoverable Charge (-1 1/4), Range Limited by STR (-1/4), OAF (-1), Lockout: Cannot use either of her HKAs while Entangle is in effect (-1/4) [40/11]

1u 30 STR Telekinesis, only to pull objects towards Suicide (-1/2), Affects entire object (no squeezing, -1/4), Must have made a successful Entangle first (-1/2), OAF (-1) [45/20] 4

16 Bondage Gear, including Handcuffs and Manacles: 6D6 Entangle, Entangle Takes No Damage From Attack (+1/2), 2 Recoverable Charges (-1), Set Effect (Only ties up hands or feet, -1), Does not prevent use of most Accessible Foci (-1), No Range (-1/2), OAF (-1) [90/16] [2rc]

24 Leather Buckles, Cuffs and Straps: 4D6 Entangle, Entangle Takes No Damage From Attack (+1/2), 6 Recoverable Charges (-1/4), Range Based on STR (-1/4), OAF (-1) [6rc]

30 50% Damage Reduction, Physical and Energy Resistant, STUN Only (-1/2), Requires a CON Roll (-1/2)

18 Costume: 9 PD/9 ED Armor, OIF (-1/2)

7 Costume: Lack of Weakness (10 pts), OIF (-1/2)

4 +2" Running (8" Total) 1/5"

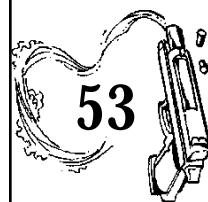
2 +2" Superleap (6" Forward/4" Up) 1/5"+STR

6 +2 to All Perception Rolls

5 Costume: +2 Skill Levels with Shadowing and Stealth, OIF (Costume, -1/2)

Skills

- 3 Acrobatics, 14-
- 1 "Animal" Handler, 8-
- 3 Breakfall, 14-
- 3 Climbing, 14-
- 3 Concealment, 11-
- 1 Contortionist, 8-
- 7 Interrogation, 15-
- 3 Paramedic, 11-
- 7 Shadowing, 13-
- 3 Stealth, 11-
- 7 Streetwise, 13-
- 5 AK: The Fell's Point Basin and the Hole, 14-
- 4 CK: Fell's Point, 13-
- 4 KS: Prostitute Subculture, 13-
- 2 Language: Black Cradle Code, Prostitute Slang (Fluent)
- 2 PS: Assassin, 11-



- 2 PS: Dominatrix, 11-
- 2 PS: Homemaker, 11-
- 5 WF: Small Arms, Uncommon Melee Weapons, Knives
- 24 +3 Combat Levels with All Combat

100+ Disadvantages

- 20 Psychological Limitation: Masochistic (Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Fear of Being Naked (Common, Strong)
- 20 Normal Characteristic Maximum
- 0 Dependency (Psychosomatic): 1 Stress Point/Day she is not in Costume (Common)
- 15 Distinctive Features: Scars (Concealable, Major)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Dominatrix (Easily Concealable, Major)
- 5 Reputation: Assassin (Limited Area: Fell's Point, the "Hole," Criminals), 11-
- 10 DNPC: Family; Husband, Daughter, Son (Normal), 8-
- 10 Monitored by the Widow (Mo Pow, NCI), 14-
- 5 Monitored by the Epicurean (Mo Pow, Limited Geographical Area: Fell's Point), 8-
- 15 Secret ID: Ellen Smalls
- 183 Villain Bonus



Background: Tension. Pulled tight and harsh like a strap against flesh, the thin leather straining, striving against the skin. To create that tension is an art in itself. To live with it is the sheerest agony.

Start the day as normal, with a book (some vacuous piece of trash, with perhaps some soap operas during midday) and force yourself to read every word, listen to every detail transpiring

on the screen, clean the kitchen of every speck of dust, pressing yourself hard against the linoleum floor until your shoulders and arms hurt, perform some vacuuming in the upstairs rooms always at a painful hunch, then down the stairs, vacuuming every step three or four times until the tension builds up inside, turning like a knot in one's chest. Feel the throbbing of the band on your finger, too thin for comfort, and the dull gaze of your husband as he inspects his house that you have cleaned and washed and kept.

Be subjected to it, do not dull yourself to it or enjoy it or expect it. Make every day a torture and the Tension comes with it, hard and tight like a strap against flesh.

This was my life, the life of Ellen Smalls. This is what the Epicurean saw, the day he came to me.

* * *

The Epicurean, The Book of Letters.

There are telltale signs of it, of course, that inner tension, and one must guard against showing it to the outside world, for a very simple reason — there are those that will exploit when they feel it in a victim. And it can be felt; those who claim they cannot feel the tension in others are simply not in touch with themselves.

Sometimes these tensions manifest in the bite of the lip; as the lips come apart, the edges of the teeth are crowned with the tiniest kiss of blood. At other times, the tension can be felt in the taut lines of the throat, knotted in pain and anguish...and I have seen throats so tightened and straining that you wish you could peel the muscles from the cervical vertebrae and fashion ropes to bind others. At other times, this exquisite tension is displaced and turned against the self in a piece of apparel, a watchband, a neck cloth or high collar, or a

leather belt drawn so tight around a small waist it might as well be choking the wearer. I could speak of these symptoms at great length, but I have not the time to do so here. Suffice to say, that in Ellen, sweet Ellen, there was no one symptom that sang out to me. The tension was pure, running like a vein of gold beneath her white pale flesh.

In Ellen, I could see the feeling penetrating her, coursing through her limbs. It was almost a harmony of pain, every joint and crease in her features like a sheet of music. And in the way she dressed, her obvious fear of her own nakedness; it had been some stroke of luck that had delivered her to me.

Oh yes, it was luck. For I do not believe in any higher power. I believe in pleasure.

To break Ellen, to externalize that pain, I was certain it would bring me pleasure. It did. We do as we will, we do as we wish, we do what we must to free ourselves from pain...even if we must bring this pain to others to maximize our own pleasure; pleasure is a thing of contrasts. It is pain that gives pleasure definition, and with Ellen, sweet, pure Ellen, she gave pleasure such definition that it almost brought tears to my eyes, and my eyes have not seen a drop of remorse or gratification for decades. Decades. Think on that, and what having Ellen in my little red schoolhouse meant to me. I had thought that at last, I had broken the mold, cracked the foundation of the Earth at last, left my mark, and it was Ellen.

* * *

The child had no idea of her potential.

I had lunch with her, subjected to myself to the mediocrity of one of the restaurant bars in Chelsea that the University students frequent when they have their pathetic, uninspired revels on the weekends, finally to retire to each other's clumsy embraces and dare call it an experience, or worse, experimentation.

She ate a salad, picking at the greens with her fork, carefully spearing each one. Oh, her movements...!

And I? I ate at her psyche, carefully spearing each of her thoughts and movements, analyzing, categorizing and finalizing. I was determined she should become mine; if I did not have her, someone else might, and that, I would never allow. I had been waiting years to show the true fulfillment of my craft, and here was Ellen before me, a clean slate on which I could write all I had learned.

The circumstances of our meeting was not fate or any such foolish thing. I teach Ethics at Fell's Point University. Ellen taught Freshman English. Before you entertain the notion, let me stop you by saying that that is nothing to be proud of at Fell's Point University. The selection of works and, worse, their presentation, is commonplace and substandard, even pathetic.

Ellen recognized her position, however, though she did not say it as such. I felt the tension, though.

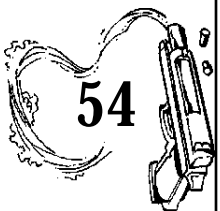
I simply feel so helpless sometimes, she found herself telling me, as I nodded inside, listening with my easy, careful demeanor and my sympathetic ear, drawing her slowly and slowly into a seeming friendship.

She was married. She had two children. She kept house. She taught English. Her husband was comfortable in his suburban mediocrity. He loved routine. He liked her to keep the house clean. He liked her to stay out of the way, in what he termed "her place." Her wedding band hurt her sometimes, because he had forgotten to check the width of her finger when they were married. Now it would not come off.

Her children were slaves of buzzing electronic devices. They loved the television. They loved Nintendo, cartoon violence, and revelled in underachievement and ignorance, as if these things were some form of rebellion.

These were suburban torments.

I would have done anything to keep her. It did not come to that, fortunately, though I would have liked to have seen myself tested to the limits of discomfort, simply to see how far I would



go to have her.

Instead, I offered her a quiet solution. I would take her back to school and reeducate her.

If I had had any less moral character, I never would have allowed her to leave. Perhaps it was my vanity that gave her freedom. It was my way of displaying my own craftsmanship.

Perhaps.

* * *

The Epicurean promised Ellen he would break her down and build her back up again until she no longer felt this inner tension, he would externalize it and make her life bearable again. Instead, he took pleasure in making her life a cycle of binging and purging of pain. He trained her well, and then he introduced her to the Widow.

Look what I have done with this woman, he said proudly. I do believe I have outdone myself. Chiseled a body out of such wonderful stone.

The Widow said nothing, but she purchased Ellen. The Epicurean thought it was because Ellen was too beautiful to be refused, no matter what the price. He was conceited in this way, the Epicurean. It did not cross his mind that the Widow might wish to undo his work, the vast damage the Epicurean had inflicted without even caring.

Men were this way in Fell's Point, and the Epicurean was among the worst. Egocentricity was among their milder symptoms. The Widow hoped that one day, this would change. Until then, she would keep this woman in her Kingdom until the damage could be unwound from her frame and she could again be alive.

In her heart, the Widow held many precious virtues. Patience was among them. Another was the inability to accept the *wrongs* she saw around her and her ever-present movement to change these wrongs.

Ellen was a reminder of this.

Personality: Knots of tension run through Ellen, as if her nervous system has somehow been externalized into the black leather bands that encircle her. As she moves all of them pull at her flesh and muscles, twisting them in a dozen different directions, each movement evoking a delicious knot of pain from her protesting muscles. She lives for the release of this tension.

Through the teachings of the Epicurean, Ellen suffers and inflicts her suffering on others, and there is nothing more that she desires to do; this has become her life. Ellen has attempted to rationalize her unhealthy desire and love of pain, but her rationalizations have always turned up somewhat empty and hollow, whether she commits them to paper or speaks them aloud.

Black Strap Suicide is the Widow's personal tool. She is not necessarily an assassin or a plaything, a slave or a messenger...she is something that the Widow has always found to be a distasteful but necessary reminder of things best not forgotten.

Quote: In her masked identity, Ellen does not speak. She has found that silence does more to evoke terror in her customers and her victims than any words she could utter.

Powers/Tactics: Black Strap Suicide possesses no paranormal powers, but she intuitively knows how to inflict pain on others, how to maximize their suffering with every strike of her whip and hand. She has combined this strange intuition with a combat style using handcuffs, spiked manacles, leather entangles and a long leather whip which she keeps coiled about her body like a snake. She prefers to attack from ambush whenever possible, binding her target during her first attack and then attacking them with her instruments of

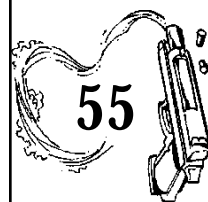
mercy while they are bound. Despite her bizarre fighting style, she is an accomplished combatant, and recognizes how to maximize the terror of her victims by first rendering them helpless and then chiseling away at their reserve until they collapse physically and emotionally.

Notes: Black Strap Suicide should be tailored to fit the campaign. It is recommended her main attack equal the highest Active Point Offensive Power of the PC in the group, and that her arsenal has a good chance of either wounding or binding the toughest member of the party. If confronting many characters at once, the GM should increase her SPD and DEX to appropriate levels in order to provide a challenge. If any character has a special attack that is in danger of knocking her out with a single blow (say a NND or a gas attack), her defenses should be modified to compensate.

Appearance: Ellen is a slight woman with an erect carriage and a tired, friendly smile, but even while she is at home with her children there is an obvious tension that runs through her. Although her arms appear thin and delicate, her muscles have the strength of a horse, and it seems that her skin and muscles have somehow become one; there is not a wasted inch on her body that does not have some reserve of strength. When out in public, she always wears some element of leather in her outfit, anything from broad black leather watchbands and high heels, along with a leather handbag and sunglasses. A wedding band is wedged onto her finger; a thin red line where it pinches the flesh is visible around its edge.

Ellen never takes off her clothes, not even when retiring for the night; when she wears clothes, she is careful to make sure that no portion of her body below her neck and beyond her wrists and ankles is exposed. This style of dress, her blouses buttoned up to the neck, her preference for slacks over skirts and the sleeves of her outfits fastened tightly at the wrists, has always been attributed to her conservative nature. Beneath her clothes, however, her thin body is marked by thick, purple welts that entwine her shoulders, her back, buttocks, breasts, and countless welts and blackened bruises overlap and crisscross her skin. In other places her pale flesh has the traces of slightly whiter lines, old scars that have never healed. These scars are the vestiges of the Epicurean's training upon her body, reinforced by the black leather skin she wears when setting out to punish one of the Widow's enemies. Just above the cleft of her thighs, just below the navel, a red hourglass has been branded on her flesh.

Black Strap Suicide is a tall, thin dominatrix wrapped in tight leather bands that cover every inch of her body; she sports stiletto-heeled boots and a belt affixed with bondage gear to trap her victims. No inch of her skin is exposed. When encased in her leathery second skin, she seems to gain several inches in height and weight.



The Widow

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Revelation 18:3

I awoke to find myself in luxurious surrounding. My body was immersed in a huge bed, with a thick mattress and heavy blankets covering me. I felt groggy, as if drugged, and my wounds had been bandaged, salves applied to my cuts.

I still felt terrible, but not as bad as before. My leg was lying on a chair by the bed. I pushed myself into a sitting position, trying to see beyond my bandaged eyes. My arms ached, but they were better than before.

I can't describe the room; only the smells and the feelings...I smelled what seemed like a hundred faint scents, lingering on the air. They made my lungs relax and the dull ache of my scars fade.

I sat there, just trying to catch up on life for a moment.

I was tired. Very tired.

Within minutes of waking, they came for me. They were dressed in red and purple robes, and their faces were shrouded by black gauze; my vision began to clear as I continued to try and piece together my surroundings.

The robed figures welcomed me to the Peak; they had brought my clothes, cleaned of blood and mended, and laid them out beside me. They offered to dress me, but I found myself waving them away...I could do it. I don't like people helping me. I may be ol' peg leg, but I can manage just fine on my own.

As I was slipping into the sleeves of my shirt, I asked them where I was.

The Peak is, they replied, their robes whispering as they moved to encircle me. You will be harmed no longer, unless you wish it. The Widow has asked that

we care for you. Here in the Peak only seconds separate your desire from its fulfillment.

I want to speak to the Widow, I said; my words seemed strangely distorted. Drugs? Or was it the Peak? I couldn't figure it out. But my request disturbed them all the same.

I could feel the stirring in their movements. But finally, they acquiesced, the red-robed escorts with their blackened faces taking me gently by the arm to the heights of the Peak.

There, they said, you will find the Widow.

The Peak

The location of Widow's Peak is a secret; most residents of Fell's Point who are aware of its existence assume it is located somewhere in the Hole, but this is not known for certain; customers have been carefully screened and blindfolded before being allowed admittance to the Peak. Once within its corridors and chambers, the sound-proofed walls and filmed windows prevent any piece of the outside world from bleeding into its expanse.

The Widow's Peak is known to be the Babylon of Fell's Point, a precious hidden secret in the foul refuse and sundry carnal houses that litter the Point. The Peak is a luxury that the rich and powerful in Fell's Point indulge in, feasting on their fantasies made flesh. It is possible that the Peak is a series of pleasure houses, all tenuously connected to each other, scattered across the Point. At each of the pleasure carnal houses, no cameras are allowed, electric devices at exits destroy film and demagnetize tapes, and the windows of the building are covered with a strange film that makes it impossible to see in or out: these obliterators of evidence only make the Widow's Peak more unreal to

visitors. Up the staircases of the Peak's chambers, characters climb through one lovely layer of dream after another; each level seems dedicated solely to a particular pleasure, one cascading after the other with the smell of leather, heat and sweat. In the thick yards of vermilion carpet, among the black velvet draperies, the sounds of passion seem to fill every space in the Peak, from the bare feet of naked figures running through the corridors, the whispering of the dark red robes of customers and prostitutes with their black gauze hoods, to the clinking and creaking of chains and ropes, black leather and visions of wasp-waisted corsets; soft sounds and voices, the slow giving of springs and curtains, with the sharp crack of leather, whimpers and gasps, mixed with groans and the sudden release of tensions swirl around the characters. Through it all is the feeling that if one turned away from the



Peak for the barest instant, it all might melt away into air and unreality.

* * *

I rose through the Peak until they led me before a pair of great, iron-banded doors that rose nearly ten feet high, dwarfing me to insignificance. I stood before them, like a prisoner, astounded by their size and width.

Two of my guides, their robes like blood in the dim light, slowly opened the doors with the sound of a castle gate being drawn back. They waited, then motioned me to enter into the darkness beyond.

I stepped into the darkness and heard the doors thunder closed behind me, sealing me in.

The Widow

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
13	STR	3	OCV: 3		
8	DEX	-6	DCV: 3		
12	CON	4	ECV: 7		
13	BODY	6	Phases: 7		
15	INT	5			
20	EGO	20	Costs		
15	PRE	5			
10	COM	0	Char:	38	Base: 100
4	PD	1		+	+
4	ED	2	Powers:	330	Disad: 268
1	SPD	0		=	=
3	REC	-4	Totals:	368	368
20	END	-2			
30	STUN	4			

Cost	Powers	END
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11 Martial Arts: Widow's Reach

Maneuver OCV DCV Damage

Hug

(Martial Grab) -1 -1 Grab, 23 STR

Root

(Root) 0 0 28 STR to resist Shove; Block, Abort

Smother

(Choke Hold) -2 0 Grab, 2D6 NND (2)

(2) Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing Protects

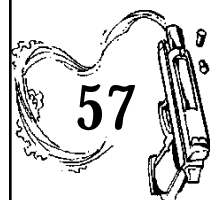
- 13 Concealed "Widow's Sting" Blade: 1/2D6 HKA (1D6+1 with STR), Armor-Piercing (+1/2), IAF (-1/2), Blade Limitations (-1/4), No KB (-1/4), **plus** 2D6 RKA, "Widow's Sting" Must Do BODY Damage (-1/2), IAF (Poison, Fragile, -3/4), 1 Charge (-2), No KB (-1/4), Linked (-1/2) [1c]
- 13 Needle in Wedding Ring: As "Widow's Sting" concealed in a IAF (-1/2) [1c]
- 10 Damage Resistance (+10 PD/+10 ED), only vs. drugs, poisons and toxins (-1)
- 5 Power Defense (10 Points), only vs. drugs, poisons and toxins (-1)
- 5 Presence Defense (10 Points)
- 4 -2" Knockback Resistance
- 10 -5" Running (1" Total) 1

Skills

- 25 Bases (8 100 Point Dens, Casinos, Night Clubs and Sex Clubs)
- 3 Well-Connected
- 15 Contact: The Count (*Fell's Point*, Head of Card Shark's Operations in Fell's Point), Crave (*Underworld Enemies*, p.36), Divine (*Underworld Enemies*, Hostile, p.57), The Hanged Man (*Underworld Enemies*, p.40), Hell Razor (*Underworld Enemies*, p.74), The Orphan (*Fell's Point*), *Protégé* (*Underworld Enemies*, See *Divine*, p.57), The Tosconi Brothers (*Fell's Point*), and six additional Contacts (GM's Discretion: the contacts can extend to government and business circles), 11-
- 1 Contact: Darkling (*Justice, Not Law*, p.102) and Vain (*UNDERWORLD ENEMIES*, p.38), both at 8-
- 6 12 Favors (GM's Discretion, but half must be confined to the city of Fell's Point)
- 45 Followers: 128 Streetwalkers, "City of Sin" (See above, 50 pts.)
- 35 Followers: 32 Black Cradle Call Girls (50 pts.)
- 25 Followers: 8 Eunuch Bodyguards (Terrorist Template, *Justice, Not Law*, p. 127)
- 10 Wealthy
- 21 Vehicle (Black Armored Mercedes-Benz Limousine; use "Sportscar" stats, *Dark Champions*, p.96)
- 5 Gambling, 12-
- 7 High Society, 14-
- 9 Streetwise, 14-
- 5 AK: The Fell's Point Peninsula, 14-
- 6 AK: The Fell's Point Basin and the Hole, 15-
- 5 CK: Fell's Point, 14-
- 3 Street Scholar
- 1 KS: Card Shark Organization on Fell's Point, 11-
- 4 KS: Fell's Point Underworld, 14-
- 5 KS: Prostitute Subculture, 15-
- 1 KS: The Law Enforcement World, 11-
- 1 KS: The Mafia (the Tosconi Brothers, the Morelli Family and the Saittas), 11-
- 1 KS: Hudson City Card Shark and Hudson City Underworld, both at 8- (Unfamiliar with both)
- 1 KS: Scents, 11-
- 3 Linguist
- 10 Languages: Arabic, French, Italian, Spanish, The Black Cradle Code, Prostitute Slang (Fluent)
- 4 PS: Prostitute, 13-
- 4 PS: Madame, 13-
- 4 PS: Informant and Blackmailer, 13-
- 6 SC: Accounting (INT), Pharmacology/Toxicology, 12-
- 4 WF: Small Arms, Knives, Syringes
- 4 +2 Combat Levels with Grab

100+ Disadvantages

- 15 Physical Limitation: Overweight (Frequently, Greatly)
- 20 Normal Characteristic Maxima
- 10 Age: 60+
- 20 Distinctive Features: Overweight (Not Concealable, Major)
- 5 Split Reputation: "Widow of the Hole," (Limited Group: Underworld) and "One of the Fell's Point Social Elite" (Limited Group: The Higher Circles), 11-
- 10 Hunted by any pimp or heavy operator in the Basin (As Pow, Limited Area: Basin), 11-
- 15 Mystery ID (*Underworld Enemies*, p.5)
- 183 Villain Bonus



Background: Small lamps, like ghostly worshipers, were arrayed around the perimeter of the darkly paneled room. They had been so carefully placed that I had ample reason to doubt if it was a room at all, and not some hall or great chamber open to the sky; the lamps had been arranged so that they did not hint at whether the surfaces behind them were walls or whether they were heavy tapestries that soaked up the light without unveiling the great space beyond. The ceiling of the room rose to such a height that the lamplight could not reach it, and the room seemed to stretch out in all directions, the walls sloping away from me, the curve of the wall beckoning visitors to attempt to take in all the room at once.

To complement the lamplight, small candles burned in candelabras that followed the slope of the walls, eventually slipping into the shadows and becoming lost to view. In front of me, a small scene had been set, a series of Oriental screens that gave the scene the illusion of walls, and a comfortable leather chair that sat alone, facing nothing.

The shadowy forms of the guards, in their black and red robes with their sleeves gathered at the wrists and full in the shoulder, flanked me. Their faces were masked with a hood of filmy black gauze as if some monstrous spider had descended upon them are enshrouded their features with her spinnerets.

One of them walked carefully to the chair and turned his gaze upon me. His hands did not touch the chair, but his intent was clear. I stepped forward and sat down, feeling the leather surface surround me as I slipped into its arms.

* * *

I sat there, like a spirit into the wilderness until the moment came when I entered her presence.

She was carried in on a divan, materializing from the darkness upon the hands of a half-score of robed figures. They sat her gently upon the floor in front of me, then withdrew, bowing as they left.

There before me I saw a Woman, sitting upon a scarlet colored divan, the rich carvings and reliefs upon the divan scripted and gilded so that it appeared to have seven heads and ten horns. The Widow was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, the red folds bedecked with gold and precious stones and pearls. A golden cup rested in her hand, the surface of the liquid within a tranquil red. I watched the Widow raise the cup to her lips, and the ripple of her flesh as she drank from its depths.

She slowly turned her gaze upon me, her glittering eyes almost lost within the folds of her flesh.

For that moment, in her eyes, I thought I saw the flicker of recognition.

* * *

I found myself speaking to her, gently and without hesitation, of all that I had seen in Fell's Point, in the Harbor and in the Basin. Of coming to

investigate the murder of Deborah Cross, of that maddening smile I had seen on Deborah's face as she sat, dead in her apartment upon that hard wooden chair like a queen.

I told her of entering the Hole to look for answers.

The Widow said nothing. Her hand rested upon the stem of the gold chalice without drinking from it.

I told her about Fantasy, and I found myself describing everything about her, from the bitter cynicism I had heard in her voice when she spoke to me, to the way she cradled her cigarette in her hand and that helpless expression that crossed her face when she talked of leaving Fell's Point.

Still, the Widow was silent, but her eyes continued to watch me as I spoke.

I told her about the night in Hudson City, where I Fell. This time, when I told her, there was no tremor in my voice, only a cold narration.

At that, I saw her nod, the shadows cast by the candles shifting upon her face. Her hand strayed from the chalice to her breast, where they locked with her other hand. Her fingers were sharp and delicate for such a massive body.

I could feel the sleeves of my jacket sticking to my arms, and I mentally noted the robed figures and where there were placed throughout the room.

The Widow made a slow motion, unlacing her fingers. A ring flashed on the forefinger of her left hand as she beckoned me to come closer.

I rose from the chair, stiffly, and walked toward her until I was within arm's reach. The ring flashed on her finger, and something about it, the way it caught the light, disturbed me. Her hand stretched forth, the ring extended, and she drew it down my features, as if she was feeling its contours so that she might see me better. Her hands felt the muscles in my cheeks, down my jaw, then up the back of my neck to my forehead, gently brushing my hair.

I looked at her face, the definition lost beneath the sweeping folds and rises of her flesh, her eyes black pools, her body smelling faintly of cinnamon and perfume, the red halo upon her face where her lips may have been.

She spoke, and her voice was a slow ssssss-clkkk.

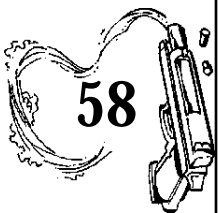
"I know what it is you want," she whispered.

* * *

She spoke, but it wasn't in negotiation. Instead, I listened as the Widow told the story of the Kingdom she held.

The Widow said that she had come from Western Arabia; she did not give specifics, only that the area was well known for its merchants and luxury trade. She said that it was of no real importance; it was not where the history of Widow's Peak began.

What had come before in the urban wasteland



of Fell's Point, the vague shadows that passed for fantasies and pleasure in the peninsula, hardly bore mention except that the people of Fell's Point were a tortured populace. Fell's Point had fallen and become the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful thing.

These people fed on themselves in a cycle of murder and violence, emptying themselves by taking pleasure in the death of others. They craved release, and they sought it in the blood of their dimly-perceived adversaries, men and women who were nothing more than reflections of themselves. Black, white, male, female, reverent, irreverent, all waged war on the other and took pleasure in their differences, convinced that each of them held the truth and used it as a weapon.

Onto these tortured people came the Widow's husband. She described him impassively; his face gaunt, sharpened to the bone, dark eyes, gray hair combed carefully back on his forehead, and a brutal intensity that belied the compassion beneath the surface. She did not give him a name; from what she implied, names were not things of consequence to her.

Her husband came unto the heart of Fell's Point, and there he built a Kingdom in the sight of the world and invited all to partake of its sweet pleasure. He allowed no distraction, no disobedience and no division in his Kingdom, and all was Love.

The Widow had heard much of him and his Kingdom. She traveled half way across the world, in order that she might speak to him many hard questions and commune with him all that was in her heart. When the Widow had seen all of his wisdom, and the House he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his lieutenants, and their apparel, and their cup bearers, her heart became as flame.

The King gave unto her all her desires, whatever she asked. Here, he spoke, here you will be cared for and loved because you are human, and because all humans long for these things.

* * *

But the King communed with many strange men on the governing of his Kingdom. The Widow had warned him that he should not partake of them, nor should they seek him out, for surely they would turn away his heart. She saw it in their gazes of greed and lust of power, that these were dangerous men, born in Fell's Point with the same violent corruption of spirit that all their kind had inherited. Where the King ordered love, they dispensed cruelty. Where the King ordered consent, they became as masters to their women, taking pleasure in breaking their spirit.

And the King had seven hundred loves, three hundred troops in the very depths of Fell's Point. And his lieutenants, they turned his heart. The King grew old and cruel, his heart darkened, and many were the crimes he inflicted upon his loved ones. He did evil in the sight of his children.

The evils of the King stirred up adversaries in the Basin of Fell's Point, and they slowly began to gather against him, inflicting many torments upon the women in their employ. The King, exhausted, turned a blind eye to them, then partook of them himself, turning from Love to sate his own cruel pleasures that he claimed would renew him and give him second life.

The Widow watched it all, hearing the cries of the tortured on Fell's Point, the falling of the Kingdom and the end of everything in the hollow eyes of her husband. She acted to preserve the Kingdom; she fashioned a blade, a Widow's sting, which she gave to the one the King sated his cruelties upon. In so doing, she gave in to the violence; when the Revolution came and her carefully placed lieutenants began their grand execution of their former masters, she felt her husband die.

When she visited the site of his death, she saw what she had fashioned, and it weighed heavily upon her.

* * *

Our negotiation was short.

The Widow wanted Eve returned to her, unharmed. I was to speak about nothing I had seen here; I would not be allowed to. If I did, Fantasy would be tried for murder and executed.

I was to leave Fell's Point and never return.

She never asked me what I wanted. As she said, she already knew.

* * *

I agreed to all she asked. I told her where she could find Eve.

I'm not ashamed to say it; I just wanted the torture to be over...this entire abyss I'd plunged into, this idiocy built on accidents taken to the extreme. Deborah's death had been a mistake, a communication breakdown. Her murderer, if there was just one, would never be punished, at least by me. If I pursued it, some effigy would be put in her place and sentenced. Fantasy would die, and I couldn't live with that, not again.

Dimly, I realized I'd probably have to quit NILE. I didn't care; I'd never had a real life with NILE anyway, not since Hudson City.

It was perhaps the biggest decision I'd ever made.

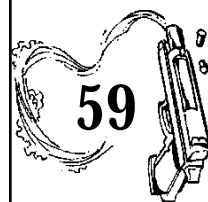
Still, it was one of the farthest things on my mind as I sat there with the Widow.

* * *

I asked her what she intended to do about Donna, what that meant for the Peak.

"Donna..." the Widow voice was a soft hiss, followed by the clicking of her teeth together as she spoke, like tiny white mandibles in her mouth. "Donna is one of the Hungry Ones. They starve always, the Hungry ones. They taste, yet never have enough. She is too far gone for..."

Another soft hiss, an intake of breath. Her dark eyes, like pools, gazed at me. Her eyes ran over my



body, the stiffness in my frame, seeing the leg that was not my own. Her eyes flickered, as if in recognition, then resolution. In that eternity, when I felt her guards press around me, I felt her pass judgment.

"You may take the girl with you when you leave here. I will hold her no longer." The Widow's eyes closed, melted into the folds of wrinkled flesh that hid any trace of emotion from me. "You remind me of..."

The Widow became silent.

The Eunuchs gathered around me, like a curtain being drawn in front of my eyes, and the Widow's immensity vanished behind the huge male bodies. Two hands gripped my arms like vises, and in tandem, became my forcible escort to the door.

"The Mistress is tired." It was a command, not a statement.

There was a resounding boom as the doors of the Kingdom closed themselves to me.

Quote: [Slow lingering hiss, clicking of teeth like a chorus of tiny spiders.] *"If you could but see the people that come to my home...marginal beings, half-educated, low things who empty their frustrations into the wake of my kingdom. They define their own superiority through their alienation from others. This fantasy world, this world so divorced from their dreary lives, their mediocrity and the burden of their repeated failures..."* [Lingering sigh, exhalation through the seams of her lips.] *"...this world is the only release they have. I would ask that you show them compassion. You have more in common with them than you know."*

Powers/Tactics: The Widow has no superhuman powers and relies on her bodyguards and the Black Cradle Call Girls to protect her against physical threats to her person. For the sake of her position on Fell's Point and her cunning, she will never allow herself to be maneuvered into a position where she is outmatched or is in danger of coming to harm. Whenever possible, she will attack a foe indirectly, calling in favors from her most influential clients using whatever form of coercion is appropriate. She always prefers to deal with a problem non-violently, using social pressure or blackmail as solutions.

The Widow is intended to serve as a figurehead and a source of information for characters in any campaign, having many skills, contacts and favors, all of which she may use to help or hinder the characters.

Appearance: The Widow is a mountain of flesh and blood, so deep and thick in places that furrows of skin are the only things that mark her joints and neck. In fact, everything about the Widow, from her great weight to her expensive wardrobe and jewelry, suggests overindulgence, but as characters may discover, her speech and actions hold a surprising amount of reserve.

Despite her great frame, the Widow manages to carry her surplus weight sensuously as some women can, and her heavy movements lack the sluggishness that would be expected from a figure of her weight; her motions are slow and precise, much like a stalking spider. Her face above her heavy garments carries only the barest hint of her former beauty. When eating, the Widow maintains her strange eroticism; she treats every meal as a lover, caressing each morsel as it is drawn into her mouth.

Descent

It was the last I saw of the Widow.

I thought about her as I made my way back along the streets of Fell's Point; everything I saw was covered with a creeping gray, in the wake of speaking with her. The trail of cars, the slow methodical march of people into the Hole, I looked at them closely, at their faces and studied their expressions. I didn't learn anything; if anything, I only became more confused.

When I returned to my hotel room on the Point, Fantasy was lying curled upon the bed, sleeping soundly, twisted in the blankets. I walked carefully up to the bed and sat down on the edge, being careful not to disturb her. The bedsprings creaked slowly as I sat down.

Fantasy's wig was gone. Her hair was as black as mine. Maybe darker.

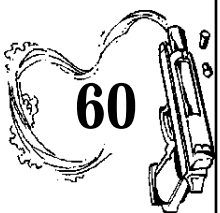
I reached out to brush my fingers against it, but before I touched her head, she rolled on the bed, and reached out for me, latching onto my arm and murmuring something into the bedspread. Her arm tugged on mine and pulled me down into the bed.

"Where d'you think you're going," she murmured again.

"North," I said, quietly, although there was no one else to hear in the room. "To Hudson City. Have you ever been there?"

She didn't respond. I watched her body rise and fall, the blankets tangled around her. I softly kissed her forehead.

"Nice place," I whispered. "You'll like it."



Widow's Peak Epilogue: Adventure Seeds

Listed below are a series of adventure seeds that can be used as one-night stands or placed in a *Dark Champions* campaign.

Victims In Paradise

A wealthy figure on the Point has targeted a PC or a character's DNPC as part of a fantasy he wishes to have; this can be a boss of the PC or DNPC, a business associate, a crime lord who has run across the character in the past (for example, Divine long considered enlisting Widow's Peak for a revenge fantasy using Crusader as part of a snuff rock video staged in one of his clubs). The customer then pays the Widow's Peak an exorbitant sum to kidnap the PC/DNPC and make them part of the fantasy. Depending on the campaign, this can be a low-key: perhaps Tenderheart (*Underworld Enemies*, p.86) pays Widow's Peak to stage a Harlequin romance fantasy where she/he saves the PC or DNPC from shadowy thugs and menacing villains, or else the fantasy can be an excessively cruel and violent revenge fantasy (usually domination or murder). The PC will have to save either a DNPC or themselves from Widow's Peak before the fantasy reaches its climax.

Adventures involving these "fantasies" can become extremely surreal, with much drug use used for hallucinatory experiences, or the character can start off an adventure not even realizing that they have become actors in the fantasy that is spiraling toward an unpleasant end. The GM should take every opportunity to play with plot and character in these adventures.

Alternatively, the PCs could hire Widow's Peak to do the same to a villain, forcing them into a fantasy where all of the villain's crimes and victims come back to haunt him.

Stranglehold

Despite the danger of doing so, the Widow hires the mercenaries to "break" Divine's hold on the drug pipeline in Fell's Point; after giving the mercenaries detailed locations of Divine's nightspots and drug distribution centers in the Basin, the mercenaries set to work, mowing down Divine's Glory Boyz, his clientele and gouging holes in his drug network. The Widow wants to strike Divine such a blow that he will either be killed or forced to negotiate with her to release his hold on drug distribution in the Point. Unfortunately, this assault only makes Divine angrier and more stubborn; he has no intention of backing down. He promptly hires his own mercenaries, purchases additional firepower from the Hanged Man and fights back, turning the Basin into a war zone and hurting profits on both sides. The two groups lay siege to each other, with the mercenaries making surgical strikes on Divine's territory as he slowly encircles the Hole and cuts off the Widow's supplies. It will be up to the PCs to resolve the situation; as it stands, time is on Divine's side: the Widow will not be able to hire the mercenaries forever, as her pockets are not bottomless, nor can she long survive without a steady influx of drugs into the Hole.

PC Alternative: This adventure can be more interesting (and relative to the PC) if the heroes are the ones breaking Divine's stranglehold; depending on their combat skill and persuasion skills, they may either be being manipulated by the Widow's Peak into breaking Divine's drug network or else they may be doing it to force a favor from the Widow's Peak (or favors: the Widow's Peak would be heavily in debt to any PC that caused Divine to relax his hold on the Harbor's drug traffic).

Supporting Cast: Any of the mercenaries or vigilantes from the *Dark Champions* books (especially Caliber and Triggerhappy from *Dark Champions*), plus Artemis and the Hanged Man (*Underworld Enemies*, p.50 and 40, respectively).

Pretty Woman

The players discover that the female escort of a wealthy businessman or politician is an assassin sent by the Widow to murder him; after discovering he was doing business with the crime lord Divine while still taking pleasure at the Widow's Peak, she plans to do him in as a warning to other businessmen on the Point. The businessman is blissfully unaware of his impending doom, caught up in the fairy tale existence of having his own disposable female plaything, who is playing the role of the naive, obedient Cinderella, waiting for an appropriate time to strike him down.

Peak Of Ecstasy

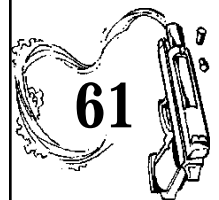
The Widow's Peak has been peddling a drug that gives the user a sexual high, making them dangerously aroused and craving release, and she is using it to drag more customers into the Hole. This drug can either be a fictional drug of the GM's design or else one of the drugs described in *An Eye for an Eye*, pp.42-45. This drug can either be manufactured by Divine (who is giving it a test run in the Hole to see if there are in harmful side effects before using it in his own clubs) or by Opium (see *The Black Cradle Call Girls Album*, above).

My Fair Lady

A wealthy Fell's Point businessman hires the characters to protect a prostitute he has rescued from slavery in the Hole. He is afraid of reprisals (and of public exposure), and has chosen the PCs because he doesn't want to involve the authorities. At the beginning of the adventure, the businessman has the prostitute tucked safely away on his estate on the Northwest section of the peninsula; other than two security guards stationed on the grounds, he has no other protection to offer her. The adventure can be run as a straightforward "bodyguard" scenario or else the GM can choose to put a spin on the adventure: the woman may be a plant, assigned by the Widow to either assassinate the businessman or else milk him for all the money he is worth. The PCs are an added problem. One plan (after the prostitute informed the Widow that the businessman had fallen in love with her) was that the Widow would "recapture" the prostitute and ransom her, telling the businessman he could have her (with no trouble from the Peak) for a sizable amount of money. After the businessman paid the money, the prostitute would then leave him, claiming that she did not love him any longer, and then make her way back to the Peak, where she would receive a small percentage of the earnings.

The Vanishing

A young man comes to the PCs (after trying the police first and getting no assistance) and claims his young fiancée was kidnapped and forced into servitude in the Hole. He asks the PCs for help. This can either be a straight-forward plea for help, or else may be a trap arranged by the Widow to kidnap the PCs and hold them in her Kingdom for one of her clients.



CLOWN ALLEY

"Why, Doctor Shreiver, I'm surprised I didn't tell you. I've always wanted my own little personal villain team...I'm afraid it's just one of my many petty, self-indulgent wants."

- Elliot Manns, the Idiot King

Clown Alley [n.] A group of clowns or a dressing tent reserved for clowns.

STEP RIGHT UP

"Howdy, Ma'am!"

The bank teller looked up from her adding machine to see a squat, pudgy clown leaning outside her window. His overcoat was a tangled mess of white, red and black patches; matching her gaze, the clown tipped his hat and smiled.

Next to him was a larger, fatter clown, bedecked with a large tie and a heavy, seedy trenchcoat; despite the greasepaint smile caked on his face, the larger clown was frowning intensely. Neither one had shaved in a while, and judging from the smell emanating from them, they hadn't bathed in a while either. Behind them, a troupe of clowns was filing into the bank, most likely their fellows; she watched as the clowns trundled over to customers, who tried to ignore them as the clowns began their antics.

Great. Soon the First Unified National Bank would be known as a "clown bank." She could almost see the headlines now. Sighing mentally, she turned back to the checkered clown. The clown's bulbous red nose was a little skewed, and as he saw her looking at it, he gave it a squeak, smiling wider and displaying his teeth, yellowed from nicotine and cigar smoke.

Her nose wrinkled distastefully. "Can I help you?"

"Yes, actually, Ma'am, you most certainly can," the smiling clown remarked, putting on a tone of earnest supplication as he solemnly took his battered hat from his head and held it to his heart. "I am Checkers, and this is my friend Fats. But please," Checkers added conspiratorially. "It is Fats, not Fat. Big difference...very big difference." He smiled again, and squeaked his nose a few times. "Get it?"

The woman remembered how much she was being paid per hour and steeled herself. It was only a few minutes until break.

"So how can I help you?" She asked, coldness inching into her voice. If they made trouble, she could always call the guard. He stood over by the door, his eyes trailing the clowns as they put on their display around the bank.

"Ah...yes." Checkers seemed to be having difficulty speaking. "Well, I...actually my friend and I...were wondering if we might make a withdrawal."

"Do you have an account here?" Somehow, the woman doubted it.

The two clowns looked at each other. The larger clown's frown deepened.

"Regrettably, No," Checkers said, subdued.

"Then I'm sorry; if you'd like to open an account—"

"Might we make a deposit?" Checkers asked hopefully. Before she could reply, he huffed and puffed, hefting a huge suitcase onto the teller window. When he was done, he exhaled slowly and wiped his brow. "Fats, would you like to—?"

"My pleasure," the heavier man grumbled. Tipping the suitcase on its side, he grabbed the edges and cracked the top with a sudden, violent motion. A boxing glove shot from its depths, plowing through the teller window with a CRASH. The teller stumbled backwards, groping weakly at her face as she collapsed on the floor, blood dribbling from her nose and mouth. Covered with shards and blood, the boxing glove dangled on its spring from the suitcase, looking pleased with itself.

"That one always gets them," Checkers muttered. The smile was gone.

Machine gun fire filled the bank as the remaining clowns pulled forth guns from their baggy costumes and unloaded clips into the walls. Screams erupted in the bank as the other tellers and customers fell to the ground...the lone security guard, stunned by the sudden flurry of action, had the surprised look wiped from his face as one clown pistol-whipped him, sending him to the floor with a dull thud. The security camera behind the teller exploded in a shower of sparks; patrons screamed as the clowns began to shout at them to toss their wallets on the floor.

"Think I should have guessed her weight first?" Checkers remarked, gazing at the woman with some sympathy where she lay on the floor.

But Fats was already climbing atop the teller window, busily rummaging through the cash drawers and stuffing bills into his

trenchcoat.

"My sentiments exactly," Checkers smiled, tipping his hat to the woman.

BACKGROUND

Clown Alley is an itinerant group of low-powered career crooks, composed of former members of the circus, the homeless, and poverty-stricken war veterans. They were first assembled by the Idiot King (*Underworld Enemies*, p.13, the *Idiot King Rules* adventure book and the *Asylum* source book) in the city of Fell's Point during the *Big Night*¹ several years ago and given an assortment of odd, unpredictable and extremely dangerous high-technology gadgets in exchange for acting as targets (cannon fodder) for the Idiot King while he put the finishing touches on his mad schemes. After Clown Alley was defeated and the Idiot King reverted back to Elliot Manns, Clown Alley was sent to the Fell's Point Penitentiary, where they served a year or two of hard time, then returned to the streets (and their usual antics) after a recent break-out. While no longer possessing a majority of their crazy weapons, Clown Alley still has a number of acrobatic and tumbling skills, as well as enough cash stocked away to stage a few conventional robberies in the city. This ragtag bunch of crooks frequently use props and "clown" equipment to carry out their crimes, though sometimes they have gotten so carried away with their props that they have been caught by the police or vigilantes. The Idiot King has had no contact with Clown Alley after the *Big Night*; their murderous tendencies may have something to do with it, along with their increasing preference for firearms and explosives in their crimes.

Clown Alley is a villain organization intended for use in *Dark Champions: The Animated Series* ("Dark Champions.TAS"), a subgenre of ordinary *Dark Champions* games. As the title implies, it is based on the *Batman: The Animated Series* television show (and related comic book), the best known example of this subgenre. The *Dark Champions.TAS* street environment is a "sanitized" version of the street environment depicted in more realistic *Dark Champions* games. As Clown Alley shows, the tone of the campaign and characters is somewhat lighter; GMs should encourage appropriate humor in the game, and should do his best to ensure a happy ending for the good guys and a bad ending for the crooks. Even though the characters are "vigilantes," the morality in this subgenre is usually pretty black and white.

¹ The "Big Night" was a wide-scale riot that took place in Fell's Point in January of 1990 and mirrors the Night of Villainy that occurred in the Champions universe; see *Day of the Destroyer* and *Champions Universe*. It is curious in that many Fell's Point residents have different memories of what transpired on the "Big Night" and call it by different names; Widow's Peak, for example (see the *Widow's Peak* source book) refer to the riot as the "Revolution," Clown Alley calls it as the "Big Night," the Idiot King dubbed it the "Saturnalia, the Feast of Fools," and for Crusader, it was "the Fall" (this was the first, true Fall he experienced before he was murdered in *Underworld Enemies*). The choice of names may be solely due to perspective, but many patients in the Fell's Point Asylum have other explanations for what transpired on the night and its impact on the Fell's Point underworld, which will be explained in the forthcoming *Asylum* source book.

PURPOSE

Clown Alley is designed to get the tar beaten out of them effectively and embarrassingly by a vigilante; their clownish behavior tags and weapons are included only to distinguish them from street gangs and other organized crime figures lurking in the city. Clown Alley makes good muscle for any villain in the GM's campaign, and many of their adventures are intended as opening vignettes or "combat interludes" for long, investigation-oriented adventures. Clown Alley currently consists of fifteen members:

Monkeyshines: A put-upon flunkie who has a "trained" pet monkey that helps him out.

Fats: A huge brawny clown who enjoys bludgeoning his opponents with an oversized bowling pin.

Checkers: A former taxi cab driver, shanghaied into Clown Alley.

Punchline: A former boxer and stand up comic who has merged careers into a not-so-funny comedy routine.

Skinny Benny: A skilled contortionist, seemingly composed entirely of angles.

Smiley: A smug clown brimming with hormones and a joy buzzer that stimulates the brain's pleasure centers.

Goodfellow: A well meaning, but violently hyperactive, happy-go-lucky clown.

Peppy: A nasty, brutish, over-sensitive clown of short stature and temperament, working with Clown Alley, making ends meet while his temper frays.

Giggles: A psychotic midget bristling with throwing knives.

Lucky: A jinxed, schizophrenic vagrant who punches out people with dirty socks filled with pennies.

Sad Billy: An Auguste clown afflicted with severe bouts of depression.

Mims the Pantomime: A mime with a chronic stutter and acute artistic sensitivity. Mims is alternatively referred to as "Mims," "Pantomime," and "Mims the Pantomime" throughout the text.

Joey Toes: At home in the heights, Joey's penchant for getting into trouble is balanced only by his ability to run away from it.

Chuckles: A Vietnam War veteran who tackles Clown Alley crimes like a war.

The Tramp: A crippled, elderly clown from the Dreamland circus, fallen upon hard times.

If the GM don't like Clown Alley as a group, each one is designed to function as a villain in themselves: Monkeyshines, Mims, Smiley, Fats, Giggles and Chuckles could all be separated from the group and used on their own for one-night stands against lone heroes.

Chuckles, Smiley and Joey Toes are recent recruits; they were not with Clown Alley when they were assembled by the Idiot King. One member of Clown Alley, a caustic smart-ass known as the Knave, was shot to death by the Fell's Point vigilante Gun Nut during the *Big Night*, and another, a deaf-mute known as the Mannequin, was beaten to death by a gang of looters in the Fell's Point Borough while fleeing Crusader.

Clown Alley is a group of expendable henchmen for any mastermind. They are designed to round out a campaign and make PCs feel good about themselves. Clown Alley has no megalomaniac designs; they only want to scrape together enough cash to let them live in comfort and

style...unfortunately, their only success to date is being used as stooges by every member of the Fell's Point Asylum, including Sid the Id, the Face and others (see the *Asylum* source book). As it is, Clown Alley barely makes enough money to feed themselves and pay for new weapons and the occasional gadget. They are seldom a serious threat if not accompanied by a powerful mastermind. Their only advantage lies in their numbers, and they are not bright enough to pull off a major crime without some mental heavyweight on their side. When this is not the case, their extracurricular activities are usually pathetic blunders that attract unwanted attention.

Clown Alley does not get along. Their lack of camaraderie has been the basis of much speculation, within the

group and without, as to why they have stuck together. Unknown to Clown Alley, their seemingly-impossible attachment to each other was orchestrated by the Idiot King when he assembled the group. The Idiot King drafted only those candidates who, by their natures and disposition, would act as "human flypaper" to keep Clown Alley together, but also possessed just the right amount of annoying personality traits and mental instabilities to keep them from getting along. This psychological tug of war is constantly going on in Clown Alley and can be observed in many of their crimes...in the past, they have had many heated arguments during robberies, even going so far as to attack each other during shoot-outs or chases with the police. The traits that perpetuate this psychological tug of war are apparent in the Clown Alley character descriptions.



RULES OF THE ALLEY

Each member of Clown Alley is supposed to contribute “dues” every month to pay for rent, gas and food...unfortunately, all of them are such welchers that this agreement is more a pipe dream than a reality. Clown Alley members horde their cash like children, and although they are supposed to pool what they get from a robbery, they always hold out on one another to such an extent that the rule translates as “keep what you take.” While there is a Clown Alley treasury under a loose board in the Clubhouse or jammed in the glove compartment of their cab, it is only a token fund.

Clown Alley has no tactics. In combat, they attack as one would expect a series of selfishly individualistic, down-and-out clowns to attack. While they have a series of “signs” they can use to communicate with each other (see *Writing on the Wall*, later on), this is far removed from any battle codes or tactical system. Any PC using tactics against Clown Alley should be rewarded for their efforts, drawing potentially long combats more quickly to their conclusion.

POWER ADJUSTMENTS

While suggestions for modifying each member Clown Alley for specific campaigns (four color, realistic, etc.) are included in their descriptions, listed below are major overhauls that can be done to the entire group to allow them to mesh with different campaigns. Clowns come in three “types”: the whiteface, the Auguste, and the character clown, and Clown Alley’s appearance conforms to one of these three types depending on the tone of the campaign (four color or realistic).

Champions Four Color: In a four color campaign, most of Clown Alley should be described as “whiteface” clowns, the most common (and colorful) clown type. Whitefaces have a thin layer of white over their faces so no skin is visible, and their mouths are colored red and exaggerated. Their round rubber noses are bright red, and their hair is tucked beneath a skull cap of white latex or rubber. A whiteface costume is usually a one-piece suit, baggy around the middle with ruffles at the neck, wrists and ankles and flashy stripes, dots and designs decorating it. They sometimes sport tiny hats and white rubber gloves. (As presented, most of Clown Alley wouldn’t be caught dead wearing such items because they are afraid it will project a negative, non-macho image at odds with their “tough and uncompromising” criminal natures. In a four color campaign, this isn’t a problem and is stylistically appropriate.)

In a four color *Champions* campaign, Clown Alley should be given a scrubbing, remove their killer and/or gritty natures and make their clown apparel more colorful (more like Bozo and Ronald McDonald). Each clown should be given Comic Book Martial Arts, higher Acrobatics skills, and their firearms should be changed to more gimmicky novelty items such as juggling balls that have different effects (tear gas, flames, flash bombs and so on). They should remain easy to defeat in a four color campaign. GMs who want to immediately indoctrinate Clown Alley into a four color campaign may want to give them back all their gadgets and weapons they had on the *Big Night*, then turn them loose on the heroes.

Dark Champions, Paranormal: In a realistic or gritty campaign, Clown Alley should be described as Auguste clowns (this is how they are portrayed in their descriptions) or character clowns (in the case of the Tramp). Auguste clowns look outrageous, with only parts of their flesh-colored faces deco-

rated white, and big, bulging noses. Wigs are optional. Auguste clowns dress in old, unwanted clothes such as baggy pants, striped shirts and vests (for more ideas, see the Clubhouse, later on). Their clothes clash and are odd, mismatched, tattered, grimy and smell bad.

Dark Champions: Clown Alley as is should do fine (Lucky’s ‘paranormal’ power should be changed to a simple jinx), as long as the GM does not overwhelm low powered heroes with all of Clown Alley at once. They should be scattered over a battle scene or a robbery target so not more than two to three are encountered at a time.

POWER NOTES

Clown Alley is intended to be employed or cajoled by a powerful villain into becoming a group of toadies. To this end, it is possible for a mastermind or major villain to “purchase” Clown Alley as their personal vassals. If purchased as Followers, Clown Alley has the following cost: They are 15 (treat as sixteen...between Monkeyshines and Billy, villains usually get more than they bargained for) Followers of 75 points each, bringing the Total Cost to 35 for a Mastermind Power Pool.* Even better, Clown Alley does not have to be paid in advance (or afterwards) for their services. In fact, it takes only the promise of riches and wealth to make them sign on to a (seemingly) competent villain. Clown Alley has rarely had a caper where they were paid at the end, but they never seem to learn from their mistakes (“Guys, it’s the big break we’ve finally been waiting for!”) and consistently get suckered by false promises and the rantings of criminals more skilled than they are.

GMs running through Clown Alley will notice that many of them have a straight 15 Presence. This is due to their clown costumes, which surprise unsuspecting people (gun-toting clowns tend to make a strong first impression, even when they are not tumbling through the air). If encountered out of costume, they have an average to below-average Presence.

* A Mastermind Power Pool is a Variable Power Pool that can only be used to purchase Perks (e.g., Followers, Bases, Vehicles) and powers that have the Focus Limitation. The Pool can only be changed between adventures; for more information, see the *Asylum* source book or the Idiot King (*Underworld Enemies*, p.12 or *The Idiot King Rules* adventure book).

“NEW” RULES

Cost	Skill
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3/2 Acrobatics (Clown Routines, DEX)

Acrobatics (Clown Routines): This skill, when applied to Clown Alley, needs a little explanation. Clown Alley is trained to perform a number of acrobatic maneuvers that hardened vigilantes or gymnastic champions may be unfamiliar with. Clown Alley has trained themselves in making human pyramids, round-offs, professional stumbling, pratfalls and so on and so forth. For cinematic reasons, the GM may wish to allow another member of Clown Alley to use another member’s Acrobatics skill as a complementary skill to their own...despite their oafishness, they can coordinate their backflips and tumblers to pull off some pretty amazing stunts.



2 Weapon Familiarity: Novelty Items

Weapon Familiarity: Novelty Items: This odd weapon familiarity is a mixture of knowing how to use items as bowling pins, yo-yos, slingshots, firebrands, lassos, hoops, rings, scarfs, stilt poles and any circus related gear as weapons. It is primarily intended for *Dark Champions: The Animated Series*, but it can be used for any genre. As this Weapon Familiarity spans Common and Uncommon Melee Weapons in *Champions*, it is included as a separate weapon familiarity group for economy. It is essentially combines Common Melee Weapons: Club and Common and Uncommon Missile Weapons: Knives (throwing daggers) and Slings (slingshots), but the tightness of the Familiarity (primarily children's toys or circus equipment to the exclusion of more "conventional" weapons such as tonfas, actual slings and so on) gives it its low cost.

CLOWN CONSTRUCTION

In the world of *Dark Champions*, accidents happen. Many villains suffer from Vigilante Sudden Death Syndrome, and it is likely that over the course of the campaign that Clown Alley's ranks will be thinned and whittled away by an industrious avenger of the night. To help offset this, some rules for making a member of Clown Alley quickly and easily are provided here for the GM's convenience.

The first step is to equip the aspiring clown with one "heavy" attack, whether a shotgun, submachine gun or high-powered rifle. Follow this heavy weapon selection with one or two hand-held close quarter weapons, one a pistol (an automatic or revolver) and the other a weapon suited to the clown's personality. Third, select a name from below (or make one up) and add one personal quirk that sets them apart from a normal thug (a mild form of insanity, an annoying habit, etc., etc.). Names can be chosen from the following: the Jester, Funny Bones, Small Talk, Heckler (and his close friend, Koch), Knuckles, Harlequin, Bubbles, Wheels, Trundle, Slump, Wee Willie (a midget), Hocus Pocus (or Hocus n' Pocus), Howdy-Do, Johnny Flick, Mister Fastbuck, Jerry Sneak, Stumblebum, Scraps, Knucklehead, Magic Tricks and Fool Hardy. Just replace a dead Clown Alley member with a new name and personal quirk and you have a new Clown Alley recruit. The stats can even be kept the way they are.

No member of Clown Alley should have any strong family ties.

A Note Regarding Killing: Killing members of Clown Alley is admittedly easy in most circumstances. However, wholesale killing of the clowns is not necessarily conducive to good gaming. While dangerous, the clowns are not the sort of depraved criminals that populate much of the *Dark Champions* underworld, and, if run properly, are relatively harmless. They are intended as an easy-to-beat "recurring villain group" that allow PCs to flex their combat skills and have a little fun in the *Dark Champions* setting. Killing large numbers of them would ruin this effect.

The Narrator: In the following descriptions of Clown Alley, there is usually one narrator who introduces the characters, with editorial comments by the characters being introduced and occasional third person perspective scenes thrown in for good measure. While the reader is intended to be the person the narrator is speaking to, the narrator and the "actual" person he is speaking to are revealed at the end of the character descriptions.

MONKEYSHINES

Background: Monkeyshines was a street peddler and small



time burglar who had trained his monkey to take jewelry and small items of value from tourists. He spent several years squeaking out a life on the street corners of Fell's Point Harbor, selling trinkets and junk to "rubes" and perfecting a silent

comedy routine where he would saddle up to prospective suckers and secretly divest them of their valuables while amusing spectators. As he was doing this, the Monkey would scamper all over the victim, causing the crowd to laugh as the Monkey secretly took coins and tiny valuables from the victim's pockets. When the suckers were well on their way, Monkeyshines left quickly with their wallets and watches, trundling off to another street corner to hawk them, then start the routine all over again. As long as he did not anger the more aggressive panhandlers in the Harbor, he made enough to get by.

The city's vagrancy laws conspired to keep him and his annoying pet off the streets, however. After numerous complaints, Monkeyshines was ready to move on to another city, when one night as he was performing, a gang of clowns grabbed him from a speeding taxi and took him to a warehouse on the waterfront. There he was brought before the Idiot King and asked to become part of Clown Alley. Monkeyshines accepted (with reservations) because he was afraid of what would have happened if he said no.

Even after all this time, after all the humiliations and excruciating defeats that have turned them into the laughing stock of the underworld, Monkeyshines is too scared to leave Clown Alley; if he were to do so, the more paranoid members of Clown Alley, especially Fats, might decide he needed to be silenced to protect the rest of them.

Personality: With a few exceptions, Monkeyshines is on the bottom of the Clown Alley pecking order, and it shows in his careful, nervous movements. It is unlikely his current status would have come about if he had not displayed a consistent fear of entering combat and voiced shoddy excuses and complaints for failing to perform the simplest assignments. To make matters worse, when skulking from a difficult mission, Monkeyshines draws attention to himself by whining about the most trivial of problems, treating every minor setback like a catastrophe. ("What are we gonna do *now*, guys?! They're *shooting* at us, for crying out loud! My God, we're done for!") The rest of Clown Alley have long since lost patience with his bellyaching; it now it takes only a dark look from Fats to silence Monkeyshines.

The rest of Clown Alley keep Monkeyshines around primarily as a target for their verbal abuse (plus, as long as Monkeyshines is on the bottom, none of the other losers have to worry); the only reason they haven't kicked him out is that he (i.e., his monkey) has occasionally proven useful. While Monkeyshines always threatens to leave after they have taunted him ("You guys'll be sorry when I'm gone! Just wait and see!"), he is too afraid of what will happen to himself if

he strikes out on his own. Indecisive, ridiculed and incapable of standing up to the abuse of his fellow criminals, Monkeyshines's frustration leads him occasionally to bark and rage at his small pet. Despite his occasional anger, however, the monkey is the closest thing he has to a friend, and he would be distraught if it was killed.

Monkeyshines is wanted for questioning in a number of felonies and burglaries.

Quote: "No! Get the shiny thing! The *shiny* thing!...NO, NO, NO! Bad monkey! Bad monkey!"

Powers/Tactics: Monkeyshines does not have a weapon of choice; he typically carries a small handgun somewhere on his person (Fats calls it a "peashooter"), that unknown to his comrades, is loaded with blanks (Monkeyshines is afraid he might shoot himself in the foot). His tactics in any combat situation are to give a startled yelp when he sees a PC, retreat to a safe distance, then wave his gun threateningly in the hopes the hero will leave him alone. If the hero rushes him, Monkeyshines flees for the nearest exit, screaming. All in all, getting within striking distance of Monkeyshines is usually sufficient to take him out of the combat.

Monkeyshines serves Clown Alley better in a non-combat role. Not only is he an accomplished pickpocket and fence, his monkey has proven a talented thief and has been trained to enter buildings and unlock them from within to allow Clown Alley to loot the place. When the monkey is not on a mission, Monkeyshines keeps it on a leash tied to his hand in case the monkey gets any ideas about making a break for it. The monkey is typically sent on simple missions, such as fetching, dropping off ransom notes or placing timed explosives in those hard to reach places.

Monkeyshines has never really considered the great extent to which he and the monkey can communicate.

Four Color: During the *Big Night*, Monkeyshines had a series of colorful explosive shells that his monkey was trained to place in special areas. These explosives were extremely powerful, capable of clearing out entire floors of their furnishings, occupants and sending glass shards streaming out onto the street. Monkeyshines was careful to keep a safe distance from the Monkey while it was dropping its charges. Crusader dealt with Monkeyshines by attaching a tear gas grenade to the Monkey's costume and letting it take it back to its master.

Dark Champions, Realistic: If the GM needs to give Clown Alley more punch, they can give Monkeyshines a more powerful handgun (with real bullets) or grenades that he gives to his monkey to place in buildings or in the pockets of attacking heroes.

Appearance: Monkeyshines is a man of average height and weight, dressed like a hobo; his colorful make-up and grease paint, however, cannot hide his obsequious and desperate-to-please demeanor. In conversation, Monkeyshines repeats himself and nods constantly when speaking in the hopes that this will force the listener to agree with him. If cornered, Monkeyshines will whip out his blackjack or his blank-filled .38 pistol and threaten his opponent. Like most of the other members of Clown Alley, Monkeyshines is scruffy looking, badly shaven and his pockets filled with .38 caliber bullets (real ones), old fast food wrappers and monkey hair. He smells *bad* (the Monkey likes to mark its territory on him and leave surprises in his pockets for him to find). Characters with Tracking Scent should be given bonuses if they track Monkeyshines. PCs should be warned about coming too close, however; Monkeyshines has a number of rashes and

scratches frequently.

MONKEYSHINES

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	200 kg; 3d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack 2Hd6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	2		Total: 11 PD/ 6 rPD
3	ED	0		Total: 9 ED/ 6 rED
4	SPD	25		Pha 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
40	STUN	20		

Total Characteristic Cost: 64

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Powers & Skills:

Combat Skills:

Combat Skill Levels: +2 Levels w/ Fisticuffs, Pistols, & Clubs (6)

Killer Clown Equipment:

Smith and Wesson Model 10: 1D6+1 RKA, 6

Charges* (-¾), OAF (-1) (7) [6c]

* Monkeyshines's pistol is usually filled with blanks.

Blackjack: +3D6 HA, (6d6 w/ STR), OAF (-1) (4) [1+]

Armored Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½) (12)

Killer Clown Skills:

Contact: "Pickett," a Fell's Point Fence, 8- (1)

Follower: Monkey (50 points) (10)

Acrobatics, 8- (1)

Acting (Clown Routines), 12- (3)

Animal Handler (Monkey), 11- (3)

Breakfall, 12- (3)

Lockpicking, 12- (3)

Sleight of Hand (Pickpocket), 12- (3)

Streetwise, 12- (3)

Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent),

Monkeyspeak ("Fluent") (2)

PS: Clown, 11- (2)

Weapon Fam: Novelty Items (2)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 62

Total Character Cost: 126

Disadvantages: 75+

DNPC:

The Monkey (Ls Pow), 14- (15)

Distinctive Features:

Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Concealable, Major) (10)

Psychological Limitation:

Abject Coward (Common, Moderate) (10)

Secret Identity: Kelley Emmett (15)

Total Disadvantage Points: 130



THE MONKEY

Background: The monkey was imported many years ago from Africa, purchased by a *Full Tank* gas station owner who hoped that hanging the monkey in a cage outside the station would attract business. After a few months of being driven nearly crazy by the monkey's incessant screeching and banging on the cage, the owner decided to sell it to the zoo to make up for the lost profit. Unfortunately, the monkey took advantage of the shoddy lock on the cage and escaped in transit, running off into the night. The station owner let it go, figuring good riddance to a bad investment.

After days of wandering, the monkey, cold and hungry, eventually ended up hanging around a rather stupid, unimpressive human it met on the streets, who gave it food and tidbits in exchange for listening to his bellyaching. The monkey is looking to move on to a new, more skilled (and well-stocked) owner when the opportunity presents itself.

Personality: This tiny bundle of trouble is the source of Monkeyshine's ills. The monkey's "personality," as far as it goes, is to cause only enough trouble for its master without getting him in serious trouble. Most of the Clown Alley are certain the monkey is the smarter one of the two and never fail to comment on it.

Quote: "Eeeeeeeeeee! EeeEeeEEEEEEEEEE!"

Powers/Tactics: The monkey's value is in reconnaissance and breaking and entering. It is intelligent, and Monkeyshines has trained it to perform "gopher" missions ("go for" this, "go for" that). Clown Alley quickly discovered the monkey was also skilled at placing and setting explosives, and they used this talent extensively during the *Big Night*. If caught by a vigilante, the monkey will screech horribly until silenced. It is really not a match for most heroes, but it can be distracting, annoying and downright inhospitable. For fun, it occasionally excretes in the Clown Alley costumes and escapes the scene before they suit up.

Appearance: The Monkey wears a dirty little clown costume ragged around the edges. Sometimes it will have an explosive or a stolen object clutched in its paws.

THE MONKEY

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
6	STR	-4	OCV: 5
15	DEX	15	DCV: 7*
10	CON	0	ECV: 2
6	BODY	-8	Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	INT	-4	
6	EGO	-8	Costs
9	PRE	-1	
10	COM	0	Char: 1 Base: 50
2	PD	1	+
2	ED	0	Powers: 46 Disad: 50
3	SPD	5	=
4	REC	2	Totals: 4 7 100
26	END	3	
15	STUN	0	* Shrinking Bonus figured in.

Cost	Powers	END
13	Shrinking (10 Points), 0 END (+½), Persistent (+½), Always On (-½), (-2 to others' Sight Perceptions, +3" KB)	
5	1 pip HKA, Reduced Penetration (bite, -¼)	1
7	+3 DCV, only when Dodging (-1)	
-2	-2" Swimming (0" Total)	
-4	-2" Running (4" Total)	1/5"

Skills
7 Acrobatics, 15-
7 Breakfall, 15-
7 Climbing, 15-
3 Sleight of Hand (Pickpocket), 12-
2 KS: Monkey Routines, 11-
1 Language: Monkeyspeak ("Fluent")

100+ Disadvantages
20 Physical Limitation: Monkey (All the Time, Greatly)
20 Distinctive Features: Monkey (Not Concealable, Major)
10 Watched: Monkeyshines (Mo Pow), 14-

FATS

Fats?

Oh, you must be talking about the Fats who runs Fats. It's this bar and grill just off the Fell's Point Strip, on Easy Street.

Fats, our boy, he runs the place. Fats is Fats, if you catch what I'm saying. The place is his life...he couldn't, wouldn't dream of giving it up.

Anyway, Fats had the usual regulars. Us, mostly. On occasion, though, we'd get a few strangers, mainly because the drinks tend to be cheaper at Fats: you can get huge pitchers at the best price in the neighborhood. So when they opened up that trendy nightclub "the Tide" across the way, for example, we got a lot of new faces. Any of the regulars could tell Fats didn't much like them rich kids coming into his place, but he never said anything, only served 'em drinks, real silent, and just watched while more and more of 'em drifted in during the night. They'd drink, laugh among themselves, no harm done, I guess, but...every time they laughed, Fats's ears turned crimson, like they were laughin' at him.

Now, you have to understand, Fats, he was...he is...a hard worker. He put all of his life into the bar...but the truth of the matter is, times weren't treating Fats all that well. The bar wasn't even fully his anymore, and it was getting less so all the time. Now the fact he's run it for so many years means he already got some stake in it, but here's a thing most people don't know...Fats's father left him that bar. And his father had worked hard to keep it running so his son could have it when he died. Now you can imagine how

hard it musta been for Fats to have to sell his family history, piece by piece, and maybe you get the idea of what drives a man like that. And to have them young folks come in...the rich ones from Fell's Point North, out on the town to dance and somesuch, well, every smile, every laugh, coming out from behind their flashy clothes and cars, musta been like an iron spike being driven into him.

How Fats joined up with us ain't so surprising. Not too many people know this, see: we were at the bar almost all the time. Could be Fats may have said something to us about his problem. We might've offered him a solution. A way to earn some extra money. Something like, "Choose a place to hit, Fats, and we'll help you out."

I ain't saying he did, but maybe Fats said yes.

Maybe.

FATS

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
20	STR	10	OCV: 4		
11	DEX	3	DCV: 4		
15	CON	10	ECV: 3		
15	BODY	10	Phases: 4, 8, 12		
10	INT	0			
10	EGO	0	Costs		
15	PRE	5			
10	COM	0	Char:	59	Base: 75
6	PD	2		+	+
6	ED	3	Powers:	66	Disad: 70
3	SPD	9		=	=
7	REC	0	Totals:	125	145
30	END	0			
40	STUN	7			

Cost	Powers	END
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17 Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting

Maneuver **OCV** **DCV** **Damage**

Head Butt

(Nerve Strike) -1 +1 2D6 NND (7)

Kidney Punch

(Killing Strike) -1 +1 1D6+1 HKA

Punch

(Martial Strike) 0 +2 6D6

Uppercut

(Off. Strike) -2 0 8D6

(7) Facial rPD protects.

1 Use Art with Clubs (Bowling Pin)

18 Sawed off 12 Gauge Shotgun: 2 ½D6

RKA, +1 STUN Multiplier (+½), 5 Charges (-¾), Reduced by Range (-¼), Reduced Penetration (-¼), OAF (-1) [60/18]

[5c]

6 .38 Derringer: 1D6-1 RKA, +1 STUN Multiplier (+½), 2 Charges (-1 ½), OAF (-1) [22/6]

[2c]

8 Oversized Bowling Pin/Shotgun Butt: +4D6 HA, OIF (-½) [12/6]

1

12 Armored Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)

Skills

- 3 Lightsleep
- 1 Breakfall, 8-
- 1 Gambling, 8-
- 3 Streetwise, 12-
- 1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- 1 PS: Clown, 8-
- 1 TF: Large Ground Vehicles
- 4 WF: Small Arms, Novelty Items
- 16 +2 Overall Combat Levels

100+ Disadvantages

- 15 Psychological Limitation: Paranoid (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Reckless (Common, Moderate)
- 20 Distinctive Features: Huge fat man (Not Concealable, Major)
- 10 2D6 Unluck
- 15 Secret ID: Tommy "Fats" Berth

Background: Fats

Fats could feel the make-up hardening on his face. To be safe, he had smeared it on in extra-thick white and red clumps, and now, checking himself quickly in the visor mirror, he felt sufficiently unrecognizable. He snapped the visor up and looked out the passenger window at the building across the street.

"I want to hit that place, there," Fats said, nodding at *The Tide*. A line trailed from the door of the nightclub to the sidewalk outside, where a bouncer was checking IDs. "How about it? That okay?"

Monkeyshines sniffed, wiping his nose with his sleeve and squinted at the line of people. "That nightclub there? Why?"

"Cut into my business, back when I was the only one who was running the bar. Punks from there were always comin' in, getting in my face and schtick. They were poor tipplers, too...hell, I dunno. Is there a *problem* with hitting that place? Do I got to argue it with you?"

"No. No, I guess not."

"Awright, then." Fats voice became muffled as he the pinched the rubber clown nose onto his face. "Let's go."

"Now?"

Fats's hand paused on the door handle, and he turned back to Monkeyshines, who cringed as Fats leaned toward him. "Yeah, *now*," Fats echoed. "You said 'choose the place, Fats, it's your call, Fats,' now you go chicken on me. Get it together, awright?" Fats clapped Monkeyshines on the shoulder, giving it a gentle squeeze to drive his point home. "I don't need you losin' it on me when we get in there. You in or not?"

"I'm in, Fats."

"Good to hear it, good to hear it," Fats slipped the shells into his shotgun as he spoke. "Just follow my lead when we get in there, and everything'll be fine." Lifting himself from the car seat, Fats's boots clomped on the pavement outside as he stood and began walking, hands in pockets, toward the door of *The Tide*.

He could feel the blood pounding in his veins.



The red lines ran across the floors, walls and ceilings of the club; Fats, as he entered, felt as if he had stepped in a kiln, and his pores prickled beneath his clown make-up. Shadows swayed around him, pantomiming the tempo emanating from the club's speakers. Frustration began to brew in Fats...there were too many people here, the atmosphere too thick...his hand felt for the bowling pin in his jacket, and he steadied himself.

The first thing to do was to get their attention...even in costume, the darkened atmosphere of the club would make it difficult for the patrons to see him if he was more than five feet away. He needed to be sure everyone was focused on him. Fats, squinting to make out the DJ across the room, began to move slowly across the floor, the bodies parting for him, unwilling and unable to halt the advance of his huge frame. One, a slip of a girl, dressed like a whore, playfully made a grab for his wig, but he grabbed her and gave her a powerful shove backwards into a knot of dancers. When he had made his way across the floor, he stood, almost directly in front of the DJ, waiting. The DJ glanced at him, smiled; his mouth moved, but his question was drowned by the music. Fats nodded, and opening his trenchcoat, slid the shotgun from it strap and pointed it at the console in front of him. Without pausing in its arc from coat to his hand, he pulled the trigger, and the console exploded. In the shotgun's wake, the music whined to static, then to silence. Fats turned slowly, shotgun outraised, to the crowd on the dance floor, who had stopped and were looking to see what had happened.

"Put your valuables on the floor, right now." Fats barely raised his voice, but it carried in the sudden silence of the club. Some people in the back cried out for the music to be turned back on. Fats felt some of his frustration he had felt entering the club fade; things seemed more controlled, calmer.

The club patrons did not move. He felt his anger resurface. He repeated his request, and when they looked uncertain, he pointed his shotgun at the closest person next to him, a young man, and demanded he place his wallet on the floor and step away.

When he didn't move, Fats felt the anger pour over him. His gun dipped slightly, and he let the bowling pin slide from his trenchcoat and into his free hand.

"Your money," he repeated. "Now."

The boy, frightened, did not move. His expensive clothes were draped on his pale body, and in the shadows of the dance floor, the boy looked like a mannequin at a department store. Fats felt the blood pounding in his veins, burning, as the boy stared at him and clutched the bowling pin tighter, his fingers whitening as his grip constricted on the pin. Turning it heavy end up, he swung, knocking the boy to the floor. He could have stopped there...but without thinking, he struck again, and again, and with every blow, he heard laughter, the clinking of glasses, the sound of wealth, and the red lines on the floors of *The Tide* blurred, bled outwards, running past Fats's eyes.

The red lines blurred past the window.

"Fats, you kill that guy?"

Monkeyshines's voice was frantic. The tail lights of cars moved slowly past the window as he sat in the driver seat, his eyes flickering on and off the road every other second, trying to lock eyes with Fats, to get some sort of confirmation.

Fats did not respond. The tail lights of the other cars

they passed blurred to red lines, running past his eyes, the car he was in never going fast enough to make the burning red lines go away completely. The clown make-up felt heavy and thick on his face. Pieces of it had flaked off and were lying in his lap.

"Fats?"

Fats's bowling pin rolled on the floor of the car near his feet, one side of it stained dark red. As the car turned, accelerated or slowed, the pin rolled on the floor at his feet, as if trying to attract his attention. Fats ignored it, his breathing low and wheezing. His muscles felt overextended, and he was certain if he moved his left hand from the armrest, even the slightest bit, it would open the door, and he would leap out onto the road that was rushing beneath them.

"Fats, *did you kill that guy?*" Monkeyshines's voice rose again, almost hysterical. He turned back to the road in front of him. "Oh, God. You did. You did! You killed that guy! Awww, hell, Fats! Why did you have to go so rough on him?! He wan't doing anything, just some stupid—!" Monkeyshines sputtered, suddenly at a loss for words. "You didn't *have* to hit him, you know! Oh, man, what are we gonna do?! What am I gonna do?! Me, Fats! What the hell am I gonna do, now?! Hunh?!" Monkeyshines pounded his fist against the steering wheel. "I'm an *accessory to murder!* You know what that means? Hunh? I'll tell you what it means, Fats, it means I'm *screwed* — and you, man, they're gonna give you the friggin' *chair* at the least —"

Fats's hand, moving in slow motion, grabbed Monkeyshines.

"Drive."

He released the smaller man, who nodded in frantic silence. Fats turned back to the road.

The red lines blurred past the window.

Personality: The murder Fats committed has affected him more than his allies know. While he is haunted with the ugliness of the incident, it has also had a curious liberating effect on him. Replaying the death over and over in his mind, he has concluded he can't do anything worse than what he did to that young man at the nightclub. As he is facing a life sentence (or a death sentence) if arrested, he cares little or nothing about committing other crimes, crimes other members of Clown Alley would hesitate doing.

The murder, however, has produced another change in Fats, one he has yet to realize. It has developed into an obsession. He is secretly convinced he is the Most Wanted criminal in Fell's Point, if not the state, and the police are devoting all their manpower into tracking him down. He occasionally makes comments to this effect, but his remarks are largely ignored by the other members of Clown Alley (although they have noticed that Fats sleeps off by himself more often and is always careful to lock his door). As his fears of the police manhunt mount, Fats has developed an unhealthy suspicion that Clown Alley might sell him to the cops to cut a deal for themselves. For this reason, Fats is suspicious when any member of Clown Alley steps out alone or makes a big, blustery speech about how they are going to quit and find a new line of work...Fats is usually quick to interrogate his friends on what they do when they go out by themselves, and whenever someone begins to talk about quitting, Fats grumbles and silences the offender with a few short words. ("No one's quitting. No one's leaving. We're all stickin' together, *ain't* we?") Fats's suspicions of their loyalty have made him unwilling to hang around his companions unarmed, and when sleeping, he makes sure he is never far from a firearm: several pistols and shotguns are secreted beneath his pillow, under the bed, and in the dresser drawers of his room.

He has a tendency to brood when left alone, fingering his shotgun and cracking the barrel to make sure it is loaded. When the rest of Clown Alley has gone to sleep, the *dik-clak* of the barrel opening and closing can be heard in the dark from Fats's room.

Quote: [Wipes his bloodied jaw with forearm, looks somberly at attacker.] "Awright. Lucky punch, masked man. Not again."

Powers/Tactics: Fats's favorite weapon is a huge bowling pin with a taped handle. A derringer is tucked into the left cuff of his massive coat, and a 12 gauge sawed-off shotgun is strapped to a holster at his side. Despite his preference for bludgeoning others, Fats's shotgun is usually the first weapon he reaches for when entering an unknown situation (he pulls out the bowling pin as soon as an opportunity presents itself; if the bowling pin is knocked from his hand, he beats opponents with the barrel of the shotgun). Fats is typically considered to be the Clown Alley tough guy; his great strength and endurance, however, hides his cunning. He has restrained himself in fights in the past, waiting for opponents to leave themselves open to a roundhouse or head butt.

Many times since his indoctrination, Fats has assumed the position of leader (sometimes in tandem with Chuckles), primarily because his overbearing personality and the fear he instills in the other clowns prevents anyone from questioning his orders. As his paranoia has progressed, he has become more suspicious and violent, and Clown Alley is careful not to antagonize him. The slightest hint that Fats is angry is enough to silence any argument or altercation.

Four Color: In a four color campaign, Fats STR should be increased to 25 (or more), his CON to 20 and his PD and ED increased to 8 (or more).

Dark Champions, Realistic: Fats can be kept the way he is, although GMs may want to take away the bowling pin and replace it with a heavy firearm.

Appearance: Fats's hefty frame lacks definition due to his preference for baggy clothes and the layers of fat that hang from his face and his body. Nevertheless, his immense height (6'6") and mass makes the question of body definition largely irrelevant...it is enough to know he is there. Heavy work boots, scuffed and with torn laces, secure his feet, and when his voluminous coat blows open, a dirty white T-shirt or pair of long johns stained with grease is revealed. Stubble coats his chin, and his large red nose is not due to make-up. Fats takes little care in disguising his face for robberies...clumsy and unwilling to learn the subtleties of applying grease-paint, he smears white face powder on his face in uneven clumps, only to have it run in rivulets down his face when it mixes with sweat and flaking off when it dries later. The cracks in the caked layers of his face are especially visible on the brows, forehead and on the area around the mouth. Shotgun shells fill the pockets of his coats, along with tubes and tins of make-up and grease paint.

In combat, Fats bellows from the pit of his stomach as he lumbers at an opponent, his bowling pin upraised. His pin is much larger and exaggerated than a conventional pin; it has a star on the tip and is scarred around the edges where it has encountered especially hard skulls. When not physically engaged, Fats rests on the nearest horizontal surface, and his breathing slows to an asthmatic wheezing, interrupted occasionally with low, dangerous grumbling when Fats perceives "trouble" among the members of Clown Alley.

CHECKERS

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
10	STR	0	OCV: 5		
15	DEX	15	DCV: 5		
15	CON	10	ECV: 3		
12	BODY	4	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12		
10	INT	0			
10	EGO	0	Costs		
15	PRE	5			
10	COM	0	Char:	59	Base: 75
5	PD	3		+	+
5	ED	2	Powers:	108	Disad: 92
4	SPD	15		=	=
6	REC	0	Totals:	167	167
32	END	1			
29	STUN	4			

Cost	Powers	END		
13	Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
	Dodge			
	(M. Dodge)	-	+5	All Attacks, Abort
	Punch			
	(M. Strike)	+1	+2	4D6
	Uppercut			
	“Offensive” Str	-2	+1	6D6
18	12 Gauge, 18” Open Choke Shotgun: 2 ½D6 RKA, +1 STUN Multiplier (+½), 5 Charges (-¾), Reduced by Range (-¼), Reduced Penetration (-¼), OAF (-1)* [60/18] [5c]			
10	Beretta Model 92 in Ankle Holster: 1D6+1 RKA, 15 Charges (+0), OAF (-1) [20/10] [15c]			
12	Baggy Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½) * Checkers usually keeps the shotgun in his cab.			

Skills	
23	Vehicle (Checkers's Cab)
3	Acting (Clown Routines), 12-
3	Breakfall, 12-
3	Combat Driving, 12-
1	Streetwise, 8-
2	AK: The Peninsula, 11-
3	CK: Fell's Point, 12-
1	Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
3	PS: Cabbie, 12-
1	PS: Clown, 8-
2	WF: Novelty Items
6	+2 Combat Levels with Dirty Infighting
4	+1 Combat Level with Shotgun and Pistol

100+	Disadvantages
10	Psychological Limitation: Garrulous (Common, Moderate)
10	Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Concealable, Major)
10	2D6 Unluck
10	Public ID: Bernie Chase
52	Villain Bonus





Background: That's a damn fine cigar. Damn fine. Y'know, it's always the cigar smoke that takes me back to the ol' days. I wasn't always doin' this clown gig, see. I'm not saying I don't like it, don't get me wrong, but I used to be a cabbie...yeah, that's

right, a cabbie. And every night, just as my shift was drawing to a close, I'd have myself a good smoke. I'd pull a cigar outta the ol' glove compartment, light one up and just relax.

Anyway, the cigar smoke, it takes me back to the night I met the fellas. It was a rainy night; I had my change counter chocked up along the dashboard and the light on the Checkers taxi glowing, but I didn't think anyone would come along...I'd parked in this dead section of town, and nothing had been coming in on the radio about pick-ups, so I said, what the hell? I been busting my ass all week...time for a smoke. I pulled open the glove compartment, popped out a big ol' cigar and lit up. Now you see, it was only a few minutes before my shift was due to be over, and I'm puffin' away, when there's this knock on my window that nearly makes me jump outta my pants.

Then all these clowns come outta nowhere and start piling into the cab, screaming at me to drive.

It never really hit me they was all armed 'til we were peeling out from the curb, but when I heard the police sirens, I knew we had a problem, see? I was about to ask them what was going on, when this gun barrel gets jabbed into the side of my head, and this foul-smelling old rat turd with a gut that would set a Volkswagen van to shame told me that if I took my foot off the accelerator, he was gonna squeeze the trigger and splatter my brains all over the windshield.

After that, it all happened kinda fast. There were these headlights and taillights and traffic lights and God knows what kinda lights rushing by me as I was weaving in and out of traffic — I still had my cigar between my teeth, right, and puffing it something awful while I was sliding through traffic. I don't mean to brag, but I musta covered nearly the entire Fifteenth avenue in nighttime rush by the skin of my teeth and without skipping a beat. So's all these clowns were yelling at each other in the back, and one of them had rolled down the window and was blasting away at the cops that were on our tail, but he couldn't hit the broad side of a barn, so it wasn't doing much except making noise.

Um, yeah. *He* was there, too. Sitting on the passenger side. Didn't look at him, but I had this feeling, y'know, that raised the hairs on my neck. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the carpetbag in his lap. He was looking straight ahead, and whistling, one of his legs crossed over the other. He was wearing his seat belt, too, now that I think about it.

Anyway, I was doing ninety or more, swerving past this old broad in a pickup, when there were more gunshots from the back, this BANG!, then all this laughter and hooting. I glanced in the rear view mirror, enough to see the red and blue flashing lights of one of the cop cars swerve smack dab into the left lane, its lights tripping circles over each other, though it was kinda hard to make it all out in the rain cause the guys were jumping around in the backseat. There were still cops following us, though...thing is, I didn't care. I just wanted to make it through the night in one piece. I had heard

of things like this happening to other cabbies, but not me, y'know?

But anyway, outta nowhere, the guy next to me says something. So I turns to him and asks him what he said, right? "Turn here," he said, a little louder, pointing off ta my left. I banked that cab into the hardest turn I ever made, and the next thing I knew we were hydroplaning and spinning fit to tear up the pavement. Anyway, BAM! We jumped the median and started rumbling through this narrow alley. I didn't even want to know what that median jump had done to the shocks or what it had stripped off the bottom of the car...in the lane behind us, the cars we'd just cut across were honking their horns and squealing their breaks, then I heard another CRASH as the second police car plowed into the car back-up on Fifteenth avenue.

Anyways, now we're shooting going through this alley, musta be going about fifty (maybe sixty, I dunno) or more, and the clowns keep firing, cause this other cop car had pulled into the alley after us. Anyway, I'm praying to sweet Mary Mother of Jesus, as these trashcans, boxes and all kinds of junk are sailing over the hood of the cab. There's this *bump*, see and before I know it, one of the headlights goes out, and not too long afterwards, the biggest damn trashcan I've ever seen bounces across the hood and CRASH! pounds into the windshield. So not only is it raining, dark and the headlight gone, but the windshield's cracked. Wipers were still working, though. Thank God for those surefire *Checkers* windshield wipers, never let you down.

But that wasn't all. Oh, no. Next things I know, the guy next to me, keeping his voice just above the gunfire says, "A little more to the left, please." I was about to ask him what'd he said, when there's this tearing of metal and sparks shot up along the right side of the cab where it's grinding against the side of a building, and one of the clowns in the back starts screaming to high heaven.

Okay, cab near shambles, my nerves shot, a bunch of loonies shouting and carrying on — and I can't take my eyes off what little I can see in front of me, cause if I do, even if I stopped and thought about what I was doing, for even a second, BAM! That woulda been it, end of story. As it so happens, the guy next to me has opened his carpetbag, see, and he's fishing around in it, coming up with these little pellets. He says something to one of the clowns in the back, and passes the pellets back to them. There's some cursing, and then one of them hurls them out the window at the cop car, and there's this POP! I can't see the cop's headlights anymore, and soon after, there's this CRASH. The guys in the back are laughing and clapping each other. "Got th' paint pellets right on der windshield, boss," one of them says and then there's more laughing. I start to relax a little, but I'm still trembling, and I ain't afraid to say it. Scariest fifteen minutes of my career, and I'll bet it's shaved off a few years from the end of my life to boot. Anyway, I make the first mistake. I goes like this, "So can I let you fellas out here? You can forget the fare," and start slowing down, figuring they're more than happy to get out of this in one piece.

The cab gets really quiet, then all these guns start *clicking* and *clacking* around me. I freeze.

The guy, the King, next to me pulls down my sun visor and takes a good look at my picture. "Well, we won't pay your last comment any mind, Mister Chase. However, we're in most desperate need of a driver, and you will do in a pinch. Please keep driving until I tell you to stop, then we will discuss your financial situation, and how we can remedy it."

So's I kept driving. Ain't never regretted it.

Personality: Checkers talks too much, smokes too much and once he's started a story, he can never seem to let go of it, all throughout disrupting the story by talking to others or making loud exclamations and sound effects while telling his tale. To make matters worse, whenever he's speaking, he has a tendency to grab the person he is talking to and force them to make eye contact, laughing loudly at the conclusion of the joke and not letting go until the victim has surrendered an obligatory smile or laugh in response.

Checkers is uncomfortable about hurting people but suppresses his conscience because he needs the money; he's concerned about doing wrong only when there is a (good) chance he might be caught; otherwise, he is quick to resort to violence when in tense situations. Checkers has no criminal record.

Quote: "So then *I* says, 'what are you gonna *do* about it, Mr. Vigilante...arrest me?' And then *he* goes (you guys are gonna love this), *he* goes..."

Powers/Tactics: Checkers is one of the rank and file members of Clown Alley and can always be counted on to leave himself wide open for an uppercut or a bullet from a fast-dropping vigilante. Outside of combat, Checkers is a skilled driver and mechanic and takes care of all the maintenance of Clown's Alley's cars and trucks. On the *Big Night*, the Idiot King "spruced up" Checker's cab and gave it a variety of non-lethal armaments, such as smoke screens, paint guns and caltrops that dropped from the trunk. The *Checkers* cab was impounded by the Fell's Point Police Department just before Clown Alley was defeated on the *Big Night* and is sitting in the police storehouse, waiting for its owner to come rescue it. Its statistics are listed below.

Four Color: In a Four Color campaign, Checkers can steal his car back from the pound, upgrade its silly arsenal and use it to commit crimes in the campaign city, doing drive-bys of tobacco stores, greasy burger joints and so on.

Dark Champions, Realistic: Checkers can be kept the way he is; GMs may want to remove the more cinematic weapons from his cab arsenal.

Appearance: Checkers's gut peeks out from under his dirty white T-shirt, elbows it way past his black suspenders (stretched to bursting) and hangs over the edge of the red, black and white patches of his costume. His checkered pants are complemented by an oversized plaid coat, a scruffy brown hat (its brim folded back in front) and a foul-smelling cigar trapped between his nicotine-stained teeth. He has an annoying tendency to talk while the cigar is buried in his jowls, and his clothing reeks of cigar smoke, he rarely brushes his teeth, and he has a tendency to scratch himself when speaking. On missions, Checkers does not wear oversized shoes (they hinder his driving) but his massive forearms and hands make up the difference.

CHECKER'S CAB

Val	Char	Cost
2x1	Size	15
-2	DCV	0
800 kg (-3)	Mass (KB)	0
30	STR	5
8	DEF	18
15	BODY	2
20	DEX	30
4	SPD	10
30"x4	Move	53
460"	MAX	0

Cost	Equipment	END
5	High Range Radio Hearing, OIF (-1)	
32	Exploding Bumpers: 10D6 Physical Energy Blast, Double KB (+1), Damage Shield (+½), No Range (-½), 2 Charges (One in back, one in front, -1 H), OIF (-1) [112/32]	[2c]
30	Paint Guns (mounted on sides, front and back): 4D6 Flash vs. Sight Group, Area Effect: 1 Hex (+H), 7 Charges (-½), OIF (-1) [75/30]	[7c]
21	Oil Slicks: 4D6 DEX Drain, Area Effect: One Hex (+½), Set Trigger (+G), Only Affects Characters or Vehicles Moving on the Ground (-¼), 4 Charges (-1), OIF (-1) [70/21]	[4c]
22	Trunk-launched Caltrops: 2D6 RKA, Area Effect: One Hex (+½), Continuous (+1), Uncontrolled (+H), Only Affects Characters or Vehicles Moving on the Ground (-¼), No KB (-¼), Activation Roll 14- (-½), 4 Charges (-1), OIF (-1) [90/22]	[4c]
12	Rainbow-colored Smoke screen Generator: 2" Radius Darkness to Sight Group, No Range (-½), Limited Arc of Fire (Straight Back, -¾), 7 Charges (-½), OIF (-1) [40/12]	[7c]

Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Clown Car (Concealable, Recognizable)
- 15 Mystery Disadvantage (Variable; GM's Discretion)

Total: 230/46/23

Description: The Clown Alley car appears to be nothing more than a rundown checkered cab, dents and bruises along its surface and rust gathering at the edges of the doors and bumpers. Graffiti (smiley faces and clown slogans) decorates its doors and hood, the shattered back window is covered with a badly taped piece of plastic and the light at the top of the cab is permanently lit. The cab churns to life only reluctantly when the key is turned, and once the engine has been coaxed to life, the car becomes unwilling to accelerate, the tailpipe coughing smoke while it stammers along, the whole frame shaking as if in pain.

When Bernie (Checkers) is behind the wheel, however, the car is suddenly transformed into a high performance machine and reveals a host of hidden surprises...first of all, the car becomes much more maneuverable than one would expect from its rusting exterior; in addition, it may have many passengers with it during a getaway, many more than characters would expect to fit within the tiny cab (and more distressingly, most or all of the passengers have room to fire at characters from the windows). The reason for the extra room in the cab is easily explained when PCs examine the inside; its interior seats and trunk partition have been removed so every inch of space can be used for heavy weapons or a few extra clowns. Under optimum conditions, the car can hold eight clowns, some of them hanging out the windows; in combat, one clown can fire from the passenger window, two from the back passenger windows, two more from the back window (which will be kicked out if necessary or shattered by gunfire), one from the roof window and one clown can even prop open the trunk and act as a tail gunner (although he will quickly close the trunk if Checkers is about to detonate the bumper).



Beneath the cab's ignition switch is a switch board that activates the cab's weapon systems, including the smoke screen generator, the paint-guns and oil slicks...one of the switches, when flicked on, spills dozens of happy-faced caltrops across the road behind the car (the Triggers for the oil slicks and caltrops are set off when a car or speedster runs over the area). The car's bumpers are also wired to detonate if a button on the dashboard is pressed (it is right next to the cigarette lighter, which has caused some embarrassing situations in the past). Checkers has staged frontal assaults on heavily-guarded targets by driving the car right at a wall or window and detonating the front bumper with a BOOM, making a hole big enough for Clown Alley to rush through, guns blazing. At other times, Checkers has waited for a pursuing hero to try to ram him from behind, then detonated the back bumper, hopefully taking care of the pursuer long enough for them to make their getaway. The exploding bumpers do not damage the car (they are shaped charges designed to explode away from the vehicle), but the explosion makes a lot of noise and can irritate passengers.

GMs should use the statistics for a normal car when Clown Alley does not have access to the *Checkers* cab.

PUNCHLINE

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
20	STR	10	OCV: 5		
15	DEX	15	DCV: 5		
15	CON	10	ECV: 3		
12	BODY	4	Phases: 4, 8, 12		
10	INT	0			
10	EGO	0	Costs		
15	PRE	5			
10	COM	0	Char:	61	Base: 75
5	PD	1		+	+
5	ED	2	Powers:	76	Disad: 65
3	SPD	5		=	=
7	REC	0	Totals:	137	140
36	END	3			
36	STUN	6			

Cost	Powers	END
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- 17 Martial Arts: Boxing
- | Maneuver | OCV | DCV | Damage |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-------------|
| "Bolo" Punch
(Nerve Strike) | -1 | +1 | 2D6 NND (7) |
| Boxing Cross
(Martial Strike) | 0 | +2 | 6D6 |
| Jab
(Def. Strike) | +1 | +3 | 4D6 |
| Kidney Punch
(Killing Strike) | -1 | +1 | 1D6+1 HKA |
- (7) rPD in vitals protects.
- 1 Use Art with Boxing Gloves and Shot Gloves
- 9 Spring-Loaded Boxing Glove Strapped to Chest or Concealed in Sleeve: +4D6 HA, 1 Recoverable Charge (The Boxing Glove has to be reset, which takes at least a Phase...if Punchline is lucky, -1 G), OIF (-½) [12/4] **plus** 3" Stretching, 1 Recoverable Charge (-1 G), No Fine Manipulation (-½), OIF (-½) [15/5] [1rc]
- 7 .357 Smith and Wesson Model 27 Revolver: 1 ½D6 RKA, 6 Charges (-¾), OAF (-1) [20/7] [6c]

- 3 Shot Gloves: +2D6 HA, No KB (-¼), OAF (-1) 1
- 12 Armored Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED
Armor, OIF (-½)

Skills

- 1 Acrobatics, 8-
3 Acting (Clown Routines), 12-
3 Streetwise, 12-
2 KS: Boxing, 11-
1 KS: Comedy Sketches, 8-
1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
2 PS: Clown, 11-
2 WF: Novelty Items
6 +2 Combat Levels with Boxing
6 +2 Combat Levels with Pistols, SMGs and Clubs

100+ Disadvantages

- 10 Psychological Limitation: Dismal Sense of Humor (Common, Moderate)
10 Psychological Limitation: Short-Tempered (Common, Moderate)
10 Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Concealable, Major)
10 2D6 Unluck
10 Public ID: Bobby Sochs
15 Villain Bonus



Background: Me? Well, if you ain't guessed, I didn't always used to be a clown. I used to be a boxer, see, though you wouldn't catch me arguing with you if you said I was washed up in that business far fore I ever met my buddies here. Anyway, after I was out of boxing and resting up, letting my

nose heal (this punk had gotten in a lucky shot, see) I start doing a few odd jobs here and there, you know, breaking legs for thirty bucks a pop, you know, stuff like that. Nothing serious. Anyway, these odd jobs are just to make ends meet, cause what I really wanted to be was a comic, see, one of those stand up guys like Seinfeld, right? Plus, I don't want to break legs for the rest of my life (what kind of future is that, eh?), and I had to face it; when you wash up in the boxing circuit, you're pretty much screwed, so's I hung up the gloves. So I talk to a few people, talk to my agent, you know, and he says, "Bobby, I'll see what I can do," so he signs me up for this comedy club downtown called *Shoops*, right, where all the comics go (or so he says) to get started, cause sometimes the critics hang out there looking for talent, which I figure I got in spades, right?

So's, I don't know why I let myself get talked into this, but my agent, he tells me I'll be funnier if I look funny, too, if I like put on this clown get up with all these noisemakers. And I says, "well, I don't know," and he goes "look, Bobby, you trust me?" and I goes "Yeah I do," so I put on this clown stuff, and you know, I don't look half bad...I look funny, and that's what a stand-up comic gotta look like, right? Funny. Anyway, so the big night comes around, an' I walk out on the stage for th' first time, and this light's shining on me, and me being such a big guy, you must figure, I never get nervous, but that's a load o' crap, cause I was nervous as hell,

and it musta showed, even through all that clown get-up. Okay, but anyway, that wasn't the problem, cause when I got up there on stage, right away, this old guy starts panning me, see, with his skanky young broad fawning all over him, and I'm trying to tell my jokes, and he's yelling and carrying on and trying to impress his woman, and let me tell you, I hear it for a few minutes, when I just turn around and tell him to "shut up," right, and he gets really quiet, and his girl's giggling, and he says something smartass like "that's the funniest damn thing I heard all night," and so I just can't help it, but I give Gran'pa a sock in his jaw and knock him flat out of his seat onto the floor. Right after I knock 'im on his ass, I shouts to the audience, "BA-BOOM!" and honk my noisemakers while I'm laughing, cause you know, seeing him on the floor there was funny, you know? Anyway, th' bouncer and th' manager start running over, and the look on the chick's face was too much, her jaw had dropped in her lap and I was just laughing when the bouncer grabs me, and I punch him, too, with a "BA-BOOM!" and squeak my big clown nose a few times, cause I ain't done with my act yet, see? So's everybody laughin', right, but the manager's got this bloody nose and he's threaten' to call the cops, so I take my bows and they push me outta there. "Okay, okay," I says. They start telling me they don't want me coming back, and I says, "okay, okay."

Then wouldn't you know it. Take a look at this — I tore it out of the *Fell's Point Times* the very next day from the *Weekend* section, right? Check it out.

...and for those unfortunates who attended last night's Comedy Fest at *Shoops* on West Fifteenth, you may have the misfortune to have caught Bobby Sochs' "act." For those not familiar with Mr. Sochs, he's an ex-boxer from Hudson City who washed out on the boxing circuit last year when he got his nose broken in a contender. Here's another news flash: he's a wash-out in the comedy circuit, too, and has decided to take his boxing career to the stage, beating up patrons and club managers who fail to find him humorous. Not only is the guy not funny, he's not even articulate. Any dummy can walk up on stage and tell a few jokes, maybe get a laugh, but even that small amount of skill is beyond Mr. Sochs. If you see his name on the placard of any comedy club, just keep walking.

First off, I can take a joke, right? And after all, this guy doesn't really know what he's saying, especially dragging my boxing history into it an' all, so I figured I go downtown and learn him some manners. So I pack something special in a brown box, get all dressed up in the clown gear I was wearing last night cause I want to make a good presentation, see, and then I take a cab downtown to th' news building, head up on the elevator and talk to this nice lady at the desk, and told her that I had a package for this guy, and she said "I'll take it," and I says "no, I'll deliver it personally cause it's my job," and she goes "you ain't no package guy I ever seen" and I says "look I'm just a clown an' I'm delivering for a birthday party" and she goes "it ain't the guys birthday" or something, I dunno, so I punch her one, knockin' her out cold, and squeak my nose a few times. Then I walk into the office, right, and there's these guys clustered around the coffee machine and I says "hello, boys" and they just look at me and I says, "which one of you is the guy who wrote this?" and they all,

at the same time, point to this guy off to their right, and sure enough it's that old geezer (with a shiner from where I hit him last night) so I says (you're gonna love this), "I come to make up with you," and I give him the package and he looks at me suspiciously but he's one of those turds who can't refuse anything so he opens the package and "BAM!" a boxing glove pops out and knocks him silly, and I'm laughing my head off. He's staggering around, and just for good measure, you know, I popped him again before he could run and these other guys jumping all over me and screaming at the secretary to call the cops and I'm whaling away on this guy and I toss him over a few desks and you know, I'm laughing, cause it's just so stupid...I dunno. I hit him and go "BOOM!" or "BA-BOOM!" just to make my point. Anyway, security shows up, and takes me out, which is okay, cause I don't have no guff with them, they're just doing their job. They take me outside, and I figure, okay, I'm prob'ly going to the Pen for this, when the two guards start smiling at me and say, "how do you do," and I says, "what?" and they says "how would you like to be a full time comic?" and I says "a lot" and I'm figuring these guys are pretty strange cops, when they take me over to this cab waiting in the alley and says "how would you like to be part of a comedy team," and I goes "sure," and they take me to the Man, the *King* you know, right, who says "boy, have I got a deal for you," and I goes, "okay" and I been hangin' out with you guys ever since, I figure.

Personality: Bobby's straightforward. He wants to be a stand-up comic more than anything in the world, but he has a somewhat...novel approach for making his way in his desired profession. While of average intelligence, his slurred speech and slowness makes him seem stupider than he actually is. His obsession with punching people have made the rest of Clown Alley give him wide berth when he starts telling jokes. Despite his violent disposition, Bobby can be counted on to pull his weight in Clown Alley crimes.

Punchline has a sketchy criminal past, usually throwing fights and doing muscle work for the Mob. He is wanted for numerous charges of assault and battery.

Quote: "Waddiya mean, you ain't never heard of a bolo punch? *Bo lo the belt*. Get it? Keee-rist. Aw, never mind; it's more of a sight gag, anyway."

Powers/Tactics: Punchline retains the essentials (plus a few clearly illegal moves) from his Boxing career and still uses them on innocent victims during the course of a robbery. Bobby finds leveling unfortunates with his boxing glove (below) to be hilariously funny, and sometimes takes a moment to hit security guards, cashiers, clerks and bank tellers when on a robbery. His tendency to hit people without provocation has earned him the nickname "Punchline," or "Punch" for short.

During the *Big Night*, the Idiot King upgraded Punchline's "boxing glove gag," allowing it to shoot from his wrist with enough force to punch through brick walls. After it has discharged, however, Punchline has to push it back to reset it and this is where the trouble sets in. Every time Punchline tries to reset the boxing glove, the GM should roll for Unluck. Even one 6 means Punchline fails...if he rolls 2 sixes, he hits himself or one of his comrades with the Glove.

Punchline has noisemakers attached all over his body in a desperate attempt to add weight to his jokes; he has a tiny bicycle horn (Meep Meep), a bulbous red clown nose (Squeak Squeak) and he often shouts "BUDDA-BOOM!" right after he tells a joke (or fires his submachine gun, with a BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BOOM). PCs can finish him off with a WHAM or a TOOM.



Four Color: In a four color campaign, Punchline can be given enhanced STR and BODY; in addition, his Boxing Glove attack may be a rocket-propelled "heat-seeker"...he can fire it off, then it detaches from the spring and tracks a victim, turning corners after the victim as Punchline guides it with a small, brightly colored hand radio. This silly power aside, Punchline can just be given 3" to 5" of Stretching, with the Boxing Glove only.

Dark Champions, Realistic: Realistic campaigns may wish remove the boxing glove entirely.

Appearance: Punchline is squat and powerful looking, much like a gorilla pretending to be a human being. A carpet of hair covers his chest, back and forearms, his neck is huge, and it's difficult to tell where his head ends and his shoulder begins. His stocky frame, powerful forearms and his square jaw are impossible to hide behind make-up, although his crooked nose (it was broken in a fight a few years back) is concealed, as a matter of pride, beneath his bright red rubber clown nose. Punchline likes wearing a red fright wig and a large, bulky overcoat that hides his spring-loaded boxing glove from unsuspecting targets. The glove is a conventional red and black laced boxing glove mounted on a powerful spring jack. Punchline has a few bruises from where he has accidentally hit himself while trying to reload it in the past.

When Punchline laughs or smiles, his mouth splits, revealing rows of broken teeth.

SKINNY BENNY

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
10	STR	0	OCV: 7
20	DEX	30	DCV: 7
15	CON	15	ECV: 3
10	BODY	0	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	INT	0	
10	EGO	0	Costs
15	PRE	5	
10	COM	0	Char: 68 Base: 75
3	PD	1	+ +
3	ED	0	Powers: 99 Disad: 95
4	SPD	10	= =
5	REC	0	Totals: 167 70
30	END	0	
30	STUN	7	

Cost	Powers	END
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15 Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting

Maneuver **OCV** **DCV** **Damage**

Dodge

(M. Dodge) - +5 All Attacks, Abort

Escape

(M. Escape) 0 0 25 STR vs. Grabs

Hold

(Martial Grab) -1 -1 20 STR to hold only

Kick

(M. Strike) +2 0 4D6

8 Knife: 1D6+1 HKA (2D6 HKA with STR), Blade Limitations (-¼), No KB (-¼), OAF (-1)

2 (3)

4 Nunchaku: +3D6 HA, OAF (-1) [9/4]

1

6 Walther PPK: 1D6 RKA, 7 Charges (-½), OAF (-1) [15/6]

[7c]

- 12 Padded Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)
 - 2 Velcro Tear-Away Costume: +10 STR, for escape from grabs only (-1), 1 Charge (-2), OAF (-1)* [1c]
 - 5 Acid Capsule: 2D6 BODY Drain, 1 charge (-2), only vs. Entangles (-1), OAF (-1) [20/5] [1c]
- * The costume is an OAF because it can be torn away in a single phase. This may not be immediately apparent to characters, but anyone who has fought Billy more than once will know this is the case.

Skills

- 3 Double-Jointed
- 3 Acrobatics, 13-
- 3 Acting (Clown Routines), 12-
- 3 Breakfall, 13-
- 3 Climbing, 13-
- 7 Contortionist, 15-
- 3 Stealth, 13-
- 1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- 2 PS: Clown, 11-
- 3 PS: Escape Artist, 12-
- 2 WF: Novelty Items
- 10 +2 Combat Levels with HTH Combat
- 4 +2 Combat Levels with Knives

100+ Disadvantages

- 10 Psychological Limitation: Gullible (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Physical Limitation: Terribly Near-Sighted (Frequently, Slightly)
- 5 Physical Limitation: Underweight (Infrequently, Slightly)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Concealable, Major)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Skinny (Concealable, Recognizable)
- 15 DNPC: Ginny, girlfriend (Normal), 11-
- 10 2D6 Unluck
- 10 Public ID: Benjamin "Benny" Hadley
- 15 Villain Bonus



Background: Benjamin "Benny" Hadley was a contortionist working at the circus as a janitor, clean-up man and as an occasional substitute clown when one was unable to perform. Because Benny's emaciated frame had more of a tendency to disgust viewers than amuse them, he was asked to perform only in

emergencies; his usual station was in the freak show, where he was billed as a political prisoner who escaped from Eastern Europe during the Cold War by crawling through the plumbing in the prison and making his way to freedom. When one of the mainstay clowns was arrested after being caught short-changing a police officer at a local town, Benny was drafted into the clown troupe, where the owner designed a skit that would hide Bennie's body for a majority of the Clown Entrée; Benny would come into the ring, dressed in a large, billowy costume, from which he could pull out large objects that looked as if they could not possibly fit into his clown suit (pigeons, tent poles, balloons and so on; the fact that there was a great deal of room in his costume allowed

him to pull forth tremendously large objects). The culmination of his act was when the other clowns, jealous of his ability, ripped off his costume to reveal only Benny in his candy-apple red boxer shorts, at which point he would run off the stage chased by the other clowns.

Benny, when the circus folded after a rash of fires, was forced to strike out on his own. With little or no credentials, he attempted to work in other circuses, was turned away, and eventually had to resort to petty theft to make a living. While attempting to break into a liquor store, he was interrupted by the sudden arrival of the Clown Alley gang, who rather than beating him up, recognized him ("Hey, it's that guy, you know, Skinny Benny!") and told him they had set up a sweet deal with this criminal mastermind who was giving them free equipment and training to be part of his thug squad. Benny swallowed the offer hook, line and sinker, and was taken back to see the Idiot King. The King, seeing that Benny was easily swayed, promised Benny he would make it big if he stayed with Clown Alley, and from that moment on, Clown Alley has had its very own contortionist.

Personality: Benny for all his claims of being a "man of the world," is a first-class sucker. He believes everything anybody tells him and still believes what the Idiot King said about Clown Alley making it big one day, and holds on to this "promise" (which is the main reason he's sticking around). Characters who can lay it on thick with role-playing can convince Benny of just about anything. ("Benny, I'll show you how to take the safety off my pistol if you free my hands for a moment.") Benny is a stooge and can be used by resourceful PCs to escape deathtraps or difficult situations Clown Alley has placed them in.

Benny has been had by every member of Clown Alley at some point and women have made it a habit to use him whenever he succumbs to their feminine wiles. Benny's current girlfriend, a chubby young woman named Ginny, is using him to milk profits from Clown Alley ("A Benny and his money are soon parted," is one of Ginny's lines) and make down payments on her apartment, her car, as well as providing her with enough petty cash to purchase new dresses and go out dancing with her other, more suave, boyfriend. Ginny might be a means of tracking down Skinny Benny and Clown Alley. Through it all, Benny remains oblivious. ("Ginny? Aw, she's visiting her parents tonight. Her Ma's sick.")

Benny's gullibility would be an asset to the rest of Clown Alley (too many people question orders as it is) if he wouldn't keep trying to tell everybody else how to behave. Part of his "man of the world" image makes him offer wrong or useless advice to other members of Clown Alley, who did not ask him for his two cents in the first place. ("Well, it's not my place to say, fellas, but if I were you, I'd...") In addition, Benny, for all his daring-do during combat and rapid-fire smart mouth, is one lazy bastard. When not going on a hit, he sleeps, snoring loudly.

Quote: "C'mon, tough man! You want a piece of Benny, huh?! Take a shot, c'mon! Not so easy, is it? Yeah, I didn't *think* so. Dance like a butterfly, sting like a bee — Whiff!!! Missed again! Say, if I didn't know better, I'd say that was a feint to — UNFFFF!!!"

Powers/Tactics: Benny is a skilled contortion, wrestler and, in all fairness, difficult to get a grip on. Fighting him is like fighting a rubber band, made even more difficult by the props on his costume. The pieces of his costume are attached loosely with velcro, so if tackled or grabbed, he can leap away from his opponent, leaving them holding his costume (his armor is worn beneath his tear-away costume). When wrestling,

Benny can turn on-lookers' stomachs as his body twists in unpleasant angles around his victim like a coat hanger out of control.

His wrestling skills aside, Benny is obsessed with weapons. Not necessarily using them, but just having them on hand in *case* he needs to use them. Battles with Benny should involve him drawing a new weapon from the folds of his costume every other Phase (if a character is Disarming him every round, this can be comical) and launching himself at a character, trying to use his agility to dodge attacks until he can get a clear shot. Skinny Benny's close quarters weapon of choice is a long, skinny dagger strapped to his ankle. He enjoys playing with it in front of others, balancing it on his nose or fingertip, or twirling it between his fingers like a coin. Benny is also learning how to use nunchaku, in the hopes of becoming like those martial artists on *Steve Long's Kung Fu Theater*.

This focus on melee skills betray one of Billy's handicaps, one even he does not realize: his eyesight is dog awful. His reliance on wrestling and hand to hand combat is actually a cover for the fact he can't see too far; he can't make out street signs half the time, catch the numbers on buildings, and so on. His squinty eyes are a side effect of the fact he is always trying and make out things at a distance. The GM should assign Benny penalties for attempting to shoot a target.

Benny's contortionist ability is enough to allow him to be mailed in a package into a building where Clown Alley wishes to do a hit. He does not really like doing it, but he can use the incident as "proof" that he is pulling his weight in Clown Alley and use it to escape doing other, more unpleasant jobs.

Four Color: Benny can be given an elastic body for an ultra-four color campaign. He can also be quadruple-jointed for really strange campaigns.

Dark Champions, Realistic: Skinny Benny can be kept the way he is; ultra-realistic GMs may want to remove the baggy, tear-away costume.

Appearance: Benny's emaciated body, jutting ribs, and fragile limbs are hidden beneath the baggy folds of his costume (see *The Clubhouse*, make-ups and props). All his clothes are attached loosely to his body and have been rigged to tear away at the slightest pull. Benny has a hatchet face, composed of angles and a large, sharp nose, with squinty eyes complemented with huge eyebrows drawn over them. His hair is a dirty blond, and looks as if he is balding because it rests so close to his forehead (he usually covers it with a wig; he is really afraid of becoming bald because then he can't get any chicks). Benny's pencil-thin limbs draw attention away from his toned muscles and the fine muscular control he can exercise when doing a performance.



SMILEY

"...okay, so sometimes we have to use the john, right? And as usual, the door's locked, cause Rudy's in there. Now before you think he has constipation or something, I just want to give you a little background here — Rudy's the only guy who's been able to hold on to his gadget given to him by the boss, mainly cause the guy he filled in for managed to stay out of the way during the Big Night, so the cops didn't grab a hold of it. It's this bright red hand-buzzer thing, except when it hits you, it doesn't always do an electrical shock, see, sometimes it makes you feel reeeaaaaal good. Understand what I'm saying?

Anyway, back to the bathroom.

So Fats has got to go real bad, and when Fats has got to go bad, you know, he's got to go...you just don't argue with the man unless being able to chew your food is something you don't care about. So Fats is pounding on the door and bellowing, and suddenly from within, real nervous-like, Rudy starts whining.

"I'll be out in a minute!"

But you don't really say that to Fats, 'cause his bladder must be straining like Hoover Dam at this point and he can't wait a minute and he's pounding on the door, when you know, I think I heard somethin', real faint. "Hold on, Fats," I says.

And we both get real quiet and sure enough, we're hearing these little bzzzes and zzzzzts coming from the bathroom.

Fats is about to start pounding on the door, when suddenly we hear this real loud GZZZZT and a THUMP.

"Rudy?" I says. "Rudy?"

SMILEY

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
12	STR	2	OCV: 5		
15	DEX	15	DCV: 5		
15	CON	10	ECV: 3		
11	BODY	2	Phases: 4, 8, 12		
11	INT	1			
10	EGO	0	Costs		
15	PRE	5			
10	COM	0	Char:	46	Base: 75
3	PD	1		+	+
3	ED	0	Powers:	84	Disad: 55
3	SPD	5		=	=
5	REC	0	Totals:	130	130
30	END	0			
30	STUN	5			

Cost	Powers	END
23	Joy-buzzer: 6D6 EB NND (Full Body Insulated rED protects, +1), Damage Field (+½), 6 Charges (-¾), Activation 14- (-½), OAF (-1) [75/23]	[6c]

- 15 Joy-buzzer: 6D6 Mind Control, No Verbal Communication (+¼), NND (Full Body Insulated rED protects, and Power Defense subtracts from the attack, +1), One command only ("Stand Still," -½), 6 Charges (-¾), No Range (-½), Activation 14- (-½), Visible Effects (-¼), OAF (-1) [67/15] [6c]
- 12 Colt M1911A: 1D6+1 RKA, +1 STUN Multiplier (+½), 7 Charges (-½), OAF (-1) [30/12] [7c]
- 12 Armored Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)

Skills

- 3 Acrobatics, 12-
- 3 Acting (Clown Routines), 12-
- 3 Breakfall, 12-
- 3 Climbing, 12-
- 1 Electronics, 8-
- 3 Sleight of Hand, 12-
- 3 Stealth, 12-
- 1 PS: Clown, 8-
- 1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- 2 WF: Novelty Items
- 6 +2 Combat Levels with Pistols
- 4 +2 Combat Levels with Joy Buzzer

100+ Disadvantages

- 10 Psychological Limitation: Arrogant and Overconfident with a trace of Smugness (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Physical Limitation: Addicted to Joy Buzzer (Frequently, Slightly)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Concealable, Major)
- 10 2D6 Unluck
- 15 Secret ID: Rudolph "Rudy" Glazier

BACKGROUND

CUT: Fell's Point, the Big Night.

Local rooftop of slums on East Side, Rudy Glazier's Apartment Building. Pan upwards to reveal two long-haired figures staring at the urban chaos broiling below. The walls of the building are illuminated with firelight and flashing red and blue lights of police cars. Sirens and shouts fill the night as the two figures, one of them, RUDY, stares down at the scene below with binoculars.



RUDY: ...Man, are you kiddin'? If I was one of them clowns, I'd be gettin' chicks all the time.

GUITARIST ROOMMATE: Rudy, the only thing them clowns are getting is their asses kicked.

RUDY: No, it's true, man, clowns get chicks — oooh! The fat one got pegged again, in the head...I don't think he's getting up. Wait a minute. He is! He is! Aw, man you won't believe this!

GUITARIST ROOMMATE: [Ignoring the bloody spectacle below and strumming his air guitar] Rudy, you are so full of it. Clowns don't get women. They *do* get laughed at. That's all clowns are good for.

RUDY: Hey, man, that's a negative stereotype perpetuated by the media. I know what I'm talkin' about. I read about this "clown magnetism" in a magazine. Clowns get women.

GUITARIST ROOMMATE: Right.

RUDY: You don't believe me? Ask some clowns.

[There is an explosion from below, followed by screams. The two continue arguing, oblivious.]

GUITARIST ROOMMATE: Oh, there's another bright idea. How am I gonna do that? Where am I gonna find a friggin' clown this time o' night? And I ain't gonna ask any of them down there, cause they're gettin' beaten up by Mr. C and won't make it through the night.

RUDY: [Ignoring him] The reason yer gonna have such a hard time findin' clowns is cause their off somewhere with loads of women. That's why they're so hard to find.

GUITARIST ROOMMATE: You're the one who's hard.

RUDY: Yeah, yeah, yer such a comedian. Just you wait. I'm gonna be a clown. Then I'm gonna get me some chicks.

CUT: A few days after the Big Night, in the Golden Globes porno theater in the Fell's Point Basin. RUDY, walking down the aisles, is cleaning up after the latest showing of "Not Without My Daughter" when he notices SMILEY slumped over unconscious on one of the chairs. Approaching carefully, he shakes him.

RUDY: Show's over, buddy. Get a move on.

SMILEY: Ennnhh...what? What is it?

RUDY: The show's over, pops...hey, waitaminute. Yer dressed like a clown.

SMILEY: Uh...am I?

RUDY: Yeah! Yeah, you are! Are you a clown?

SMILEY: Uh...Maybe. Are you the police?

RUDY: No man, I'm Rudy. Rudy Glazier. I'm a clown fan.

SMILEY: What?

RUDY: I said I'm a clown fan. Are you one of them Clown Alley clowns?

SMILEY: Are you sure you're not the police?

RUDY: Man, I said no...say, are you okay? You look pretty bad.

SMILEY: No...yes...I dunno. What time is it?

RUDY: I don't know. Pretty late, I guess.

SMILEY: [Hefting himself unsteadily to his feet] I'm hungry. I better get out of here.

RUDY: Hey, hold on. The manager's gone home. Want something from the concession stand? We're tossing out a few bags of popcorn, if you want some of that.

SMILEY: Uh...sure...sounds good...ooh, my head hurts.

RUDY: C'mon. Hey, look, I'll help you over.

RUDY strains to help SMILEY out of the theater and into the concession area, where he is forced to shake him back into consciousness. He notices a bright red Joy Buzzer on the SMILEY'S palm, along with what appeared to be scorch marks on the back of the SMILEY'S other hand and neck. He rouses the clown, who once he sees the popcorn, tears into it for several minutes. After devouring almost an entire bag with RUDY making small talk, SMILEY suddenly registers what Rudy is saying and stops eating.

SMILEY: Wait, let me get this straight. You wanna be a clown?

RUDY: Sure, man. Something wrong with that?

SMILEY: No. No...uh, look...oh, never mind. [Munches on popcorn while fishing in his pockets, pulls out the power pack for the Joy Buzzer connected to his hand.] You want to be a clown, take this. Here.

RUDY: What is it? [Rudy takes it. An anxious expression crosses SMILEY's face as he hands it over, as if giving away something precious, yet somehow repugnant.]

SMILEY: A...Joy Buzzer. [Watches as Rudy slips it on.]

RUDY: This work?

SMILEY: Oh, yes.

RUDY: Then let's shake on it!!! [BZZZZTTTTT as he shocks SMILEY, who gives a wide smile and falls unconscious. Rudy stares in surprise at the body.] Ohmigod. I've killed him.

SMILEY: [Still smiling.] Groan.

RUDY: Hey, man. Wake up.

SMILEY: Ooooooh. Don't stop.

RUDY: Hunh?

SMILEY: [Getting anxious, pleading, like a man possessed.] Shock me again! What are you deaf? *Shock* me!

RUDY: Uh...look, man, this is gettin' weird.

SMILEY: [Smile fades and he shakes his head to clear it.] What th—? Oh, God. Get away from me with that thing.

RUDY: Uh, okay, man.

SMILEY: [Under his breath.] Have to get away...have to...[Looks at Rudy with a dissecting gaze, thinking, then raises his voice.] So kid, you wanna be a clown, eh?

RUDY: Do I? You bet your sweet ass.

SMILEY: Let's keep that out of this.

RUDY: It's just an expression, man. Chill.

SMILEY: [Scribbles on a dirty piece of paper, hands it to Rudy.] Look, here's the address. Go there, say yer "Smiley" and tell them yer my replacement. If they want to know where I am, tell them I've had enough. I...I just got to get away for a while. You understand, don't you, kid?

RUDY: I guess. Are you goin' to visit one of yer women? Is that it?

SMILEY: What?

RUDY: Aw, yer bein' shifty with me. I catch you.

SMILEY: Uh, yeah. Well, I have to go, Rudy. It was nice meeting you...and please. No handshakes.

RUDY: Oh. Right.

SMILEY: [Leaving quickly.] Good-bye.

RUDY: Bye, Mr. Clown. And thanks!

SMILEY: It was my pleasure.

CUT: Obituary column of local paper, a week later.

Obituary: An unidentified white male in his late 30s was found dead, an apparent suicide, in a hotel room in the Harbor. He was found with electrical wire connected to his wrists and the other end inserted into a electrical wall socket. Police report that death must have been instantaneous. There was no identification on the body. Anyone with information on the man's identity should contact the police at...
Fade to Black.



Personality: Rudy's young, a little naive and has only one thing on his mind. He has yet to develop the experience (good or bad) the other members of Clown Alley have and sees nothing wrong with where he is right now; he figures he can get out of crime whenever he wants...as soon as he gets some fine looking woman and enough cash to support himself comfortably. Who exactly this "fine looking" women will be and exactly how much money he will need to support himself comfortably hasn't been fully thought out yet, but Rudy's working on it. In the meantime, Rudy has been developing an addiction to the Joy Buzzer the Old Smiley passed along to him. Rudy often sneaks off to a remote part of the Clubhouse and shocks himself. Despite the intense pain it causes, it is out-weighed by the bliss he feels when he touches it to his skin. Fortunately, the Joy Buzzer renders him unconscious before he can do any serious damage.

Currently, there are no outstanding warrants out on Rudy.

Quote: "Chill, buddy. I'm not laughing at you."

Powers/Tactics: Smiley's weapon of choice is a bright red Joy Buzzer that stimulates a human being's pleasure centers. By touching an opponent with the buzzer, Smiley can paralyze an opponent, allowing the other gang members to pound away at the victim while he is in the throes of orgasmic bliss. Note that while the character is in the grip of electrical pleasure, they may lose control of their other body functions (for the sake of character integrity, only NPCs and villainous targets hit with the Joy Buzzer will manifest these embarrassing symptoms), including loss of bladder control, drooling and making wild animal noises. It's not a pretty sight.

The connection is not always perfect (the switch is dirty or rusted; Activation 14-), but Rudy can make it work most of the time, as long as he recharges it occasionally. The Joy Buzzer has a small adapter plug he can stick into a wall socket and let it sit for a few minutes, until the Joy Buzzer is back up to full charge (it has a red indicator needle that indicates the level of the charge, from "E" to "F": "Exhausted" to "Full Fry"). The Joy Buzzer has two settings...one is "CRACKLE" that performs an electrical shock (i.e., taser) and the other is the "BZZT" pleasure center setting (there is another bright red switch on the Joy Buzzer that allows Smiley to alternate the settings).

Through industrious on his part, the first incarnation of Smiley wove wire mesh through his clown costume, so he could leave the Joy Buzzer on so it discharges when someone strikes his coat or anywhere where he is "wired." (The Damage Field; Crusader defeated this mechanism by kicking him into the East River during the *Big Night*.) Rudy has made improvements to the coat's wiring so that now the buzzer's electrical charge is connected to a red light in his nose and another in his left breast, so that when he uses the Joy Buzzer, his nose and "heart" light up. ("Chicks will love it, guys. Just watch zzzztEIIOWWWWW!")

The persona of Smiley can be given limited immortality by giving the Joy Buzzer to someone else. In combat, Rudy prefers attacking with the Joy Buzzer to his pistol.

Cinematic Rules: At least once during the course of the campaign. Smiley should be able to be hurled or pushed into another member of Clown Alley, setting the Joy Buzzer off with a loud CRACKLE, a sparking explosion and effectively paralyzing one of the other clowns while the PC deals with their companions. Furthermore, Smiley's nose and a light in the left breast of his overcoat will light up when he uses the Joy Buzzer (he can also flick the switch on and off to get a blinking effect), which can make a comical effect if he strikes

the wrong person.

Four Color: As he stands, Smiley is appropriate for four-color campaigns.

Dark Champions, Realistic: The GM may wish to reduce the effects of the joy buzzer to a taser.

Appearance: Smiley's appetite is phenomenal for such a thin guy. His metabolism is either incredibly fast or terribly inefficient, for Clown Alley has watched Smiley consume buckets of hamburgers, guzzle three or four large soft drinks and several packets of french fries all in one sitting, and still complain of hunger pains. (This is a side effect of using the Joy Buzzer on himself; the peculiar nature of the electrical shocks is damaging his metabolism and his body is losing its ability to process food and nutrients correctly.)

All of Smiley's clothes are stained with mustard, ketchup and grease, the horrifying remains of his fast food frenzies. He likes to eat at *Barnyard Burger* and always stops there before or after committing crimes, getting a meal loaded with cholesterol (*Barnyard Burger's "Heart Grabbing" All-Cholesterol Burger: "This burger will touch your heart and never let go"*) and grease just to keep the old ticker on its toes. On clown assignments, Smiley can be found wearing a happy face T-shirt; the face on the shirt, however, has a neutral expression on it, with the words "Have a Day" scrawled beneath it. Smiley's own face, however, seems frozen in a smile (another side effect of continually using the Joy Buzzer on himself...the smile hardens after a while). Smiley's nose and a light in the left breast of his overcoat will light up when he uses the Joy Buzzer, and his painted-on red smile reinforces his features. When attacking, Smiley likes to wag his eyebrows up and down suggestively, especially if his opponent is female.

GOODFELLOW

Okay, first of all, I was there when the explosion went off.

I was looking for my powder sock I'd lost when there's this loud bellowing from the bathroom and Fats comes out, holding his butt and hollerin' fit to bring the house down. Smoke's pouring outta the bathroom, 'cept the smoke isn't brown, you know. It's green. But that didn't hit me at first because Fats was making such a ruckus. I runs up, you know, forgetting about my powder sock, and says, hey, Fats what's wrong, and he says the can exploded while he was doin' the business, so's I try and look in the bathroom, and then I notice the smoke ain't brown...it was green. And I says, Fats, I ain't known no explosion with green smoke. But he's holdin' his butt and concentratin' real hard on making the pain go away so's he ain't said nothing. So I head in there, and check out the toilet, and then I sees the remains of this firecracker lying on the floor and the toilet seat, cracked, lying over in the corner. It musta blown clear off its hinges. Anyway, when I notice the firecracker, I knows what happened, and I step outside and start looking around.

Sure enough, Goodfella was standing off down the way, with that dumb smile and

looking really pleased with himself, watching while Fats was rollin' around and groaning. And he's holdin' my powder sock. I don't know what happened after that, but I kinda remember him walkin' up to Fats and sayin' he was the one who blew up the toilet, and Fats just got this look on his face and grabbed him, and I was on him, trying to pull Fats off, and the other guys run in, trying to pull Fats off, and...well, we managed to hold Fats down with all of us working together. Goodfella still had that dumb smile on his face when he ran off.

I tell ya, one day that boy is gonna pull a practical joke and he's gonna get himself killed.

GOODFELLOW

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
10	STR	0	OCV: 5		
15	DEX	15	DCV: 5		
15	CON	10	ECV: 3		
11	BODY	2	Phases: 4, 8, 12		
9	INT	-1			
10	EGO	0	Costs		
15	PRE	5			
10	COM	0	Char:	38	Base: 75
3	PD	1		+	+
3	ED	0	Powers:	96	Disad: 70
3	SPD	5		=	=
5	REC	0	Totals:	134	145
30	END	0			
25	STUN	1			

Cost	Powers	END
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16 Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting

Maneuver **OCV** **DCV** **Damage**

Choke

(Choke Hold) -2 0 Grab, 2D6 NND (2)

Dodge

(M. Dodge) - +5 All Attacks, Abort

"Hug"

(M. Grab) -1 -1 20 STR to hold only

Punch

(M. Strike) +1 +2 4D6

(2) rPD on neck protects

11 Flash Grenades: 2D6 Sight Group

Flash, 6 Charges (-¾), OAF (-1) [30/11] [6c]

7 .357 Smith and Wesson Model 27 Revolver:

1 ½D6 RKA, 6 Charges (-¾), OAF (-1) [20/7] [6c]

12 Armored Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED

Armor, OIF (-½)

2 +1" Running (7" Total) 1/5"

Skills

- 3 Acrobatics, 12-
- 3 Acting (Clown Routines), 12-
- 3 Breakfall, 12-
- 3 Sleight of Hand, 12-
- 3 Stealth, 12-
- 1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- 2 PS: Clown, 11-
- 2 WF: Novelty Items
- 6 +2 Combat Levels with Dirty Infighting
- 6 +2 Combat Levels with Pistols

100+ Disadvantages

- 20 Psychological Limitation: Practical Joker (Common, Total)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Irrepressible Optimist (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Kleptomania (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Concealable, Major)
- 10 2D6 Unluck
- 10 Public ID: Robert N. Goodfellow



Background:

Counselor's Report: [Goodfellow, Robert Niles. Fell's Point Orphanage] Latest session conducted with Robert yielded no new information on parents. Robert can't, or won't, recall what transpired on the night of his

parent's deaths. When questioned, he closes up and refuses to respond [Neighbors recall Robert's parents fought almost constantly, and it is likely the two killed each other, but the fact Robert may have witnessed the double murder may have been traumatic and the basis for his current behavior]. Rather than risk further trauma, I chose to discuss the details of his life at the orphanage and peer relations. Robert claimed things with the other children were "wonderful, great, fantastic," [A standard set of adjectives, see prev. entries] and things were going "well" between them. When questioned about his bruises, he claimed he inflicted them himself. Staff have reported that Robert's hyperactivity and pranks attract unfavorable attention from the other children. Staff also reports, not surprisingly, Robert goes out of his way to get this attention.

Psyche Evaluation: Optimistic, excessively good-humored. Robert refuses to absorb negative stimuli from his environment and channels it into other mannerisms, such as kleptomania, camaraderie with his fellows (even in the face of hostility) and his need for attention (favorable or not) from his constant pranks.

Career Evaluation: The career survey turned up an interesting note. Robert said he wanted to be a "clown" so he could "make people laugh." I would guess this career choice only reinforces what has been said before...a clown or other performer would be an outlet for many of his mannerisms, including his need for attention and his growing dependence on

practical jokes for meeting this need. Robert, when questioned why a clown in particular, he claimed it came to him in a dream. He refused to elaborate.

Personality: Optimistic, cheerful and hyperactive, Goodfellow's irrepressible good humor is matched by his need to play pranks on every other member of Clown Alley, whether short-sheeting their beds, taking all the toilet paper out of the bathroom, taping "KILL ME" signs on backs of his buddies before robberies, or strategically placing bowling balls over doorways. He always waits until the target falls for the prank, then pops out, assuming responsibility and (usually) making a run for it as the target draws a gun or a knife and chases him. (His "pals" are just joking around with him, though. They would never think of gutting him for replacing their ammunition with blanks right before a robbery.) Whenever Goodfellow is standing around giggling, the other members of Clown Alley usually freeze and attempt to figure out what Rob's done this time before they find out under less pleasant circumstances. Goodfellow maintains a friendly rivalry with Smiley, who likes to give him a jolt with the joy buzzer every once in a while (just enough to make Goodfellow lose control of his bladder).

Rob's got his good points, which is why he hasn't been tossed out. He's the only clown in the Alley (besides Billy in one of his good moods) who helps a comrade in need, even when it places him in danger. For all of his practical jokes and annoying mannerisms, Goodfellow always sticks up for his friends when they are in trouble, and he has displayed a greater need for Clown Alley to stay together than anyone else. Whenever Clown Alley argues, it is not uncommon for Goodfellow to interrupt it with an explosive practical joke, taking attention away from the argument and directing their hostilities onto him. In many ways, Robert considers Clown Alley to be his surrogate family and is upset when they fight...this may be part of the residual trauma of the death of his parents.

Goodfellow has an odd behavior trait; the meanest comments or vilest insults slide right off of him. It's not that he ignores them, it's just that he doesn't seem to hear them. This selective filtering is believed to be some form of defense mechanism; even when threatened or verbally abused, Goodfellow maintains his dumb, happy smile. The other Clown Alley members have commented on this among themselves.

Goodfellow is wanted for questioning in a number of felonies.

Quote: "Hey guys, watch this! Guuuuys!"

Hey, guys! Look at this!"

Powers/Tactics: Goodfellow likes weapons that pack a lot of punch and have a rapid rate of fire (i.e., submachine guns and assault rifles); during a robbery, he likes to unload whole clips of ammo into the air (which annoys Chuckles) and whenever any senseless vandalism or destruction is called for, Goodfellow is always the one to do it. Goodfellow has a belt with bright yellow spherical flash grenades (each one painted with a smiley face) which he throws indiscriminately in combat and relishes the POP as they explode and disorient his target. His grenades are always the first choice when attacking, followed quickly by his submachine gun. Whenever Clown Alley needs a distraction, Goodfellow is usually nominated. He accepts such a delegation of duty with his usual good humor and eagerness.

If Goodfellow has the chance to pull a prank during a robbery, he will do it. In the past, he has made customers strip off their clothes and run into police lines (only when camera crews are set up), stolen police cars while the police officers are chasing the rest of Clown Alley and glued clown noses to innocent victims they have held hostage during the course of a robbery. Despite his bursts of hyperactivity and need for attention, Goodfellow will never harm a child or anyone who appears to be a parent during the course of a robbery and will go into shock if a child or parent is harmed (GMs should role-play this).

Four Color: See Clown Alley introduction. Goodfellow, more than usual, sports bright colors such as yellow and red to attract even more attention than his counterparts (thus, GMs should probably describe him first in a Clown Alley group). During the *Big Night*, the Idiot King gave Goodfellow a series of magnesium flares and a "Flare Gun" that had small Roman candles that launched at opponents. If desired, Goodfellow's hyperactivity can be superhuman; increase his DEX, SPD, END and REC accordingly.

Dark Champions, Realistic: Goodfellow can be kept the way he is. GMs may want to remove his flash grenades.

Appearance: Beneath his bright clown costume, Rob sports a dumb, feeble-minded grin. His squinty eyes blink rapidly, and his hands are always reaching out, touching things that don't belong to him and placing them in his pockets. In some ways, he's extremely childlike, always pulling pranks and performing stunts in a continual attempt to be the center of attention.

PEPPY

Well, Peppy's probably had the worst time adjusting to the Clown Alley gig than most of us...but not because he ain't a good clown or nothing. He's an okay clown, he ain't great, but you know, he's got the basics down pretty good. The main thing I'm drivin' at is see, Peppy's a small guy and he's got to over-com...over-com...over-compensate. I guess is what you'd call it. Anyway, he's good guy to have around...sure, we may poke fun at him a lot, but we don't really mean it, except when we tease him, he gets all pissed off and wants to kill someone. But you give him some time to relax, some time to himself to work out his anger, and he's okay again. No harm done.

I wouldn't say that Peppy's crazy or nothin', he just likes gettin' mad, as the boys and me can figure...and when he gets in a situation (you know what I mean, robberies and the like) he just blows up, pulling out this junk and blasting away at anything that moves. You have to see him do it one day, but maybe watching from a distance would be better! Heh-heh-heh...eehhhh. I mean he's almost shot every one of us at one time or another (in combat, unintentionally, mind you) but for the most part, he's pretty safe.

He's a sensitive little guy, really, and as long as we don't push him too far, things are okay. He's just more tightly wound than most people.

PEPPY

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
13	STR	3	OCV: 4
13	DEX	9	DCV: 4
15	CON	10	ECV: 3
10	BODY	0	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	INT	0	
10	EGO	0	Costs
15	PRE	5	
10	COM	0	Char: 50 Base: 75
5	PD	2	+ +
3	ED	0	Powers: 111 Disad: 90
4	SPD	17	= =
6	REC	0	Totals: 161 165
30	END	0	
30	STUN	4	

Cost	Powers	END
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- 32 Sticks of Dynamite: 13D6 Physical Energy Blast, Explosion (+½), Gestures (Light the Fuse, -¼), Range Based on STR (-¼), Costs 1 Additional Charge for every 1D6 past 5D6 (i.e., 13D6 uses all of Peppy's eight charges), 8 Charges (-½), OAF (-1) [8c]

- 25 Coat of Arms: Multipower (50 Active Points), OAF (-1)
- 2u Twin "Mr. Pepper" 9 mm Browning Hi Power Automatic Pistols: 1D6+1 RKA, 2 Clips of 20 Charges* (+½), Autofire (2 Shots, +½), Separate Rolls and Levels (-¼), No KB (-¼), OAF (-1) [40/16] [2x20]
- 2u Brightly-painted Ingram MAC-10: 1D6+1 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), +1 STUN Modifier (+½), 2 clips of 32 charges each* (+½), No KB (-¼), OAF (-1) [50/22] [2x32]
- 1u .38 Colt Revolver: 1D6+1 RKA, 6 Charges (-½), OAF (-1) [20/7] [6c]
- 1u Standard-¾ssue Gun Butt: +3D6 HA, No KB (-¼), OAF (-1) [9/4] 1
- 12 Baggy Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)

* These two clips simulate the fact that Peppy carries two guns. For the MAC-10, the two clips are taped together so Peppy can change clips in half a Phase, rather than the full Phase normally required (*Dark Champions*, p.80).

Skills

- 3 Acrobatics, 12-
- 3 Acting (Clown Routines), 12-
- 3 Breakfall, 12-
- 3 Climbing, 12-
- 3 Demolitions, 11-
- 1 Streetwise, 8-
- 1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- 1 PS: Clown, 8-
- 2 WF: Novelty Items
- 16 +2 Combat Levels with Weapon Multipower

100+ Disadvantages

- 10 Enraged if Insulted (Common), 11-, 11-
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Manic-Destructive (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Cranky and Ill-Tempered (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Concealable, Major)
- 5 Distinctive Features: Clanks when he walks (Easily Concealable, Noticed)
- 15 Secret ID: Peter Barrelhouse
- 20 Villain Bonus



Background: You been talking to the other guys, aincha? About how it's okay to smack around little Peter cause little old Peter don't mind when people are hasslin' him cause he thinks it's funny when people are always mocking him and making fun of

something like his height which he couldn't control anyway cause it's genetic, right? But, nooooo. It's great fun around here, oh, yessir, cause these guys are so stupid and unimaginative they've got to make fun of the most obvious things cause they ain't got no subtlety, see? They always make these real obvious jokes, things like you know, "Say Peppy, feeling a little under the weather?" "Say Peppy, know any good short cuts?" "Peppy, can you give us some help, we're a little short



handed." Crap like that. Now is that funny?! *Is it?! I don't think so. My grandma, God rest her soul, coulda thought up funnier crap than that and she was stupid and senile.*

I'll tell you. I've spent my life in the Circus. My Dad was a strongman. And me, what do I become? A clown. The way the management explained it to me, I wasn't short enough for the freakin' freak show, and I wasn't big enough to be the strongman, you know so what else could I be? Why, a clown! A stupid clown! But I showed them, oh yes, I showed them. I was the best clown they ever had, no matter what the rest of these bozos say. I was always in top form, so they decided to slap me in the worst part of the clown skits, you know, where they kick you around and knock you over with slapsticks, stuff you in sacks and crap like that cause they said I wasn't talented enough to do the more complicated skits. Man, was I glad when that Circus burned down. Best thing that ever happened to it, far as I'm concerned. And I wasn't even out of work for long...I had a job as soon as I slipped out of there, cause this big name mastermind villain wanted to recruit me to work in this outfit, see? Why he teamed me up with the rest of these bozos I'll never know, but I do know that I coulda taken down all the opposition by myself if these jerks hadn't been in the way to screw everything up. That Crusader guy had nothing on me, nothing! I coulda flagged his ass a dozen times over with my weapons, it's just he was always using cover and dodging or else I woulda caught him...man, if he'd slowed down for just one second, BOOOOM! it woulda been all over for that jerkhole. Eh, forget this. I don't need to be chummin' with a dame like you. I'm gonna go find out what the boys need me for now, cause they don't make a move without me, see?

I'm outta here.

Personality: Peppy is a nasty, sarcastic little cynic. Second only to Giggles in stature, he is sensitized to any comments about his height (either intended or interpreted) and if sufficiently irritated, will open fire at offenders to put a "scare" into them. He has never seriously taken a shot at Clown Alley, however...he would like to, but he can't seem to do it; whenever he is on the verge of completely losing his temper, he channels his anger into a verbal attack (which just makes them laugh), and then tromps off somewhere and sulks, grumbling about how much he hates clowns.

Peppy's one love is guns, really big guns, because they give him a sense of respect and importance he does not feel when without them. With a gun, he can get more attention, more compliance and no back talk when he "asks" someone to do something...the *klik-klak* of his grenade launcher being primed or the slow HISSSS of a dynamite fuse being lit is enough to get people hopping. Respect is something Peppy never got it as a clown; when he worked at the Dreamland Circus, he was always second string to the other clowns, always the one singled out to be the stupider, weaker clown for all skits. His similar treatment in Clown Alley has made him even more bitter and psychotic. The only thing that keeps Peppy from being on the bottom of the pecking order is his nastiness, no matter what level of opposition he is facing.

Not one member of Clown Alley denies, that in the wrong hands at the wrong time, Peppy would be extremely dangerous. However, they all agree that while he is with them, he is tremendously fun to slap around and make fun of, and they do so at every opportunity, laughing when Peppy starts shouting and jumping around like psychotic Elmer Fudd. They do not take anything he says or does seriously (although they stay away from him during fire fights because he has a tendency to go nuts when he gets his finger on a trigger).

It has become a running gag around Peppy to slap him

for good luck. He has gotten extremely tired of it.

Quote: "What's that?! 'How'm I feeling?' Duuuuhhh, well, I dunno...pretty *Peppy*, I guess...yeah, ha ha ha ha. Now why doncha you stupid morons tell it a few more times until it completely looses whatever shred of humor it once had, hunh?! And stop slappin' me! Cut it out, I tell ya! I'm not playing wicha this time! I'll shoot every damn one of ya!"

Powers/Tactics: Peppy is a Manic-Destructive...he takes fiendish delight in destroying things, not out of any tactical (or sane) reason, but just for the sake of destroying things; his behavior is a childish revenge against the world he believes has wronged him. Before going on missions, he packs his coat full of dynamite, grenades, clips and every firearm he can get his hands on (if a character attacks him with a flame-thrower, they may unintentionally take out an entire city block when Peppy "blows his top"). When he attacks, his mad laughter can be heard across the battlefield as he sends bullet after bullet into anything in range.

One of Peppy's attacks is to fire two pistols at a target. He usually uses two Browning Pistols to do this, but he has known to improvise with whatever weapons available. His aim while firing both pistols is awful, a point his more "conservative" buddies never fail to point out to him (mainly because they don't want to get hit by a stray bullet).

Four Color: On the *Big Night*, Peppy was given a string of brightly-colored sticks of dynamite that he could fire from a launcher strapped to his sleeve...these explosive devices had the potential to collapse three-story buildings (and did, much to Peppy's insane delight), and there were many variations of the weapons, including gas sticks, airburst sticks, EMP sticks...the mind boggles. During the *Big Night*, Peppy would ride on Fats shoulder, cradling his sticks of dynamite and blasting anything that came close to him.

Dark Champions, Realistic: Peppy can be used as is.

Appearance: Peppy stands at an uninteresting and unimposing 5'1" and speaks with a squeaky cartoon animal voice. His nose is sharp (like a rat's), and his eyes are in constant motion behind narrowed eyelids, always looking around to make sure no one's taling about him or making fun of him. Despite his nom de geurre, he never smiles or does anything that could even remotely be construed as "cheerful." The sheer amount of weapons he carries beneath his trenchcoat makes him clank when he walks. If strangers ask him about it, he pistol-whips them, grumbling about "respect." He has been known to pull pistols on store clerks who card him for alcohol.

GIGGLES

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
10	STR	0	OCV: 7
20	DEX	30	DCV: 9*
15	CON	10	ECV: 3
10	BODY	0	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
9	INT	-1	
10	EGO	0	Costs
15	PRE	5	
8	COM	-1	Char: 66 Base: 75
6	PD	4	+ +
5	ED	2	Powers: 138 Disad: 129
4	SPD	10	= =
5	REC	0	Totals: 204 204
30	END	0	
30	STUN	7	*Shrinking Bonus figured in.

Cost	Powers	END
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- 13 Shrinking (10 Points), 0 END (+½), Persistent (+½), Always On (-½), (-2 to others' Sight Perceptions, +3" KB; Giggles stands 3'2")
- 25 Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting
- | Maneuver | OCV | DCV | Damage |
|------------------|-----|-----|---|
| Disarm | | | |
| (M. Disarm) | -1 | +1 | 20 STR Disarm |
| Dodge | | | |
| (M. Dodge) | - | +5 | All Attacks, Abort |
| Groin Kick | | | |
| (Nerve Strike) | -1 | +1 | 2D6 NND (7) |
| Punch | | | |
| (Martial Strike) | 0 | +2 | 4D6 |
| Slash and Bite | | | |
| (Killing Strike) | -1 | +1 | 1D6+1 HKA |
| Snatch and Grab | | | |
| (Takeaway) | +0 | +0 | Grab Weapon, 20 STR to Take weapon away |
- (7) rPD in Vitals protects.
- 1 Use Art with Knives
- 8 Combat Knife: 1D6+1 HKA (2D6 HKA with STR), Blade Limitations (-¼), No KB (-¼), OAF (-1) [20/8] 2 (3)
- 7 Combat Knife: +20 STR, with Snatch and Grab only (-1), OAF (-1) [20/7] 2
- 15 Throwing Daggers: 1D6 RKA, Penetrating* (+½) Autofire (3 Shots, +½), Invisible to Hearing (+½), 10 Recoverable Charges (+¼), Blade Limitations (-¼), No KB (-¼), Range Based on STR (-¼), OAF (-1) [41/15] [10rc]
- 5 Throwing Daggers: Clinging (Normal STR), OAF (-1) [10/5]
- 12 Padded Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)
- * If the target has *any* level of "Lack of Weakness," the Penetrating Advantage will not work.

Skills	
3	Acrobatics, 15-
3	Acting (Clown Routines), 12-
3	Breakfall, 15-
3	Climbing, 15-
3	Concealment, 11-
3	Contortionist, 15-
3	Sleight of Hand, 15-
3	Stealth, 15-
1	Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
2	PS: Clown, 11-
3	WF: Novelty Items, Throwing Daggers
6	+2 Combat Levels with Knives
6	+2 Combat Levels with Dirty Infighting
10	+2 Skill Levels with DEX-based Skills (Added In)

100+	Disadvantages
15	Enraged if Injured (Common), 14-, 8-
10	Psychological Limitation: Psychotic (Common Moderate)
20	Distinctive Features: Ghastly Midget (Not Concealable, Major)
5	Rivalry: Monkeyshines's Monkey
15	Mystery ID (<i>Underworld Enemies</i> , p.5)
64	Villain Bonus

Background: In one of his many visits to the Fell's Point peninsula, a talent scout employed by the Dreamland Circus happened to chance upon Giggles. Hearing of the child's horrific appearance from newspaper articles and local rumor, the scout followed up on the possible circus candidate; after meeting the child's parents and recognizing the profit of marketing the midget as part of the freakshow, the scout arranged to purchase Giggles from his impoverished parents. At the age of five, Giggles was taken into the folds of the Dreamland Circus where he was carefully (and when necessary, forcefully) instructed how to behave in front of an audience in the freak showcase the Circus had established. Kept locked in a trailer when not being "trained," Giggles became more animal than human. Lacking formal education, he was unable to write and his deformities prevented him from mimicking the sounds spoken by the others around him.

While initially docile to the circus owner's wishes, Giggles, after becoming familiar with the circus routine and what was expected of him, began hiding in secret places throughout the circus and watching the other circus performers going about their duties. Fascinated by the undercurrents of the circus, the colorful immensity of the huge billowing tents and the performers who balanced on the wires seemingly miles above ground, Giggles became a silent, unnoticed silhouette sitting atop the bleachers or atop trailers, watching the performers as they went about their daily routine. From his vantage point, he listened to their conversations, overheard the throes of passion and sexual liaisons in darkened trailers and watched as they sang, danced and tumbled, practicing and refining their acts. His favorite spot, however, was beneath the Clown Alley trailer, where he watched the clowns dress up and prepare for their skits. Occasionally, Giggles crept into their trailer at night and stole tins of whiteface and greasepaint, then retreated to a secluded area behind a storage trailer, where he would build a small fire, make himself up and prance around in a ghastly imitation of the clowns performance.

One night, one of the clowns, Lou, who suspected one of the other clowns was stealing his make-up, lay awake in his bunk for the thief. When he saw Giggles enter the trailer and take his face paint, he armed himself with a tent peg and



followed the midget to his private hiding place behind the storage trailer. There he watched, disgusted, as Giggles cavorted in the firelight in a twisted parody of Lou's clown performance; furious, Lou strode into the firelight and confronted the midget. Giggles, frightened, froze as Lou knocked the tiny clown props from his hand, slapped him, and when Giggles did not answer his questions, started beating the midget with the tent peg. Giggles, scrambling around trying to avoid the blows, was struck across the head, drawing blood and knocking him to the ground. When his eyes clouded with blood, Giggles's whimpering changed to screeching. Whirling on Lou, Giggles bit and clawed him, sinking into Lou's soft flesh, biting off his index finger and leaving raking claw marks on the larger man's face and eyes. Lou, screaming, fled, and in the darkness behind the empty trailers, Giggles scuttled after Lou, clawing him and biting him until the larger clown fell dead in the grass between the tents.

When he was found in the morning, it was assumed that one of the circus animals had mauled him. The question of his missing face paint was never resolved.

Afterwards, a specter of misfortune haunted the circus. Items turned up missing, support ropes were found slashed, and mysterious fires sprouted up in the makeshift stables and in the wooden trailers. The Dreamland Circus attracted fewer and fewer customers as damages and accidents mounted and performers left in the wake of the shadow that laid waste to their livelihood and their dreams.

* * *

The night the big top burned down, Giggles took it in silently from afar, his breath heavy and wheezing in the cold, his eyes mirroring the flames that licked around the edges of the tent. His breathing rose in pitch, just for a moment, to a giggle, then quieted as he settled again into the grass surrounding the tent.

He felt rather than heard the grass stems crushed underfoot as the figure approached him from the night surrounding the circus. As the fire raged higher, an elderly man walked calmly from the shadows, leaning on a cane and holding a carpetbag in his left hand. He sat with Giggles as the tent burned. When nothing was left but ash, the man extended his hand to the midget, and Giggles took it, trundling aside the man back the way he had come, until they were lost in the darkness surrounding the Circus.

Quote: Giggles does not speak. His laughter is a low whisper that breaks into demonic cackling when he leaps into combat. While part of Giggles's laughter is due in part to his diseased nasal passages and mild asthma, there is something terrible and frightening in its expression that sends shivers through a listener's body.

Personality: Giggles is a giggling little vulture that perches anywhere his comrades have made their lair, watching the rest of the members of Clown Alley as they go about their bumbling routine with a feral gleam in his eye. He has been known to sit motionless for hours on end, and when characters enter combat with Clown Alley, there is a good chance Giggles is concealed somewhere nearby, waiting for the opportunity to perform a back or flank attack on the character

(he rarely makes frontal attacks unless the target is heavily wounded or obviously weaker than he is), grabbing their weapons and scuttling off with them. In combat, Giggles is a hissing psychotic, lashing out at anything that attacks his allies.

Giggles hates Monkeyshines and his pet, both of whom stay well out of reach of the evil midget. Giggles, unknown to his comrades, has been building sadistic traps for the monkey for the past year and the monkey has had to keep on its toes (and tail) when it ventures into the dark corners of Clown Alley's Clubhouse. Giggles has never successfully caught the monkey, although he has come close on numerous occasions (if he catches the monkey, he will eat him).

The sophistication and the obvious cruelty with which the traps are designed should make onlookers shiver. Players attempting to sneak into Clown Alley may accidentally run across one of Giggles's traps or even Giggles himself, concealed in one of the rafters or sitting deathly still on a ledge near one of the windows.

It is not known why Clown Alley tolerates Giggles. While he was with them since the beginning, all of them, including Fats, secretly fear him. Nevertheless, the fact he is not usually underfoot or as noticeable as more annoying members of Clown Alley keep him a low priority, and while Monkeyshines has insisted Giggles be thrown out or "dealt with"

in some manner, a low rumble from Fats is enough to silence him. Fats believes the original crew should stick together no matter what, and that includes Giggles. ("I trust him more than you other guys, anyway; at least I know he won't rat on me.") Through all of Clown Alley's activities, Giggles merely watches with a hungry, animal glint in his eyes. None of them know what he is thinking or what causes him to emit his high-pitched laughter.

Powers/Tactics: Giggles is Clown Alley's second story man, small and agile enough to slip in the ventilation shafts, drain pipes and laundry chutes of targeted locations and scout the area. In the past, Giggles (like Skinny Benny) has been mailed or delivered into prearranged locations; once, he was even left on the shelf of a toy store after it closed, until he could scamper down and let his buddies in. Giggles seems incapable of coherent speech, and only nods or shakes his head violently when responding to questions. There is some evidence to suggest he is illiterate as well, although he can understand what the other members of Clown Alley are saying and (usually) follows their orders.

Giggles keeps ten needle-like throwing daggers concealed on his person. He can hurl them at opponents, three at a time (each one held lightly between two fingers) and has an uncanny ability to toss the daggers so that they will slip easily into exposed flesh, armor joints, eye holes, the victim's ears...any exposed portion of the body (as mentioned above, if the victim has any level of Lack of Weakness, Giggles's "Penetrating" advantage will not work; if he can't see an exposed portion, he can't guarantee that he will hurt the target). Giggles can also use the daggers to scale surfaces by sinking them into the walls or ceiling and making his way slowly along inclines which normally have no available handholds. Characters examining an area Giggles has scaled will notice small holes or daggers embedded in the wall, ar-



ranged as a makeshift "ladder" up or down a steep incline. In close quarters, Giggles uses a thick combat knife with a serrated edge and a triangular base that leaves jagged scars in the bodies of his opponents. To date, Giggles has never used firearms in any of his crimes. His reliance on stealth makes blades his preferred weapons.

During the *Big Night*, Giggles was armed with an seltzer bottle filled with a contact chemical that, when placed on exposed skin, sent victims into gales of laughter...then cardiac arrest. Giggles lost the seltzer bottle long ago, and now resorts to his knives to elicit horrific, screaming laughter from his opponents.

POWER NOTES

1. Giggles's "Snatch and Grab" is taken from Aaron Allston's *Ninja Hero*, where the maneuver is defined as a "Grab and Takeaway." When performing a Snatch and Grab, Giggles must make an OCV Roll (if successful, it means he has successfully grabbed the character's weapon without hurting himself...if the GM is using Critical Fumbles, Giggles may hurt or maim himself trying to seize a character's weapon if he rolls a 17 or 18). Then Giggles and the character must execute a STR vs. STR contest (this is a 0 time action and is performed each time the Snatch and Grab is successful). If Giggles wins, he snatches the weapon and can use it. If the target wins, the target wrests the weapon away from the Giggles and can use it. If the roll is a tie, both hold on to the weapon and neither can use it. Giggles's +20 STR advantage (above) with Snatch and Grab reflects that when he performs a Snatch and Grab, he also sinks his combat knife into the target's hand, causing them to release their grip. (Usually, just the stabbing motion alone will cause characters to release their grip, due to surprise; characters with reflexes of steel and with enough protection to prevent being harmed by Giggles's knife may ignore this...for example, Harbinger, who has a 20 EGO and Hardened PD body armor. If Giggles encounters a PC that meets these requirements the GM may wish to modify the +20 STR, instead letting Giggles stab impotently at a target's hand as his opponent winds up for a retaliatory punch.)

2. A lot of points have been put into Giggles's Snatch and Grab. This is intended to allow him to exploit a common character power Limitation, the Obvious Accessible Focus; this Limitation is a -1 Limitation, and Giggles is designed to exploit it at least once during the campaign.

Four Color: As mentioned in the introduction, if Clown Alley is given the weapons that were taken from them in the *Big Night*, they will be restored to four color status. In addition, Giggles's psychotic nature should be removed or downplayed, and his stealth skills may want to be increased to the 18- level or be considered a "Non-Powered" Invisibility Power (Super Stealth and Concealment with appropriate Skill Roll).

Dark Champions, Realistic: Giggles, statistic-wise, can be used as is, although ultra-realistic GMs may want to give Giggles a gun. In addition, Giggles can be used as a foe for lone wolf PCs and may not even need to be in Clown Alley. His Snatch and Grab, however, works much better when he is with a group that can exploit it.

Appearance: Giggles is a three foot, two inch midget, hideously ugly, with a deformed collarbone and a nasty, demonish disposition. His smile is as malformed as the rest of his body, and he occasionally curls his lips back like a chim-

panzee when giggling. Giggles's whiteface and "auguste" appearance only accentuates his deformities, with his painted smile seeming somehow out of place and making on-lookers uncomfortable, and his black, penciled eyebrows twist and distort his forehead. At the slightest provocation (such as sneaking up on him or touching him), Giggles bristles with gleaming knives, and the rest of Clown Alley has learned not to make sudden motions around Giggles for fear of "spooking" him. Giggles does not walk, or even run, normally. He scuttles, crab like, in the shadows around a battle scene, waiting for the right moment to strike.

LUCKY

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
10	STR	0	OCV: 5
15	DEX	15	DCV: 5
15	CON	10	ECV: 3
10	BODY	0	Phases: 4, 8, 12
8	INT	-2	
8	EGO	-4	Costs
8	PRE	-2	
10	COM	0	Char: 31 Base: 75
4	PD	2	+ +
3	ED	0	Powers: 51 Disad: 35
3	SPD	5	= =
5	REC	0	Totals: 87 110
30	END	0	
40	STUN	7	

Cost	Powers	END
15	3D6 Unluck, Invisible Effects (+1), Exploding (+½), 0 END (+½), No Conscious Control (-2)*	
3	Roll of Pennies/Coin-Filled Sock: +2D6 HA, OAF (-1)	1
12	Baggy Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)	

Skills
30 Find Weakness with Roll of Pennies, 15-
3 Sleight of Hand, 12-
1 Streetwise, 8-
3 Survival [Urban], 11- (see AC #26)
1 KS: Sewer Subsystems, 8-
1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
2 WF: Novelty Items
6 +2 Combat Levels with Roll of Pennies or Coin Sock
* Note that Lucky's Unluck has no range.

100+ Disadvantages
10 Psychological Limitation: Schizophrenia (Common, Moderate)
10 Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Concealable, Major)
15 Mystery ID (<i>Underworld Enemies</i> , p.5)



BAKROWN

i got aye pensill broken off @ the tip and im righting wit it. ima key pin a rekerd pf wat haz hapend 2 me sense i kame 2 the allee. A wile A go they grabbed mee in the tunnelz under wear tha the citee. It waz a buncha Guyz clowns hoo grabbed mee sayz i was the Guy they wuz lookin for an i sayz no i aint and they sayz **YES YOU IZ** and aye lotta bad wordz and kik me in the bellee. **YER A COMIN WID US** and i sayz no i aint and they sayz yez you iz and be 4 i Ken say **NO I AINT** they kik me agen and drag mee to dis place wear thiz Guy is whereing a mask and has this suit and this bow tie and ee **LOOKS** @ meen sayz

hello Good sir

and i den sayz nothin cause hez one of dese crazee Guyz i Ken hear in my sleep. He s the **RING** of awl da vorces.

im afraid my erstwhile allies have brought me quite a catch. i was looking for someone, you see

does the name **PRE-TENDER** mean anything to you?

i shooook my head. **Da KING** Kinda sighed.

i was Kind of hoping you would know, but i think the boys picked the wrong homeless person

and i call myself an **IDIOT** if every fool were a crown this room would be fool of Kings

Da other Guyz start makin Grumbled noises n stuff n shuffling their feet n apologizing but the **KING** told em 2b quiet cause every time they spoke they were wasteing precious energy

Still it might be best to salvage the situation

The **PRE-TENDER** is loose but i think he is out of my reach so enlisting his services is pretty much futile

Hmmmm

You have a very odd mind sir something about it...

Oh yes i see now

Ni didnt say nothing.

i think it would be poetic justice if you joined us

Den he started lat fin. your nu name is **Lucky**



Personality: Lucky lived in the subway tunnels beneath Fell's Point for many years before grabbed by Clown Alley and taken to the Idiot King. The Idiot King had sent Clown Alley to bring back the Pretender (who was hiding out in a new identity in the subway tunnels), but when the clowns returned with Lucky, he decided to indoctrinate the unfortunate schizophrenic into the Alley as a joke. Since then, Lucky has been an unconscious source of trouble for the Clown Alley gang (see Powers, below).

Lucky is quiet and noncommunicative. He is easily distracted by small, shiny objects and adds them to his huge collection of coins. When entering a new area, Lucky sways his head back and forth, looking at the ground to see if anyone has dropped anything of interest...after scouring the floor, he checks the coin returns in phone booths, dips his head under benches, and so on, looking for loose change to add to his collection (vigilantes can distract Lucky by scattering change on the battlefield and standing back). Lucky has over five hundred different coins, all of them stored in an empty wine bottle wherever Clown Alley is headquartered. If the jar is broken, Lucky will howl at the top of his lungs until he passes out in exhaustion (incidentally, this takes him out of combat and also leaves him at 0 DCV). If Lucky is captured, he has a cell waiting for him at the Fell's Point Asylum.

The rest of Clown Alley take Lucky for granted, finding him useful for hauling stolen goods and for flank attacks when vigilantes show up. Lucky has no close friends in Clown

Alley, but the guys treat him decently, so he is content to stay where he is. They do not suspect he is a jinx.

Lucky will always find his way back to Clown Alley, wherever they might be. Separations from his fellows are only on a temporary basis.

Quote: Lucky keeps quiet. He nods occasionally when spoken to. It doesn't matter what the person is saying.

Powers/Tactics: Lucky is an indiscriminate jinx, tripping up friends and allies as well as any other unfortunates close to him. Lucky's power, however, always falls short of implicating him as the cause of the jinx (Invisible Effects), and his power can be perceived by those with Mental Awareness. On the *Big Night*, the Idiot King chose not to give Lucky a weapon of choice; instead, he filled the inside of Lucky's coat with a double layer of pennies that protected him from gunfire (this coat was a 9 PD/9 ED Armor with a 14-Activation Roll and reduced Lucky's movement by 1"). After insuring Lucky had adequate protection, the Idiot King encouraged him to back up his fellows as much as possible.

Lucky, despite his low intelligence, has picked up on Clown Alley's gang mentality and has even chosen his own odd combat style using rolls of pennies and metal slugs slipped into his palms to give added weight to his punches. He occasionally fills his tattered gloves (or his socks) with spare change to make an improvised blackjack. The coins and slugs have proven effective weapons: Lucky has knocked out foes twice his size with a single roll of pennies clenched in his hand. When attacking, Lucky launches himself an opponent, throwing wild swings until he happens to catch a foe with a lucky hit. (GMs should roll for Lucky's Find Weakness every round he is in combat until he fails the roll. These half-Phase delays should be portrayed as Lucky stumbling around, trying to keep out of reach of the character until he can attack. He is not consciously aware he is using Find Weakness.)

Lucky keeps at least one roll of pennies in his pocket at all times and enjoys punching opponents until the roll breaks and pennies spill across the ground (if he is not in any immediate danger, he will stop to pick them up). When not using his weapon of choice, loose change jingles in his pockets and may tip off characters who make a Hearing PER Roll that Clown Alley is in the vicinity.

Note: Lucky stretches the rules by using Unluck as a power. If the GM wishes, the jinx can be turned into an 3D6 Cumulative Major Transform, Explosion, No Conscious Control, giving people in Lucky's vicinity the 3D6 Unluck Disadvantage. The math for this can get a little complicated, especially keeping track of how many BODY points have been Transformed and so on, so Unluck has been used to keep things simple. Lucky's power allows the GM to fudge combats in favor of the PCs; Lucky's presence can radically tip the balance when things look bad. Lucky can prevent PCs from being surprised, hurt or overwhelmed, all on a moment's notice. He is also a perfect stooge for heroes who want to pull cinematic stunts against the members of Clown Alley. ("I'll move just enough for the guy rushing at me with the pennies to miss and crash headlong into the fat guy.")

Appearance: Past the dried, plastered layers of greasepaint and his lice-ridden, baggy clothes, Lucky is nondescript; his appearance tends to slip from memory once out of sight. He is of average height and build, with terrible body odor and poorly-applied face paint that gives him an exaggerated, melancholy look. A mop of brown hair is caged under his hat, and his wide, staring eyes are light brown. Lucky has a shambling gait and slack look about him that may make char-

acters suspect he is retarded or has a mental disorder. When others are not looking, Lucky scribbles frantically in a small spiral notebook he keeps hidden in his pocket. This tiny notebook is falling apart at the edges and is jammed with torn pages; its cover is that of a faded unicorn striding into a rainbow; past the cover, the yellowed pages are filled with unreadable scrawls. It looks as if Lucky writes over previous entries.

Note: Lucky's scrawls in the Background section are uncharacteristic examples of his penmanship; his normal "journal entries" are unreadable. It is not understood why he remembers the scene described in the Background so clearly or why he writes the Idiot King's words differently than his own.

SAD BILLY

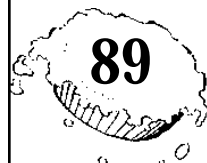
Billy. HMMMM. Talkin' about Billy ain't easy. See, it ain't us that really found Billy, it was him, you know, the King. So we figure, okay, the big man's brought him to us, that must mean Billy's something special, like that Pretender guy the King sent us to nab but we wound up with Lucky instead. Billy must be special, at least so I figure.

Nope. Billy's different, but he ain't special. He was a perfectly average guy as near as we could figure. Maybe a little high-spirited, you know, but still average. As near as we could figure, mind you. Some of us, you scratch the surface, and you get a mess of worms, n' some of us you only got to take a look at and you pretty much got us figured out. Billy ain't either one of them types. Thing is, he acts like the most damned normal person you ever met (well, except for the fact he can't speak, or don't) but, well, he ain't himself when he ain't with us. Or he ain't himself when he is with us. One of them two.

MAD BILLY

MANIC EPISODE; MULTIFORM ONE.

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
15	STR	5	OCV:	5	
15	DEX	15	DCV:	5	
15	CON	10	ECV:	5	
12	BODY	4	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12		
15	INT	5			
15	EGO	10	Costs		
15	PRE	5			
10	COM	0	Char:	91	Base: 75
5	PD	2		+	+
3	ED	0	Powers:	79	Disad: 95
4	SPD	15		=	=
10	REC	8	Totals:	170	170
40	END	5			
35	STUN	7			



Cost	Powers	END
10	Multiform (Psychosomatic, to "Sad" Billy, 50 Point Multiform, uncontrollable, see below)	
20	Weapon Holster Belt: Multipower (40 Active Points), OAF (-1)	
2u	9mm Uzi: 1D6+1 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), 40 Charges (+½), OAF (-1) [40/20]	[40c]
1u	9mm Browning Hi Power: 1D6+1 RKA, 2 Clips of 20 Charges (+½), OAF (-1) [30/15]	[2x20c]
1u	"Billy" Club: +3D6 HA, OAF (-1) [9/4]	1
12	Baggy Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)	

Skills

- 5 Fast Draw, 13-
- 3 Acrobatics, 12-
- 3 Acting (Clown Routines), 12-
- 3 Breakfall, 12-
- 3 Climbing, 12-
- 1 Streetwise, 8-
- 1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- 2 PS: Accountant, Clown, 11-
- 2 SC: Accounting, 11-
- 2 WF: Novelty Items
- 6 +2 Combat Levels with Weapon Multipower

100+ Disadvantages

- 20 Accidental Change (Psychosomatic) to Sad Billy every *Phase* Billy is separated from Clown Alley, 14-
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Manic Episode (Bipolar I Mood Disorder, Very Common, Strong)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Conceable, Major)
- 15 Secret ID: William Bonn, Jr.
- 30 Villain Bonus

SAD BILLY

MAJOR DEPRESSIVE EPISODE: MULTIFORM TWO.

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
13	STR	3	OCV:	3
10	DEX	0	DCV:	3
15	CON	10	ECV:	2
12	BODY	4	Phases:	4, 8, 12
10	INT	0		
5	EGO	-10	Costs	
10	PRE	0		
10	COM	0	Char:	3 Base: 50
3	PD	0		+ +
3	ED	0	Powers:	46 Disad: 65
2	SPD	0		= =
5	REC	-2	Totals:	49 115
20	END	-5		
30	STUN	3		

Cost	Powers	END
20	Weapon Holster Belt: Multipower (40 Active Points), OAF (-1)	
2u*	Uzi Submachine Gun: 1D6+1 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), 40 Charges (+½), OAF (-1) [40/20]	[40c]
1u*	9mm Browning Hi Power: 1D6+1 RKA, 2 Clips of 20 Charges (+½), OAF (-1) [30/15]	[2x20c]
1u*	"Billy" Club: +3D6 HA, OAF (-1) [9/4]	1
12	Baggy Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)	

Skills

- 1* Acrobatics, 8-
- 1* Climbing, 8-
- 1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- 2 PS: Accountant, 11-
- 1* PS: Clown, 8-
- 2 SC: Accounting, 11-
- 2 WF: Novelty Items
- * Billy will never use these skills or weapons while in his depressed state. If he is somehow forced to, they are performed at an 8 or less Skill Roll or at -2 to OCV (OCV: 1).

100+ Disadvantages

- 20 Accidental Change (Psychosomatic) to Mad Billy every *Phase* Sad Billy is with Clown Alley, 14-
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Major Depressive Episode (Bipolar I Mood Disorder, Very Common, Strong)*
- 10 Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Conceable, Major)
- 15 Secret ID: William Bonn, Jr.

* Billy's manic depression is unusual in that his manic phases and periods of depression are governed by a specific environmental trigger. Dr. Shreiver (of the Fell's Point Asylum, *Underworld Enemies*, p.12; also see the upcoming *Asylum* source book) believes the selective nature of Billy's disorder is due to manipulation by the Idiot King.



Background: The office window looked out over Fell's Point. Lights shined across the darkened landscape, the lights of cars rushed below on the streets. The tinted glass, however, threw a pall across the lights, dampening them. William sat in

the chair, his limbs draped over the armrests.

He had been sitting there for several hours after he had gotten back from the morgue, his eyes lingering on the landscape without really seeing it. His eyes were dry and raw, but he was terrified of closing them.

When he did, he saw two coffins, in silent accompaniment, next to each other on a bier.

* * *

When he was seven, Billy's father had taken him to Dreamland.

There he had watched as the trapeze artists, a man, a woman and a small girl, perform on top of the high wire. They balanced atop one another, the girl held in the hands of the mother, the mother held in the hands of the father as

he stood on the wire, no wider than a thread from where Billy was on the ground. He had held his breath, terrified for them as they slowly walked, step by step, across the wire. He was so afraid they might fall and plunge to their deaths. He was certain if they died, then their deaths would kill him as well.

Welcome relief came when they had stepped onto the platform to safety. Drowned in the applause of the crowd, Billy had cried half with relief and half with the thought of what would have happened had they fell. His father had tried to calm him, but Billy's tears had kept coming, and he could not stop. Through his tearing eyes, he saw his father's despairing expression. Not a day had passed since Billy could remember when he had not seen that same helpless gaze on his father's face.

Sometimes I think Billy cries for the entire world, his father had said once to Billy's mother.

As he cried, there was someone next to him and a flash of color from a bright handkerchief that was proffered to him. Billy's crying stopped suddenly in surprise, as the strange man, with baggy clothes and a face painted with red and white, touched the handkerchief to Billy's cheeks deftly, dabbing away the tears and with a smooth motion, withdrew the handkerchief, draped it over his hand, and yanked it suddenly upwards, a dove flying from his hand, to circle the top of the tent.

Billy's eyes followed the path of the dove, but when he turned back to the man, he realized the clown had never taken his eyes off of him. Only when Billy's tears dried, forgotten, on his cheeks, did the clown truly smile beneath his face paint. Billy watched him stumble down to the tent floor, where his brightly colored fellows continued their antics around the ring. His father had stared at Billy in wonder, pleased at the smile that had finally crossed his son's face.

Billy held onto the warm memory. When he grew older, and his life turned gray and dead, it remained flickering in the cold halls of his mind.

* * *

His father had passed away in the war, his mother following soon after with cancer. In time, they became only black and white pictures in his mind. His life had continued on, like a death march, working onwards and taking comfort in routine. He shunned others, kept his life closed. His marriage and his daughter had been a surprise even to him, but even they did not long dispel the gray that had taken root in his mind. When he had received the call, had been asked to come identify the bodies that had been recovered from the wreckage of the car, he had felt the gray rush over him like a tide, drowning everything he had ever thought and felt. At that moment, had he had the will, he would have ended his life. But the gray robbed him even of that, and unbidden, tears began to well from his eyes until the morgue was filled with his uncontrollable sobbing.

In the office, looking out the window that dampened all light, there was a knock at the door. Billy sat there, unwilling to move.

There was the slow creak of the door, measured footsteps across the floor, and the shadowy figure stopped behind him, reflected in the window. Billy watched as the figure reached into a carpet bag he held in his hand.

Billy did not even turn, did not care.

When he saw the handkerchief proffered to him, he began to cry again, the tears streaming down his cheeks.

Personality: Billy, when separated from Clown Alley, has persistent, overwhelming feelings of sadness and despair; every movement he makes is sluggish, and attempts to make

conversation with him are met with slow replies and a dead gaze. His crying spells are legendary, yet they are only the surface of the flood of hopelessness and his increasing, recurring thoughts of death and suicide. Billy, when he closes his eyes, sometimes sees visions of coffins or his parents.

For some unknown reason, however, when he is around Clown Alley, Billy's depression gives way to a manic state, his feelings of gloom and depression shattering beneath a burst of energetic, happy behavior. He is always eager to accompany and aid his fellows, and his depression seems buried or to have vanished entirely. His one trait, however, is that he never forwards any action on his own...he is like a shadow clown, mimicking his fellows without offering any contributions other than his presence and extra firearm. In the past, Billy has fought like a berserker to protect other members of Clown Alley and has performed insane, potentially self-destructive stunts to help them pull off their crimes and robberies (leaping from moving vehicles onto others, doing jumps from the tops of tall buildings to fire escapes, acting as a distraction for security guards, police and vigilantes and drawing fire away from other members of Clown Alley to allow them time to pull off a robbery and escape). Billy's bravery never ceases to amaze his fellows, but his apparent disregard for a share of the cut from robberies is even more amazing (and welcome).

Late at night, Clown Alley can hear Billy crying, but they do not know what would drive such a happy person to tears...his name "Sad Billy," was coined as a joke: to them, Billy seems perfectly normal, and certainly happier and more energetic than any "normal person" they've ever seen.

It is no exaggeration that Clown Alley brings out the best in Billy. If they are disbanded or killed, Billy will take his own life.

Quote: Billy has never spoken in Clown Alley's presence.

Powers/Tactics: Billy shines in combat, in acrobatics...anything related to helping Clown Alley. While his fighting skills are only slightly above average, and he can shoot a gun well enough to hit what he's firing at most of the time, his combat skills dim in comparison to his willingness to take dangerous risks to help his fellows. In the past, Billy has fought the police and even thrown punches at vigilantes three or four times his combat skill without fear. He has been a quick study in gymnastics and clown props, and his talents in these areas have made newcomers believe Billy has spent his life as a clown.

If Clown Alley is being systematically defeated, PCs will notice Billy becomes more sluggish as his fellows are defeated or knocked unconscious. Billy's manic behavior will slow, and his expression beneath his grease paint will become grimmer and sadder, until every clown is defeated, at which point he will stop fighting, offering no resistance whatsoever to PCs attempting to capture or attack him. The GM can roleplay this odd psychological change in combat (in game mechanics, simulate it with steadily decreasing OCV Rolls, EGO and END), and this change should be considered Sad Billy's behavior tag when PCs battle Clown Alley.

During the *Big Night*, Billy was given a seltzer bottle filled with a chemical that activated a target's tear ducts, causing their eyes to tear up uncontrollably for up to an hour; this reduced their OCV and DCV by 2 for the duration. He also had a squeeze flower that fired a paralyzing fragrance onto others.

Billy will never intentionally kill another human being, no matter what state of mind he is in. It is not taken as a Code vs. Killing, because Billy has already sunk to the depths of despair, and another death on his conscience is only an-



other gray area of many in his life.

Appearance: Billy is slightly overweight, but not so much to make it immediately noticeable. His cheeks are sunken, and his ears project out from the sides of his face. When not wearing make-up, Billy's black hair lies in an uncombed tangle on his head, and his thick eyebrows seem etched gloomily over his gray eyes. In costume, Sad Billy wears a painted-on frown, a bright red nose, wistful eyebrows and black triangles painted beneath his eyes to simulate tears. His clothes are baggy, rumpled and look as if he has never taken the time to mend the tears and bullet holes in his clothing. In his manic phase, his eyes are wide and bright, and his energy boundless as he enters combat, delighting in action even when he is getting trounced by someone more skilled than he is. His attacks are flurries of movement, and Billy wastes considerable energy in clown-related acrobatics while fighting; this is immediately apparent to any trained vigilante. As Clown Alley begins to fall around him, however, his movements will become less erratic, his eyes will dull, and the painted tears beneath his eyes will slowly be replaced with genuine ones.

MIMS THE PANTOMIME

But all the stuff I been telling you so far...it don't mean nothing when we get around to the friggin' "mime" we got. Mimes. Sheesh. Who woulda thought? In Clown Alley, for Chrissakes. I mean, we're a professional outfit.

I'll be the first to tell you, that mime is always the one who screws us over when the chips are down, mainly cause he makes us bring along the props we got in the clubhouse so we'se can get our "behavior tags" down right. It wouldn't hurt if he wasn't such a nag... "Nyh-Nyh-Nooooo, you gu-gu-guys got to do it this way, Nyh-Nyh-Nooooo, you guys got to do it this way, you guys aren't acting like real clowns, blah blah blah..." What would he know about being a real clown, anyway? Oh, but get this. He went to clown school. But he's a mime, right? Me and the boys figure he couldn't cut it at the clown gig, not like the rest of us...he musta flunked and became a mime. God, just saying that word makes me sick.

But you know, I could stand his asinine behavior, I could stand his butting in all the time if he weren't stuttering and spitting all over the place. It's like his tongue ain't attached to his brain. Okay, he's got his good points, he's a good shot, but sometimes...jeez. I'm not sure how smart it is havin' one of those mimes in our group. Dad for morale.

Still, he was there from the beginning 'n has as much right to stay as the next person, I guess. If it was just bein' annoying that could get you tossed out of Clown Alley, then ol' Monkeyboy and his pal would gotten th' boot a long time ago.

MIMS THE PANTOMIME

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats	
15	STR	5	OCV: 7	
20	DEX	30	DCV: 7	
18	CON	16	ECV: 3	
12	BODY	4	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12	
10	INT	0		
10	EGO	0	Costs	
15	PRE	5		
10	COM	0	Char: 82	Base: 75
4	PD	1	+	+
4	ED	0	Powers: 147	Disad: 154
4	SPD	10	=	=
10	REC	6	Totals: 229	229
44	END	4		
30	STUN	1		

Cost	Powers	END
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20 Martial Arts: Performing Arts

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
Block			
(Martial Block) +2		+2	Block, Abort
Disarm			
(M. Disarm) -1		+1	25 STR Disarm
Dodge			
(M. Dodge) -		+5	All Attacks, Abort
Escape			
(M. Escape) 0		0	30 STR vs. Grabs
Strike			
(M. Strike) +2		0	5D6

35 Cinematic Power Pool (30 Active Points), can only change Power Pool at the Clubhouse (-1/2), can only change between entrées (-1/4), Foci only (i.e., gags and gadgets, -1), no weapon can do BODY to a target (no Killing Attacks or EBs without "STUN only" limitation, -1/4)

12 Throwing Club: Multipower (25 Active Points), OAF (-1)

1m Throwing Club: +4D6 HA, Ranged (+1/2), No KB (-1/4), Range Based on STR (-1/4), OAF (-1) [18/7]

2m Throwing Club: Missile Deflection, Arrows and Projectiles, +5 to OCV, OAF (-1) [20/10]

1m Throwing Club: +4 Combat Levels with Ranged Weapons, Throwing Club only (-1), for Bouncing attacks and Against Hit Location Penalties only (-3/4)* [20/7]

12 Cushioned Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-1/2)

8 +3 DCV, only when Dodging (-1)

2 +1" Running (7" Total) 1/5"

* These combat maneuvers are optional. They are designed to simulate Mims's ability to knock objects from a target's hand or bounce the club off walls, floors and ceilings to strike an opponent. If the GM is not using these rules in their campaign, they should be ignored. Note that Combat Levels are not normally allowed as part of a Power Framework. Mims's Combat Levels are contained in his Power Framework because the Combat Levels are due solely to the club's flexible construction, not Mims's throwing skills.

Skills

- 3 Ambidexterity
- 5 Acrobatics, 14-
- 5 Acting (Mime Routines), 13-
- 3 Breakfall, 13-
- 3 Climbing, 13-
- 3 Contortionist, 13-
- 3 Shadowing, 11-
- 3 Sleight of Hand, 13-
- 3 Stealth, 13-
- 2 KS: Charades, 11-
- 1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- 2 PS: Clown, 11-
- 3 PS: Mime, 12-
- 2 WF: Novelty Items
- 6 +2 Combat Levels with Weapon Multipower
- 6 +2 Combat Skill Levels with Non-Weapon Weapons (See UMA)

100+ Disadvantages

- 15 Psychological Limitation: Performer (Common, Strong)
- 10 Physical Limitation: Stutter (Frequently, Slightly)
- 20 Normal Characteristic Maxima
- 10 Distinctive Features: Mime (Concealable, Recognizable)
- 7 2D6 Unluck, only when a member of Clown Alley (-½)*
- 10 Public ID: Simon "Mims" Simms
- 82 Villain Bonus

* See *Enemy Mime* in the *Adventure Seeds* section.



Background: When Simon heard the scream, he knew immediately what had happened.

A minute later, when the Tramp stormed into the room, Simon was whistling silently, his eyes looking up at the ceiling. He twiddled his thumbs innocently.

"Did you think you could hide it from me?!" The Tramp

managed to force out the words through wheezing gasps. He was livid. His face looked like a turnip.

Simon stopped twiddling his thumbs, looked at the Tramp and blinked, as if confused.

"Don't lie to me! I found this in your room!" The Tramp held up the striped mime costume and black spandex with two fingers, as if he could not bear to touch it. "One of Clown Alley..." he shook his head. "A mime."

Mims hung his head. He shrugged, downcast.

"Say something!" The Tramp shouted, flabbergasted. "Something that a clown would say!"

"Ah-ah-ah-¾ just don't feel cuh-cuh-comfortable as a cuh-cuh-clown," Simon said, slowly. "Ah-ah-ah have to be suh-suh-silent all the tuh-tuh-time anyway, s-s-s so why cuh-can't I just be a mu-mu-mime?"

"Don't say it!" The Tramp pointed a trembling finger at him. "Don't say it! Don't you even think it! You are not a mime!"

"A muh-muh-mime is wuh-wuh-what I am," Mims said, again.

"You're a clown!" The Tramp shouted. "A clown!" He clutched his head in his hands. "This is all my fault. If I'd just paid more attention, I could have helped you..." The Tramp

balled up his fists and resumed shouting. "You're doing this just to embarrass me! You're a clown! You know you're one!"

"Nuh-nuh-no, I'm nuh-nuh-not," Mims insisted, trying as hard as he could manage to get the words out. "I nuh-nuh-nuh-need to express m-m-myself in other wuh-wuh-ways."

"Deviant ways," the Tramp's eyes narrowed. "You know mimes are all sick. They're all..." His hands fluttered, as if trying to find the right word. "*Fruity*."

"I'm puh-puh-proud to be a muh-muh-mime!" Simon said, flushing. "And I'm nuh-nuh-not ah-ah-ashamed of it! I luh-like being a muh-mime!"

"Oh, so you like to prostitute yourself on street corners?!" the Tramp bellowed. "Not as a member of Clown Alley you won't!" The Tramp threw the costume to the floor and began to jump up and down on it. When he was finished, he stopped, tired and panting, and glared at Simon. "Go...to...your room," the Tramp drew another breath, "...and don't come out... 'til you're ready... to be a clown... like the rest of us."

Simon, shoulders hunched, walked to his room and closed the door softly behind him. He laid down with an imaginary sigh and frowned.

After a moment, he lifted himself up and stood on his feet. Looking both ways, he reached beneath his mattress, felt around for a few minutes, then pulled out another mime costume and pulled it on. When he was properly attired, he tipped an imaginary hat to his mirror.

The mime in the mirror smiled back.

Simon Simms has had a chronic stutter since childhood, and his embarrassment at speaking in public led him into performance art, learning to communicate with his body rather than with the spoken word. Despite his many theater classes in school, his stutter curtailed his aspirations of acting, and he began looking for less vocal media to express himself. He eventually fell in with the local Clown College offered at a Fell's Point Community Center. While there, he learned juggling, gymnastics and other feats of balance...nevertheless, something about clowns didn't sit well with him, and he eventually dropped out. With his acrobatic talents and desire for theater, he burned a year or two acting at angst bars in Chelsea (the run-down student area for Fell's Point University students and the freaky artists of Fell's Point) but became disheartened by the pretentiousness of the whole affair and the seeming dead-end he had worked himself into. The night he decided to quit, he walked out the back stage door, only to find a rag tag group of clowns waiting for him. As he made to step back into the club, they all drew guns and dragged the startled young man to see his first criminal mastermind, the Idiot King. After a brief question and answer session, the Idiot King promised Simon fame and glory, with all the publicity and marketing potential the young performer could possibly hope for. The King even provided him with a special aerodynamic club as his weapon of preference. Simon, eager to become a big hit, became Mims the Pantomime, another Clown Alley recruit.

The *Big Night* was something of a bust, although Mims was a big hit; in fact, he was hit many times. When he roused himself back to consciousness, he slipped away as the rest of Clown Alley were being trashed by Crusader. After learning of Clown Alley's arrest, Simon walked the streets of Fell's Point alone, feeling disheartened and deciding that fame simply wasn't for him. The day after he had sworn to give up his aspirations to fame, however, he spotted a mime practicing on the streets of Chelsea and was fascinated. After watching



the performer for several hours, he swore that he would become a mime. It was his calling. He practiced for months in secret, waiting to unveil his talents on the Fell's Point streets.

Shortly before Simon's debut, however, Clown Alley were released from prison, and suddenly, before he could protest, Mims was in the troupe again. Too embarrassed to say what he wanted to do with his talents, he stayed in the closet and resumed his old role as the Alley pantomime.

Personality: Mims is comfortable and confident only when "performing"; when not otherwise occupied, he slinks to a private corner to practice his routines until his next performance (entrée). Simon is obsessed with crime, not for the financial rewards (slim at best) but because it allows him to perform for the world and be the focus of attention. If a PC acts as a positive role-model in *Enemy Mime* (see *Adventure Seeds* later on), they may convince Mims he could achieve the same attention as a hero.

Simon rarely speaks, even under pressure...when nervous, his stuttering becomes worse, making him almost unintelligible. As a result, he has made an art of communicating through charades and pantomime, and some members of Clown Alley are (quietly) impressed by his ability to communicate with his body. Nevertheless, Simon frequently irritates the other members of Clown Alley because of his obsession with style rather than with expediency in a course of a robbery. He spends too much time dressing properly for his role, carrying huge pillows in his gut to simulate bigger punching effects, or putting corn kernels in his teeth so that he can spit out when he is punched in the jaw. And he always secretly hopes a vigilante shows up so he can strut his stuff.

There are warrants out for Mims's arrest, mainly for petty theft. The Fell's Point police consider him low priority.

Quote: ["Sus-sus-sus-*stop* huh-huh-hitting h-h-him!"] Pantomime prefers speaking through body movements; he does an exaggerated double-take or an "O" of surprise when he meets an imposing hero.

Powers/Tactics: Pantomime is extremely agile and can perform difficult feats of balance without effort (despite Clown Alley's objections to his presence, they grudgingly admit he's got *some* acrobatic talent). He has mastered tumbling, somersaults and a host of other acrobatic maneuvers; in addition, his endurance is phenomenal: he can perform tirelessly for up to a half hour before he needs to stop and take a breather. Pantomime regularly practices his Dodging skills in weekend paint ball courses outside of Fell's Point and by pushing his acrobatic talents, he has learned how to twist his body to avoid bullets (Missile Deflection and Dodging)...although his record with submachine gun fire and assault weapon fire is less than perfect.

Mims's major problem in combat is he is a performer, not a fighter, and his acrobatic displays take precedence over defeating his opponent. Sometimes Mims, rather than attacking, will perform a stylistic maneuver, such as suddenly putting on thick glasses right before a hero is about to punch him, or pulling out his baton and whirling it around his body in an impressive Bruce Lee imitation (all of these are aspects of his Gadget Pool, see below). These stylistic maneuvers give his character concept flavor, but they may get him killed against an experienced vigilante. ("Neat trick, mime-boy. Now I got a 9mm one I want to show you.")

Clown Alley occasionally call him "Mums," as a joke.

is a versatile weapon; he has trained with it every day since it was given to him. When attacking, Mims starts his performance by taking a Snap Shot at an opponent from behind cover (usually to disarm), then he rolls/flips/somersaults out and, if the target is still holding their Focus or weapon, he Martial Disarms the victim and then executes a circle kick or jab to knock them unconscious before they can reclaim their weapon. If the foe seems able to defend themselves without their Focus and has a dangerous melee attack as well (knife, baseball bat, katana), Mims will dodge and feint around an opponent (DCV: 15 with Martial Dodge) until the character is tired and leaves himself open. Mims has no hesitation about engaging foes in combat; he has considerable faith in his dodging abilities.

Mims is designed as a cinematic character. His throwing club, in tandem with his acrobatic skills, should allow him to do some amazing things.

- Note that while Mims's club is Ranged, it does not have a recoverable charge option. This is designed to simulate Mims's ability to use the club like a boomerang, bouncing it off walls and objects so it returns to him. Characters can still grab it (OAF) as it is returning to him in mid-air. If there is no realistic way the club could return to Mims, then the GM should let the club fall as it may.
- Mims's club helps his Martial Arts. Mims's Martial Strike does more damage when he has his club, for obvious reasons, but his club can also deflect punches and missiles for his Dodge, strike an opponent's knees or elbows when doing a Martial Escape, or be used as a "choker" for grabs.
- As mentioned in the Personality section, Mims has a Cinematic Gadget Pool and sometimes keeps white-painted corn kernels in his mouth, so when he is struck, he can spit them out. Other cinematic effects he has used in the past include:

Cost	Powers	END
1	Fluffy Pillows, Padding: +3 PD, non-resistant, Activation 9- (only protects Mims's Chest and Stomach, Hit Locations 10, 11, 12, -1 H), IAF (-1/2) [3/1]	
4	Corn Kernels in Mouth: Images vs. Normal Sight and Normal Touch, Damage Shield (only works when struck, +1/2), Limited Power: Specific Image (Spit "Teeth" from mouth when struck, -1), No Range (-1/2), 1 Charge (-2), IAF (-1/2) [22/4] [1c]	
4	Blood Capsule in Mouth: Images vs. Normal Sight and Normal Touch, Damage Shield (+1/2), Limited Power: Specific Image (Fake Blood only, -1), No Range (-1/2), 1 Charge (-2), IAF (-1/2) [22/4] [1c]	
3	Spring-shoes: +3" Superleap, 0 END (+1/2), IAF (-1/2) [4/3]	
7	Cooking Pot and Spoon: 2D6 Flash vs. Sight Group and Normal Hearing, No Range (-1/2), 1 Charge (-2), OAF (-1) [30/7] [1c]	

...and so on. These gadgets should never be lethal; Mims is not a killer.

Four Color: Mims can be played up in a four-color campaign; by increasing the accuracy (i.e., Combat Levels) of his throwing club, Simon can target specific Hit Locations and render focus-oriented heroes gadgetless. In addition, his minor Gadget Pool can be expanded to a 50 point Gadget Pool that gives Mims a Cinematic Scene-setter for his crimes (or acts of heroism), complete with grapple lines, trampolines, dazzling noise-makers and so on. In a four color world,



POWER NOTES

- In his hands, Mims's flexible hard-rubber throwing club

Mims's Acrobatics should be increased to a Skill Level of 15 or 16.

Dark Champions, Realistic: Conservative GMs may want to remove Mims's ricocheting club and replace it with a handgun with a silencer; Mims isn't stupid, and there are many instances in a Realistic Dark Champions campaign where a pistol would be necessary.

Appearance: Mims's uncanny resemblance to a coat rack may surprise characters; his striped shirts and beanpole appearance make him stand out amidst the chubbier members of Clown Alley. On missions, Pantomime sports a white face with black triangles under the eyes and exaggerated black eyebrows; his face paint terminates just above the neck, where striped shirts and suspenders take over and cover the rest of his body. His black hair is carefully secured beneath his black beret (which resembles a military beret, except where a military insignia would be, a smiley face button has been affixed; it is the face of a smiling mime rather than a normal smiley face). His face is sharp and watching him contort his mouth and lips can be repulsive and frightening.

Pantomime's wiry movements and stunted expressions are momentarily eye catching, but are quickly lost in the heat of combat.

JOEY TOES

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
13	STR	3	OCV: 6		
17	DEX	21	DCV: 6		
15	CON	10	ECV: 3		
10	BODY	0	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12		
10	INT	0			
10	EGO	0	Costs		
15	PRE	5			
10	COM	0	Char:	60	Base: 75
3	PD	0		+	+
3	ED	0	Powers:	92	Disad: 77
4	SPD	13		=	=
6	REC	0	Totals:	152	152
32	END	1			
32	STUN	7			

Cost	Powers			END
14	Martial Arts: Hit and Run Infighting			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
	Dodge			
	(M. Dodge)	-	+5	All Attacks, Abort
	Skedaddle			
	(Flying Dodge)	-	+4	All Attacks, Abort; FMove
	Sucker Punch			
	(Def Strike)	+1	+2	3D6
15	Multipower (30 Active Points), OAF (Combat Belt, -1)			
1u	Skorpion Model 61: 1D6 RKA, Autofire (5 shots, +½), 13 Charges (0)*, OAF (-1) [22/11][13c]			
1u	9mm Browning Hi Power: 1D6+1 RKA, 13 Charges* (0), OAF (-1) [30/15] [13c]			
1u	Pocketknife: 1 Pip HKA, Blade Limitations (-¼), No KB (-¼), OAF (-1) [5/2] 1			

- 10 Telescoping Aluminum Vault Pole: Multipower (20 Active Points), OAF (-1)
- 1u Pole: +4D6 HA, OAF (-1) [18/9] 2
- 1u Pole: +5" Superleap (8" Total, 4" Straight Up), 0 END (+½), OAF (-1) [8/4]
- 1u Pole: 2" Stretching, 0 END (+½), No Fine Manipulation (-½), OAF (-1) [15/6]
- 1u Pole: +3 to Acrobatics, OAF (-1) [6/3]
- 12 Padded Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)
- 4 +2" Running (8" Total) 1/5"
- * Joey *never* keeps his guns fully loaded. This has caused trouble more than once.

Skills

- 3 Acrobatics, 13-
- 3 Acting (Clown Routines), 12-
- 3 Breakfall, 13-
- 3 Climbing, 13-
- 3 Persuasion (Fast Talk), 12-
- 3 Stealth, 13-
- 3 Streetwise, 11-
- 3 Trading, 12-
- 1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- 2 PS: Clown, 11-
- 2 WF: Novelty Items
- 6 +2 Combat Levels with Weapon Multipower
- 6 +2 Combat Levels with Punch, Kick and Vault Pole

100+ Disadvantages

- 15 Psychological Limitation: Superstitious (Common, Strong)*
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Acrophobia (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Concealable, Major)
- 5 Reputation: "Two-bit, shortchanging, no-good bum!" 8-
- 15 Mystery ID: "Joey Toes" (Joey's last name is unknown; it ain't "Toes," that's for sure)
- 22 Villain Bonus
- * This takes into account the Obsessive-Compulsive behavior that comes with the Superstition.



Background: Lotsa people know Joey Toes. Just ask around. At the very least, they've heard the name...the stream of expletives before and after it kinda makes it stick in the head. Thing is, Joey's not an old man by any means, and a lotta of the experienced bums and cheats and no-good low life bastards are a little sur-

prised (envious?) at Joey's rep at such a young age. It's gotten to such a point that no one even remembers what his last name is anymore — it always just "Toes," cause he's either got his toe in something fishy or other or just trying to toe the line after his latest screw up. Others call him "Toes" cause more often than not when he's pulling a second story job, it's only his toes that are keeping him from slipping and falling to his death. I suppose it's fate Joey ended up in Clown Alley. He's alienated everybody else.



Oh, one thing — don't tell anybody you *know* Joey. They'll either casually ask you where he is, ask you to deliver a message of some godawful length or just beat you up and make you spill his hiding place out from behind your busted lips and churning guts. Joey's made a lotta enemies in his time. Bets are circulating his life won't be worth much after twenty years (or more than twenty dollars). There's not a fella in the Fell's Point underworld Joey don't owe money to or hasn't cheated out of a few bucks at some point...and the women...hell. A few of Joey's "exs" have a little extra they tack onto the end whenever his name is mentioned, usually how they faked something or other, how Joey isn't good in bed, and how if you ever see the bastard tell him such and such about how their new man will kick his butt, the usual...you know how it is. He musta had and disappointed every woman in Fell's Point to hear it told. I believe it.

You see, Joey's not really the bad sort...just lazy enough to tempt the devil himself. One of them boys who never really took to work, or got it in his head that you got to make a stand at some point in your life to squeak out a living — instead, he's one of them who starts risking everything soon as he wakes up in the morning. Hell, he's cheated, robbed and run from every problem in his life. Work? Well, he tried to make some honest wages a few times, but that didn't work out none either. I heard he was a construction worker (best one they had walking those girders, those, can't deny that — that boy's home is up in the high places), slapping burgers down at *Fats* or running the bar down on fifteenth where the whores come to eat after three, smoke and complain.

The reason I'm going on about Joey is I talked to him once, you see. Even bought him a drink, just to hear him tell his story. Turns out his Pa died when he was young...what little remained in his Pa's savings had to go to pay off his Pa's debts and ever since then, he's had a sorry time holding onto his money. He was able to afford a dingy hole in the Fell's Point slums for a while, but when his bosses started catching on to his shortchanging and money skimming, people started coming around to where he lived, so it wasn't safe no more. So he figured he'd make a little money through window shopping, if you catch my meaning. And then there was the Salvation Army gig, too, where he took his pail out and went looking for handouts, but he ran into one of his old buddies and got his head busted for his trouble. Didn't learn him none, though. Just kept doing the same old same old.

Well, I think Joey's hit the low with this latest gig. No telling how long that fool lasts 'fore the cops catch him, he meets one of his old buddies down the wrong end of a gun barrel, or one of them vigilantes gets a hold of 'im. Joey'll to settle his debts then, most likely with the devil himself.

Personality: It's impossible to say Joey is lazy; he spends too much energy avoiding work. Joey can never commit himself or hold a promise to anyone, including himself, and his life has become a dangerous balancing act, always staying just a few steps ahead of his enemies and cheating everyone else within a hair of serious retaliation. "Walking a fine line" is more than an expression with Joey; it's a way of life.

The only thing more fantastic than Joey's penchant for trouble is his intricate rationalizations and obsession with superstition. Any conversation with Joey that lasts more than a minute will invariably turn toward the rituals he uses to keep his "lucky streak riding high." Avoiding black cats, skirting leaning ladders, stepping over cracks, being careful handling mirrors...name a cause of bad luck, and Joey's heard of it and avoids it like the plague. He clings to every half-brained superstition in a desperate attempt to hold his life together one more day...superstition has become yet another rationalization for him to avoid work and responsibility. The degree to which he de-

pends on superstition to explain his life is somewhat frightening, and every adventure involving Joey should play up this behavior tag (along with his inclination for high places) at least once during the adventure.

Joey Toes joined Clown Alley after their debacle with the Idiot King and has never met Mr. Manns. As such, he had no special weapons or gadgetry that the other, older members possess.

Quote: "Sorry boys, it's been a blast, but I gotta run."

Powers/Tactics: Joey carries any gun that requires no skill to handle...pistols, submachine guns...nothing too heavy, if he can help it, and he could care less about ammunition and firepower as long as when he pulls the trigger, a bullet comes out. His current pistol of choice is a scarred Browning 9mm that he never seems able to keep fully loaded (countless fire fights with Joey have turned into fits of cursing and desperate scramblings for extra bullets in the folds of his costume). His other close and personal friends are a battered Skorpion Model 61 and an old pocketknife he keeps in his hip pocket. It's a little dull and needs sharpening.

Joey's only other weapon of note is a telescoping metal vaulting pole that he can collapse into a two foot stick and place in his coat. He stole it from a *KNOW FEAR* Sporting Goods store a year ago, and since then, has helped him out of many tough situations. The pole is hollow, its exterior a treated aluminum alloy a millimeter or two thick, with spring catches that lock it into place at whatever length Joey desires. When extended, the pole has enough flexibility and spring in it to allow Joey to vault over building gaps, enough weight to help him balance when he walks the wire to escape a foe and durable enough so that he could even walk on it if he placed it between two buildings. Joey cannot use this pole as a skilled weapon unless he is dueling on the high wire; his attacks with the pole are usually desperate swings just to keep an opponent out of reach until Joey can escape. Joey has painted black and white bands (a foot in width) on the pole.

Joey's agility is natural; every since youth, he has enjoyed heights and climbing: he would walk along fences, rooftops, building ledges...any place that offered a few inches of standing room for his toes to find a purchase on. As he grew older, he turned his talents to crime, walking across telephone wires and laundry lines to "shop" in potentially lucrative buildings. Despite the obvious combat advantages of having a fine sense of balance, Joey uses it primarily to keep a safe distance between him and his foes.

Four Color: In a four color campaign, Joey may be given added DEX (perhaps 21-23), 5 SPD, a vault pole that does more damage (a few extra D6 worth) and a special high tension spring attachment that lets him vault several hundred feet. GMs should also give Joey extra armor (a little shock-absorbent mesh for those rough landings) and perhaps a martial arts style that uses his pole as a weapon. For GMs that want to experiment with "realistic" gadgetry, Joey's telescoping pole can be reduced to a fold up piece of carbon fiber or kevlar; when it inflates, its internal honeycomb structure fills with air and the pressure keeps it a rigid cylinder. It would have greater flexibility than Joey's current aluminum pole but would not offer as much help balancing on difficult wire walks. A rapid air pump stored on his costume that could inflate (or deflate) the cylinder with the push of a red button would make it a handy gadget; plus, the "FSSSSSHHHHH" sound as it's inflated would make a good four color special effect. By bracing himself, pointing the cloth at someone, Joey could use the pole's sudden inflation as a surprise attack.

Dark Champions, Realistic: Joey can be kept the way he is. His

vault pole attack may want to be removed...anyone in their right mind facing someone like Scarecrow (see *Dark Champions*) is going to pull out a gun first thing, anyway.

Appearance: Joey is always fidgeting. Nervous and apprehensive, his eyes dart over his surroundings, no matter how familiar they are, desperately trying to take in everything around him and failing, only getting fragments and stuttered images. Underneath his dirty clothes and behind his sliding smile, is an athletic frame he has acquired more out of necessity than physical training. Joey's feet and hands are large and look awkward in contrast to his thin frame and his narrow, nervous face...his nervousness seems amplified whenever he begins to balance, and despite his skill, he always seems to be teetering back and forth, just short of plunging to his death. When ascending, Joey fumbles in his coat for his vaulting pole, dragging it out and using it to help his balance.

Joey's laugh is more like a nervous titter. Most of Clown Alley suspect he's gay.

CHUCKLES

I tell a tale or two. I don't deny it. But my stories, some of them aren't anything compared to what people carry around inside themselves everyday. Chuckles, for example. Terrible. I try an' think about his stories when he's drinking himself to death, trying to figure out what he must be going through.

Chuckles, he's a vet, served in 'Nam. Was imprisoned there for close to seven years 'fore he made his way back to the States. That Night I found him in the Fell's Point Basin Park, all bloody and crying...well, now's not the time to tell that story...maybe Chuckles'll say something about that later, if he feels like it.

It's the other stories I'm talking about, the stories about 'Nam he got to telling me later when he was too drunk to hold back, stuff he'd said he never told his doctors. About how'd he crawled like a baby across prison dirt floors, begging, pulling himself forward by his finger stumps while they kicked him and beat him 'till he couldn't feel no more.

He told me about the cage where they'd kept him boxed. Too small to stand in, too narrow to lie down, open to the rain, open to the insects that nested in the stump of his arm and laid their eggs, the itching that sent pins up his side, and the light that hung from the jury-rigged wires through the trees, that terrible light that never went out, day or night, blazing out across the jungle.

He told me how, cause he was so terrified he wouldn't die fast enough, he tried to bite a hole in his arm and bleed to death.

An' he sat there, bottle in hand, looking at me, and he wasn't even communicating half of what he was feeling. Sometimes, words just ain't enough.

You know why they call me Chuckles? he asked me, his eyes red. Know why? He took a long drink, tears blurring his eyes, then laughed in that hollow way that dead men do.

It's cause I have so much to laugh about.

Chuckles

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats		
15	STR	5	OCV: 5		
15	DEX	15	DCV: 5		
15	CON	10	ECV: 3		
12	BODY	4	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12		
10	INT	0			
10	EGO	0	Costs		
15	PRE	5			
10	COM	0	Char:	52	Base: 75
6	PD	3		+	+
3	ED	0	Powers:	95	Disad: 75
4	SPD	15		=	=
6	REC	0	Totals:	147	150
30	END	0			
32	STUN	4			

Cost Powers END

13 Martial Arts: Commando Training

Maneuver OCV DCV Damage

Boxing Cross

(Martial Strike) 0 +2 7D6

Choke

(Choke Hold) -2 0 Grab, 3D6 NND

Karate Chop

(Killing Strike) -2 0 2D6 HKA

8 +2 Damage Classes (Added In)

20 Weapon Belt: Multipower (40 Active Points), OAF (-1)

2u H & K MP5: 1D6+1 RKA, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), 2 Clips of 30 Charges (+½), OAF (-1) [40/20] [2x30]

1u 9mm Browning Hi Power: 1D6+1 RKA, 2 Clips of 20 Charges (+½), OAF (-1) [30/15] [2x20]

1u Fragmentation Grenades: 1 ½D6 RKA, Explosion+½), Range based on STR (-¼), 2 Charges (-1 H), OAF (-1) [37/10] [2c]

10 Liquor Bottle: Multipower, OAF (-1)*

1u Liquor Bottle: +1D6 HA, No KB (-¼), OAF (-1) [3/1]

1u Broken Liquor Bottle: ½D6 HKA (1D6+1 with STR), Can Only Be Used After HA Is Used (-¼), No KB (-¼), OAF (-1) [10/4] 1

12 Ballistic Mesh Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)

* After Chuckles hits someone with the Bottle, it becomes a ½D6 HKA.

Skills

- Acting (Clown Routines), 8-
- Breakfall, 8-
- Demolitions, 11-
- Interrogation, 12-
- Mechanics, 11-
- Paramedic, 8-
- Streetwise, 8-
- Survival (Jungle and Urban Environments), 11-
- Tactics, 8-
- Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- KS: Military Protocol, 11-
- WF: Novelty Items, Small Arms and Knives
- +2 Combat Levels with Weapon Multipower
- +1 Combat Level with Commando Training

100+ Disadvantages

- 10 Psychological Limitation: Bitter (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Physical Limitation: Amputee (Right Arm, Frequently, Slightly)
- 10 Physical Limitation: Alcoholic (Frequently, Slightly; see *An Eye for an Eye*, p.45)
- 5 Physical Limitation: Chain-smoker (Infrequently, Slightly)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Clown (Easily Concealable, Major)
- 10 2D6 Unluck
- 15 Secret ID: Chester Green
- 5 Villain Bonus



Background:

[T r a n -
s c r i p t f r o m
t h e F e l l ' s
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V e t e r a n ' s A d -
m i n i s t r a t i o n
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d i s c h a r g e d
f r o m m i l i t a r y
s e r v i c e a n d
r e f e r r e d t o

the veteran's hospital.]

DOCTOR: ...and how long were you in the Army before you were captured?

GREEN: Three years. Three years before I was captured.

DOCTOR: Do you want to talk about it?

GREEN: There's not much to tell. [Pause] Pretty routine, really, what happened. I pulled off onto this trail, with my M-14 and I thought I heard these voices...like chuckling, really, and I was a little scared, so I opened fire. I was a little scared and smiling at the same time, too, from what I remember-

DOCTOR: Smiling? What were you smiling about?

[Pause]

DOCTOR: What were you smiling about?

GREEN: [Pause] You know, it beats the fuck out of me. [Light chuckle] Well, anyway, I'd taken a few shots at the area where I was sure I'd heard the voices, waited, then my buddies shuffled up to me and asked me in these real loud whispers what I was shooting at. I told them, then the C.O. called me up, and I told him what I'd heard, and he asked me to take point...which I did. We took it slow, up to the area where I thought we heard the voices. [Pause] Thing is [light chuckle] when we got up to it, there was a spider trap was underneath the trees, off to the right of the trail...a spider trap is this hole in the ground...usually well-camouflaged...this one sure was.

There was this log, and I stepped over it, and just as we crossed it, there were these three shots. The guy behind me ran off, and I...suddenly there was this sharp pain in my arm.

DOCTOR: The right arm?

GREEN: Yeah, that's right. It didn't even hurt, but I hit the dirt and couldn't move. I was afraid as soon as I tried to take off, they'd cut me down. I musta lay there for fifteen minutes, waiting for some backup, but I didn't hear any noise from behind me, no noise, no gunfire or anything, none of my buddies, none of my buddies coming to...

[Long Pause]

DOCTOR: Go on.

GREEN: [Voice drops, then chuckles] They never showed. Not one. [Shakes head]

DOCTOR: None of the enemy showed?

GREEN: [Gives DOCTOR a look and frowns] No. I'm talking about the other guys in my squad. They never showed.

DOCTOR: I see. What happened next?

GREEN: [Swallows, uncomfortable] Well, I heard a noise from behind me, where the firing came from. I didn't want to move. I was scared they'd start shooting again. I just kept my eyes closed and stayed the way I was. I thought I might die, there, lay me down and sleep, sort of. I felt...[pause]...I felt dead...worse...I...

DOCTOR: Yes?

GREEN: I felt abandoned.

[Pause]

DOCTOR: What happened next?

GREEN: There were more sounds, whispering maybe, then someone came and picked me up, stripped me of my gear, carried me off to the left of the trail...for a while there was silence, and then they carried me off. After a while, I lost consciousness.

[Pause]

DOCTOR: Where did they take you?

GREEN: Well, I don't really know for certain; when I opened my eyes again, I was in a bunker. There was this Viet Cong C.O. [pause] and this medic there, too. The...the medic got out a syringe, gave me a shot [looks confused, as if trying to place his surroundings] in the right arm...to stop the blood, I guess...maybe not soon enough. No, not soon enough. Maybe if it had been sooner, then maybe, but see, during the journey, they'd put this tourniquet around my arm and the bandage [GREEN blinks] the bandage was real tight [GREEN blinks again, then chuckles] and the bandage was real tight, and I should have kept loosening it up,

maybe. It must not have allowed enough blood to circulate; they had to amputate. I lost my right arm. I lost it. [Makes a whistling noise and a chopping motion with hand] *Whhssst!* Chopped it right off. Chopped...[Stops] Then the interrogators showed up.

DOCTOR: What did they ask you?

GREEN: Oh, about my family, how many there were in my family, my fucking 'wife' and my father and my stupid, drunk mother (Note: see *Staff Notes*, below), plus what I knew about the military. There were psychologists, too...they asked me, um, things. Like why...[Pause and slow chuckle] Why didn't they come for me?

DOCTOR: Who?

GREEN: My buddies. Why didn't they come for me? There in the jungle. They could've saved me.

DOCTOR: They may have thought you had been killed.

GREEN: [Looks at DOCTOR for a long time. Smiles, then chuckles again. Unfriendly expression crosses face.] I don't want to talk about this anymore.

DOCTOR: Why don't we stop for today, then.

Staff Notes: Case History. PFC GREEN broke within two weeks of his capture, after being burned with cigarettes, having his nails pulled out and his shoulder dislocated (PFC GREEN claims he cannot remember how his shoulder was dislocated). His wife (who obtained a common law husband in his absence) and mother never responded to his letters while he was stationed in the hospital, but according to reports, they took an active interest in obtaining GREEN's back pay, and his mother spent about \$6000 of his money while he was a prisoner and has been after the rest since his return. At one point, she tried to get him declared incompetent so she could have it all. Since then, he has refused to see her; for all he knows, she may be dead. GREEN claims he doesn't care. I think his family's attitude and treatment after his return has only reinforced his feelings of alienation and abandonment, both by his unit and his family.

I never read any of their damn reports about me, about what I was feeling and all that bullshit. All I know is that I ditched the hospital and dragged my body around Fell's Point for close to three years fore I was finally Saved. I know that's a little strong, but I really thought I had reached the end of the line, you know? I ain't lying to you...I'm as sick of liars and false sentiment as much as you are by now, if not more so.

I was in the Fell's Point Basin maybe for three years when it happened. I'm surprised I can even remember what happened, I was so drunk off my ass, musta burned whatever sense I had outta me. I'd just finished polishing off a bottle

and was heading into the Basin's industrial park to relieve myself when I thought I heard these voices; now I know that don't mean much in the Basin, but this was in a pretty quiet area, so I decided that I'd get the hell out before the owners of the voices showed up. It might been one of them roving gangs in the Basin that like to skin the winos they catch for a little fun. I didn't much like the idea of being caught.

I took it slow, up to the area where I'd come in, creeping away there, and I was just stepping over this fallen wooden beam, when suddenly off to my left, this shape steps out of the shadows, and before I know it, he's flicked out his knife and plunged it into my arm...the left one, and the kid's laughing. I watch the blade flash in his hands, red sliding down its surface.

I just fall, there, like instinct, and I musta lay there for what felt like fifteen minutes, waiting for help, but I didn't hear any noise from behind me except the sounds of gravel crunching around me as other shapes came from the darkness, more kids, all of them clutching cold metal and steel in their hands. They didn't say anything, just surrounded me and waited. The one with the knife just got this crazy gleam and his smile widened.

I closed my eyes...I thought I might die, there, lay me down and sleep, sort of. I didn't care. I just prayed that this time, they'd kill me quickly and put me out of my friggin' misery.

Turns out, it didn't happen. They didn't even get a chance to touch me again. Cause They showed, the guys. The Tramp and all them, who had been cruisin' the Basin, saw these punks and stopped.

"What's all this, now?" I cracked my eyes and saw them walk up, right into the face of the kids. "You kids messing with this guy?"

"None of yer business," the smiling kid to my left snarled, the one who stabbed me. He wasn't smiling anymore. "Get back to the circus 'fore they miss you, gramps."

Like lightning, there was the sound of wood striking flesh, a gunshot, and the kids scattered, one of them dropping his knife, bleeding from his face and shoulder. They vanished into the night like whispers, then someone came and held me for a moment. It was this old guy, he looked like some kind of tramp, half clown. In his hand was this long pole. He was resting his hand on my arm gently, making sure I didn't move while he checked my wound.

"Don't you move, now, friend. Yer gonna be okay. Them boys are gone...and they gonna leave you alone, if they know what's best fer them." The hand on his arm was reassuring. "You just hang in there, friend...yer gonna be okay."

And then, before I even knew what I was doing, I was blubbering like a baby. Like a friggin' baby, right there while I was bleedin' and all. Heh.

Go figure.

Chester was taken back to the Clown Alley hideout, nursed back to health and made an honorary member of the gang. In gratitude, Chester started to help Clown Alley out with minor tasks, such as cleaning their weapons, then training them to fight as his commando training slowly came back to him. Even though he does not have all the clown comedy routines down, Chuckles's military training has proven useful in a number of situations; on the flip side, his tendency to drink heavily before missions to "steady himself" has created its share of problems.



Personality: The remnants of Chuckles's patience and good humor have been washed away by hard liquor. He has a hatred of bankers, lawyers and politicians whom he feels have robbed of his life after the war; to bring up any of these subjects in a conversation is guaranteed to make him furious. He rants and raves about them to no end and is always encouraging Clown Alley to hit as many banks in the area as possible. His hatred of bureaucracy, however, is dim in comparison to his misogyny. Chuckles's hatred of women is infamous, and he frequently refers to them as "unfaithful whores" and "dirty bitches." From what the Tramp has discovered, Chester was once married, but while he was imprisoned in 'Nam, his wife picked up a common law husband; this, combined with his experiences with his mother (see *Staff Notes*, above), have tinged his comments on women with bitterness and violence. Chuckles's mid-life crisis passed him in a blur of war flashbacks and drunken spells, where he was happy to find oblivion in the gutters of Fell's Point.

Quote: "Awright! Enough of this crap!" [Clik-Clak] "I'm going to finish this joker right *now*."

Powers/Tactics: Chuckles still retains the essentials of his Commando Training he learned in the war and is a capable hand to hand combatant; nevertheless, he likes keeping targets at a distance and will not melee with a dangerous opponent if he can perforate them first. Chuckles is the Clown Alley member most likely to draw a gun during combat, and his explosions of temper can put Fats to shame; there is no question that Chuckles is one of the more violent members of Clown Alley, and the other clowns are careful not to provoke him.

Chuckles has a strong sense of loyalty to Clown Alley; if any of them are in danger, or are threatened, hurt or even killed by a vigilante, Chuckles will do his best to make sure the offender gets what's coming to him; if the vigilante is too tough for him to hurt on his own, he will attack something precious to the character, such as a DNPC or a NPC the character has shown concern for in the past.

Chuckles occasionally uses beer and wine bottles as weapons (the first hit usually changes them from a HA to a HKA), and in fits of anger, he has jabbed lit cigarettes into the arms of his comrades when he thinks they are doing something "stupid." Chuckles hates Giggles and Monkeyshines's monkey especially and throws bottles at them if they come too close while he is drinking or sleeping. The only person Chuckles is even remotely afraid of is Fats, but he is confident that if push came to shove, he could draw his Browning 9mm faster than Fats could whip out his bowling pin.

Just to fit in with the clown motif, Chuckles has painted his grenades with red and yellow stripes and carries them in his pockets or on a bandoleer strap across his chest. Vigilantes who pull the pins on his grenades then kick him off a building should earn cinematic experience points.

Appearance: Chuckles's puffy face and body belies the thick muscle lurking under the skin. Thin greasy strands of hair drift down the sides of his face and neck, and he keeps an unhealthy growth of stubble around his chin along with a thick mustache, more bristle than hair, sandwiched beneath his fat upper lip and squat nose. His thick black eyebrows have long since grown together over his red eyes, and a carpet of hair covers his back. His right arm is severed at the elbow, and his coat sleeve of his coat is turned upwards and pinned to the shoulder; if he is wearing his prosthetic, he may be able to rip it off his arm and use it as a club to pummel attackers. An onlooker might mistake the fingers of Chuckles's left hand for cigarette butts; his fingertips are

blackened with ash and black face paint where they jut out from beneath his tattered gloves.

Beneath his costume, Chuckles still wears his dog tags, and his body has numerous tattoos and scars running beneath the grime and clumps of hair that cover his body. Like Fats and the other Clown Alley members, Chuckles prefers to wear "tramp" outfits rather than bright colors ("The colors give the goddamn cops somethin' ta shoot at, boys...don't be dumb"), forsaking the more clumsy attire that might hinder his movements. He keeps all his weapons well-cleaned and oiled, and always makes sure one is within easy reach at all times in case a vigilante or the cops should make a guest appearance. His pockets usually contain crumpled cigarette packets, a souvenir liquor flask, and a bottle or two of malt liquor to drink in case of emergencies.

Chuckles smells like a garbage truck. His breath (and clothes) have the potential to kill a lesser man.

THE TRAMP

Okay, so that's pretty much it about the rest of the guys.

'Cept me, that is.

Yeah, well, to tell the truth, I'm not so sure how I fit into things. you know? Or at least I wasn't 'till I asked the boss about it. This was a while ago, when the boss was around, 'fore he up and changed and all and they put him back in his cell cause he was causin' so much trouble. Anyway, a few days 'fore the Dig Night, you know, I goes up to the boss, you know, and we gets talkin' and he's giving out orders for me to relay to all the other guys concerning the upcoming festivities n' all, when it suddenly occurs to me he ain't given me nothin' to do.

Well, look, I'm an old guy and everything, but hey, don't crap on me cause I'm old. I like to pull my own weight, and I don't like sitting on my duff when everybody else is busting their back, see? So I said, boss, not to be rude or nothin' but what about me? I wanna help out, and I'm feelin' like yer humorin' me.

And he said the strangest thing.

He said he wanted me to remember somethin' for him.

Someone was gonna die soon, he said, kinda subdued, and that it was important to him that I remember everything he was gonna tell me about him.

Who's gonna die, I says. It ain't you, is it?

It kinda threw me, you know, this sudden talk of dyin' 'nall. I mean, we'd just met the boss, and he seemed like such a spry guy for his age. Plus, you know, we were kinda fond of him, even if he was supposedly this crazy mastermind and all. But he shakes his head and goes, No, No, it ain't him who's gonna die, but this Crusader fella.

You gonna off him, boss? I says.

He says, No, he ain't. He said if he'd wanted to off the big C, he coulda done it a long time ago but didn't feel like it. He said he liked beatin' Crusader too much to kill him.

Well, then who's gonna off him boss? Are we gonna have to do it? I ask. Not really liking the sound of that too much. I mean, killing, well...it screws people up.

But he said no, he didn't want us to kill anybody. He said Crusader would die cause he was old. Cause he clung to the ways things were, way back when heroes didn't kill.

And that made him sad, I could tell, without him really saying it. There was something missing, and he didn't sound so happy like he had before.

I feel like we've entered a dark age, he says.

I didn't know what to say, so I just listened. He was kinda quiet for a bit.

Then he started talkin' about this Crusader guy. And I just sat there and listened, trying to memorize it all. This guy's name was Sam, it turns out, like Samuel from the bible, and he'd been carrying this chip around for a while 'cause he'd killed someone way back when and he didn't know how to deal with it. The boss said there was a name for it, that this guy Sam, he'd fallen.

Then, and this I remember real well: the boss said Sam was in love with you, Miss Robinson. He said he was sorry Sam would have to go, because he knew that would mean you would go to the asylum. There was no way around it, he said. There'd be no place left for you to go.

He said you'd probably die there.

THE TRAMP

Val	Char	Cost	Combat Stats
9	STR	-1	OCV: 5
15	DEX	15	DCV: 5
12	CON	8	ECV: 5
10	BODY	0	Phases: 4, 8, 12
10	INT	0	
15	EGO	10	Costs
15	PRE	5	
10	COM	0	Char: 53 Base: 75
3	PD	1	+ +
3	ED	1	Powers: 111 Disad: 89
3	SPD	5	= =
4	REC	0	Totals: 164 164
28	END	2	
28	STUN	7	

Cost	Powers	END
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19 Martial Arts: Clown Routines

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage
"Alley-Oop!"			
(Legsweep)	+2	-1	3D6, Falls
"Clang!"			
(Martial Block)	+2	+2	Block, Abort
"Hey, Rube!"			
(Martial Strike)	0	+2	4D6
"Whack!"			
(Martial Disarm)	-1	+1	19 STR Disarm
"Yow!"			
(Martial Dodge)	0	+5	All Attacks, Abort

- 1 Use Art with Quarter staff
 - 4 Quarter staff: +3D6 HA, No KB (-¼), OAF (-1) [9/6] 1
 - 5 Quarter staff: +15 STR, with Legsweep only (-1), OAF (-1) [15/7] 1
 - 20 Handfuls of Chalk Dust in Pockets/Powder Sock*: 3D6 Flash, NND (+1, Common Sense Defenses...i.e., being immune to bright light and wearing sunglasses won't help a character, but a force field or something that prevented the chalk from clouding the characters vision would work; GM Discretion), 3 Charges (-1 ¼), Range Based on STR (-¼), OIF (-½) [60/20] [3c]
 - 12 Padded Clown Costume: 6 PD/6 ED Armor, OIF (-½)
- * A powder sock, in conventional clowning, is simply a sock used to apply powder. In Tramp's case, it is a sock filled with powder, hurled at an opponent to blind them.

Skills

- 3 Acrobatics, 13-
- 3 Acting (Clown Routines), 12-
- 3 Breakfall (Pratfall), 13-
- 3 Climbing, 13-
- 3 Persuasion, 12-
- 3 Sleight of Hand, 13-
- 3 Stealth, 13-
- 3 Streetwise, 11-
- 2, 2 AK: Fell's Point Peninsula, North America, 11-
- 1 AK: Western Europe, 8-
- 1 Language: Clown Alley "Signs" (Fluent)
- 3, 3 PS: Clown, Play Harmonica, 12-
- 2 WF: Novelty Items
- 6 +2 Combat Levels with Quarter Staff and Chalk Dust
- 6 +2 Combat Levels with Clown Routines

100+ Disadvantages

- 10 Psychological Limitation: Nostalgic (Common, Moderate)
- 5 Physical Limitation: First Stages of Irreversible Dementia (Infrequently, Slightly)
- 5 Physical Limitation: Pronounced Limp (-1" Running)
- 10 Age: 60
- 10 Distinctive Features: Limping, Elderly Clown (Concealable, Recognizable)
- 10 2D6 Unluck
- 15 Secret ID: Terry Cloth
- 24 Villain Bonus



Background: Most of the clowns couldn't tell you how Terry was recruited into Clown Alley, and Terry, well...his memory isn't what it used to be, so it's not too likely he could tell you. He stood by Clown Alley

and the Idiot King until their festivities were brought to an end by Crusader on the *Big Night*.

Terry, he's talkative enough if given a chance, but most of the time, he's quiet or else plays his harmonica. You know, it's funny...Terry tries to keep the old harmonica clean, but it only seems to get more tarnished from year to year.

Terry's got some great stories to tell. He can remember the circus, all the way back when it was in it's golden age, when Dreamland traveled the world and left crowds roaring and people with more joy in their hearts. But stuff never lasts, not really. You know what they say, about clowns becoming clowns because they're either too old or too injured to do anything else. For Terry, it was both. You just couldn't see the injuries, that's all. That night the Dreamland Circus burned down, I think it killed him inside.

Now he just plays his harmonica, mostly. When he plays alone at night, I think he gets a little bit of the Dreamland Circus back, for that brief time he plays. That's where he belongs, you know. Me and the boys talk about it sometimes. Terry don't belong here. Not really. But we just keep him on.

He ain't really got no place to go. And the place he wants to go to, he can't get back to.

I guess that's just the way it is for some of us.

* * *

Terry, above all, is a storyteller. He knows hundreds of tales, some aching of the sufferings of men and women, others that tell of their triumphs. All of these are somehow linked to the world of the Dreamland Circus, in a distant, golden age, that Terry, without any more room left for regret in his mind or his heart, must remind himself no longer exists. As his physical body suffers the onslaught of age, he fights to keep alive those segments of the past that he hopes can bring relevance to the present and in so doing, tries to keep alive the memories of Dreamland in the shadow of the circus he can see in Clown Alley. His fading memories, the slow death creeping through his bones and joints only hint at the end result of his efforts.

When he dies, the remnants of the Dreamland Circus will die with him.

Personality: Terry spent his entire life, all sixty years plus, with the Dreamland Circus. He helped run it from the sidelines, giving it help here and there, making sure events proceeded smoothly, backing up his comrades when they got in trouble from the local authorities and serving as the sounding board, the shoulder to cry on and the storyteller who gave the circus new life through his voice. He can tell you all the acts, no matter how small or transitory that somehow formed the larger world of the Dreamland Circus, all the people he met, and all the men and women he had the pleasure to know.

If you ask, he'll tell you, in perfect clarity, about the night Big Lou died after being mauled by one of the circus animals. And he'll tell you the ache in his heart when the Dreamland Circus decayed and then burnt to ash. All of his memories, where he had left his mark in the world, had been destroyed. Terry lost more than his life that night. He lost his soul.

When he was found by the Idiot King, the criminal mastermind rejuvenated Terry by giving him new stories to remember. Terry only talks about the Idiot King when he feels that it is somehow right that he do so; he will never willingly tell any PC anything about the Idiot King if they intend him harm.

Quote: "Me? Aw, look, whaddya want to hassle me fer? I'm just an old guy, hanging out here, doing nothing wrong...yeah, I'm dressed like a clown, but so what? Ain't everybody dressed like a clown? Let's take you, fer example, with that spaghetti western trenchcoat and dimestore Fedora hat...hey, lemme go! Ow, Ow!"

Powers/Tactics: Terry does his best to stay out of fist fights, since vigilantes of any skill (or any weapon) could break him like a twig. He prefers surprise attacks, using his pole to trip

characters from behind (Legsweep), then leaping away and letting the rest of Clown Alley deal with the prone target. If confronted, he tries to talk his way out of a situation, sur-rendering, offering up (true?) information, all the while looking for the earliest opportunity to make a break for it before he gets in any more trouble. Terry, despite his physical weakness, is loyal to his allies and will never let them suffer or be harmed if he can prevent it.

Four Color: The Tramp was the only member of Clown Alley who was not given a weapon by the Idiot King during the *Big Night*. If the Tramp is used in a four color campaign, modify his skills and abilities to reflect those of a much younger man, reduce or ignore his Age Limitation (Age: 40+) and make him an equal combatant to the rest of the members of Clown Alley. He is still 60+ but won't act it; in the four color world, comic book heroes and villains never really age; debilitation and death is just a phase that everyone goes through.

Any paranormal powers the Tramp possesses should be geared toward memory or used in a support capacity for the rest of Clown Alley, perhaps a subtle mind control that soothes dissent in the ranks, or a powerful Persuasion skill. The Tramp is intended as a non-combatant, the "old timer" who sits in the back and tells the rest of Clown Alley what is was like in the old days when they weren't robbing and beating people up for a living, but trying to make people's dreams achieve a permanence in the real world.

Dark Champions, Realistic: Remove the Tramp's martial arts and most of his attacks (if he engaged in combat at his age, he would have a heart attack). As the section mentions above, he is intended to serve in a non-combat role.

Appearance: Terry looks like a tattered cloak on a stick. The gray stubble coating his chin and the droopy downcast to his eyes is not due to make-up. His face is adorned with a red, exaggerated putty nose, and a battered derby hat barely covers his baldness; his seedy attire, baggy pants and big shoes round off his image. If struck or slapped, his clothes raise a cloud of dust (genuine or chalk) he uses as part of his routine (PCs may get the impression they are dusting off a relic if they strike or kick the Tramp). The Tramp wears grimy, dark colored clothes including an old, moth-eaten coat, a huge tie (about two feet long) and gloves, the tips of which look as if they have been eaten away. His primary colors are black and white, with splashes of red and flesh, and his mouth is painted a big, round white that is neither smiling or frowning. His eyebrows are heavy and black and a beard covers the bottom of his face, all the way down to his ragged shirt. Whatever part of his body lucky enough to peek through is dirty, messy and unshaved. Terry walks with a slight limp.

THE LADY AND THE TRAMP

Well, I really appreciate you listenin' to me and all. I think the boss wanted me to remember them things 'cause he wanted me to tell you, Miss Robinson. So there it is. All I know.

For what it's worth, I'm sorry.

Well, I better be going.

I'd call you a taxi, but I think you can find your own way from here on.

CLOWN ALLEY ENTREES

Entree [n.] A comic interlude, fifteen or twenty minutes in length, performed by clowns.

This section details a variety of Clown Alley crimes (entrées) that can be used either as adventures in their own right or as opening vignettes for adventures the GM has already scripted.

CLOWN ALLEY ENTREE: "WINDOW SHOPPING"

INTRODUCTION

A character is shopping at a local convenience store early in the evening when there is the sudden roar of an engine being gunned from the parking lot, a squeal of tires, and a pair of taillights rushes toward the front of the store. Seconds later, the back of a pick-up truck CRASHES through the front window, scattering glass shards across the store. *[GM Event: A startled shopper, surprised by the taillights plowing toward them, may stand right in front of the window as the truck hurtles toward them. The person needs to be saved by a quick-thinking PC. The NPC can be a little girl, a tired mother, or a panic-stricken man who freezes in the face of imminent danger.]*

As the back of the truck juts from the remains of the front store window, clowns jump from the cab and strafe the store, screaming at everyone to get down. Once they have performed crowd control, the Clowns grab cigarettes, snack foods, beer, rolls of lottery tickets and the bare necessities (Clown Alley frequently performs their shopping this way to cut down on costs); as the characters watch, the Clowns hurl armloads of these items into the back of the pick-up, while others strip the customers of their wallets and other possessions. Once they have finished stripping the store, they pile into the truck and drive away into the night, laughing and squeaking their clown noses. The PCs can intervene whenever they wish.

Complications include:

First Dibs: The Clowns bust in on two guys already robbing the store, Frankie and Cue, skilled store robbers (see the stats for Skilled Human in the *Champions Rulebook*, p.134 or use the statistics for Thug Type Two in *Justice, Not Law*, p.126); Frankie is holding a .44 Automag (2D6 RKA, +1 STUN Multiplier, 7 Shots) to the store clerk's head and shouting at him to fork over the money in the register, while Cue is covering the remaining customers with a *Street Sweeper shotgun* (2 1/2 D6 RKA, +1 STUN Multiplier, Autofire [5 Shots] with 20 Shells in the shotgun). They are both nervous, and the sudden crash through the front window of the Clown pick-up will cause them to start firing, turning the robbery into a bloody shoot-out.

The two thugs, Frankie ("Yo, bay-bee, my name's Frankie") and Cue ("Take your cue from THIS, mutha #^(%*!\$!!!") RATTATATTATTA) care only about getting the money out of the register and the safe and care nothing about getting provisions. Frankie is an thin, unshaven piece of white trash with a baseball cap and a lumberjack shirt; Cue is a leather-jacketed husky black man with an eightball shaved into the back of his head. (He has been beaten badly by Eightball on many previous occasions and sent to prison for his trouble.

He is nursing a heavy vendetta against "Mr. Eight," but right now, he wouldn't mind grinding a few clowns into blood sausage.) Frank and Cue, like the members of Clown Alley, will not hesitate to take hostages.

Cops Arrive: This option can be used with any of the Clown Entrées presented here, but in this adventure, it is particularly appropriate. Clown Alley didn't choose the place well enough; this convenience store has been tipped over many times in the past month, and the police have special orders to keep an eye on it. In fact, seconds after the Clown Alley shows up, a police car drives by, does a double-take, then jumps into the parking lot, its sirens flashing and engine roaring as the police officer screams for back-up on the radio. As soon as the cop shows up, Checkers (from the cab of the pick-up) yells at the others, and Clown Alley will open fire at the cop. The cop will hide behind the door of his patrol car and demand that the "renegade clowns" surrender. (*"For Chrissakes, fellows, what will kids think?!" he'll shout, during a burst of inspiration. "Think of the children!"*)

Suggested Clown Crooks: Checkers, Goodfellow (who *really* wanted to stop and was so insistent that Checkers drove the truck through the window in exasperation; Goodfellow tries to grab all the two liter soda bottles he can and throw them in the back of the truck), Peppy, Punchline, Chuckles, Fats, Smiley and Skinny Benny, in that order. Giggles, Mims the Pantomime and the Tramp can be thrown in for good measure if Clown Alley is going to up against stiff opposition. As they are robbing the store, they argue with each other, throwing snack foods around and generally act unprofessionally as Checkers honks the horn and shouts at them to hurry up.

This adventure can also use the car chase rules in *An Eye for an Eye* (pp.61-74) if Clown Alley peels out from the store; if Clown Alley drives away and are pursued (cops or no), the Clowns in the back light sticks of dynamite (painted as fire crackers) and hurl them at their pursuers, shouting "Dy-NO-mite!!!" Dynamite is a 5D6 Physical EB Exploding Attack, and the GM should be sure to check to see where the dynamite lands if it misses its target...there *are* other cars on the road. (*"Ohmigod! The fuel truck you hit! It's plummeting right for the gas station...where an Army munitions carrier is fueling up, right next to the fireworks factory!"*) Everything should be done to keep the chase as exciting as possible. To this end, Clown Alley should have a *lot* of dynamite in the back of the truck.

Map: The GM can either use the map on p.74 of *Justice, Not Law* or the map on p.210 of the *Champions Rulebook* (line the interior with shelves of convenience items and the battle scene is ready to go) for the robbery.

The Pick-up Truck Stats: Size: 2.5"x1.25", DCV: -2, 1.6 Tons, -4" Knockback, 40 STR, 3 DEF, 16 BODY, 15 DEX, SPD 3, Move: 25"(x4), Max: 300". Most of Clown Alley will be in the back of the truck, shooting or throwing dynamite at the characters.

CLOWN ALLEY ENTREE (KID NAPPING PROLOGUE) "THE PROS AND CONS OF BUSING"

INTRODUCTION

Pros and Cons of Busing is an Opening Vignette, either for *Kid Napping* or for another adventure of the GM's choosing. It employs the Car Chase rules from *An Eye for an Eye*, pp.61-74. This adventure takes place on a downtown street in the Campaign City on a weekday afternoon, shortly after school has let out for the day. Weather conditions are good, although traffic in the city is becoming increasingly congested.

SETTING THE STAGE

The adventure is Checkers's brainchild. As he is driving Smiley around the Campaign City one afternoon, they are cut off by a School Bus. Checkers, honking his horn and fuming, grumbles about how much he hates school buses, how the kids always make faces when he passes or shout at him and so on and so forth, when Smiley cuts in and says that the bus in front of them is from the Mount Sinai Private School (*if the GM is not GMing in Fell's Point, they can change the name of the private school; in Hudson City, it is the Hudson City Day School*) where the Mayor's son goes. "Doesn't trust the public schools, I guess," Smiley laughs as Checkers' mental gears turn. "How hard do you think it would be to hijack a school bus?" he finally asks Smiley, who frowns. "I mean, once we got on board, we could take all those kids somewhere and hold 'em for ransom. How many rich kids you figure ride on that bus?" Checkers persists. "I'm bettin' on a lot. And I bet there are a lot of parents who would be willing to pay out the nose to get their little darlings back, whaddya say, Smiley?" Smiley suggests they see what the other clowns say. Checkers forgets about it (lost on another topic) until he sees the bus again a few days later. Bringing up the idea before the rest of the clowns, they mull it over, agree it seems like a sound plan, and suggest Checkers and Smiley follow the bus around for a few days, getting a feel for its pattern.

Checkers and Smiley follow the bus for a week, making a note of all its stops and times on a *Monster Burger* napkin. (They are spotted by the kids twice, who point and laugh at them. "I'm gonna shoot those kids after we get the ransom money," Checkers mutters as the kids make obscene gestures at him.) One of the bus' early stops is on the corner of Fifteenth Avenue, and Smiley and Checkers agree that there would be the best place to hijack it. They could wait by the corner in costume until the bus stops, then jump aboard, beat up the bus driver, and they'd be good to go before anyone knew what was going on. They could then drive the kids to a secure location (the Clubhouse), lock them up and then issue ransom demands. Simple. They slap each other on the back and *honk* their noses.

GET ON THE BUS, GUS

On the chosen afternoon, the Clown Alley criminals taking part in the hijacking (Fats, Chuckles, Checkers, Smiley and Mims the Pantomime; also see *Suggested Clowns*, below) stand on the corner bus stop, smoking and drinking while waiting for the bus to show. PCs passing by may notice them, and if they fought Clown Alley before, they should recognize these guys (Distinctive Features). If the GM doesn't want to end the adventure early, have the PC be across the street or passing by in their car when they see Clown Alley lounging by the bus stop. This should prevent the clowns

from getting trashed before they can enact their grand plan.

The Private School Bus nears the corner, and the Clowns get ready...only to watch in surprise as the bus drives by without stopping (the student who is usually dropped off at that location was sick today, so the driver skips the scheduled stop). The clowns run wildly down the street after the bus, to its next location five blocks down (once again, a PC may be walking on the street when the clowns dash madly by him). By the time the clowns have reach the bus' next stop, two children have gotten off and are already walking away with their parents, and they watch in surprise as the clowns, huffing and puffing, grab the bus' door before it can close and SMASH it open, causing the bus driver to start cursing loudly (the kids giggle). Before he can say anything more, the clowns pile aboard, *honking* their noses, blowing their kazoos and punch out the driver as the children watch, stunned. The driver, Ernie, is dumped out at the next stop, and Fats slides his girth into the driver's seat, making sure his shotgun and bowling pin are in easy reach. Chuckles, his pistol ready, sits behind Fats so he can give Fats directions on where to turn. Two of the three other clowns, Checkers and Smiley, take up positions near the emergency door, and start feeling uncomfortable as the kids stare at them. ("Are you guys real clowns?" one child asks. "You smell *bad*!" "Yeah," the other kids echo. "Shutup, you little rich punks," Checkers snarls.) Pantomime begins to entertain the kids, who stare at him sullenly.

The parents back at the last stop, however, surprised at first, now become concerned. The clowns that boarded the bus did not really *look* like party clowns or act like them. (My word! The way they were hitting the driver!) Seeing a police officer down the street, they wave their hands to get his attention as the bus pulls away from the curb. As the bus gathers speed, it "clips" a subcompact car, knocking it spinning into the next lane over. The bus then lumbers down the street toward its destination.

Problems: Because they caught the bus several blocks away from the planned location, Clown Alley can't take the route they originally worked out back to the Clubhouse...worse, the Bus is going to be trapped in the city rush hour unless they make a detour on the interstate and double-back. Chuckles starts giving Fats directions as to how to get to the interstate. Depending on where the GM wants to stage the death-defying chase and rescue, however, their success varies — if the GM wants to do a chase scene where the bus plummets through back alleys, the bus misses the entry ramp onto the freeway (if in L.A., they may be luckier keeping off the interstate). Otherwise, the GM can stage a high-speed, no holds barred combat chase on the freeway. If confining the action to downtown streets, the GM may want to exercise some classic clichés (stylistically, they are appropriate for Clown Alley), including a loading truck pulling out in front of the PCs, Clown Alley driving into an area UNDER CONSTRUCTION, or driving the bus full of screaming passengers off the local pier. If the PC has no transportation, the GM should allow them to hop on top of the bus or hang off the side or hood as soon as possible...a leap off an overpass onto the top of the bus can really get the adrenaline pumping. PC specific action movie clichés include (1) being hurled out the front window of the bus, tumbling over the hood, then clinging to the grill as Fats guns the bus toward a car in front of the bus, laughing as he intends to crush the hero, or (2) Fats is knocked unconscious, with his foot pressing down on the accelerator, sending the bus on a death course toward a large, explosive object.

If the GM does not have access to the car chase rules

from *An Eye for an Eye*, they can use the rules on pp.184-195 of the *Champions Rulebook* for vehicle combat and characteristics. If the character does not have a vehicle to chase the bus in, the vehicle combat rules are not necessary.

Problem Two: The kids should prevent the PCs from dropping grenades or opening fire at the interior of the bus. The clowns have no such compunctions (and since they are going to be firing at targets outside or on top of the bus, the heroes will quickly find that the advantage is on the clowns' side). To prevent the chase from ending prematurely, the GM should emphasize that if the tires are shot while the bus is traveling over a certain speed (30 MPH), there is a good chance the bus will tip over or crash in a fiery inferno. The PCs should be encouraged to try and get up next to the bus and leap on the hood, roof or on the side, all the while fighting for their lives against sinister clowns so devoid of morals that they would stoop to steal children from their parents.

Cinematic Suggestions: This adventure is a limited, action-packed engagement...hopefully, with no serious complications. Clown Alley, while they take hostages, aren't hard-boiled killers and should not seriously harm the children they have kidnapped. If the PC has the chance to brawl with Clown Alley on the bus, the kids root for the PC and cheer whenever the hero gets a good punch in. ("Beat that clown! Beat that clown!" they chant.)

THE BUS

The bus is Length: 4 Hexes, Width: 1.6 Hexes, Area: Approx. 5 Hexes, Mass: 4 to 5 tons, DCV: -4, STR: 35, KB: -6" BODY: 16. The seats of the bus are hard, uncomfortable, covered in green plastic and are packed with fifteen students, all of whom are snobbishly rude.

Bus Map: The GM should have a rough map of the interior of the bus before the adventure takes place. It is 4 hexes long, with sixteen seats (each with the capacity to hold 2 students) on each side of the bus. There is an emergency door in the back that can be opened by pushing a lever on the inside of the bus.

The Driver's name is Ernie (use the statistics for a Normal Human, *Champions Rulebook*, p.133 with PS: Bus Driver, 11-), a thin, obsessive compulsive smoker who hates the kids he ferries around and is always trying to figure out who is cutting the plastic lining from his bus seats. As he drives the little ones home, his hawkish eyes drift across the back of the bus, looking for any trace of dissension.

Alternatives: Cop Sanction: The police can become involved very quickly; if the parents of the two children at the bus stop were able to convince the officer what just happened, he will call for all cars to intercept the bus. This will cause problems for the PC and Clown Alley. Include as many cop cars as desired to spice things up.

Suggested Clowns: Checkers and Fats are naturals for Combat Driving, although the GM may want to hold Chuckles and Fats in reserve for further adventures, as they are two of the only members of Clown Alley actually prone to fight.

CONCLUSION

Assuming the PCs stop them, Clown Alley's hijacking should not only be stopped, but the extraneous members that the GM doesn't want to show up for the rest of the adventure can be arrested. If the Clowns drop the ball (imagine that), they can have another shot in *Gate Crashing*, below. If they succeed, they will drive the kids to the Clown Alley Clubhouse, force them into a small room, then script the ransom demands and phone the parents to tell them

where to drop off the money. The PCs could tap the phones of the parents, drop a tracer in one of the money bags or just follow the deliverers back to the source. Go to *Running Gag*, below.

KID NAPPING, EPISODE ONE: GATE CRASHING

INTRODUCTION

This adventure can be run as an opening vignette, a one-night-stand, or as the second chapter of the Clown Alley adventure that began in *The Pros and Cons of Busing*. This adventure is suitable for any number of heroes, as long as enough clowns are included to challenge the characters. If the *Pros and Cons of Busing* was successful, or if the GM wants to speed up the course of the adventure, the GM can simply announce *Gate Crashing* has taken place, Carrie Anne has been kidnapped (perhaps with other children as well), and then proceed to *Running Gag*, below.

Suggested Clowns: Checkers, Smiley, Pantomime, Monkey-shines (should they need to break in the house), Skinny Benny, Goodfellow, Joey Toes and Punchline. Lucky can be used for comic relief, or else can be left at the Clubhouse to await the return of the clowns. All the clowns who escaped in the last adventure should be in *Gate Crashing*, especially Checkers and Smiley (who are looking for petty revenge against the children who witnessed their humiliating defeat). If the PC(s) playing this adventure are a tough bunch of hombres, Chuckles, Peppy and Fats should be throw in, too.

PROLOGUE

Assuming *The Pros and Cons of Busing* was bungled (surprise, surprise), Clown Alley tries a different track (if *The Pros and Cons of Busing* was successful and the children were shanghaied, skip to *Running Gag*, below). As they read aloud what the newspaper has to say about the hijacking of the school bus (accompanied with groaning, wincing and cries of "*Lies! These are all lies!*" from the clowns), they come across a direct quote from one of the children's parents who is a local public official (the GM should choose a NPC from their own campaign; if none is available, the County Commissioner, Mr. Hanwell, is provided), who says he is glad the PCs (or cops) were successful in stopping the marauding clowns, for he "doesn't know what he would have done if his little Timmy had been seized" and "would have paid any price to get him back."

The clowns look at each other and smile.

Clown Alley promptly looks up Hanwell in the telephone directory to find out where "little Timmy" and his father live. Once they have the address, they stake out the Hanwell mansion.

The Hanwell mansion is located in an affluent suburb either in or outside the Campaign City. The two story domicile is not guarded; the Hanwells are not expecting a troop of armed terrorists to enter their home. The Hanwell mansion is surrounded by a high stone wall (eight feet high), and a gate Mr. Hanwell closes and locks every night at about 8 PM, right after he walks the family's big sheep dog, Shep. The Hanwells are a nuclear family, with a rather petty, unintelligent wife who tends to dwell on life's trivialities while ignoring the complexities, a snobbish son (Timmy), and their

adorable young daughter, Carrie Anne. The family employs a maid to help with the chores around the house.

It is intended that Clown Alley bungle this adventure as well; they (primarily because of Joey Toes's fumbling) seize the wrong child; instead of getting Timmy, they seize the Hanwell's little daughter, Carrie Anne.

THE SET-UP

The attack on the Hanwell mansion can be done in three ways: The first option is to have the clowns walk in on a posh dinner party Mr. Hanwell is hosting. Several important guests are in attendance, all dressed up in their evening wear and basking in their pretentiousness. The guests are scattered through the house (see below). The second option is to have the clowns walk in on "little Timmy's" birthday party, disguised as party clowns. The third option is to have them sneak into the home at dusk when the Hanwells are having dinner and seize little Timmy. The GM should use one of the three options according to the campaign (in a four color campaign, the clowns should storm the birthday party, and in realistic Dark Champions campaigns, the clowns should attack the posh party or sneak in the house at night).

The PCs can already be attending the posh dinner party for their own reasons when the attack begins (they are unlikely to attend the birthday party unless they have a "child of consequence" at the Mount Sinai school); if the PCs are not the socializing type, they may be following up leads in a graft and corruption investigation in the local government, and one of their targets for observation will be making a deal at the party. If neither of these options is acceptable, the Hanwells can call the police and report a car that has been parked on their street for the past few days. If the PCs have access to the police band, they will overhear this; if they make a Deduction roll, they realize Timmy was one of the children on the bus "hijacked" by Clown Alley during the last adventure; they may conclude that someone, perhaps Clown Alley or another group, intends to make another try at the child and is staking out the place. If the GM wants to drop a major hint, the Clown Alley car can be described in great detail to the police; the police won't recognize it at first, but vigilantes might.

THE HANWELL MANSION

Map: Use the Milford Mansion map on pp. C50-51 in *Champions* as the Hanwell mansion. If the GM wishes, the map for the Senator's home in Scott Heine's *Mind Games* can be used instead.

Map Additions and Changes: There are no blasters, secret control rooms, motion sensors or magnetic sensors. Room 4 on the second level of the Milford Mansion is actually a linen closet (no secret door). The second floor, lower right bedroom (#2) is Carrie Anne's nursery. Timmy's bedroom is the bedroom just North of the nursery, and the Master Bedroom is where Mr. and Mrs. Hanwell sleep. The GM can photocopy the map for his own use and pencil in the changes.

THE POSH PARTY

If the GM is using the posh dinner party option, the following set-up should be used. Party guests are scattered throughout the mansion, most of them by the pool where a live band is playing, people are dancing, and a buffet table is up and running.

First Floor

Front Door
The Pool

Library (#1)

Kitchen (#2)

Restroom (#3)

Foyer (#6)
Billiards (#7)

Second Floor
Nursery (#2, Lower Left)

Timmy's Room (#2)

Bathrooms

Guests

Valet

32 Guests, 4 elderly Band Members and Mr. and Mrs. Hanwell

2 Guests admiring Hanwell's video tape collection.

5 Caterers, stirring and baking industriously.

50% chance of being occupied at any time of the evening.

Hired Coat checker.

3 Civil Servants playing pool and laughing about the plight of the poor.

Guests and Residents

Carrie Anne, sleeping like a little angel. "Shep" is sleeping on the floor here, masquerading as a rug.

Timmy, sulking, after being sent to his room after making farting noises with his armpit in front of guests.

50% chance of being occupied at any time of the evening.

Checkers, Smiley, Pantomime, Monkeyshines, Punchline, Fats, Goodfellow and Joey Toes pull up outside the house (at the Northern wall) at 9 PM in the *Checkers* cab. When the car squeals to a halt, the clowns pile out of it. When the valet greets them at the door ("Can I take your...ahem...car, sirs...?") they mob him ("Oh my God!"), beating him with their clown props ("Ow! Ow!") and tossing his body in the bushes outside of the front door.

Hat, sir? The clowns then storm through the foyer, honking their noses, setting off firecrackers and startling the coat checker...who smiles weakly as the seven or eight clowns gather around her. Punchline slowly and deliberately removes his hat from his head and hands it to her, and then fires his boxing glove from beneath his coat, knocking her into the wall, unconscious. The clowns clap their hands like seals.

Pooling Resources: All the clowns except for Smiley, Joey and Goodfellow proceed to the pool area with a series of back flips and round-offs, crashing and bungling their way through the mansion. Once at the pool, the guests clap as the clowns arrive, surround the guests and then draw "uncannily realistic" firearms which they point at the guests and tell them to place all their valuables on the ground. As this is going on, Checkers draws forth the newspaper article on the Hanwells from his jacket and ask where Mr. and Mrs. Hanwell might be.

Playing Pool: Smiley moves to the Billiards room, drawing his pistol and telling the Civil Servants to place all their valuables on the pool table, take off all their clothes and then line up against the wall, where he pulls out a camera and snaps a picture. Then he forces the three men out of the pool room with ZAPS from his joy buzzer, driving them into the backyard and into the pool.

Goodfellow meanders through the house, putting expensive pens and decorative statuettes in his pockets, with the same dumb guilty smile on his face he always wears. A character at the party can ambush him when he is alone and take his costume if necessary to surprise the other clowns

(and also if they left their vigilante costume at home). Goodfellow can also be a surprise for a character who is concentrating on the main Clown Alley force gathered by the pool.

Joey, as soon as he sees no children around the pool area, makes his way upstairs, looking for Timmy. Timmy is sulking in his closet, and when Joey cracks the door and sees that Timmy's room is empty, he assumes Timmy is in one of the other rooms. Joey then proceeds to Carrie Anne's nursery, and overcome with her presence, scoops her up and starts *cooing* at her. (Shep, the family dog, continues to sleep soundly on the floor.) Joey will play with Carrie until it becomes apparent that Clown Alley is in trouble, then Joey skedaddles with Carrie Anne out the window (he uses his vault pole to slide to the ground, then makes a run for the wall). Unless the GM wants to end the adventure here, the PC can only watch as Joey leaps over the wall and escapes with the Hanwell's little daughter.

How the Police Find Out: If the GM needs a way to alert the players to the crime, the PCs can be listening in on the police band when the call comes in on the Clown attack...as it turns out, Clown Alley missed one of the guests who was using the bathroom when they arrived, and the guest snuck to the hall phone and called to the police. Another option is for a latecomer to arrive outside and see the valet lying in the bushes. Stepping inside the foyer, he sees the coat checker has been knocked unconscious and runs out to his car and car phone, where he calls the police.

The "Posh Party" should end with Joey Toes escaping with Carrie Anne and as many clowns as the GM wishes to reappear in the next scenes escape.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

In the Birthday Party option, Timmy is celebrating his seventh birthday and has invited every "person of consequence" (a term he picked up from his father) from the Mount Sinai Private School. The mob of childish, screaming chaos is swirling around the pool and seeping into remote the corners of the house. Timmy's Birthday Party can in the afternoon or in the early evening, GM discretion.

First Floor

The Pool

Kitchen (#2)

Restroom (#3)

Second Floor

Nursery (#2, Lower Left)

Bathrooms

Guests

32 Screaming Kids and Mr. and Mrs. Hanwell, understandably frightened.

3 Caterers, working industriously. A large cake is here. "Shep" is here, looking at the food being prepared with large eyes.

50% chance of being occupied by a squirming child at any time.

Residents

Carrie Anne, sleeping like a little angel.

50% chance of being occupied by a squirming child at any time.

The clowns, Checkers, Smiley, Pantomime, Monkeyshines, Goodfellow and Joey Toes pull up in the driveway in the *Checkers* cab, either in the afternoon or at night, depending on what time the party is taking place. They trundle into the building, "pop guns" out and head through the foyer (#6), with Goodfellow picking things off of tables and putting

them in his pockets. They make their way into the kitchen, where they push the caterers around a little bit (and give old "Shep" a pat on the head) and take large chunks out of the cake with their hands. Examining the pool outside from the window, they saunter out, masquerading as party clowns, asking where the birthday boy is. Once they find little Timmy, they hoist him on their shoulders and then, as a seeming clown trick, run around the house with him on his shoulders and into their car for a little drive. If the PCs do not stop the clowns, they will make off with Timmy. Joey should somehow make his way upstairs and find Carrie Anne during the course of the scene, and be able to escape with her while the main Clown Alley force is dealing with the PCs.

This birthday can be a revenge against all the children that were in *The Pros and Cons of Busing*, as many of them are making a repeat appearance at the party. With only a little tweaking in the adventure, it can be turned into a mass kidnapping.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

If the GM doesn't want to have to deal with the pompous elite or screaming children, Clown Alley sneaks into the Hanwell Mansion one night and take Carrie Anne (by accident). They do so late at night (1 AM), where the layout will be:

Second Floor

Residents

Nursery (#2, Lower Left) Carrie Anne, sleeping like a little angel. "Shep" is sleeping on the floor here.

Timmy's Room (#2) Timmy, tossing and turning, dreaming about being chased and eaten by the poor.

The Hanwell's Room (#2) Mr. and Mrs. Hanwell, snoring loudly.

Bathrooms 50% chance of being occupied by a child at any time of the evening.

The exterior doors and windows are all locked, and there are no lights on in the house.

Checkers, Smiley, Pantomime, Monkeyshines, Goodfellow and Joey Toes pull up outside the house (at the Northern wall) at 1 AM in the Checkers cab. They clumsily scale the wall (Joey leaps over it), clambering on top of the cab, then jumping on top of the wall and scrambling over the top, grunting and puffing. Checkers remains in the cab until the clowns get back. He may be dealt with quickly and easily by a PC who encounters him while he is alone.

The other five clowns run across the grounds until they reach the outside of the house, circling it until they come to the greenhouse (#9). Pushing and shoving each other, they tell Monkeyshines to let his monkey in to open the door. The monkey scampers in and opens the door latch, letting the clowns inside, and they immediately spread out and cover the first floor, weapons drawn. Upstairs, Timmy, disturbed by his nightmares, stumbles out of bed and goes to the bathroom.

Clown Alley, unless stopped, make their way upstairs and search the rooms. As they peek in Timmy's room, they see no one and close the door, assuming Timmy is safe in bed in some other portion of the house. (GM Note: It is intended the PC[s] deal with the other clowns first, allowing Joey to enter Carrie Anne's room and make his getaway.)

If the PCs are not staking out the Hanwell house, two things can be done to alert them:

1. The Hanwells have a security system that goes off when the clowns enter.

2. Mr. and Mrs. Hanwell wake up when they hear the clowns bumping around downstairs. As Mr. Hanwell goes down to see what's the matter, his wife calls the police. If the PCs listen in on the police band, they will hear about the intruders at the Hanwell house (the police will arrive too late to prevent Carrie Anne from being taken, however). Mr. Hanwell is beaten up by the clowns and left on top of the pool table in the Game Room on the first floor; the house is ransacked as well.
3. When Joey enters the room, the Hanwell's sheep dog, Shep, starts barking, waking them up, and Mrs. Hanwell calls the police as Mr. Hanwell goes to investigate (Number Two, above). Carrie Anne sleeps soundly despite how much noise is occurring in her room or in the house.

Joey enters Carrie Anne's room, and seeing the slumbering child, picks her up ("Awwww") and prepares to abscond with her. ("This lil' darling'll do in a pinch.") Opening the window, Joey extends his vault pole and slides down to the ground, then makes a run for the wall. Unless the GM wants to end the adventure here, the PC can only watch as Joey leaps over the wall and escapes.

It is intended that Joey Toes make off with Carrie Anne to set the stage for the rest of the adventure. If he is stopped, the adventure ends.

ALTERNATIVE OUTCOMES

Clown Alley steals Timmy and Carrie Anne. Clown Alley may decide to swap Carrie Anne or Timmy (Timmy first...they like Carrie Anne) for any members of Clown Alley who were thrown in jail. This option can be used if many members of Clown Alley have been captured by the police.

KID NAPPING, EPISODE TWO: "RUNNING GAG"

INTRODUCTION

After Clown Alley makes off with Carrie Anne, they tie their ransom note to a brightly-painted rocket and fire it through the Hanwell mansion's library window, where it embeds itself into one of the bookcases. The note reads as follows:

Mister Hanwell:

We have your cute littel daughter and will plan to keep her unless you deliver \$100,000 dollars in unmarked bills in a brown paper grocery bag at midnight on Thursday to the phone booth on the corner of Fifteenth and Broad street. You wait there with the money until you get a phone call from the booth. If you tell the police, you will never see your daughter again. Your sincerely,
Clown Alley.

Wrapped in the note is a crinkled photograph showing Joey Toes with Carrie Anne (sleeping) next to a copy of today's paper. If the GM wishes, the hero can use the photograph to help determine where Carrie is being held. (This

option should only be used if the PCs somehow fail to track down Clown Alley through the phone booth chase, below.)

Overall: Running Gag is not combat oriented; it is primarily a full-tilt obstacle course all over the city, with a combat at the end (see Big Top, next). The PCs can approach this adventure two ways: they can either choose to Disguise themselves as Mr. or Mrs. Hanwell and drop off the money themselves (and hopefully coming within reach of the real perpetrators; this will work if the PC makes their Disguise roll) or else follow Mr. Hanwell across the city, from phone booth to phone booth, until the collectors pick up the money. If the characters have the technology, they can also secretly place a locator in the brown paper bag Hanwell is carrying.

Maps: There are no maps in Running Gag; while general street map locations might prove helpful (see Justice, Not Law), they are not necessary. Once the Hanwells come to the phone booth on Fifteenth and Broad with the money bag, Clown Alley will call the booth and then have the Hanwells run all over the city, from phone booth to phone booth, giving them just enough time to make it to the next booth before calling them and telling them to run somewhere else. At discrete points during the chase, members of Clown Alley will be watching the Hanwells to see if they are being followed. When the Hanwells reach the next to the last telephone booth (this booth one has a opaque lower half and no light bulb in it), the Hanwells will be told to set the money bag down and pick up another brown paper bag lying in the bottom of the phone booth. This second paper bag is filled with confetti and looks a little different than the ones the Hanwells were carrying (Sight PER Roll at -3 in Darkness every minute the characters to see the difference). The Hanwells are instructed to make the switch as casual as possible (with the implied threat that Carrie Anne will be harmed if they mess it up) and are told to run to the next telephone booth, leaving the money bag behind.

A minute after the Hanwells leave the booth, Monkeyshines's monkey scampers into the booth, pulls out the bag with its hands and teeth and drags it into a nearby alley, where Monkeyshines and Punchline are waiting. The two clowns grab the bag and run down the alley where the Checkers cab is parked (with Checkers is waiting impatiently behind the wheel), hop in and take off, laughing. From this point on, Running Gag can become a car chase, or if the characters catch the switch, they can beat up the members of Clown Alley before they even reach the cab. If caught, the clowns will eagerly rat on where the rest of the Clowns and Carrie Anne are, but insist (in pleading, whining tones) that they never would have hurt Carrie Anne, even if the Hanwells hadn't coughed up the dough.

If the PCs place a tracer in the money bag the Hanwells are carrying and hide it beneath the money, they should be able to track the clowns back to the Clubhouse.

Alternate Locations: GMs may want to stage the grab in more exciting places, like the city park at midnight (with plenty of roving gangs and obstacles), a shopping mall, an abandoned industrial park (with huge rusted iron pipes and plenty of places to hide) or even in a carnival or amusement park a few hours after closing (perfect for cinematic fight scenes).



KID NAPPING, EPISODE THREE: "BIG TOP"

INTRODUCTION

The characters should eventually track down the Clown Alley kidnapers to their Clubhouse where they will have to defeat Clown Alley and prevent Joey Toes from making off with Carrie Anne. If the character was unsuccessful in spotting the money drop in Running Gag, an underworld informant can tip off the characters as to where Clown Alley is holed up or else the PCs can eavesdrop on the police radio until the cops spot the Clown Alley cab pulling into a warehouse in the Harbor. The PCs can then attend to matters personally.

Storm Warnings: A light rain begins to fall as the characters make their way to the Clubhouse, and the wind picks up. The weather gets progressively worse as the adventure continues; while it will not affect combat within the Clubhouse, once Joey Toes makes a break for it, PCs may suffer penalties to their actions while chasing down the fleeing clown.

CLOWN ALLEY ADVENTURE LOCALE: "THE CLUBHOUSE"

INTRODUCTION

The Clubhouse is a spur of the moment, drop anywhere you want, Clown Alley Sample Base if the GM needs one in a hurry (it's perfect for the Kid Napping scenario). The Clubhouse description is kept segmented and general so the GM can dump Clown Alley's personal effects wherever they wish to create an instant battle site, whether in an old hotel, gymnasium, warehouse, abandoned toy factory, dilapidated barn, and so on. All the GM needs is to photocopy a location map from the *Champions Rulebook*, *Justice*, *Not Law* or another Hero product and then pencil in the appropriate places from the key below.

Cinematic Parameters: Any place where Clown Alley is holed up must have a lot of breakables in it, whether it be bottles, glass, old boards...whatever. Plus, little events should also be scattered around the battle site, including rat traps, swinging balls or hooks, window panes begging to be broken, crates, scaffolding, open dumpsters, fragile stair and balcony railings, trash cans, old chairs and breakaway furniture. PCs should gain experience points if they manage to break everything in the Clubhouse.

Where is Carrie Anne? Carrie Anne (and Joey Toes) will always be located at the farthest point away from where the characters enter the Clubhouse to make their escape that much easier. Clown Alley is keeping Carrie Anne in a Toddler-B-Still papoose, tucked in with a pink blankie, a small rattle and a pacifier to chew on quietly. She is napping when the characters arrive, and Joey Toes is watching her sleep; he, like most of Clown Alley, has fallen in love with the "sweet

lil' angel" and wouldn't dream of harming her, despite his threats to the Hanwells.

Free Parking Zone: Clown Alley has access to three vehicles, usually parked in an old garage or in back of the Clubhouse where they cannot be seen from the street. At the moment, most of the vehicles are parked inside the Clubhouse (first floor area). The three vehicles include the Checkers Cab, a large moving truck (for long hauls or when moving all the junk from their base to somewhere else) and a rusty red pickup truck for stealing such cumbersome items as trampolines, gymnastic bars, armloads of food and even the occasional hostage (see Window Shopping). Clown Alley usually keeps mattresses and whatnot in the back of both trucks to cushion their fall should they need to jump into it from atop a building. Characters falling through the skylight on the roof or from the catwalk can cushion their fall on these mattresses or in the knee-deep piles of junk that fills the first floor of the Clubhouse.

Building Next Door: The building bordering the Clubhouse is an abandoned three-story tenement building. While the door and windows are boarded over, characters can still gain access to this building, and a large wooden gangplank connects the roof of the tenement to the Clubhouse roof.

THE ROOF, THE "BIG TOP"

Da Roof: The roof is quiet except for the slow patter of rain-fall and the dirty laundry flapping on lines strung across the roof; coupled with these sounds is an intermittent BANG and the slow creaking as the door to a sagging chicken wire pigeon coop on the roof rattles in the wind. The rain has begun to coalesce into brown, sludgy pools here, mixing into an unhealthy stew of dirt, gravel and tar. A large rectangular skylight on the northern portion of the roof looks down on the interior of the clubhouse, the dirty window panes unable to hide the faint yellow glow coming from inside. If necessary, the skylights can be opened and characters can climb down to the third floor of the Clubhouse, although they may run into one of Giggles's traps (see below). There is also a roof access door (locked and rusted shut) that leads down to the third floor, and the building has an old iron fire escape and several windows beneath the perimeter of the roof that a character could reach with a swing line or climbing claws. Finding a port of entry should not be a problem, although the slippery, rain-slicked surfaces and sudden gusts of wind may make the safer ones more attractive.

Combat Notes: There are a number of ramshackle structures on the roof that provide cover; actions such as fighting or running across the roof should be done at a -1 Penalty (this applies to OCV, DCV, and DEX-Based Skills), due to the storm and the rain. Visibility is poor. Characters with Superleap, such as Joey Toes, will find the neighboring roof-tops accessible.

INSIDE THE CLUBHOUSE, GENERAL

Random Problems, the Monkey: Monkeyshines's pet is always wandering somewhere in the Clubhouse. If it sees an intruder, however, it will not screech a warning to the other members of Clown Alley; it only watches the PC silently from a safe location, blinking occasionally. It will screech up a storm only after the character attacks, or if the character should attack it first. Unfortunately, the rest of Clown Alley

have gotten used to the monkey's screaming, and will assume it is "crying wolf" or just being a nuisance if the PC makes a grab for it. Monkeyshines may berate it from below, before going back to his business.

Random Problems, Sad Billy's Lone Watch: "Mad" Billy is up and about, straightening up around the Clubhouse and walking a manic guard patrol, weapon out, either somewhere on the first floor or on the second floor catwalks. Sad Billy doesn't really have an area he calls "his." When he sleeps (only once every few days), he sleeps in the back of one of the trucks or on one of the hammocks.

INSIDE THE CLUBHOUSE: THIRD FLOOR

The Third Floor of the Clubhouse is falling apart, with piles of junk and garbage filling the corners. There is little or no light in this area, and what light does reach here usually comes from string lamps and bulbs on the first floor. Clown Alley uses this floor as a trash bin, and the floors and walls of the rooms on this level have gaping holes in them. A series of thick wooden beams crisscross the open space on this floor, some with ropes and chains dangling from them to the floors below (there are usually mattresses and foam padding beneath these ropes and chains, which are meant for climbing). Characters gain +1 to their Stealth Rolls while creeping around this area.

Warning: Characters entering this section of the Clubhouse must make a DEX Roll to avoid the evil little traps Giggles has placed around the area, including: mousetraps with pins and glass attached to the metal "snap" that comes down on the users hand (1D6 HKA, sometimes with the Penetrating or Armor-Piercing advantage), nails embedded in the floor covered with a thin fabric, spring blade traps and so on...any character who runs through this area takes an automatic 1D6 HKA every Phase. If going slowly, characters can make a Sight PER Roll to avoid the traps that blanket this area, but a light source is needed; most of this floor is dark.

Giggles: Giggles sleeps in the rafters of the Clubhouse, in a space between the roof and the ceiling of the third floor. None of the other members have seen his room and do not know where he sleeps. Giggles's private space (concealed somewhere on this floor, GM discretion) has grainy black and white photographs tacked on the walls with pins and knives. His "bed" is a rat's nest of old clothes, pieces of carpet and cardboard, crawling with insects and lice. A broken cosmetic mirror hangs from a support beam.

If Clown Alley has been forced to move, Giggles always sleeps in areas difficult to access...basements, vent shafts and so on...anywhere where it is difficult for others to follow.

INSIDE THE CLUBHOUSE: SECOND FLOOR

The second level mostly contains rooms of Clown Alley members. Chains, ropes and low wires are within reach of the catwalks, dangling from the rafters and beams on the upper level. Two "low wires" span the catwalk on this level (see the map).

Catwalk: This rickety catwalk is composed half of rickety banisters (near the offices) and iron grating (around the rest of the Clubhouse). The catwalk seems to beg player characters to throw clowns off it.

Punchline: Punchline has the door to his room rigged so that when it is opened, a boxing glove will shoot out and

strike the character. He set it up because he got sick of people taking things from his room, or so he claimed; most of the clowns think he just likes to trick people. His room contains a number of noisemakers, bongo drums and popular culture magazines highlighting famous comedians. Several pairs of boxing gloves hang from the walls, each of them showing a great deal of wear and tear.

Smiley: Pictures of models cover this room like wallpaper, so thick and chaotic that the brick and cinder block cannot even be seen. Smiley's room has a battery charger plugged into the wall that he attaches his joy buzzer to recharge it. He has a long wooden table that runs through the center of the room with many small wire and electrodes lying on it, all scrap pieces from either fixing or modifying his joy buzzer.

Mims the Pantomime: Pantomime's room is clean and neat; targets cover the walls and the thump thump coming from his room late at night is usually due to his target practice. A large mirror leans against one wall, which Mims practices in front of (with the door locked and window shades drawn). His bed is several mattresses thick, and the floor is free of dust. Faded newspaper articles of Clown Alley exploits are taped on the walls of the room. Mime entertainment magazines and extra costumes are hidden beneath his bed.

Fats: Fats sleeps in his own room along the second floor catwalk, double locked, with a dead bolt and a sliding chain (DEF 4/BODY 3). If the heroes attack at night, Fats is unlikely to be seen at first, for he usually sneaks off to a remote corner of the building to sleep, lacing the area with tripwires and cans before falling into a restless slumber. Fats is intended to be in the background for the first few Phases of fighting, then suddenly appear on the scene, his shotgun and derringer blasting away at the intruders as he bellows at the top of his lungs. The catwalk allows an excellent sniping position for the hefty clown, and he will use it to good effect.

Skinny Benny: A "shrine" dedicated to Ginny dominates half of Benny's room. There are dozens of pictures of her, smiling, not smiling, standing, sitting, eating, not eating, and all the pictures surrounded by valentine hearts and white lace. Benny's bed is large and lumpy with a plump mattress and piles of blankets and quilts (it looks like he could be lost in its immensity). His daggers, pistols and nunchaku are usually lying scattered on the floor. Characters who need to tie up disruptive members of Clown Alley can find many Entangles in Benny's trunk — there are ropes, handcuffs, chains and so on that Benny used to practice with as part of his clown act. If PCs want to use some of them, assume each is: 5D6 Entangle, Set Effect (Only ties up hands or feet, -1), Does not prevent use of most Accessible Foci (-1), No Range (-1/2), OAF (Handcuffs, Rope, Chains and so on, -1). Benny can automatically get out of these restraints if he is secured with them.

Chuckles and the Tramp: Beer and wine bottles have been dumped on the floor of this room, and a thick, smoky smell blankets the area. There is a wooden prosthetic arm (right handed) resting on a coffee table by the window, surrounded by ashtrays and cigar butts. A rickety bunk bed is shoved up against the side of the wall, with the Tramp's huge trunk leaning against it, as if to hold it up. A few spent shell casings lie on the floor, along with a pool cue rack that holds several of the Tramp's battle-staves, as well as his favorite cue stick.

The Bathroom: The moldy sinks and rusted urinals testify to how often this place is used. There is no running water on this floor.



INSIDE THE CLUBHOUSE: FIRST FLOOR

Entrance Doors: All the exterior doors on this level are locked, but they can easily be broken down or shot open (DEF 4/BODY 3). The truck doors can be smashed open by a pick-up truck or van, if necessary; while they are not locked, they take some time to raise and lower.

Sleeping Area: This area is the communal sleeping, dressing and eating area for the rest of the clowns. Hammocks are strung between the pillars of this floor, and rats skitter in corners of the building (occasionally one can be seen rooting through in the piles of junk like a small furry pig sniffing for truffles). The latest mode of transportation (if only one) is kept here, either the Checkers cab or a van of some sort where they can cram their junk when necessary. Long ropes and bungee cords line the ground near the vehicles, the remnants of their unpacking. Much of the “equipment” that fills the first floor has been gathered by Mims, and he is more than eager to share it with his buddies to make sure they keep Clown Alley crimes in the proper spirit. An old Ping Pong table has been set up in the east side of the Clubhouse. Sometimes Clown Alley takes one of the Ping Pong balls as an extra nose should they accidentally lose theirs during a crime.

The lighting in this area is the best in the Clubhouse; low wattage bulbs hang from cords from the catwalks and work lights are plugged into some of the sockets; nevertheless, there is plenty of cover and shadows all over the first floor, and characters can easily sneak into the Clubhouse and get close to some of the clowns before the clowns knew what was going on.

Checkers and the Cab: Checkers lies prone in the front seat of cab, snoring loudly and mumbling a story to himself in his sleep. His Shotgun rests beneath the seat.

Goodfellow: Goodfellow is sleeping on one of the first floor hammocks, dreaming up his next prank.

Lucky: Lucky is in the common room flicking pennies (taken from one of his socks of change and metal slugs) at a coffee-stained styrofoam cup and missing. Other cups, Monster Burger, Hardy’s and Dave’s Delicatessen, and a few cans that have been opened and plundered from a local Quick Corner lie scattered around the other cup, but Lucky seems unable to hit them either. When he grows tired of flicking pennies (and if no one else is around), he takes out a pencil stub, touches it to his tongue and begins scribbling frantically on a small notebook he takes from his pocket. He ceases when someone approaches. Lucky will not notice a character until the PC is right on top of him; if they approach suddenly, his mouth will make an “O” of surprise, and he will backpedal away from the character on all fours as quickly as possible.

The Bathroom: The dirty sink and broken mirrors testify to how often this place is used. The water is sluggish in the pipes in this area, and when it comes out of the faucets, it is rust-colored.

Monkeyshines: When the characters arrive, Monkeyshines is walking somewhere around the first floor, wringing his hands and fretting to himself. His small, dingy room smells of monkey, and it looks like his favorite pet uses his bed as a chamber pot frequently. Several trenchcoats hang by the door and there is a full-length mirror, a pile of newspapers and a pickpocket training dummy (with small bells attached to its outfit) propped against the far wall. The window blind is drawn shut.

Peppy: Peppy’s room has racks of guns on the walls and Long’s Soldier of Fortune magazines piled in the corners. His room is one of the largest ones in the Clubhouse and seems a trifle big for him.

Author’s Note: Any of the specific items described below can be placed in the rooms of the clowns to give their bedrooms a more authentic, detailed feel.

“C” Clothing: The largest collection of clown clothing lies in a pile by the dressing table: suspenders, striped shirts, long shirts. (These shirts are made by sewing the bottom halves of many shirts together to make a continuous top with different patterns staggered along its length. Skinny Benny really likes these shirts, despite the fact they hamper his routine.) Boxer shorts, with flowers and red hearts also lie draped on crates and chairs. Characters searching through any of the clown’s rooms in the Clubhouse will turn up clothes similar to these.

“D” Dressing Area: Clown Alley’s make-up and props litter this area like a recent avalanche, spilling out of large trunks and all over the floor. They have acquired most of this paraphernalia during their shopping trips to Big and Tall stores, Army surplus stores, sporting goods stores, convenience stores, gag sections of toy stores, department stores and so on. A dozen large mirrors, dirty and cracked, lean on top of a huge table in this section, each mirror perched in front of shaky stools, some of which are missing legs. Hats, anything from women’s felt hats, derby hats, stovepipe hats (including Fedora hats...) and so on, litter the area. Flowers and safety pins, white cardboard collars, from ridiculously large to incredibly small, ties, in all shapes, kinds and colors, button-on suspenders, size fifteen combat boots, voluminous overcoats, parade gloves from an Army surplus store, hardware gloves, spats and clown shoes cover the area. This long table is intended to be used as a combat prop for heroes who pick up a member of Clown Alley onto the table and slide them down it, smashing through all their cosmetics with flashy special effects.

A number of clothes hangers lie on the ground; they are occasionally used as props or playthings by the other members of Clown Alley. Lucky must be watched when he is around them, for he has been known to chew on them.

Make-Up on the Tables: Small tool boxes, cans, tins and squeeze bottles of white, black, flesh and red clown greasepaint, eyebrow pencils, makeup brushes (most of the brushes are jammed in the tins, without much regard for keeping the colors separate), baby powder (to keep the greasepaint from looking too pasty until set), a powder sock, powder brushes, toothbrushes (used for make-up application and for giving their teeth that special shine), small paintbrushes (soft-bristle, three inch brushes), baby oil (for removing the make-up), compact mirrors (stolen from numerous purses), a dozen or more kinds of clown noses, spirit gum, boxes of tissues and rolls of toilet paper, cotton swabs and discarded cotton balls, baseball caps and shower caps (to keep the hair back), rubber bands, nylon stocking caps, clips and so on are on the table, plus some bottles of glitter and assorted pasties (which some of the members of Clown Alley wear as a joke). A blinding variety of wigs are also available and colorful dyes abound.

“J” Junk: Foam and padding, a few reams of ballistic mesh for patching costumes, newspaper, bits of cloth, cardboard boxes, plywood, old pillows and other items are all piled here.



"L" Laundry: Some of the clowns, to the annoyance of Joey and Mims, hang their dirty clothes over the low wire that spans the Clubhouse's two catwalks (see second floor description). Mims may walk across this low wire to leap down on opponents from above, and PCs can jump up to them, using them as gymnastic bars to perform swinging kicks on opponents.

"N" Novelty Items: Plastic collapsible knives, BANG! Flag Guns, fake smear-on blood-in-a-tube, simulated doggy-vomit, noise-makers, kazoo's and so on are all stored here. If a character runs through here, the area explodes with *bing's*, honks, BANGS and "wakka-wakka" sounds.

"P" Props: Old telephones, telephone cords, trampolines (stolen from a sporting goods store) along with large plastic bouncy balls, nets, ropes and baseball bats all lie here, waiting to be used.

JOEY'S BIG BREAK

When the characters attack, Joey doesn't wait around. He runs. Only after most of the clowns in the Clubhouse have been humiliatingly defeated, should the characters realize that Carrie Anne is not here...and perhaps then they will hear the sounds of someone's sneakers beating a retreat to the roof to make their escape (Joey will make it to the roof; there are at least six or seven ways he could do so). From there, Joey will lead the characters on a death-defying chase across the rooftops of the city.

The GM should do everything in their power to increase the cinematic chase of the adventure; for maximum effect, Joey should be able to lead a character through two or three sections of the building before running outside to the rain-slicked rooftops of the city. For cinematic reasons, while Joey may put a scare into pursuers (cutting climbing ropes, kicking away gangplanks and shooting at swing lines), Joey will not do anything that will seriously impede a character from chasing him. As the hero goes outside, Joey (with a saved action) sends a hail of bullets into the ground around the character (warning shots); if Joey is hopelessly outmatched (Harbinger) he will open fire on the character as soon as they show themselves, trying to slow them long enough for him to make his escape.

Once outside, the characters will find that the storm has picked up, and the wind is scouring the tops of the city; Joey can barely be seen in the storm as he teeters along the ledges of the building, across gangplanks and the catwalks of the city, with Carrie (sleeping soundly... "kid napping," as it were) strapped in the Toddler-B-Still papoose on his back. Joey does not want to hurt Carrie, but he also does not wish to be shot to death by a vigilante or a cop. When firing, Joey will do his best to comfort Carrie. ("Shush, sweetheart! C'mon, honey, shhhh — Hey, back off!!! [BLAMBLAMBLAM] Not another step!!! I'm warning ya!!!" [BRAPP-BRAAAPP BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA] "Shhhhhh, honey, c'mon...") If things look really desperate, Joey will threaten to drop Carrie (he has no intention of doing so, but he hopes to buy time with his idle threats).

Maps: Maps of the alleyways in *Justice, Not Law* (pp.71-72) might be helpful, and some of the interior maps can be used if Joey leaps into someone's window and runs through a local nightclub with Carrie Anne. Joey's agility in the face of adversity should be nothing short of astounding; for brief moments, Joey seems to gain superhuman reflexes and the agility to pull off impossible stunts (hey, his life and livelihood is in danger...plus, he thinks Carrie is a real cute kid and shouldn't have to go back to those "stick in the mud" Hanwells).

CARRIE ALL

Once Joey Toes is disabled and Carrie Anne rescued, Carrie suddenly wakes up and gurgles pleasantly, stretching her arms out to hug the character. As soon as the character rescues Carrie from Joey, however, the rest of Clown Alley pops up out of nowhere (even the ones who were badly injured...give everyone three Recoveries in addition to however much time has passed since they were injured); the GM should time the arrival and the firepower of the clowns so the Alley presents a real threat to the character, forcing them to make their own run across the rooftops, fending off Clown Alley one by one as they attempt to reclaim Carrie. The character will be unable to:

1. Put Carrie down. If they do, a clown will come from the flank and snatch her away, and the character has to go through the chase all over again.
2. Fight the clowns. If they do, there is a good chance they will put Carrie Anne in danger as gunshots and punches are traded across the wet-slicked rooftops.

Difficulties: In the Joey's favor, the character should be unlikely to open fire on Joey Toes (especially if Joey's back is to them) considering the toddler he is carrying...even if a character shoots to disable, there is the chance that Joey will fall to his (and Carrie's) death on the streets below. Furthermore, Carrie's presence will (should) prevent characters from hurling grenades or any other Area of Effect or Explosion attacks. Although Carrie is sleeping for the majority of the adventure (Kid Napping. Get it?), once the character rescues Carrie Anne, she can scream and wail at inopportune moments, alerting the Clown Alley pursuers of where she is, and even prevent a character from making a surprise attack or ambush on the opposition.

CONCLUSION

If the characters return Carrie Anne to the Hanwells, they will earn the gratitude of the minor bureaucrat (which can be translated into a free Contact or Favor; this is in addition to the experience points the characters earn during Kid Napping). As an added bonus, Mr. Hanwell may contact the characters in the future if an emergency develops within the campaign city political scene (such as dirty dealing, mob influence or secret committees being formed to crack down on vigilantism), either requesting the PC's help or alerting them to its presence. He will also speak well of the characters to the press if they rescue Carrie Anne without harming or endangering her.

CLOWN ALLEY FINALE "SCAVENGER HUNT"

INTRODUCTION

The GM can run Scavenger Hunt as a way of drawing Clown Alley to a dose, or else as a way of making them more powerful for standard Champions campaigns (for Champions campaigns, GMs may even wish to run this adventure first). In Scavenger Hunt, Clown Alley discovers a clue that promises to lead them to their legendary gadgets the Idiot King gave them on the Big Night; shortly after they were defeated by Crusader, many of their weapons vanished, and ever since, the whereabouts of their weapons have been the subject of much speculation around the Clubhouse. Eager to recover their former glory, Clown Alley sets out on a city-wide scavenger hunt that will eventually lead them to their precious cache of weapons. PCs should learn of this plot and stop Clown Alley before they can rearm themselves; the weapons are sufficiently dangerous that if Clown Alley reacquired them, they might, for the first time ever, pose a serious threat to the city and the PCs. This adventure can be run in tandem with Enemy Mime.

ASIDE: "PAPER CHASE"

The Clues: The maps and clues in this adventure are childishly simple to unravel; all it took was one of the Clowns chancing upon the first clue to set the entire chase in motion. While digging through one of their trunks for a memento, they found a slip of paper behind one of their photographs of the Idiot King. The scrap of paper that looked as if it might be part of a map, with a few lines of doggerel scrawled beneath it. Mustering their combined brain power, Clown Alley studied the clue, and after realizing where it might lead them, hopped in the Checkers cab and roared off to the site where they believed their weapons were located. Unfortunately, once they arrived, they only found another clue for them, which in turn lead them to another clue, and so on and so on.

This paper chase should give the PCs ample time to become involved. As the clowns race madly around the city, they are likely to commit a number of crimes, most likely trespassing, assault and battery and destruction of private property. These chain of clues will continue for as long as the GM wishes, and if possible, should be used so that the PCs have an equal chance of deciphering the clues that Clown Alley leaves in their path (i.e., they should lead to places that the characters have visited in other adventures, or relate to some knowledge skill or hobby that the character has). The last clue, however, has a double meaning: one is an obvious meaning, which Clown Alley will latch onto, and the second is more subtle, which will allow the PCs to have a chance to crack it and recover the weapons before Clown Alley realizes their mistake. If Clown Alley manages to reclaim their weapons, they will create chaos in the city until stopped by the characters.

Potential Disasters: The players should realize early on that the Scavenger Hunt could end with Clown Alley becoming incredibly powerful; by examining old police reports and newspaper descriptions of what they possessed (there is even

a TV documentary of what happened in the Big Night as well, showing many of Clown Alley in action), the PCs can learn what Clown Alley was carrying in the street level war. In addition to the weapons and gear already mentioned in the character descriptions, the secret Clown Alley arsenal also contains:

Juggling Balls: There are seven of these juggling balls, in a rainbow of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. The juggling balls are concentrated explosives; their fuses are activated by pressing down hard on one of the stars on their surface.

Stovepipe Hat: Acts as a shotgun explosive, plus it is large enough for the wearer to keep guns and knives stored in it.

Joy buzzer: This is an improved version of the joy buzzer Smiley has. It has no Activation Roll, and it has the ability to permanently stimulate the pleasure centers of the human brain. Smiley may put this buzzer on his other hand and attempt to hug opponents.

Slingshot: Fires explosive pellets, colored gas and normal lead shot at an opponent.

Other weapons include slapsticks, trick canes, large clown hammers, gadget umbrellas, bird cage Entangles (they slip over the head and latch shut), exploding cigars that fire like pistols, dog catcher and butterfly nets made of sticky fibers, a bubble pipe Entangle, explosive animal balloons, seltzer sprays filled with acid or poison gas, a timed explosive baby rattle, buckets of confetti, firecrackers made of plastique, super stilts, portable trampolines, a dog whistle with a Sonic EB, scalding hot water bottles that let loose torrents of steam, rubber chickens, prosthetic hands, etc. All these objects are stored in dusty, multi-colored trunks, along with clown regalia and costumes, including white ice cream pants, orange and puce sports jackets, wide ties and a dozen tubes of grease paint.